"We don't have disabled children in my school, maybe because the principal thinks it would be very difficult. I would tell him 'You are not alone – we will help you'."

(child, Malatia Child Development Center, Yerevan, Armenia)

Enabling Education

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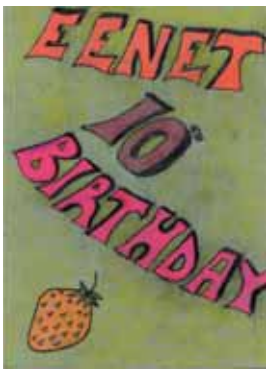

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Anniversary Issue

EENET's 10th Birthday

EENET
Enabling Education Network

Contents

Editors:
Ingrid Lewis and Susie Miles

EENET news – 10th anniversary

Anniversary events

In January 2007 we held EENET's tenth anniversary seminar in London. This was attended by representatives from about 20 organisations and academic institutions that work with or support EENET. Inclusive Technology (our website sponsor) also celebrate their tenth anniversary this year. They very generously invited EENET to share their anniversary reception. We are also very grateful to Inclusive Technology for encouraging and funding the production of EENET's new anniversary CD-ROM, leaflet and poster. Inclusive Technology has supported EENET's website since 1997, enabling us to reach readers in almost 200 countries.

Susie Miles from EENET and the founders of Inclusive Technology celebrate 10 years (children's TV character, Bob the Builder, is cutting the birthday cake!)

New EENET resources for the anniversary year

- 10th anniversary CD-ROM, containing:
  - an interactive world map showing stories and pictures from some of our thousands of members
  - all of the articles from our first 10 newsletters, reorganised thematically with new editorials
  - a small exhibition of photos taken by school children
  - a PowerPoint presentation and poster/leaflet downloads that introduce EENET's work.
- Leaflet: this summarises EENET's aims and activities.
- World map poster: this shows some of the inclusive education activities and local networking that is happening around the world among EENET's members.
- Translations poster: this displays the terms 'inclusive education' in about 30 languages and encourages people to do more translations of EENET newsletters and other useful documents.

All of these materials are available free of charge from EENET, while stocks last.

The past and the future

The last 12 months have been very busy! During the second half of 2006, a large-scale evaluation of EENET was conducted, funded by NFU Norway (a former donor to EENET). You can read a summary of the evaluation recommendations on pages 14-15. As well as reviewing our past achievements and challenges, we have also been planning EENET's future. An outline of our next 5-year plan can be found on pages 16-17.

Cover images:

These images are taken from birthday cards made for EENET by children and young people participating in KAYDA – the Katwe Youth Development Association, Uganda. We would like to thank these wonderful young artists for their colourful contribution to our anniversary celebrations!

Editorial

UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report on Education for All, published in 2007, estimates that 77 million children (aged 6–11 years) do not attend school, and that approximately one-third of these out-of-school children are disabled. The other two-thirds are said to be children from poor families, who live in poor households, and whose mothers have no education.

EENET was set up ten years ago to create conversations – within Southern contexts and between Southern and Northern contexts – about what inclusion means and how to make it a reality for all children. The articles in this newsletter show how education can be an enabling, rather than a disabling, experience – for all children. Education does not have to take place within the four walls of a classroom, and it is a lifelong experience. Sadly, though, formal education is too often a disappointing experience – even in income-rich countries. Yet in Burma, community-based teacher trainers working in a situation of violence and conflict explain what a difference quality education can make to a whole community (see pp. 20–21).

Isolation from information can marginalise and further impoverish excluded groups of learners, and their families and communities. Our readers tell us that the information in this newsletter and on EENET's website can be more valuable than money. Such information opens up opportunities and encourages people to take action. It also provides inspiration by helping to 'make the familiar unfamiliar' – stimulating us to think again, and more deeply or analytically, about the situations and problems we see every day. Information about affordable and inclusive architectural design in an Indonesian school could stimulate others to do the same (see pp. 24–25). An account of teaching teachers how to make visual aids in Liberia (p. 26) can provide ideas for how to make education more fun – with very few resources.

Pictorial learning aids workshop, Liberia (see p.26)

In this issue of 'Enabling Education' several articles focus on the participation of children and young people in the development of more inclusive education policy and practice. For example, they include accounts of using art and photography activities to involve children and young people in research, awareness-raising and school improvement initiatives. They also feature the voices of young people on issues such as child marriage and education, and inclusive education for blind students.

The implications of the ground-breaking UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are discussed on page 27. This is a new and important lobbying tool. Article 24 states that all children and young people have the right to "access an inclusive, quality, free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live". Disabled people's organisations played a key role in the negotiations and will be centrally involved in its implementation.

The recent evaluation of EENET's work provides another focus for this newsletter, along with some reflections on how to network inclusively. And for the first time we feature an article that discusses the issue of private inclusive education (in Thailand, see pp.12–13).

With all of the topics featured in this newsletter, we invite you to read critically, reflect on your own experience, and join in discussions – with the authors, with EENET and with your own colleagues.

Children's photography project, Thailand (see pp.12-13)

Young people's views on early marriage and education, northern Nigeria

Danladi Mamman

Early marriage is more common in the northern parts of Nigeria. Here, many parents prefer to marry off their daughters at a very young age, for cultural and economic reasons. The rate of illiteracy among females is higher here than in the south. Recent studies have highlighted improved primary and secondary enrolment rates for girls. Girls who have dropped out of school, or not been enrolled in the first place, are likely to be pushed into early marriage. Marriage usually prevents them from starting or resuming their education.

Response to the problem

In recent years, states in northern Nigeria, such as Niger and Bauchi states, have enacted laws prohibiting the withdrawal of girls from school for marriage, but this is not being enforced. The Federal Government of Nigeria and the 19 Northern States Government have introduced initiatives to tackle early marriage and its impact on education (e.g. public sensitisation on girls' reproductive health and rights and the importance of allowing girls to complete senior secondary school; strengthening links between schools and communities to improve girls' retention in school; changing girls' attitudes towards education; and establishing more schools for females only). Some initiatives have yielded positive results: married girls/single mothers who had dropped out have restarted school, and parents have started to allow girls to complete senior secondary school before marriage and even proceed to higher education.

The Child Rights Act was enacted in 2003 by the Federal Government and many state governments are following suit. It states that every child, irrespective of gender and disability among others, has the right to good quality education and to complete his/her education.

The Universal Basic Education programme was also established, providing for nine years of compulsory education.

All levels of government and some non-governmental organisations are taking steps to address early marriage and encourage children to complete school. This includes the re-establishment of guidance and counselling units in schools, the creation of gender sensitive curricula, making school environments conducive for learning, and involving communities and traditional rulers in schools affairs, etc. Many northern state governments have established secondary schools for married females. In Niger state, for instance, there is the Women's Day College in Minna, the state capital.

Yet despite this progress, there is still much to be done to tackle early marriage if the goals of Education for All are to be achieved. The voices of the children and young people affected by this practice need to be heard if successful solutions are really to be found.

Moving forward – young people suggest action

Girl Child Empowerment Nigeria (GCEN) decided to seek children's views. As part of our work campaigning for the education of marginalised females, a group of 23 students from eight schools across Niger state was interviewed. They were asked what should be done to solve the problem of early marriage and its impact on children's participation and achievement in education. These views will feed into our advocacy work. They made many excellent suggestions, showing the importance of consulting young people. They have so much relevant experience from which education policy-makers can learn. Here are some of their recommendations:

Educate parents

"There are many things that need to be done to solve this problem of early marriage and education. Our government should first of all put more effort on enlightening our parents on the negative effects of withdrawing girls from school for early marriage. You know many parents here are still illiterate and don't know the importance of female education. So the government should first of all increase awareness before any other thing should be done." (Maryam Kudu, 15, female student)

Enforce laws

"I dislike early marriage because it creates many problem for females, especially in education. Girls should be allowed to complete senior secondary school before pushing them to marry. I learned that there is a law concerning the withdrawal of girls from school for early marriage. Why can't our government enforce the law so as to tackle this problem?" (Salamatu Dauda, 13, female student)

Support returning girls

"I have seen that some single mothers and married girls are always ashamed and afraid to return to their school because of some fellow students' and teachers' negative attitudes toward them. School authorities should please consider the feelings of such girls and help them by warning people to stop jeering at them. Those girls need encouragement and support to continue with their education which will help them a lot in future." (Esther Musa, 16, female student)

Encourage husbands to support their wives' education

"I hate to see my fellow girls withdrawing from school and being forced to marry. It is unfair and should be stopped. One of my best friends, Dije, is now a mother. I talked to her husband one day and asked him to allow her to continue with her education. The husband agreed but

Dije is ashamed to come back to our school, so we told her to go to Women's Day College and continue. She and her husband are now making effort to get admission to the school. I want government to establish more women's day colleges in the country." (Ronke Adebayo, 16, female student)

Aim for full inclusion of married girls in the mainstream education system

"I will not be happy to see any of my sisters or school mates being withdrawn from school for any reason. The government should continue to enlighten parents on the bad effect of early marriage on education. Our government has done a good thing by establishing the Women's Day College to help married girls to continue with their education. However it will be better if such girls will be encourage to return to their former school and learn together with their friends." (Hassan Sadiq, 17, male student)

Peer support

"I never knew that I would be able to carry on with my education after giving birth, until three of my school friends visited me one day and talked with me on the possibility of returning to school to continue with my studies. I was reluctant at first, thinking that the principal will not allow me to come back to the school. But one of my friends went and talked to the principal and he quickly agreed, on the condition that I will have to repeat my last class. I went back to the school and continued with my studies. My mum takes care of my baby at home while I am in school. I wish other young single mothers like me will be encouraged to go back to school." (Safiya Sambo, 17, single mother)

Free education

"My father wanted to remove me from school some time ago, as he did to my elder sister who is now married. I refused and started crying. I then went and told my grandfather who came and talked with my dad. Later he agreed that I can continue with my school. I want the government to make education free, this will make many parents allow their female children to continue with their schooling." (Asma'u Zubairu, 11, female student)

Students from schools involved in GCEN's research

Many of the students passionately appealed for Universal Basic Education to be extended to 12 years, enabling every child, particularly girls, to attain a minimum of secondary education. They strongly believed this would reduce instances of early marriage.

Rahinatu (16) is one of the hundreds of girls who have dropped out of school to get married because of the poverty of their parents. Her widowed mother could not afford to educate her beyond the junior secondary level. "If education was made free for girls at senior secondary school level, many of us wouldn't have dropped out of school to get married", Rahinatu said.

Change government policy

Many students pointed out that the Federal Government's ongoing education reform programme should seriously consider early marriage as it affects education. They expressed a collective desire to lobby for policy reform on married and pregnant children in schools through the Children's Parliament in the state. Some of the students are members of Child Right Clubs in their schools. They now plan to use these clubs to lobby their school authorities to develop action plans to help married and pregnant girls return to school and continue their education.

GCEN is encouraging the young participants to take action towards their recommendations. We are giving them advice on how to make their cases heard by the appropriate authorities. We have also been sharing their suggestions with parents, teachers, head teachers, principals and education officials.

Danladi Mamman is a teacher and has been working with GCEN to promote inclusive education issues in Nigeria.

Contact:
GCEN, P.O. Box 4433
Garki, Abuja, Nigeria
Email: girlchildemp@yahoo.com or ladiman442@yahoo.com

GCEN is an NGO which aims to help girls and young women to realise their potential, develop skills and achieve empowerment. It encourages them to take up leadership positions. GCEN's particular focus is on girls and young women who have become mothers at an early age. GCEN has been working with EENET for several years to help share information about inclusive education in Nigeria.

Promoting inclusion through drama and art, Burkina Faso

Noëlie Gansoré

In this article Noëlie Gansoré explains how drama was used to help raise community awareness about inclusive education and disabled children's right to such an education.

Handicap International's (HI) inclusive education project in Burkina Faso exists in an environment where negative attitudes towards disabled people have dominated. We were therefore aware that promoting inclusive education would require preliminary awareness raising and information work with all education stakeholders. In our context, these stakeholders include teachers, educational supervisors, artisans in rural areas, parents, and particularly parents of disabled children.

We decided that a play followed by discussions would be an interesting way to reach people who rarely visit school facilities. It would be a good way to convey messages in an accessible and culturally relevant way. Four events were held in the department: in Tanghin-Dassouri for the centre region, in Nimdi for the eastern region, in Dondoulma for the north, and in Koumlèla for the west.

We used the Allah Dari drama company (Allah Dari means "We are looking for God"). The actors – in a funny, efficient and convincing way – showed that disabled children are like other children, have the same right to education, can be as successful, and educating them is a profitable investment for their parents and for society.

Some of the actors were disabled people. One disabled girl in the play was a successful pupil, and now she supports her parents financially, and has set up development facilities in the village (a drill, a mill, etc).

The team was given a warm welcome during the four events. The discussions following the play were intense. The audiences detected the negative attitudes portrayed in the play that need to be changed in order to enable disabled children to be included in education.

For instance, the play depicted:

- the ridiculing of disabled children
- refusal to send them to school because people think they are incapable of learning or because they want to marry them off
- parents neglecting children's education and not supporting them in their studies.

After the professional actors had finished, members of the audience – men, women and young children – took part in role-play activities. They acted out the positive attitudes that they felt some of the characters should have adopted, instead of the negative attitudes the actors had portrayed.

Most of the plays were performed in market places or in other public places. Two thousand people, from all walks of life and of all ages were ultimately involved, including market-goers, people in bars, passers-by, pupils, their parents and their teachers.

As a result of these awareness raising activities, we found that we did not need to specifically work on pushing for the enrolment of disabled children at the start of the new 2006/07 school term. The communities now realised that their disabled children could attend schools and the teachers were ready to accept them. Parents voluntarily chose to enrol their children. Since then around 100 'new' disabled children have been identified in the schools of Tanghin-Dassouri, in Grade 1 or in the transitory classes.[1]

[1] Transitory classes are for deaf and blind children in rural areas who have never attended school before. The classes teach them basic communication and learning skills in order to be able to participate more successfully in the mainstream classes. Children are in these classes for 2–3 years and interact with their peers at playtimes. HI will soon evaluate the impact and sustainability of these classes.

Global Action Week for Education

In the editorial of "Enabling Education" issue 10, 2006, we discussed the Global Campaign for Education, which focused on the theme of 'every child needs a teacher'. Here Noëlie talks about HI's activities in Burkina Faso during the campaign week.

HI's inclusive education project wanted to use the Global Action Week to further promote its messages about quality inclusive education. So we supported pupils and teachers from Tanghin-Dassouri to make full-scale figurines and over 300 drawings.

The figurines and drawings represented what the pupils and teachers considered to be 'the ideal teacher'. They carried messages calling for appropriate approaches to teaching and for better working conditions for teachers, for example:

- Train our teachers in sign language so that they can teach deaf-mute pupils like us.
- An empty sack cannot be put upright.
- Decent accommodation and quality schooling.
- Our teachers support us in all our activities. Help them give us better supervision.

On 28 April, the figurines and drawings from Tanghin-Dassouri stood proudly among the ones made by other schools. A crowd of over one thousand pupils, teachers and other key players in the education field marched from the Paspanga schools to the Nation Square in Ouagadougou. They all showed their figurines and drawings to a large crowd of spectators which grew along the way.

The Minister of Basic Education, a delegate of the deputies of the National Assembly, and other traditional personalities attended a ceremony at which they were presented with some of the 'ideal teacher' figurines.

HI published an article in a daily newspaper about the inclusion of deaf pupils in Tanghin-Dassouri. In the article a deaf boy – who was included in school – demanding that his out-of-school friends should not be forgotten. This was such a strong message that the radio station also broadcast the story. In response to the broadcast, a local businessman donated food to HI for children involved in its inclusive education project. The deaf boy's demands helped to reinforce the messages that had been conveyed through the drama and Global Campaign Week activities.

Noëlie is HI's Disability and Education Adviser for the inclusive education project. She has over 25 years' experience in research and education.

Since 2003, she has also worked as a researcher in the Education Department of the Institute of Social Sciences and in the National Research Centre for Science and Technology.

Contact:
Inclusive Education Project
Handicap International
BP 541
Ouagadougou 01
Burkina Faso
West Africa
Email: hibfeduc@cenatrin.bf

Using children's drawings to investigate racial inclusion in a school in England

Annita Eliadou, Wai Ming Lo, Sara Servio, Francis Simui

In this article, four University of Manchester students from Cyprus, Hong Kong, England and Zambia explain how they worked together to promote pupil voice in a Manchester primary school. They led a process of collaborative research about the issue of racial inclusion in the school.

As part of our Masters Degree course in Inclusive Education, we had to undertake a school-based inquiry research project. The school that participated in our research has been involved with the Manchester Inclusion Standard (see page 31).

Racial inclusion is a key concern for the primary school where we did our research. Pupils come from 15 different ethnic backgrounds and speak 19 different languages; 57% of pupils are Caucasian and 43% are non-Caucasian. The school wanted to know if racial background is a barrier to students' inclusion. The school is committed to continuously working to remove such barriers, and has received a gold award for its efforts.

Our research took four months, and we made eight visits to the school. We had regular meetings with the principal to ensure that the research was jointly planned. We focused on break times because we wanted to see if all pupils were included in play.

We asked all 233 pupils aged 5–11 to participate in the research through a drawing competition in which they could win prizes. They were asked to draw and name the friends they played with during break time. We used their drawings to identify all the play relationships that were happening and we plotted these in sociograms (see diagram). From this we could begin to see whether the pupils were playing in racially inclusive or in racially segregated groups.

We also interviewed pupils about their views on their school lives and whether they felt included in school or not; 95% said their school is a friendly place.

"I like my school because I have a lot of friends here."

"I like my school because my teachers are very friendly."

We found that, overall, the school is racially inclusive, but some instances of racial segregation were happening among some of the pupils. This could become a barrier to their full inclusion in school life.

The school is already committed to using action research approaches to improve its practices. The findings from the pupil drawing activity could therefore be a starting point for further investigation into why this segregation is happening.

As such, the school's principal committed himself to taking action to address the instances of racial segregation identified among pupils.

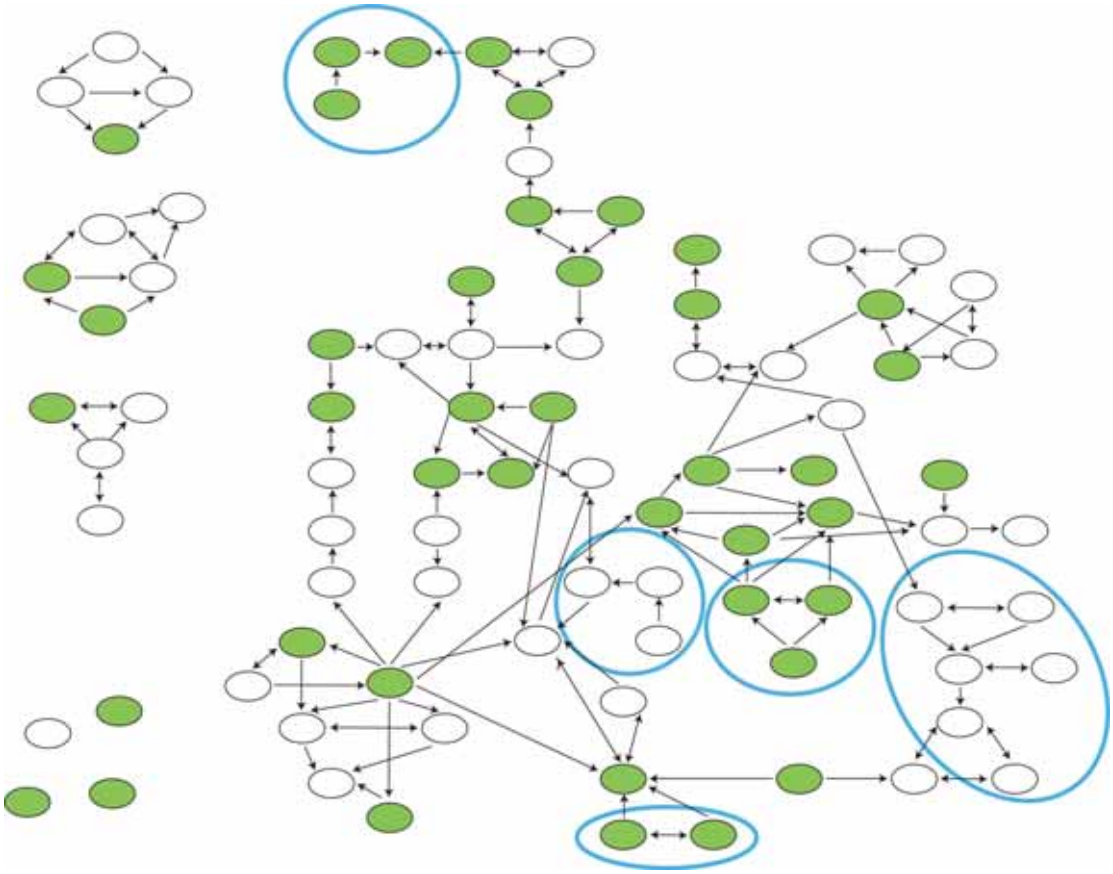
Through this school-based inquiry research project we were able to promote pupil voice activities and help the school take forward its action research.

The work highlighted for us how powerful and meaningful it can be to get children's views on issues relating to the practices and policy-making that directly affect them. We discovered that inclusive education is really possible if all education stakeholders are willing to collaborate.

A pupil's drawing. All the names have been covered to preserve anonymity.

Sociogram of Year Group 1 & 2

(distinction between Caucasian and non-Caucasian students)



What is school-based inquiry?

Education systems throughout the world are facing the challenge of learner diversity. Higher Education needs to respond to this challenge. In issue 10 of "Enabling Education", Jamie Williams argued that teacher training and development should not happen in isolation – it should be part of system-wide change in the way schools are organised.

Masters students who study inclusive education at the University of Manchester are required to undertake a collaborative school-based inquiry research project. This innovatory course enables students to develop skills and understanding so that they can take on leadership roles in relation to these challenges. It focuses on ways of bringing about change at the classroom, school and system level.

For more details about the M.Ed. in Inclusive Education, contact Susie Miles. Email: susie.miles@manchester.ac.uk or write to her via EENET.

The group of students who wrote this article won first prize in the University of Manchester's annual 'Student Team Working Awards' in 2007 – in the post-graduate curricular category. The judges said that the quality of their reflective writing was exceptionally high and that they were clear winners!

This is a sociogram for Years 1 and 2. Each oval represents a pupil who participated in the drawing competition. The arrows show each pupil's preferred friends. Caucasian pupils are represented by white ovals and non-Caucasian by green ovals. The blue circles show where pupils appear to be playing only with peers from the same background as themselves (Caucasian or non-Caucasian).

Francis Simui is a primary teacher trainer from Zambia. Wai Ming Lo is a school inspector from Hong Kong. Annita Eliadou is a graduate in Human Behavioural Biology from the University of Toronto, Canada, originally from Cyprus. Sara Servio lives in England and is the parent of a child with autism. They can all be contacted via EENET.

Using students' ideas to make teaching more inclusive, Brazil

Windyz Ferreira and Mel Ainscow

In Brazil, recent years have seen massive progress towards the United Nations' goal of Education for All. However, while school enrolment has increased, the challenge remains of how to develop practices that will enable all children to learn effectively. This reminds us that 'schools for all' is not the same as 'education for all'.

Recently we co-ordinated a project aimed at developing inclusive practices in a group of state schools in São Paulo. This was a joint project in partnership with the University of Manchester and funded by the British Council.

As part of the project we interviewed adolescents enrolled in various high schools, asking them what they liked best about their teachers and what they considered to be good teaching. Their responses provided helpful leads as to what now needs to be done to make their schools more inclusive.

For example, students commented:

- "I like teachers that listen to us!"
- "We like teachers that explain over and over a few topics that we are facing difficulties understanding."
- "The best are those lessons that are interesting: that is, we can talk with our colleagues about whatever we are learning… it is boring when we have to be there, just sitting, looking at the teacher and making notes while he/she is speaking and writing on the blackboard."

- "Practical lessons are nice, I like them because I can learn better if I do things and see how things happen."
- "Issues that are part of our lives are better to learn and to get interested, rather than those weird things that do not mean a thing to us…"

Comments such as these clearly show that students have helpful ideas as to how lessons can be made more effective for them. They lead us to argue that by listening to the ideas of students, teachers can be encouraged to re-think their teaching styles in order to reach out to more students in their classrooms. In this way, they will be better prepared to review the focus and priorities for their lessons, and better able to answer vital questions such as:

- Is this lesson content relevant to my students?
- Will they be interested in the kind of activities I am planning?
- How can I make the lesson more dynamic and interactive?

In the schools in our project we saw very encouraging evidence of the potential of this approach. In particular, we saw how groups of teachers were stimulated to experiment with new teaching strategies as a result of their discussions of the ideas generated by their students.

Unfortunately, there are barriers that have to be overcome. Some of these are organisational. For example, teachers in Brazil are forced to work very long hours, often in more than one school, and are very poorly paid. However, other barriers are to do with attitudes. For example, I have heard teachers say:

- "Children are not able to offer contributions… they are too little."
- "Students in mainstream schools are too poor, too deprived, have no rules, so they can't possibly have an idea about what is best for them."
- "Students can't understand why we do things in this way."
- "Young vulnerable people are not in position to have a say about how a teacher should teach, or what is a relevant curricular theme for them".

Such beliefs about the limited role that children and young people can play in their own learning processes create a deep communication gap between teachers and their students. This can stifle the sense that 'we all learn better if we collaborate with one another.'

The way forward, therefore, must be to create the working conditions in which teachers feel encouraged to learn from one another and, most importantly, to learn from their students.

Windyz is Senior Lecturer at the Federal University of Paraiba and a researcher in the field of inclusive education. Contact her at: windyz_ferreira@hotmail.com or via EENET. Mel is a Professor of Education in the University of Manchester. Contact him via EENET.

Inclusive education: from my perspective

Lucia Bellini

I am a 23-year-old university student. I have been totally blind since birth. In January 2006, Save the Children asked me and five other young disabled people to speak at a meeting on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We also ran a workshop highlighting the daily issues disabled people face around the world. I spoke on the importance of inclusive education and why it is necessary for disabled people to be educated with their peers.

I was educated in a mainstream school and feel that it has had a major impact on my life. I started going to a special school for blind people. At the age of eight I transferred to the mainstream education system, and stayed there. I passed the necessary exams and am now completing a degree in French, Italian and Spanish. Last year I spent three months working in an orphanage in Costa Rica, seven months teaching English in a secondary school in France, and three months attending a language school in Italy. I then got bored of being back home in the UK so I did an extra month's work experience in Romania. I worked as a journalist for an English speaking magazine. I feel that none of this would have been possible if I had not spent many years in the mainstream education system.

I cannot lie and say that being in a mainstream school was easy because it wasn't at all. I was bullied for several years for being blind. I also experienced 'suffocating' or just terrible learning support assistants. I felt very alone; I thought nobody in the entire world understood my disability. However, I feel that this experience has made me a lot more streetwise and generally more aware of the harsh realities of our society.

It also taught me that even though I have a disability, I am no less important or intelligent than any non-disabled person, and I can achieve anything. I look at people who went through special schools and they have a different perception of life. They are generally not ambitious and a lot less willing or able to fight for, or speak out about, anything they are unhappy with (e.g. the level of support they are given). Academically, they are not pushed to achieve their potential. From the special school I attended, in my year group, only one student out of fifteen went to university.

As well as being vital for disabled people, inclusive education is just as essential for non-disabled children. It helps them learn from an early age to respect differences and establish relationships with their disabled peers. I have often asked myself why so much ignorance exists towards disability in our society. The answer I think is that people are not exposed to disability. How can you know anything about a subject if you have never experienced it or met anyone who has? If the two groups are always separated they will never learn how to socialise with each other.

To enable both disabled and non-disabled children to feel more comfortable with each other and with themselves it is vital to stop thinking about disability as a bad thing. A lot of disabled children, including myself, spend years thinking they are a burden to their non-disabled classmates. A lot of emphasis is put on how non-disabled friends have to help disabled children with things they are not able to do due to their disability. But it is equally important to recognise that disabled children are just as able in other ways. Just because they cannot do one thing or need help taking part in one particular activity, doesn't mean they can't help their non-disabled friends with something else they find difficult. This needs to be encouraged. Not only does this make disabled children feel more useful, it also allows non-disabled children to learn that disabled children are just as able despite their disability.

It is important to realise that all children are individuals and therefore learn in different ways. For example, blind children learn well by listening, children with learning difficulties or children who are very energetic learn better by moving around. It would benefit all children if more alternative methods of learning were incorporated into the curriculum, so that learning isn't purely about sitting still at a desk all day.

I would like to highlight again the importance of inclusive education for all disabled children, as this helps them socially and academically. It also teaches their non-disabled peers how to interact positively and form relationships with disabled people.

Lucia lives in London. She has just finished a degree in French, Spanish and Italian, and will soon start work as a disability awareness co-ordinator for a self-help group in Papua New Guinea. Lucia is actively involved in disability politics.

She can be contacted by email at: lucia_bellini@hotmail.com or via EENET.

Inclusive private education, Thailand

Sorayot Phanayanggoor

Inclusive education is not widely known or practised in Thailand. Many people still believe that children with special educational needs should be educated in a special setting. There are a few examples of schools which are developing their own inclusive practices and initiatives, without centralised government support. This is the case in one private nursery and primary school in northern Bangkok. The school has been practising inclusive education for many years, without realising that its work fits under the inclusive education label. This article looks at the school's approach to education for a diverse range of children. It also explains how photography has been used to help pupil express their views about the school, in order to help the school improve.

The school is called Settabutr Upathum School and has around 1,000 pupils. It has an almost open admissions policy, though not a fully open policy because it is, after all, a privately run school. However, fee-paying primary schools in Thailand (especially Bangkok) are very common and the fees are capped at an affordable level by the Ministry of Education. So while it can be argued that private schools cannot be fully inclusive, such schools should be judged within their national and local contexts.

This poster says 'welcome'. It is the first thing visitors see when they arrive at school.

The school is situated in a lower-middle class area of Bangkok, where most of the pupils live locally and can just about afford the school fees. The school does the best it can for every child who enrols. Many children with special educational needs, who might have been rejected by or asked to leave other schools, are given the opportunity to be educated in a mainstream setting.

None of the staff are specialists (these are hard to find and tend to stay within special education). Neither are they trained in inclusive education. But the staff have worked collaboratively through years of experience in a mainstream setting. They collaborate through weekly meetings and termly reviews to provide the best possible education for all pupils. While no teacher at the school can be totally sure they are doing everything 'right', feedback from previous pupils suggests the school has done a good job in providing education for these local children.

The school has had to overcome many internal and external obstacles since it opened enrolment to children with special educational needs. Problems have included poor staff attitudes towards these children. There has also been the challenge of parents who did not understand the benefits of inclusive education. Nevertheless, everyone at the school now strives for inclusive education so that no child misses out on the education they deserve.

As part of the process of helping the school to reflect on its practices and strive for continuous improvement, I carried out a small participatory photography project with some of the pupils.

Their views confirmed to me that strong leadership plays an important part in the success of inclusive education. One of the photos, taken by an autistic boy, shows the front door of the school principal's house. He explained, *"That's the principal's house and she gave me the opportunity to study here so I am very grateful."* This view was backed up by comments from parents of children with special educational needs who are also grateful that their children have been given an opportunity to study by the school management.

The photography project gave children an opportunity to voice their opinions about the school. Some children engaged less well with the activity, maybe because they were not familiar with this way of working. Nevertheless children expressed views and opinions which are not usually counted or heard much in Thai culture. The activity enabled them to explore their creativity and think critically about their school.

This project has already resulted in the school taking on board some of the children's comments and trying to make appropriate improvements. For example, one group expressed concerns about the positioning of the school's recycling bins. They felt that pupils would use them more if they were placed somewhere more accessible and visible. This issue has now been passed on to the Student Council for further action.

Another group said they appreciate the influence of having two religions (Buddhism and Catholicism) taught at the school. Both religions teach them to be calm and thoughtful towards others, which provides an inclusive environment.

A third group of children commented on one of the parties standing for election to the School Council. They would vote for that party *"because it has a good policy".*

I feel this type of photography project really can help to promote 'student voice' more effectively (although success can depend on the instructions given – my instructions perhaps could have been improved!). I think in this school the results may have been different if the activity had been done by a member of the school staff. I think pupils may have been more scared to express critical views, in order to avoid negative reactions from the staff.

The school strives to be as inclusive as possible, not because this is the current trend in education, but because the principal believes it is the right thing to do. To me, it does not matter what term is being used to describe education at the school. As long as it continues its 'open' admissions policy and strives to provide the best education available to the local children - that's what matters. Some of its practices of course need improving, but the school is making a big effort in trying to be inclusive. Hopefully activities such as the photography project can help pupils and staff to work together to make the necessary improvements.

I would like to invite discussions about private schools and inclusive education. Do you think fee paying schools can be inclusive? How effective can privately initiated inclusive schooling be without central support from the government? Can participatory photography be successfully applied within an authoritarian education system?

Sorayot Phanayanggoor (known as Gong) is an MEd student at the University of Manchester. He plans to return to Thailand to promote inclusive education, after gaining more experience as a teaching assistant in a Manchester primary school. He can be contacted at sorayot@yahoo.co.uk or via EENET's postal address. The school website is: www.stbu.ac.th.

Evaluating EENET

EENET was evaluated in 2006. Evaluating such a diverse and global network is an almost impossible task! Nevertheless the process has successfully helped to raise awareness of EENET's achievements and shortcomings. The evaluation took place at a time when EENET was struggling to survive financially. Many of the recommendations therefore relate to funding, structures and staffing. However, the report also represents a celebration of 10 years of networking. It contains both challenging and congratulatory comments from EENET's users and supporters. Here Susie Miles and Ingrid Lewis present a brief summary of the evaluation.

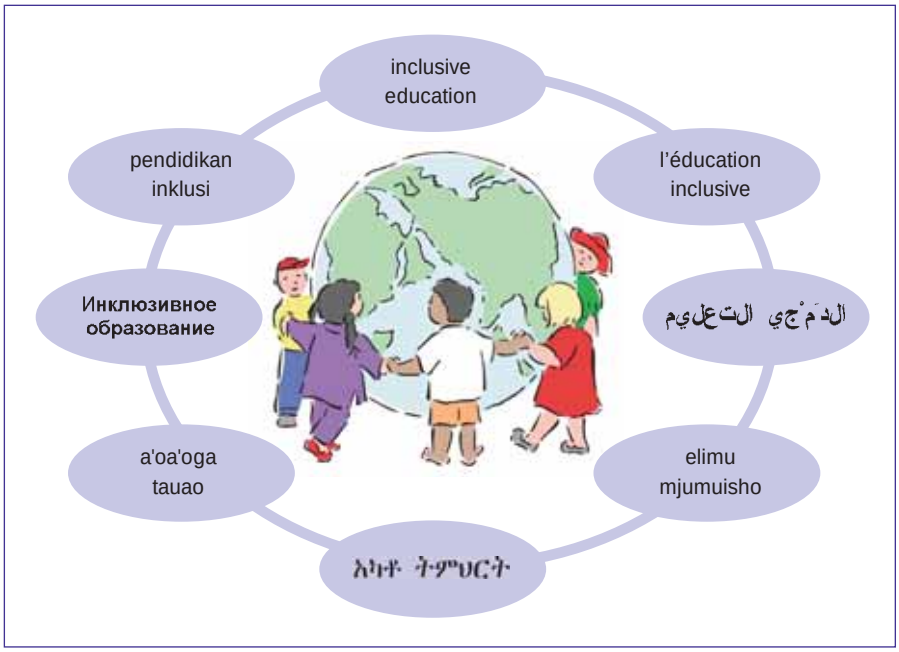
EENET has sought to raise the profile of inclusive education work in the South and to push against the mainstream view of development. It insists on being a network with an open and equal relationship with the South. It facilitates but refuses to direct or dictate. It has worked, instead, to establish an exchange of experiences and to debate central concepts of inclusion. It raises awareness of concrete, on-the-ground initiatives happening in the South.

Evaluation activities

- review of EENET's annual reports, publications and other records and statistics
- user questionnaire sent to all contacts in EENET's database. Responses from Africa (66%), Asia (15%), Europe (13%), Australasia (3%), Middle East (2%), Caribbean (1%) South America (1%)
- focus group discussions (three with EENET users in East Africa, one with EENET supporters in the UK)
- interviews with EENET's founders and other key supporters, staff, etc
- assessment of readability and usability of EENET's newsletters and website.

Evaluation of EENET users' views focused on

- What do inclusive education practitioners want from EENET? Do they get what they want? What more do they want? (service and expectations)



- Are EENET's aims and objectives clear to all users/supporters? (identity)
- How do users/supporters contact EENET? (access)
- Is there global support for EENET? (recognition)
- Is there a demand for regionalisation?
- What ideas are there for future organisational development?

EENET's strengths

The evaluation showed that EENET has:

- the ability to hold and communicate a global perspective on inclusive education and on concrete initiatives in the South
- a reputation for responding in a friendly, open, inviting manner to every enquiry
- a reputation for involving not just the 'big players', but the isolated teacher, parent or youth worker in a big bureaucracy or in a remote place
- the rare skill to be both accessible in its language to its users and yet raise and deepen the debate on conceptual issues of inclusion
- the ability to produce deceptively easy-to-read newsletters and other material that are, in fact, 'cutting edge' in terms of research, debate and contributions. This is achieved through skilful editing and being able to distil and present the core of the issue or practice being discussed
- developed relationships with inclusive practitioners worldwide

- a neutrality that comes from being independent and not affiliated with any government organisation, bigger NGO or other pressure group.

Summary of recommendations

Funding – EENET needs to focus on ensuring financial security; needs to diversify the approaches it takes to seeking funding from donors; and needs to review its position with regard to 'selling services' and 'branding'.

Website – navigation through the site needs to be improved; updating of the site needs to be brought more under EENET's control (less reliance on voluntary website support).

Readability – some of the materials EENET shares need to be made easier to read.

Identity – EENET needs to state more clearly/frequently what principles it stands for.

National/regional networks – EENET needs to maintain/increase its hands-on support to the development of such networks.

Accountability – the Steering Group needs to be revived and adapted to better oversee EENET's vision and mission.

Expanding structures – EENET needs to develop a structure so it can expand to meet demand, yet maintain its highly valued 'personal approach'.

Relationship with University of Manchester – EENET should keep monitoring the benefits and challenges of being located within the University and investigate alternatives for location in the future.

Staffing – there is a need to increase staff capacity (requiring increased funding).

Evaluation findings showed that EENET should provide

More analysis

"At present it lets the reader do their own reviewing and analysing, but it could itself offer that analysis. That too is a part of information dissemination and sharing. EENET's current position is that people should take charge of their own learning and that it is not sure that it should be providing (potentially biased) analysis. [However] EENET could usefully provide more analysis of why the successes succeeded and the failures failed".

More action research

"There is a huge gap between research and practice as well as between policy and practice, and EENET is best positioned to fill this gap in the South and the North".

More face-to-face interaction

"People do not want more guidelines, manuals and handbooks; they have enough of those 'how tos'. They want face-to-face interaction. And being in the field will also help EENET staff to act as a catalyst for action as well as extend their own understanding of the contexts with which they have links".

The evaluation highlighted two very valuable things about EENET

The medium is the message

EENET has always believed that the best ways to promote inclusion is to demonstrate inclusion in action. One way EENET does this is by making information sharing and debates open to everyone, using communication styles that everyone can understand.

"… [it has an] ability to be accessible, to present complex ideas in simple ways, to engage in a debate about inclusion and what it means, to skillfully edit the [newsletter] material…[its accessibility comes from] the content it puts out, the style, who features in it and who contributes to it. ... it encourages critical debate. [EENET shares] not just soppy stories but real, concrete examples that demonstrate the pioneering work done in the South. That is evidence of what can be done and is being done there."

Core principles

"The strength of EENET lies in its commitment to consciously reflect and hold itself accountable to its core principles. This is evident in the way that EENET sets its priorities and in its responsiveness to those who are all too often overlooked by other NGOs as being too small or not significant enough. The ethos of mutual learning and the openness to learn from the South permeates its correspondence and comes through in the respondents' feedback during the evaluation. As one focus group participant observed: '…[EENET's] strength is also in its conscious reflection about and decision to continue to go upstream and not to become mainstream. It underestimates itself and how far ahead it really is of the debate on inclusion…'."

Information in this article is drawn from the evaluation of EENET conducted by Duncan Little and Anise Waljee. Quotations come from the consultants and from users who contributed to the evaluation. The evaluation was funded by NFU – the Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities – which was a donor to EENET until 2004. The full report of the evaluation and a summary report are available from EENET.

"[I] first check EENET [website] every time I go to a new country because it will give me quality, reliable information on what is concretely happening there."
EENET user

EENET: looking to the future

As well as celebrating our 10th birthday this year, we have been doing lots of thinking about where we want to be in 5-10 years time. For the last decade EENET has been proud to be an 'organic' and inclusive network – constantly evolving and changing to reflect the information and networking needs of its users. However, even a fluid network like EENET needs to have some sort of formal plan to help guide its development and attract donors! This article will briefly outline some of the key points in our latest five-year plan.

Creation of the plan

EENET's previous plans were mostly developed through a process of consultation with members of the network's steering group, and other 'critical friends'. These plans have now formed the basis of the strategic plan for 2007-2011, which also draws on many of the recommendations made in the evaluation (see pages 14-15).

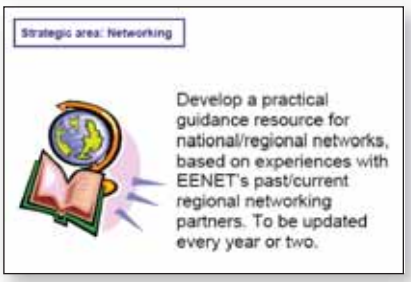
In January 2007 we held a 10th anniversary seminar in London. Participants were asked to comment on a draft of the strategic plan. However, rather than asking them to read a document, we gave them picture cards (some of the 30 cards are shown here).

Each card contained a photo or cartoon, with a few words, outlining one of EENET's proposed objectives. Participants were then asked to arrange the cards on a sheet of paper to show which objectives they considered high or low priority. They were also asked to explain why, and to think about how they or their organisations might be able to support EENET in achieving the objectives. The plan and the picture cards were also sent to EENET's regional networking partners for comment. All of the feedback received was considered when deciding on priorities for objectives.

Our plan

Networking

"EENET will develop, maintain and expand its information-sharing activities. It will encourage, advise and support national or regional inclusive education information-sharing networks."

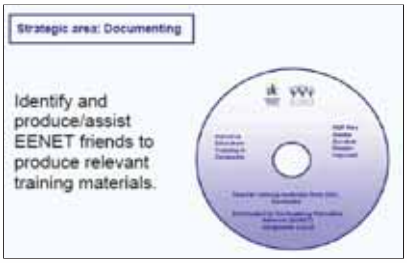


- continue to prioritise the development of our main networking tools – the newsletter and website
- redesign the website in line with feedback from the evaluation
- support regional networks with their planning
- make at least one support visit to a regional network each year
- manage an email discussion group/South-South support system so regional networks can share ideas and experiences on effective networking
- develop a guidance resource for regional networks, drawing on experiences from existing partner networks
- support one major regional networking activity (e.g. an event or publication) each year
- be more active in supporting UK and European international NGO networks on inclusive education.

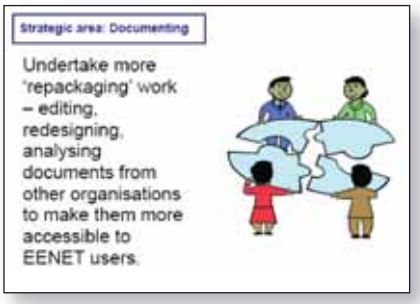
Documenting

"EENET will increase the capacity of grassroots workers to document their work and share information, knowledge and resources to promote inclusive education initiatives."

- continue to promote, and offer guidance on, action research and image-based approaches to documenting experiences
- identify and produce, and/or assist network users to produce inclusive education training materials
- increase the quality and quantity of 'repackaged' material (i.e. seeking out promising documents or training materials and re-editing and redesigning them to make them more accessible to EENET's users)



- improve our editing approaches, to improve the accessibility of materials that we share
- improve our approach to 'mentoring' inexperienced authors who wish to write articles for the newsletter
- seek new volunteer translators who can provide high quality translations of inclusive education materials in a range of languages



- plan and implement a 'children's voices' project – via printed and internet materials – so children and young people have more chance to talk about inclusion/exclusion in education. We are seeking donors for this project, so if you are interested, please contact us!

Influencing

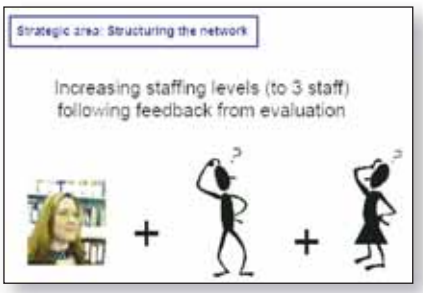
"We will use EENET's grassroots knowledge, skills and experience to add value through influencing national and international policy-makers and donor agencies."

- continue to promote debates on: the importance of learning from difference; rights of marginalised groups in education; and the links between inclusion and human rights/social justice
- provide information, advice, contacts, etc, to help regional networks and EENET users generally to advocate and lobby on inclusive education
- prepare guidance materials to help EENET users to make more effective use of information that already exist (e.g. EENET newsletters), when they are preparing advocacy initiatives
- develop greater clarity on EENET's own messages and positions on key issues – but without dictating our position to others.

Structuring the network

"We will increase/maintain EENET's human resources, capacity, infrastructure and funding to ensure the network continues to develop and support regional networks effectively."

- develop an annual fee-paying membership scheme for international NGOs wishing to support EENET. Income from this will cover core operating costs. This scheme has now started, so if your organisation might be interested in joining, please contact us for details
- increase staffing levels from one part-time Co-ordinator to at least three staff (not necessarily full-time)
- redevelop our steering group to improve systems for governance and accountability



- review the benefits of housing EENET within the University of Manchester
- continue fundraising for EENET projects
- review our approach to selling materials to North-based/funded organisations, with a view to increasing this income
- develop a list of consultants and a system whereby EENET receives a 'finders fee' or a percentage of the consultancy fee for assisting other organisations to find suitable consultants
- develop an internship scheme to provide additional staff support on key projects, while offering interns valuable work experience.

What do you think?

Ours plans are never 'set in stone'. We want them to evolve to reflect the needs of the network's users. We therefore welcome feedback on EENET's five-year plan.

Are we doing what you thought we would do? Are there any activities you thought we would do that have not been mentioned? Could you or your organisation offer any financial or practical support in achieving any of the objectives (e.g. help with translations)? **We want to hear your views!**

EENET
c/o Educational Support and Inclusion
School of Education
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester, M13 9PL, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 161 275 3711
Fax: +44 (0) 161 275 3548
Email: info@eenet.org.uk
Mobile/SMS: +44 (0)7929 326 564

Swimming upstream

What are the criteria for developing and maintaining a 'successful' inclusive network? In this article Sue Stubbs and Susie Miles reflect on their experiences of inclusive networking in the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and in EENET.

Developing an inclusive way of working involves 'swimming upstream' or 'going against the grain' of current mainstream society. It is 'normal' to be exclusive, discriminatory and hierarchical. It is 'normal' to allow the most powerful voices to dominate. Inclusive networks and partnerships have to resist this normal pattern of human behaviour. They have to do this consciously and continuously – and it is hard work! They have to be conscious about values, principles and processes – and this requires ongoing vigilance and self-critical reflection.

Inclusive

What do we mean by 'inclusive'? Inclusion relates to gender, culture, language, age, disability, accessibility, power. It involves 'listening to less powerful voices'. Some people see 'inclusion' as simply inserting a marginalised group into the mainstream. But this approach does not really change society although it can benefit a few people. In a deeper sense, inclusion is a process of radically transforming existing society – and of celebrating diversity and combating discrimination in relation to all types of difference. To be inclusive is not easy and does not come naturally, and so it requires real attention and monitoring.

Development

What do we mean by 'development'? Some people see the 'South' as the problem – full of disease, poverty, and needing help. This perception is known as 'negative deficit model'. Others see unjust trade laws, legacies of colonialism and the global imbalance of power as the problem. This is a 'social model' approach. The current global context is one of gross inequity, social injustice, widespread conflict, lack of sustainability, and environmental crisis. Networks and partnerships cannot solve these huge issues. But we can be conscious of them and engage with them.

Partnerships and networks

A partnership or network of individuals and organisations is different from a single organisation with one-person as a director. In a network, the views and convictions of any single individual person or organisation cannot so easily be imposed on others. Networking or partnership working requires a strong commitment and a skilful approach to: listening; learning from others; sharing ideas in respectful ways; focusing on the common goal; and tolerating differences.

General principles of an inclusive network

- There is clarity and transparency over who the stakeholders are and their roles in the network/partnership.
- There is clarity over the general goal, and the particular function and strategies of the network.
- Resources are used efficiently (there is very minimal infrastructure and budget).
- Time is spent on developing suitable processes, not just focusing on outputs.
- The network grows or evolves slowly.
- There is a balance between continuity and timely injections of new energy and ideas.
- 'Tensions' are acknowledged and uncomfortable issues are engaged with, not avoided.

Learning from the South, and South-South sharing

It is easy to talk about learning from the experiences of practitioners and stakeholders in the South and about promoting sharing between people in countries of the South. However, there are many challenges in adopting this approach. For example:

- Striking a balance between the use of the written word and communicating effectively with oral cultures is difficult.
- Field-practitioners lack experience and skills in relation to analysing and presenting their own work.
- Cross-cultural communication is not easy.
- Northern perspectives still dominate in 'international' seminars and conferences.
- There is still much ignorance and prejudice in relation to different cultures.

Evaluating networks

We have been inspired by the work of Madeline Church[1] on the nature and evaluation of networks. She uses the image of knots and threads to illustrates the way networks work. Members are connected by threads of communication and relationship.

These threads come together in knots of activity. The strength of the net lies in the work members do together and the trust that is built through their communication. The structure of a network is loose but connected – and horizontal, not hierarchical.

Madeline Church believes that networks can only be evaluated by those most involved in networks – since they are so complex. She suggests, and EENET agrees, that the following issues need to be considered when evaluating networks.

Participation
- e.g. What are the differing levels or layers of participation across the network?

Trust
- e.g. What is the level of trust between members, and between members and the secretariat?

Leadership
- e.g. Where is leadership located?

Structure and control
- e.g. How is the structure felt and experienced? Too loose, too tight, facilitating, strangling?

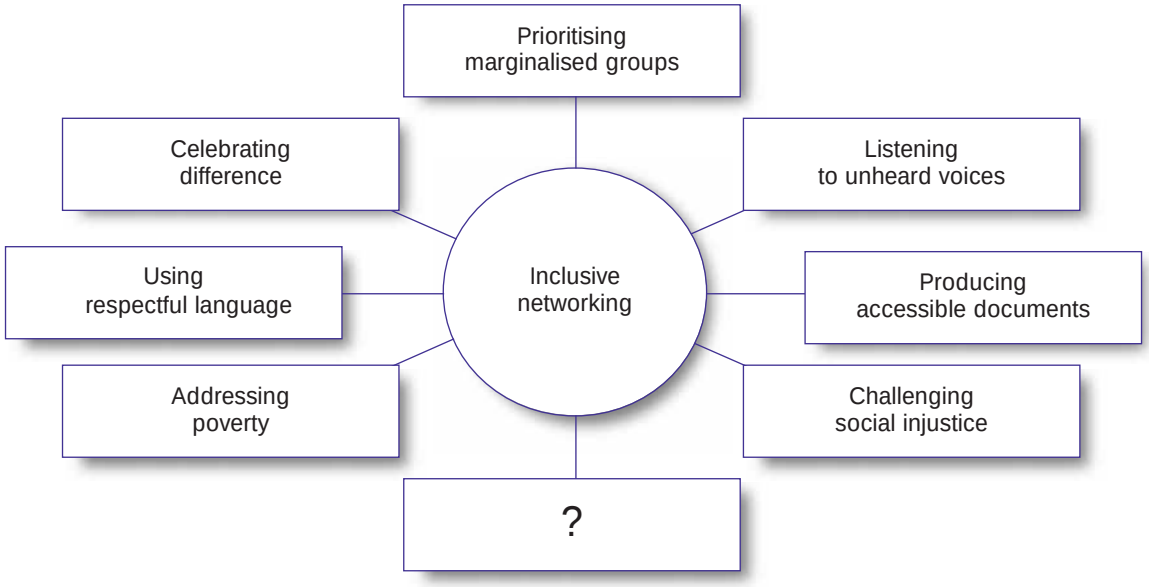
Diversity and dynamism
- e.g. How easy is it for members to contribute their ideas and follow through on them?

Democracy
- e.g. What are the power relationships within the network? How do the powerful and less powerful interrelate?

EENET would like to publish more articles about networking. We particularly want to hear about your experiences of running information or support networks that are initiated and run in the South, and built on principles of equality and inclusion.

Sue Stubbs is the Co-ordinator and one of several founding members of IDDC. IDDC began in 1993 as an informal group of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in disability and development. It is now registered as an international not-for-profit association in Belgium, and has 19 members based in 10 different European countries. Its aim is to promote inclusive development, share information and expertise, and to work collaboratively. Its members include disabled people's organisations, general development organisations, disability NGOs and 'platforms' (agencies that do not have programmes but share information). Sue can be contacted at: co-ordinator@iddc.org.uk. See also IDDC's website: www.iddc.org.uk (currently being reconstructed).

Creating conversations: inclusive networking



Do you have any other ideas about inclusive networking for this diagram? Please send us your ideas.

[1] *Participation, Relationships and Dynamic Change: New Thinking on Evaluating the Work of International Networks* by Madeline Church and colleagues can be downloaded from: http://people.bath.ac.uk/edsajw/church.shtml. If you cannot access the Internet, please contact EENET and we will help you to access the document.

Teacher training in conflict situations: Karen State, Burma

The right to education is often violated in conflict situations, particularly for minority groups. This is happening in Burma (Myanmar), where many indigenous groups are struggling to end the military junta's oppression and to gain self-determination in their regions. The Karen is one such group fighting for autonomy in Karen State, south-east Burma. More than 50 years of violent military oppression has forced many Karen to flee to refugee camps in neighbouring Thailand. Life in these camps is difficult, but there is government and NGO support for basic health care and education needs. This is not yet the case back in Karen State.

The Karen see education as central to their physical and cultural survival. So the Karen Teacher Working Group (KTWG) was set up in 1997. It actively promotes Karen education in Karen State. It has helped fund more than 1,000 Karen-controlled schools (as well as the teachers and students) in the State. KTWG also established a programme to train mobile teacher trainers to give local teachers some support. In 2004, KTWG established the Karen Teacher Training College (KTTC) on the Burma side of the border. It is the first and only institution of its kind in Burma, providing a Karen-designed, culturally relevant, two-year initial teacher training programme for teachers who will teach in Karen State, and training for mobile teacher trainers.

Despite working in a challenging conflict situation, KTTC has managed to increase its intake of students each year. It has a strong network of support from within and outside the local community. KTTC and the mobile teacher training programme are innovative and community-led education initiatives. They offer potential, practical models not just for the Karen people, but for other groups worldwide who are struggling for social and educational autonomy. On 1 June 2007, KTTC celebrated the new school year with an opening ceremony. This brought together many of the members of its support network. This article presents some of their views about KTTC and education in Karen State.

It also shows that all elements of the education programme are connected and supporting each other.

Education Leader Mutraw District, Karen State

D'gay Jr.: I am the education leader in this area, working with the teachers and the community. I approve of the KTTC programme because we need more skilled teachers. The relationships here between different members of the community are very good. We see KTTC as a strength for our community because when the students finish they will share this work with the people, and when the people have education there will be stronger leadership.

KTTC Teacher

Law Say Wa: I am a teacher of Karen history and language. I spent 31 years in a refugee camp in Thailand. I didn't want to live there. I was determined to live and teach in Karen State. When I came back here I felt very well. I hope this place will improve and help the students improve their teaching methods and classroom management.

2nd Year KTTC Student

Lah Me Htoo: I am 19. I was living in a refugee camp in Thailand and I didn't like to learn there. I came to KTTC because it is in Karen State. I wanted to come and help my State, to learn to be a good teacher and leader. I want to teach English. There are no computers for trainee teachers in the refugee camp, but there are here. When I finish I will go teach in my family's home district.

This article was compiled by KTWG, KTTC and Ian Kaplan. Contact KTWG by email at ktwghq@hotmail.com or via EENET's postal address. Visit their website at: www.ktwg.org

Battalion Leader, Karen National Defence Organisation

Som Wa: We take responsibility for the security of the community here and protect them from the enemy. There are so many kinds of needs in Karen State…for food, for security and education for the Karen people. I am happy that there are such students as in KTTC here, for the future and to take responsibility for the country.

Mobile Teacher Trainers

Mu Htee: If we have a good opportunity we give 2-3 days of training, but it depends on the Burmese army activity. We call teachers from the schools close by and 2-3 come together in one place. We advise them, share ideas about how to teach students and how to learn. We also take them news about their area, school news, and about Burmese army activity in the area.

Meyze: When we go to the schools we have to face Burmese army and local militia activity. They want to catch us and stop our work. When we give training suddenly the army will come to stop us, even though we didn't do anything but come in peace to teach our own Karen language.

Mobile Teacher Trainer Students

Esther Thein: I am in my first year of training to be a mobile teacher trainer, I also attended KTTC for two years. Many teachers in Karen State don't know how to teach. I want to be a mobile teacher trainer because I want to help the teachers in Karen State.

James Thomas: In most of Burma, teachers are only using teacher-centred methods. [But] in Karen State the teaching methods are very good so students want to attend the school…they don't leave the school. Instead of using punishment, if students are not concentrating we will all stand and start a role play and maybe go outside and play and also ask questions about the topics. We try to make different activities to interest the students.

KTWG Co-ordinators

Ler Htoo: At KTTC we teach participatory methods like group working. In other areas of Burma, teaching is rote learning. [But] we teach critical thinking for reading and writing. The education system is getting better – in Karen State now the teachers get more training and more people are in school. Even when schools have to shut for months, they are getting restated again. When we stared KTTC, we just had 22 students. This year we have 35 first-year students.

Scott O'Brien: Although a lot of villages are fleeing from the army 3-4 times a month, still, one of the first things to be opened up again is the school, even if it's under a tree. So, here's a huge commitment and connection with survival, development and education. We definitely need more financial support for our assistance programme for schools in Karen State. But besides that we're looking at how to improve the quality of education provided in our teacher training programmes. We're looking to help transform the Karen education system to make it more reflective of Karen culture by maintaining academic integrity, but also looking at how schools can really support community needs. We're also trying to build networks among Burma's other indigenous groups.

Family Friendly! Working with deaf children and their communities around the world

***Family Friendly!* is a new book produced by the International Deaf Children's Society (IDCS) in collaboration with EENET. It aims to inspire others to consider the involvement of parents and families in their work with deaf children.**

We gathered case studies from our network members in order to ensure that the guidance contained in the book was based on real experience from southern countries. We also wanted to bring the voices of parents and practitioners in the south to a wider audience. We will publish 35 contributions from 21 countries.

The book addresses many issues – community-based work, information, parents' groups, keeping deaf children safe from abuse, working with deaf adults and, of course, education. For IDCS, education for deaf children can take place anywhere – in local or special schools, at home or in the community. But for inclusion to work for deaf children, they must have access to the same learning and social opportunities as other children. This means that deaf children must be supported early to learn language, and as many people as possible need to be able to communicate in a way that deaf children can understand.

The book highlights how schools, communities and families can work together to support deaf children, improve education and campaign for change.

Parents are the first teachers

"While good schools can provide a positive learning environment, it is the parents who are the first teachers of their children. The teachers provide sign language training for parents and show parents ways to assist their children to learn. This enables children and parents to communicate more effectively."
Ms Yao Chang Zheng, mother of a deaf child, China

Parents and teachers supporting each other

"The teachers preferred children to study manual subjects like woodwork, rather than academic subjects. However, I was sure that Stephen could pass exams so I convinced the teachers to teach him these subjects. The teachers wanted parents to be more involved. When teachers see that a parent really cares for his child and is motivated to help, then they become more encouraged in their teaching role."
Geoffrey Mukonyoro Wathigo, father of a deaf child, Kenya

"Parent trainers who are parents of deaf children have unique skills in communicating with deaf children. They speak and teach from their personal experience when they raise awareness and advocate for deaf children and their families."
Amos Muyambo, Nyadire Primary School, Zimbabwe

"The teacher told me that if I could identify at least six deaf children in my district, I could open a deaf class. I asked my school director for permission to study Sign Language and I am now a teacher of deaf children. I have seven students, including three girls."
Un Sileap, father of two deaf children and teacher of deaf children, Cambodia

Fathers learning sign language, Nyadire, Kenya

Family Friendly! is about making a commitment to work together. It challenges practitioners to take an empowering approach to their work. This means recognising the unique expertise of families, teachers, and deaf people.

"Real inclusion requires a positive environment at school and a supportive family. We need to work hard to give more children this opportunity."
Snigdha Sarkar, Parent Group leader, India

International Deaf Children's Society

IDCS is dedicated to enabling deaf children to overcome poverty and isolation worldwide. We support the creation of local, national and global family-led movements to campaign for positive change for deaf children and young people. We have country programmes in Kenya and India and have supported 39 short-term projects in 27 countries worldwide.

We are a network of organisations and individuals committed to sharing information and learning. To join, see www.idcs.info/thedirectory or write to us.

***Family Friendly!* will be available free of charge from IDCS at the end of 2007.**

Kirsty Wilson,
Programmes Officer
The International Deaf Children's Society
15 Dufferin Street
London, EC1Y 8UR
UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7490 8656 (voice or text)
Fax: +44 (0)20 7251 5020
Email: idcs@idcs.info
Website: www.idcs.info

Supporting inclusive education in Afghanistan – a father's story

My wife and I live in Herat. We have six children; one has a hearing impairment and three others are deaf. Until my children were born I had not had any contact with deaf people. I knew that my children would need me to support them, but I didn't know how to do this.

I heard about an organisation working with disabled people, including deaf children. I went to find out about it. My children became involved in the programmes and started learning Afghan Sign Language. I even volunteered for this organisation for five years and learned sign language so I could support my children better.

However, I started to worry about their longer-term education. I could see that they were very intelligent and I longed for them to go to school. My oldest daughter has some hearing and the local school agreed to take her. She sits at the front and has a bit of extra input from the teacher. She is doing well. But no school would take my deaf children.

At that time the International Rescue Committee were making plans to start an education programme for deaf and blind children in Herat. They planned to select schools, train some teachers and then place some children with visual or hearing impairments into regular classes. I wondered if my children could be selected. They were! And I was chosen to be a programme officer for the hearing impairment section.

I wasn't sure if this inclusive education method would work.
Would the other children tease my children? How would the teachers communicate with my children? I had been to see two special schools for deaf children in other cities of Afghanistan and I thought maybe that was the only way. But after receiving some training on what inclusive education is and how it benefits all children, I decided to give it a go. We passed on the training we received to the teachers in the school, and we all received more sign language training. Some expert deaf adults came to train us both in inclusive education and in sign language. I was very encouraged to meet strong, confident deaf adults.
I can now see a positive future for my children.

At first my children were nervous about going to school. Now they are excited and help each other get ready in the mornings. They have learned lots and help each other with their homework. I have noticed a big change in their feelings and behaviour at home and they are making more friends among neighbours' children. Their friends come to visit or support my children in their classrooms.

At first the schools and principals were concerned about having deaf children in their classes. But after training and meetings with the families, all the teachers are now committed to making the programme successful. We now have 16 deaf children receiving education in regular schools. My colleague and I visit each classroom at least once a week. We give the teachers encouragement and more ideas and help them to solve problems. Our programme is new, and we still need to work on improving the quality of education. Also, many other deaf children in the city could be supported if we could expand the programme.

I really enjoy my work and being involved in my own children's education. Other parents can see the positive changes in their deaf children and that the school is supporting them. However, it is not always easy to encourage these parents to become more involved, especially when it comes to learning sign language. I have contact with parents of deaf children who are not yet involved in the programme. They want their children to go to school as well.

I find it difficult to convince other professionals working on deaf education in Afghanistan that our programme is possible. Many believe that special schools or special classes are the only way. They don't believe me. But I see the deaf children in class every day. I see that they are happy and are learning. I see teachers trying hard to find ways to communicate with deaf children. And I am also a father who sees that my own deaf children are happy and learning and making friends. I am a father who only wants to support my children in the best way I can.

This article has been adapted from a case study submitted for the IDCS book, *Family Friendly!*

Inclusion and deafness
There are many different ways in which families, schools and deaf adults can work together to improve deaf children's access to quality education in their communities. Case studies, such as this one from Afghanistan, can be found in the new IDCS publication (see previous page), on the IDCS website and in the deafness section on EENET's website. Please send EENET your experiences of including deaf children in education so that we can share them through our website.

Inclusive school design, Indonesia

Yusep Trimulyana is the head teacher of SLB Pembina NTB, a special school and inclusive education resource centre on the island of Lombok, Indonesia. Yusep's school needed a new library. But 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 is accessible and suits the needs of students and teachers.

Yusep consulted teachers and students. He then used 'open source' design software to create a basic model of the ideal building on a computer. 'Open source' software can be downloaded free of charge from the Internet. Yusep has recently convinced the Indonesian government to provide the funds for building. In this interview with Ian Kaplan, Yusep explains how he worked with his school community to design and build a new library.

Yusep Trimulyana – head teacher

What were the reasons for building this new library?

We are trying to build a new library in the local style where we use a berugaq…a kind of traditional gazebo which is very common in Lombok. A berugaq provides a raised and shaded platform on which people like to sit and chat and do lots of things. Many people would prefer to spend their time in the berugaq rather than indoors. So we thought we can 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.

A popular berugaq style gazebo on the school grounds

So the building is a mixture of modern and traditional building styles?

Yes, of course it is not the traditional berugaq, but is modified to fit with the modern building. We can put all 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 outside in the berugaq. 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?

I used an 'open source' software programme called 'Sketch Up' (see: www.sketchup.com) which is freely available to anyone with Internet access. The software is not very difficult to use. It's very practical. I discussed the design with the teachers and incorporated their ideas about the colour, the size and other things. We have also consulted 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 them directly in the planning because of the difficulties of communication, but we have tried to understand what they need.

We discussed the placement of the building on the school grounds.

Computer sketch for the new library with the berugaq on the right. Note the high contrast colours to help students with low-vision.

The new library under construction

Some teachers thought it would be nice to have the building at the front of the school, because it would look nice there. But we decided it would be better to place the building further inside the school grounds so the students would be less distracted by the noisy road outside the school.

Also, I consulted with the teachers who know the disabled children 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. 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.

How have you convinced the government to fund this project?

Usually the government has a building plan for schools, 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.

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

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

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 students and staff. Unfortunately, schools are often designed and built without fully considering the community's needs.

Schools are often poorly designed. They may be too hot (or cold), dark or inaccessible. One way to address these issues is to involve the school community more actively in designing (or re-designing) their schools. This may seem difficult because teachers, students and parents probably lack experience in planning and building schools. However, there are practical ways of consulting them about designs, by asking what kind of school they want, what their needs are and how they use existing schools.

A process of inclusive school design gives members of a school community a feeling of pride and ownership of their school. It 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 fit a school more effectively with its community, for example by incorporating elements of local culture and art into the buildings and grounds. Easy-to-use software that can be downloaded for free from the Internet, can make this process fun and accessible.

Yusep can be contacted at:
SLBN Pembina Prov. NTB
Jl. Sonokeling no.1 Dasan Geria,
Lingsar, Lombok Barat - NTB
Indonesia
Email:
yuseptrimulyana@yahoo.com

Making pictorial learning aids, Liberia

Bob Linney and Petra Röhr-Rouendaal

There is a widespread absence of visual stimulation for young children in many education systems around the world. Stimulation of all the senses is beneficial for brain development in young children. In many countries, however, classrooms may have few books, no pictures on the walls and no learning aids. Teaching methods frequently involve rote learning and copying, which fail to engage and challenge children fully. Yet a few colourful pictures on the walls or some simple, attractive home-made pictorial learning aids can transform a classroom – without costing much.

We recently helped to facilitate a five-day workshop for teachers and student-teachers in Liberia. Participants learned how to make and use low-cost pictorial learning aids for pre-school and primary level children. These included picture cards, maps, discussion starters and educational games. Participants also practised using these aids in ways that encourage pupils to participate and interact with each other and the teacher.

The learning aids produced at our workshop were all made from paints, paper, etc, bought in Monrovia – such materials would be available in many other towns in developing countries. Some materials can even be obtained free (e.g. printing companies might give away off-cuts of paper or card). Also, the learning aids are generally small, so are easy to make in crowded classrooms.

Participants created a range of pictorial learning aids for use across the curriculum. For example, one set of picture cards was made to help children learn about how a fruit tree grows from seed. Pupils place the pictures in the correct sequence of growth. Their classmates can agree or disagree with any decisions. Picture cards were made to help children learn about or discuss numbers, the alphabet, food and nutrition, war, HIV/AIDS, palm oil production methods, transportation and religious education. Large maps of Africa were made into jigsaws for use in a geography class. One participant made a board game for learning about blood circulation. Another made a simple game to help young children match cut-out shapes with shapes drawn on paper.

Only one participant had previously had training in drawing, yet they all made useful pictorial learning aids. Participants were shown some basic guidelines for drawing faces, figures and animals and were given further drawing advice when needed. After four days, all participants had designed and made at least one pictorial learning aid. Then they practised using these aids, demonstrating to the group how they would help pupils to learn by using their materials. Other participants provided feedback and suggestions on how to promote participation and interaction.

The teachers and student-teachers appreciated the usefulness of these materials. Such training is already being given in Liberia by workshop organiser Topiyoo Nya Blimie who teaches at a teacher training college in Monrovia and is planning to share these ideas with other colleges.

All teachers, with a little help, can make their own innovative pictorial learning aids at low-cost, using locally available materials. They can also teach their pupils how to make such aids.

More widespread use of such materials can help to make learning more fun. Schools can become more creative as pupils gain the confidence to ask more questions and play a more active role in their own education. Pictorial learning aids can help children to develop valuable thinking skills for use in adult life.

Pictorial learning aids are intended for use in a participatory and interactive way. The teacher needs to use them to encourage all pupils – even those who are normally quiet – to ask questions, discuss topics and participate in class. The approach gives children a chance to move around and take an active, hands-on role in using their learning materials. Such learning aids can stimulate discussions, helping children learn how to make causal connections and develop their analytical and problem-solving skills. They gain confidence through interacting with each other and their teacher, and are less likely to get bored or distracted. Consequently, they learn more and have more fun doing so. The use of such aids helps pupils to improve visual literacy skills, helping them extract information or meaning from other images they encounter.

Bob and Petra are graphic artists and facilitators with the group Health Images, which provides training for people who want to make and use participatory, people-centred pictorial learning aids for formal and informal learning.
Contact:Bob Linney and Petra Röhr-Rouendaal,
Health Images
Holly Tree Farm, Walpole,
Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9BD, UK.
Email:
healthimages@btinternet.com
Website: www.healthimages.co.uk

Topiyoo Nya Blimie,
LIVAP Community School,
SKD Sports Complex,
Elwa Road, Paynesville, Liberia

The first UN convention of the millennium: inclusive education is a right!

Richard Rieser

Here, Richard reflects on the significance of the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006, and has been signed by 101 governments so far. Richard highlights its importance as a lobbying tool to make education inclusive for all children and young people.

This was a difficult document to negotiate because of the diverse views around the world on this issue. Yet the negotiators succeeded in shifting the position on education from one of a choice between segregated or mainstream education, to the right to attend inclusive primary and secondary schools.

It is a historic document - the first UN Convention:

- in which civil society (and disabled people, in particular) played such a central role throughout the negotiations
- to be negotiated within such a short time (five years)
- which includes provision for international co-operation – to make the Convention a reality.

It is based on a 'paradigm shift' from a medical model (seeing the problem in the person) to a social model approach (seeing the problem in society and the barriers it creates for disabled people). The Convention covers all areas of life and is based on strong principles of equality.

The Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee which negotiated the Convention applauded the role that disabled people and their organisations played in the process. Over 80 of the state party representatives were disabled people at the last session in August 2006. Over 800 civil society organisations took part in the negotiations, though only a few were from the South. A 'Disability Caucus' of over 100 organisations spoke directly with governments as they negotiated. Now disabled peoples' organisations must take the lead in convincing governments to build capacity to develop inclusive education.

You can download the full Convention text at www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable, or write to DEE for a copy.

Article 24 – Education

Article 24 requires all signatories to ensure that all disabled children and young people "can access an inclusive, quality, free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live" (Art 24 2b).

It also states that there should be, "reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements" (Art 24 2c) and that support should be provided, "within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education" (Art 24 2d).

The following section of the article allows for the possibility of segregated education for children with sensory impairments: "Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf and 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" (Art 24 3c).

Many international NGOs are now seeking to lead the implementation process. This must not happen. Organisations led by disabled people need to lead. For more information on this, see the Manifesto for Disability Equality in Development (www.un-convention.info/manifesto.html).

The important task now is to build the capacity of disabled people's organisations to advocate for inclusive education. They need to work with allies who are committed to developing inclusive education to ensure effective programmes in every country. We need to increase South-South and North-South collaboration to make this happen (Article 32).

What is significant about Article 24?

- All disabled children are entitled to education in an 'inclusive system'.
- It should no longer be possible for governments to make children repeat grades if they fail an end of year test.
- Disabled people are not excluded from the general education system on the grounds of disability.
- The focus must be on removing barriers to the development (to their fullest potential) of disabled people's personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities.
- All disabled people should receive the support they need within the general education system.
- Large classes make inclusive education more difficult – this should be challenged when implementing the Convention.
- The Convention outlaws demeaning and degrading treatment and torture (e.g. corporal punishment).
- Every state will need to engage with disabled people's organisations in implementing this Article and the Convention.
- Disabled people's organisations need to develop their capacity to advocate for inclusive education.
- All disabled children and learners need to be consulted (Article 7).

Richard Rieser is Director of Disability Equality in Education, a disabled-led organisation that provides resources and training for inclusion. He represented the UK Council of Disabled People at the UN negotiations and is keen to support disabled people's organisations in the South.

Contact: Disability Equality in Education (DEE)
Unit 1M, Leroy House, 436, Essex Road, London N1 3QP, UK
Email: r.rieser@diseed.org.uk

Regional news

Citizens of the World – a network for Portuguese-speaking countries

Citizens of the World is an NGO which aims to contribute to the elimination of all kinds of discrimination and exclusion, and to promote the equalisation of opportunities for all individuals in vulnerable situations. As part of its work, Citizens of the World has launched an inclusion network, to support the development of inclusive education in Portuguese-speaking countries (Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, East Timor, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, and São Tomé and Principé).

This network is already developing its own website. This will be expanded to contain books, articles, policy documents and other translated/adapted materials from around the world, information about best practices in inclusive education, useful links, etc.

Citizens of the World will continue to translate the EENET newsletter 'Enabling Education'. It will also publish its own Portuguese-language newsletter containing articles from relevant countries on issues of interest to parents, community workers, educators and other professionals. This newsletter will be disseminated electronically. The network is working under a Memorandum of Understanding with EENET. It will also link with the Brazillian network, Ed Todos.

Citizens of the World is working to build contacts with individuals and organisations in Portuguese-speaking countries. They really want to hear from you if you live or work in one of these countries. Please contact:
Citizens of the World
Rua Gago Coutinho
2710-566 Sintra
Portugal
Email:
cidadaosdomundo@hotmail.com

East Africa

In September 2007 EENET is holding meetings in Nairobi, to discuss the development of a network for Kenya and/or for the wider East Africa region. This will include a two-day workshop for EENET's members. The first day focuses on discussions around the concept of inclusive education. The second day looks at EENET's approach to inclusive and accessible networking, and how to take forward a regional network.

If you would like to find out more about the development of this regional network, or would like to contribute in some way, we would love to hear from you. An update of progress will be provided on EENET's website (www.eenet.org.uk/reg_networking/reg_networking.shtml) following the meeting, and we hope to bring you more news in the 2008 newsletter.

Asia

In May 2007, EENET Asia's editorial team held a meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss the development of a strategic plan for the regional network. The meeting was kindly supported by UNESCO. This was followed by an open meeting, at which people from local and international NGOs and UN agencies gathered to discuss EENET Asia's work and comment on the draft plan.

EENET Asia is now seeking wider feedback on its plans for future work – so if you have any comments or ideas, please do contact the team. A summary of their strategic plan is presented here. You can read the full document in the 'EENET Asia Newsletter' number 4. This is available online at: www.idp-europe.org/eenet or in printed format from:
EENET Asia
Jalan Panglima Polim X No. 9
Kebayoran Baru
Jakarta - Selatan 12160
Indonesia

Don't forget
Ed Todos in Brazil and Girl Child Empowerment Nigeria are also still networking in their countries, sharing information on inclusive education issues.

Contact:

GCEN	email: girlchildemp@yahoo.com address: P.O. Box 4433, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria
Ed Todos	email: ed_todos@yahoo.com.br address: Rua Dr. Nicolau de Souza Queiroz, no. 953/82, Vila Mariana, São Paulo, Brazil, CEP 04105-003

Regina Martins and Windyz Ferreira from Ed Todos have just published a new book called 'From Teacher to Teacher: Teaching practices and diversity in basic education'. It is available in Portuguese and provides stories and voices of teachers who are using inclusive teaching strategies to respond to a wide range of pupils' needs and styles of learning. For information on how to buy this book, please email: vendas@summus.com.br

EENET Asia draft strategic plan

EENET Asia is a network of individuals and organisations with different backgrounds but a set of common values. It is facilitated by a team of volunteers based in five countries in the region. The network's vision and mission is to encourage and support the sharing of information, ideas and experiences among all those involved in improving access to and quality of education in Asia. It promotes inclusive and child-friendly education systems and practices to ensure that education for all is really for all. Its work focuses on education initiatives targeting learners vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion in formal, alternative and indigenous education systems.

Objectives

1. Enrich current understanding

- facilitate the development of a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive and child-friendly education
- investigate existing definitions and understandings of 'inclusive and child-friendly education', 'rights-based approach to education', and 'quality education' to facilitate a wider discussion on these terms in Asia.

2. Networking

- inspire and support partnerships and information sharing between regional and national education stakeholders
- facilitate networking between different initiatives and programmes to encourage increased collaboration
- moderate online discussions (in English and later other languages) on different topics related to inclusive and child-friendly education. These discussions will also be published in the EENET Asia Newsletters and online
- 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 help them write about their experiences, e.g. through small workshops and individual guidance and coaching
- ensure that all documentation is accessible and reader-friendly, as most readers will have English as their second or third language
- encourage translations of all EENET and EENET Asia publications into different languages used in the region
- invite contributors to write articles in their own language
- ensure that publications are available in Braille and that online versions are compatible with screen-reader software
- publish stories that invite reflection, and that inspire action and change of practice towards inclusive, child-friendly education
- 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 materials and research done in Asia that could be redesigned, edited and promoted for wider use
- promote useful free publications
- promote video and audio materials.

4. Influencing

- influence policies – by highlighting inclusive and child-friendly developments in schools, communities and countries throughout Asia
- influence practices in schools and communities – by highlighting socially, emotionally and academically successful and cost-effective initiatives that have short-term and long-term impact
- influence pre- and in-service teacher education and training programmes – by facilitating discussions about innovative programmes throughout Asia
- influence networking – by practising inclusive and interactive networking within EENET Asia
- influence attitudes and cultural practices – by highlighting examples of good practices and the consequences of continued marginalisation and exclusion in schools and communities.

Join us!

We believe everyone can help with sharing ideas and experiences about the development of more inclusive education policy and practice. So, we would like to hear from you if:

- you wish to join any of the existing national/regional networks
- you have ideas about starting a new national/regional network (please note that EENET does not finance such networks, but we offer advice and guidance to new and existing networks)
- you would like to help share information or disseminate newsletters in your local area (town, district, etc).

Your letters/emails

One of our goals is to encourage readers to engage with the information they read in EENET's newsletter, website and other documentation that we share. We want readers to feel inspired to respond, or to have a direct discussion with the authors. Here, Joseph Evans explains how EENET's materials have inspired his work.

Using EENET and ISEC materials in Namibia

On a regular check of the EENET website, I saw you say that if I had some information I would like to share with others I could write to you. Recently, I published a flyer on inclusive education, drawing most of my reference from material from the Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress (ISEC) 2005. In this respect I wish to say a big thank you for the ISEC 2005 CD that I received from Inclusive Technology [the company that sponsors EENET's website]. The flyer I wrote has now been distributed to our 61 schools in the region, public libraries, Ministry of Education Headquarters and Voluntary Service Overseas Namibia, among other. An extract of the flyer is reproduced here. [The flyer focuses on teacher development issues, which were covered in EENET's 2006 newsletter. You can find the full text from this flyer on EENET's website.]

I have also had an article – "Strides made in implementing inclusive education in Otjozondjupa Region" – published in the Ministry of Education Official Newsletter (April 2007). I am just proud of you people. I owe it all to you. The information on the EENET website is not only rich and informative but also very entertaining to read. Please keep it up.

Contact:
Joseph M. Evans
Regional Inclusive Education Advisor (VSO)
Otjozondjupa Regional Education Office
Private Bag 2618
Otjozondjupa
Namibia
Email: jjmburu2002@yahoo.com

Extract from Joseph's inclusive education flyer

Tips for teachers
Are you specialised? You do not need to be, this can come later.

- Believe in yourself. You can be a victim of your own making.
- Build your awareness about your skills, abilities and knowledge.
- Build your self-confidence and try out innovative or creative teaching strategies.
- Have a clear purpose when planning your lessons, bearing in mind that there are learners who have learning difficulties.
- Commitment to your work will be very satisfying.
- Share your knowledge with others. It makes teaching enjoyable.
- Recognise your sense of worth. Many times you undervalue your input.
- Do not be afraid of valuing your practices and stressing on the positive aspects of being a teacher.
- Listen to others' experiences. Avoid working in isolation.
- Recognise that as much as you do bad things you also have good things that you do or are capable of doing.
- Do not be afraid of exposing your weaknesses. After all, each one of us has some weaknesses.
- Know your learners in terms of their interests, abilities, background, and family history and plan accordingly.
- Refuse to be the owner of knowledge in the classroom.
- Make your learners responsible for their own learning and let them participate fully.
- Use different activities to keep the learners engaged.
- Manage your time. It is a strong weapon against weaknesses.
- Assess your work frequently in order to establish your level of success
- **Remember, you always know more than you are aware of!**

Contact us, contact each other!

EENET received about 40 emails and letters directly in response to the 2006 newsletter. Many commented on the quality and usefulness of the articles (so our thanks go to all of last year's authors for their excellent contributions). Some people wrote asking for more copies of the newsletter to share with their colleagues or to distribute more widely in their local area. Others asked us to send them documents, or help them get hold of documents, listed in the Useful Publications page. We also know that people contact article authors directly to discuss experiences and share ideas.

So, please contact us if:

- you have any comments on this newsletter (e.g. was there anything you found helpful, or anything you disagreed with?)
- you have any ideas for themes for future newsletters
- you want to write an article
- you want help getting hold of any documents listed in the Useful Publications page

And please feel free to contact any of the authors who have written articles in this year's newsletter. Ask them questions, give them feedback, share ideas. That's what EENET is all about!

Responding to learner diversity in the European Union

Responding to Student Diversity

These materials consist of a teacher's handbook, DVD with readings and video clips, and a tutor's manual. They can serve as a basis for teacher education through reflective practice in opening up to, understanding and responding to the diversity of strengths and needs of students in the classroom. They reflect the experience of a varied international group of practitioners in different European countries and up-to-date research on teaching and learning.

Creating the handbook

The materials were produced through an EU-funded project by an international group from Malta, Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, Sweden and UK. They came from different institutions (universities, colleges, and an NGO) and disciplines (inclusive education, differentiated teaching, educational psychology, learning disability and special education, pedagogy of mathematics and language). All are engaged in teacher education and are concerned about social justice in education.

They started by sharing information on their education systems and concerns. Five teachers from each country were interviewed, which formed the basis of the handbook content. Collection of materials was done in pairs of partners; one was a writer, the other a critical friend. Four revisions were created over three years, through democratic discussions. An additional editing process was done before the materials were piloted. Various piloting approaches were used by the partners (e.g. in pre-service and in-service training).

The materials were initially produced as an online course, but were revised for use in face-to-face learning. The revised handbook allows for more flexible use (e.g. more choice over use of activities for student reflection at the end of the chapter).

The handbook has been produced in each of the seven languages of the partners.

Because the partners were diverse, the project has covered an unusually wide variety of issues. The six chapters cover:

1. action research as a tool for professional development
2. respect for student diversity, particularly culture, language, gender and exceptionality
3. personal and social growth of individuals within a caring and supportive environment
4. understanding diverse student characteristics
5. diversifying curriculum content, the learning process, and the learning product
6. reflective application of all these principles holistically in teaching practice.

Handbook, DVD and tutor's manual available from:
Dr Paul A. Bartolo
Faculty of Education
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta
paul.a.bartolo@um.edu.mt
Price: free (plus 20 Euros for airmail postage and packing)
Will be available to download (October 2007) from:
www.dtmp.org

The Manchester Inclusion Standard

Most of the accounts of practice reported by EENET are from countries of the 'South'. However, this does not mean that education systems in the economically richer countries (the 'North') are already inclusive. For example, the story on pages 8-9 – from a school in the city of Manchester, England – explains efforts being made to reach out to groups of children who experience marginalisation.

The education service in Manchester faces many challenges. Achievement levels among children from poor families are a particular concern. School attendance is worryingly low and significant numbers of learners are excluded from school because of the way they behave.

To address these concerns, the local authority has worked with schools to develop its 'Inclusion Standard'. This is an instrument for evaluating the progress of schools on their journey to becoming more inclusive. The Standard focuses directly on student outcomes, rather than on organisational processes, and uses the views of children as a major source of evidence.

So, for example, it does not require a review of the quality of leadership in a school. Rather, it focuses on the presence, participation and achievements of students, on the assumption that this is what good leadership is aiming for. Similarly, the Standard does not examine whether or not students are given the opportunity to take part in school activities. Rather, it assesses whether students, particularly those at risk of marginalisation or exclusion, actually take part and benefit as a result.

In these ways, the Manchester Inclusion Standard aims to: increase understanding within schools that inclusion is an ongoing process; foster the development of inclusive practices; and use the voice of students as a stimulus for school and staff development. Gradually, the Standard is becoming an integral part of schools' self-review and development processes.

Students on the University of Manchester's MEd course in Inclusive Education, work with schools as they use the Inclusion Standard, helping them to collect the views of children. Pages 8-9 show how this can help to stimulate inclusive school development.
For more information contact:
mel.ainscow@manchester.ac.uk

www.manchester.gov.uk/education/sen/policies/inclusion-standard.htm

Useful publications

Inclusion in Action: Report of an inclusive education workshop, Zanzibar, 7-10 February 2006
and
Activities used during the 'Inclusion in Action' workshop, Zanzibar, 7-10 February 2006
Ingrid Lewis/Atlas Alliance, 2007
These two reports describe a participatory workshop organised by Atlas Alliance. The first document details the main discussion points, including: what is inclusive education and how to identify barriers to inclusion and their solutions. The second report describes the methodology and activities used during the event. Both reports are available in English and Kiswahili.
Printed copies available from:
The Atlas Alliance
Schweigaardsgt 12
PO Box 9218 Grønland
0134 Oslo
Norway
Tel: +47 22 17 46 47
Fax: +47 23 16 35 95
Email: atlas@atlas-alliansen.no
Or download from:
www.eenet.org.uk/key_issues/teached/teached.shtml

Disability and Inclusive Development
Edited by Tanya Barron and Penny Amerena, 2007
This book calls for a change in international policy and practice to ensure inclusion and participation of disabled people in social, economic, community and political life. It includes a section on inclusive education.
Price £20. For details of how to order and pay, contact:
International Co-ordination Manager
Leonard Cheshire
30 Millbank
London SW1P 4QD
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 207 802 8217
Fax: +44 (0)207 802 8250
Email: fiona.mcconnon@lc-uk.org

Making a Difference: Training materials to promote diversity and tackle discrimination
Save the Children, 2005
This training manual aims to help development practitioners understand how discrimination impacts on the lives of children, and how they can plan their work in a way that embraces diversity. It contains many concepts and workshop activities that are useful when promoting non-discrimination and inclusion in education.
Available on CD-ROM from EENET, or download from: www.eenet.org.uk/bibliog/scuk/scuk_home.shtml

Moving Away from Labels
This book looks at the differences between integrated education and inclusive education within India. Its objective is to help families and teachers at the grassroots level to include all children in their neighbourhood schools. The book is available in hard copy or electronic format. Prices: 'e'-book – free (courier charge: Rs 250 within India or $10 outside India). Hard copy – Rs 500 plus 250 courier charge.
Contact:
CBR Network (South Asia)
134,1st Block,6th Main BSK III Stage,
Bangalore 560085, India
Tel: + 91 80 26724273
Email: cbrnet@airtelbroadband.in
Website: www.cbrnetwork.org.in

Practical Tips for Teaching Large Classes: A teacher's guide
UNESCO Bangkok, 2006
The guide aims to give teachers practical suggestions for teaching large classes successfully without compromising quality. It encourages the idea that a large class can be seen as a resource, not a challenge, to the teaching-learning process. It also encourages the use of child-centred and learner-friendly methods.
Download from:
www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/095/Teaching_Large_Classes.pdf

Practising Gender Equality in Education
Sheila Aikman and Elaine Unterhalter, Oxfam, 2007
This book looks at key challenges in achieving gender equality in education and the need to work towards an equitable education system which allows all individuals, irrespective of gender, to develop their potential.
Price: £12.95
Available from:
BEBC
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Dorset BH12 3YD
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 712933
Fax: +44 (0) 1202 712930
Email: oxfam@bebc.co.uk

Resource Centre Manual: How to set up and manage a resource centre
Healthlink Worldwide, 2003
The manual contains practical information on all aspects of setting up and managing a resource centre, e.g. planning, fundraising, finding a suitable location, collecting and organising materials, developing information services, and monitoring and evaluating the centre's work. It includes information on how to use computers, get the most out of the Internet and select database software.
Available online:
www.healthlink.org.uk/resources/manual.html
Printed copies also available from:
Healthlink Worldwide
56-64 Leonard Street
London EC2A 4JX
UK
Fax: +44 (0)20 7549 0241
Price: £15 developing countries, £25 other countries

Please tell us about any publications you have produced or that you would recommend to other EENET readers.

EENET c/o Educational Support and Inclusion, School of Education, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK
Tel: +44 (0)161 275 3711 Fax: +44 (0)161 275 3548
Mobile/SMS: +44 (0)7929 326 564
Email: info@eenet.org.uk Web: www.eenet.org.uk

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester