Enabling Education Review

Issue 1 - December 2012

Contents

Editorial

The EENET editorial team and the EENET Asia team are delighted to be collaborating to publish a joint newsletter. To do so, we have pooled our human and financial resources to bring you this new look publication – 'Enabling Education Review'.

We hope that readers will enjoy this joint publication. It has: easy-to-read articles covering a range of topics and countries; a focus on practical solutions for achieving inclusion; and articles from a range of stakeholders, including teachers, teacher educators and student teachers, as well as NGOs and academics.

So what has been happening in EENET in the last couple of years, and what are we planning for the future?

EENET in 2011-2012
In response to falling income, something many NGOs are facing these days, we reduced our staff to the bare minimum during 2011 and 2012. This meant that we could not print and disseminate the newsletter in 2011. However, we have managed to maintain our website and Facebook page, respond to enquiries and mail out document requests.

EENET in 2013
The period of limited funding has forced us to think more creatively about how EENET continues to develop its inclusive approach to networking and information sharing. As part of our reflections we have been looking at ways in which we can strengthen our focus on the 'enabling' part of our name. This means broadening our view of education as an enabling process, and further developing our commitment to using and promoting enabling methodologies. We will take forward our work in three main areas, networking/information sharing; research; and consultancies.

Research

Network
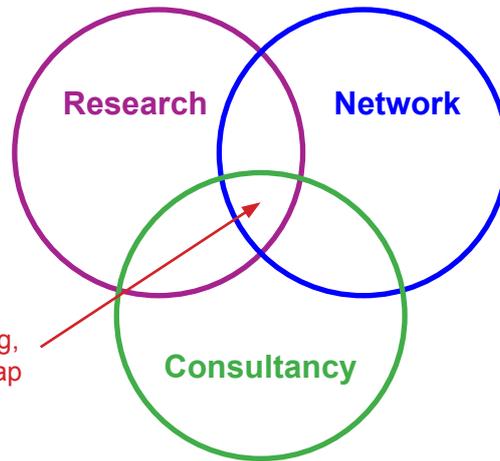
Consultancy

All of our areas of work (networking, consultancies and research) overlap and inform each other. Our shared vision and principles in relation to inclusive education are central to everything we do.

EENET Networking

In 2013 we will maintain our core activities: website, social media, responding to information requests, newsletter production, and raising new funds to develop this work. We will also be planning further joint activities with EENET Asia.

EENET Research

We will strengthen our research focus, including aiming to partner with other research organisations or academics on larger research projects. This 'wing' of EENET will be co-ordinated by Dr Susie Miles (former EENET Co-ordinator) who is based at the University of Manchester.

EENET Consultancy

In late 2009 we started EENET CIC – our consultancy branch. In English law, a CIC is a Community Interest Company – a not-for-profit social enterprise that re-invests its earnings to support its chosen 'community'. Our community is you, the users of EENET's information sharing network! EENET CIC has become very successful at delivering quality consultancy services to a growing range of clients. It will increasingly support EENET's

networking activities, by raising funds and through the networking, documenting and sharing that our consultants do when they are working in the field. We are also committed to building a growing team of south-based consultants.

EENET Asia

EENET Asia was launched in 2005. Six education activists based in Central, South and South East Asia formed a small editorial team to produce and distribute newsletters. Our main purpose has been, and will continue to be, to promote inclusive and child-friendly education through the publication of newsletters, online materials, and participation in national, regional and international conferences, workshops and seminars. Nine EENET Asia newsletters have been published so far. Good practices from more than 20 countries throughout Asia have been shared by: children, youth, parents, teachers, student teachers, teacher educators, education planners and education activists. We remain committed to providing a voice to those who are rarely heard and whose efforts and valuable work receives much too little attention.

To find out about any aspect of EENET's work, please contact:

EENET (networking and information sharing) – info@eenet.org.uk
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EENET Research – susie.miles@manchester.ac.uk
EENET Asia – asia@eenet.org.uk

A team approach to inclusion, Macedonia

Dimo Hadzi Dimov School Inclusion Team Members

Many teachers feel they do not have the skills to teach inclusively. Training materials on inclusive education often suggest: "Work together with colleagues and stakeholders to help you identify and solve challenges". In this article, teachers in Skopje, Macedonia, explain how their school inclusion team ensures everyone works together to make their school child-friendly and inclusive.

History

Our school inclusion team started in 1998 – this was when UNICEF introduced the inclusion of children with special education needs into mainstream schools. We still have some of the original team members.

The school has a policy of accepting all children, regardless of their background. Inclusive policy has developed over time in our school; our positive environment of acceptance is the result of a long process of learning and change. We have also built the support of the general class teachers, the subject teachers and parents.

The initial vision for inclusion came from the principal. We have had four principals since the inclusion team started, but when a new principal joins we inform them about and involve them in our inclusion efforts immediately. When they see the good work that is going on, they are happy to support it. The consistent support of the school principal has been very important.

The team

We started with a team of three class teachers, the principal, a pedagogue and a psychologist. The team is flexible and inclusive in its membership – but it is always willing to change when needed. Some members leave after a particular period, some stay a long time, some are external professionals and parents. The exact composition often depends on our current action plan, and the expertise or support needed.

High expectations

It is compulsory for all teachers in our school to learn about inclusive education through workshops and mentoring. If we want change to happen then everyone in the school needs to be informed. We want our whole school to have a richer profile of professional development, to strive constantly to learn more and improve ourselves. Even though we are qualified teachers we can still keep learning. For instance, in recent years some of the team members have focused on learning more about gifted and talented children, as they too can face exclusion if their learning needs are not met.

When new teachers are recruited, the school inclusion team does not have control over the advertising and interviewing process, so an open mind about inclusive education is not a requirement for joining the school. But once a new teacher starts here, we show them what we mean by inclusion, and what is expected in our school. We do this mainly through mentoring and one-to-one support. As members of the school inclusion team, we observe fellow teachers and help them when they have problems. At first some teachers are reluctant, but when they see how other teachers work together and help each other to plan their work, they want to join in.

Identifying children's needs

We observe children before they start school, so that we can get an idea of their potential learning needs, interests and abilities. We spend time working out effective composition of classes, so that children with specific needs are placed with teachers who have the best skills to help them. All teachers have children with special needs in their class, so we do not just place the 'difficult' children with those teachers who are willing to teach them. Instead, it is a genuine process of matching learning needs with teaching skills.

Inclusion at all levels

At first we worked mainly with general class teachers (grades 1-5), but gradually we started to support the subject teachers who work in grades 6-9. We also ensure that there is an effective hand-over process between lower and upper primary, so that any child who has particular needs continues to receive the same level and quality of support as they move up through the grades.

We now face the challenge of how to ensure that children receive support when they leave our primary school and go to secondary school. Not all the local secondary schools are inclusive and supportive. Some of our so-called 'special needs' pupils have gone on to university or to compete in the paralympics, others have sadly dropped out of school at secondary level. This is something we cannot tackle on our own as primary school teachers.

Working together

The school principal, pedagogue and psychologist are involved in observing teachers. We also have open classes where colleagues can sit in and watch each other teach. We meet to compare notes and experiences in relation to all our students, not just those considered to have special needs. The inclusion team helps to facilitate this sharing. The team also goes to train teachers in other schools, under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Bureau for Education Development.

Our team encourages teachers to ensure that the children in our school also work as teams by co-operating and assisting each other in group work. We support the teachers to use active teaching and learning approaches – no lecturing. This way they get more feedback from students, and it is more interesting for everyone. Lessons involve students doing things with their hands, not just talking and writing.

We ensure that we have a good relationship with parents and that they feel involved in the inclusive education efforts. We reach out to them with information about inclusion, and we engage them in individual planning processes for their children.

We even work together with other schools, doing what we call 'integrated classes', where classes from two schools merge to share lessons. When this happens our school inclusion team supports the teachers to plan for the learning needs of all children in the merged class. This also means that teachers and children from other schools get to experience how we develop more inclusive practices in our school.

What next?

We don't have all the answers yet. We still face many challenges. We work hard to plan the learning of every child effectively, but we are not always successful. We need more help with some areas of work, such as developing individual education plans. And we know that not all children continue to make good progress when they leave our school, because other schools are not so well prepared. So we need support from beyond our school to ensure that inclusion is not an isolated thing in a few schools.

One teacher's journey to inclusive education in Indonesia

Dante Rigmalia

Many teachers feel inadequate when asked to become involved in inclusive education. In this article, Dante shares her personal story which begins with her own unhappiness as a child at school, and goes on to describe her journey to becoming an inclusive teacher. Dante learned by 'doing inclusion'. She is now studying for a PhD in Indonesia.

Reflecting on my own experience as a learner

I used to feel sad about my experience of school. I struggled to make friends, and felt I had very little to offer in a friendship. This left me feeling isolated and my self-confidence was very low. I even dropped out during my first semester in senior high school, which really brought me down. Luckily I have a strong mother who always encouraged and supported me. In time, I returned to school, and later graduated with a Diploma in Education for Primary Teachers.

The start of my journey

In 2003, the head teacher at my school called all 4th Grade teachers together. We were told that a girl with a visual impairment, Rina, would be enrolling and would need support. Rina was to be placed in my class. I was both happy and worried. My class was already big with 41 students, and I didn't feel confident to manage a student with visual impairment.

When I was first asked to include Rina in my class, I was reminded of my experience of school and how, with the right support, I was able to overcome the challenges and succeed in education. This motivated me to face the challenges of being a more inclusive teacher. Responding to this challenge was an important step in my journey – a journey I had begun as a child.

Preparing for Rina

I didn't have much experience of special or inclusive education, but I understood that it was more complicated than simply placing children with disabilities into regular classes. I asked the head teacher for time to prepare my class and their parents before Rina arrived. I thought we needed to talk about this first. I didn't want my students or their parents to be confused, or for anything bad to happen because I hadn't informed them about Rina.

I raised my students' awareness about diversity and helped them to understand that every person is different and has different needs. We discussed how to make everyone happy in our class and what support we can give to friends who need help. I told them that we would have a student with a visual impairment joining our class. We decided democratically where she would sit and with whom.

Inclusive music activities

Next, I informed the parents and asked for their permission to let their children sit with Rina. Most of the parents were fine with having a student with a visual impairment in the class, but some had trouble with the idea. One parent told me that they would be watching the quality of my teaching. I felt very challenged – under pressure to guarantee the quality of my teaching.

In fact, my class already had very diverse learners – a student with emotional problems, and some with learning problems. I thought it would be difficult for me to include another student with an impairment, but I vowed to try my best.

Including Rina…and everyone

Every day of that first semester after Rina joined my class was a busy one! To prepare well took time as I didn't want the quality of my teaching to suffer and negatively affect the development of my students. I learned how to read and write Braille, and how to teach math to students with special needs. I tried to implement everything I learned on inclusion in my teaching. I brought in additional teaching aids to use with Rina. I adapted my teaching methods and realised that my strategy for teaching students with special needs was good for all of my students. My teaching became clearer for everyone. At times I felt so tired, but I was happy because some parents came to thank me. One even told me her son was not afraid to learn math anymore.

Rina is now studying music at the University of Education Indonesia (UPI)!

I keep learning

Interacting with students with special needs was a very positive experience and encouraged me to learn more about special and inclusive education. I studied for a Master's degree in Special Needs Education at UPI, with a scholarship from IDP Norway, and graduated in 2007. My spirit to learn never dies. Even though I was behind my classmates in school, now I am proud of myself. I am still studying – this time on a doctoral programme in Guidance and Counseling at UPI.

Teaching in an inclusive school and studying about special needs education not only improved my teaching, it changed my life and my thinking. I learned to be aware of my students and others, and to be more aware of myself and accept myself for who I am. I know my strengths and my weaknesses. Understanding this has been an important step in my journey towards inclusive education.

My new role and new challenges

In 2010 I became a SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) in a new school in Bandung. I am working to make the school more inclusive and to support other local schools in developing inclusive teaching and learning environments.

The biggest challenges that I now face in bringing inclusive education into schools are with bureaucracy, and ignorance about inclusive education.

The government has strict standards for evaluating schools. Some teachers think that students with special needs will negatively affect their school performance – and do not always understand the need for flexibility in teaching and evaluating children with special needs.

Inclusive activities using outdoor spaces

It is not easy to find secondary schools for children when they leave primary school. Some schools say they have no certification as an inclusive school. Other schools with certification only take students with certain impairments. Even when students with special needs are accepted into regular schools, the schools often lack an understanding of inclusive education, and teachers focus on students' barriers to learning, rather than improving the quality of education for their whole class.

Slowly but surely, my school and school community are becoming more inclusive. Through raising awareness about inclusive education, I have seen positive changes. I believe other schools can do the same. It is not an easy journey, but with commitment and consistency we get closer to our destination.

Dante Rigmalia is a teacher and SENCO at the Gegerkalong Girang primary school in Bandung, Indonesia. She has also founded the 'Dante Rigmalia Foundation' to support all children in getting a good quality education.

You can contact her via email on rigmaliadante@yahoo.com

Starting the journey towards inclusive education in Cameroon

Bridget A. Longla Fobuzie

Bridget has been teaching in secondary education in the English-speaking North West Region of Cameroon, West Africa, for over 20 years. In 2009 she became involved with the Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) whose mission is to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities. When visiting relatives in the UK in 2010, she searched for resources that would help her train teachers in inclusive ways of working. The idea of inclusion is new and challenging for teachers, but many see it as an opportunity for professional development. Here she describes the impact of this journey on her day-to-day practice as a teacher and on teacher development in Cameroon.

I trained to be an English teacher in 1989 in Cameroon, but it wasn't until 2009 that I began to question the training I had received. With student populations getting more diverse, I began to reflect on my training as a teacher; perhaps I had not been adequately trained to teach students from diverse backgrounds, with different abilities and learning styles, and those with disabilities who were now conspicuously present in mainstream classrooms?

In 2009, CBCHS asked me to work with them on their Socio-Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Programme (SEEPD). This led me to ask questions about how inclusive education can be developed in our region, which has approximately two million people and over 200 schools.

In Cameroon, special schools are owned and run by church organisations and by individuals as businesses. There are no state-run special schools. CBCHS has been operating two special schools; the Integrated School for the Blind in Banso and the Integrated School for the Deaf in Mbingo, both in the North West Region of Cameroon. In addition to these they support learners with visual impairments in some mainstream schools (government-owned) by stationing staff in the school who Braille documents for teachers and learners. With more children with visual and other impairments craving education beyond the primary level, CBCHS realised they would not have the resources to support the increasing number of students with impairments. If government took over the responsibility, then not only would the learners be better resourced but more children with visual and other impairments would attend school and be included.

Searching for relevant information

When I started looking I was amazed by how much information there was about inclusive education on the Internet! It was difficult to know where to start. UNESCO's documents proved very useful. Their strategies are in simple language and easy to follow. I wasn't looking at the various different perspectives on inclusion at that time. We focused on UNESCO's definition of inclusive education because it sat well with SEEPD's focus – the disability aspect of inclusive education – and was relevant to us and the Cameroon context. The SEEPD education team then sought materials that deal with different impairments, classroom implications and strategies to identify and address the learning needs of learners with impairments. While we looked at a wide range of impairments, including autism, we focused more on visual, hearing, mild orthopaedic and speech impairments. As time went on we started venturing into attention deficit hyperactive disorder and attention deficit disorder and dyslexia.

After exploring the literature, we decided that a bottom-up approach would be more effective. We envisaged a lot of resistance from education authorities and teachers, which is typical when major changes are introduced. However, we felt that if we had the teachers (since they would do the practical implementation) and parents on our side, convincing government to buy into the inclusive agenda would be relatively easier than coaxing government to institute a policy first.

Developing a strategy

We began by holding consultative meetings in the form of seminars and workshops with education stakeholders in the region. This included directors of teacher training colleges, heads of departments of colleges and education authorities in the region like divisional delegates of secondary education, pedagogic inspectors and advisers. We began in Mezam Division and then moved to the region's other six divisions.

The main aim of these meetings was to highlight the educational challenges children with impairments were facing in school and how such challenges were contributing to their low levels of achievement and school attendance.

We started piloting an inclusive approach in 14 schools – one primary and one secondary school from each of the region's seven divisions – with funding from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and CBM Australia. When visiting relatives in England, I contacted Richard Rieser at World of Inclusion[1] and Tara Flood at the Alliance for Inclusive Education[2] and others. My meeting with them

boosted my confidence and I realised we did not need sophisticated resources to go inclusive. It is a change of attitude and the willingness of the teachers and school heads that matters most.

We developed a handbook for teachers based on materials from books on strategies on teaching children with impairments. We organised one-day workshops in each division for teachers of the pilot schools to prepare them for practical implementation, which has been going on since September 2010. We visit these schools once a term to support teachers and further strengthen their capacities through mini workshops, where teachers celebrate their successes and brainstorm feasible solutions to the challenges they face. At the beginning, teachers saw inclusive education as just including children with impairments and so many were not keen. Interestingly, they now see inclusion as an excellent way of engaging ALL learners and becoming better teachers. Consequently the demand for our workshops is soaring!

Looking to the future

We are working with Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board to make all end-of-course examinations accessible to candidates with impairments. On invitation by the Higher Teacher Training College in Bambili in the North West Region, we have started to teach a course on inclusive education in the Department of Guidance Counseling. The plan is to make inclusive education a mandatory course for all teachers in training in the college.

There are plans underway for SEEPD to meet with and present their work to the ministers of basic and secondary education. We are optimistic about the future.

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[1] World of Inclusion: www.worldofinclusion.com
[2] Alliance for Inclusive Education: www.allfie.org.uk

Learning to include – an example of inclusive education training from Lombok

Inclusive schools have formally existed in Lombok, Indonesia since 2008. However, most schools are only called inclusive because children with disabilities have access to attend classes there. The inclusive learning concepts and processes fundamental to inclusive education are not yet fully understood and implemented. Widespread access barriers for children with disabilities also still exist. Here, Handicap International explains how it has supported a practice-based approach to teacher education on inclusive education.

Background

To improve understanding about the situation of children with disabilities in Lombok province, a sample assessment was implemented in one sub-district of Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB). This identified 126 children with disabilities not accessing school. Lombok Island comprises 50 sub-districts, so the assessment indicated the potentially large number of children with disabilities out of school.

Building capacity for inclusive education

Effective inclusive education needs co-operation between all education stakeholders (children, head teacher, teachers, parents of children with disabilities, school committee, education department, disabled people's organisations (DPOs), community members). To foster such co-operation, Handicap International's project builds the capacity of teachers, head teachers and supervisors.

Whole-school approach

Bringing these different people together was a deliberate training strategy. Effective management in inclusive schools requires all stakeholders to share the same understanding of concepts, plans and methods. Teachers have the key role of ensuring that all children access and participate in learning based on their different needs. This requires accurate supervision from their head teacher, who plays a key role in school development. He/she must know about inclusive education concepts in order to build good

communications between parents, the school committee and teachers. Involving district-level supervisors in the training is also important: they help ensure quality learning in schools, and need to give relevant recommendations to teachers and head teachers.

"[Following the training] head-teachers and teacher are now more aware and understand children's diversity and their needs regarding school environment… they can provide adapted education services to children based on their needs and abilities." (facilitator, Mataram city area, works in Provincial Education Department).

"In my experience, school supervisors are rarely involved in inclusive education implementation, so we hardly know what the activities are in inclusive schools. In my opinion this program (inclusive schools) cannot walk alone. There must be a system to monitor, evaluate and supervise inclusive school development." (Drs. H. Lalu Suparsil, School supervisor, UPTD Dikpora Kec. Jonggat, Lombok Tengah)

The facilitators

The capacity-building process developed four pools of facilitators, one for each district or city involved in the project. Each pool contained three people: one representative from the provincial education department, one special school teacher or head teacher, and one member of the forum of parents of children with disabilities.

A list of potential facilitators with relevant experience and knowledge was drawn up, and interviews assessed candidates' commitment to the training process. Once selected, they attended a training-of-trainers to strengthen their skills and understanding regarding inclusive education. Each trainer then facilitated two four-day training sessions.

Training content

Topics covered:
- concepts and practice of inclusive education
- international/national regulation on inclusive education

- positive discipline
- role of teacher as facilitator
- encouraging children
- making your class accessible
- efficient teaching strategies
- developing communication with parents of children with disabilities
- individual learning plans
- methods to foster child participation.

The training moved from general to more specific topics. Participatory methods enabled participants to share experiences, discuss and do simulations focused on exploring the strengths and weakness of implementation of inclusive education in their school. Participants realised that although their schools are labeled 'inclusive', there are still many possible improvements to make the environment and learning process more inclusive.

From theory to practice
To help participants practise what they learned, an action plan was developed for each school. The action plan was kept simple and realistic. It started by identifying things that needed improvement or adaptation in the school (e.g. accessibility, curriculum, tools), and then looked at how to address these.

Teachers and head teachers worked together to develop plans for actions to be implemented within two months. Participants then met again after two months to share experiences of implementing their action plans. This gave each school a chance to see other schools' activities, and adjust their action plans (for instance to involve more stakeholders such as the school committee or parents). Starting a good communication between the school, school committee and parents provides an opportunity for the school to create a more comprehensive action plan.

Listening to stakeholders
During the training, people with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities were invited to share good and bad experiences they have faced in education. This helped participants to understand better the stakeholders' perspectives and discuss how to improve education accordingly.

Training materials and methods
Facilitators used a training manual based on UNESCO's 'Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environments' (ILFE), in particular the Specialized Booklet 3, 'Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings'. The ILFE toolkit uses rights-based and learner-centered approaches. Trainers highlighted that teachers need to use these sorts of approaches in their classrooms. To meet various training participants' needs, different methodologies were used (group work, role plays, photo activities, discussions, etc).

"By using microteaching and role play, teachers could experience how to work with children with disabilities in the classroom. … Participants developed their understanding about child-centered approach…" (Winarno, S,Pd, special school teacher and training facilitator, Mataram area)

"Head teachers and teachers were enthusiastic when I used participatory methods. …working groups and discussions are not common methods in teacher trainings." (facilitator, Mataram city area, works in Provincial Education Department).

Beyond training
Training teachers, head teachers and supervisors helps develop better understanding about inclusive education and is the groundwork for school action plans, strengthening parental participation and supporting the development of evaluation, monitoring, and supervision for inclusive schools. But, as highlighted by Abas, S.Pd, (special school head teacher and training facilitator, Lombok Barat district), sustainable changes among education stakeholders requires not just capacity building but also the organisation of services in the school and community that can support these stakeholders in their work with children with disabilities.

Handicap international has worked since January 2011, with the Education Department of NTB province, in 36 inclusive schools in three districts and one city of Lombok island

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Rethinking the way we organise schools: An example from India

Kanwal Singh and Ruchi Singh

Three years ago Vishwas, a non-profit organisation set up Vishwas Vidyalaya[1], an inclusive primary school. In this article, Kanwal and Ruchi share their experience of helping to establish a new type of school – one where all children have a meaningful and quality education in a positive learning environment. Around 200 children aged 4-16 years are enrolled. Many of them come from Jharsa village, just behind the school boundary wall and located in Gurgaon, not too far from New Delhi, the capital of India. It is the first opportunity for and experience of formal learning for many students who were previously out of school because of their disability, or socio-economic and migratory status.

Vishwas Vidyalaya is a school with a hint of variation from the rest. It developed out of a need to explore how inclusive education could be implemented in its true sense – a school that viewed inclusion as meaningful education for all, specifically in relation to groups vulnerable to exclusion.Through this article we share the processes of establishing an inclusive school and how things have worked for us as we moved from inclusive theory to practice.

Establishing a sound foundation

We began with an analysis of the current status of inclusive education, asking ourselves: What does inclusion mean to us? How would we address exclusion while at the same time being aware of and paying attention to individual needs? How would we ensure that a child with hearing impairment attended class with his peers and at the same time address his needs for communication? Similarly, how would we ensure that a 10-year-old, who has never been to school, could study with his peers. Reflecting on all these questions we were able to clarify and establish our interpretation of inclusion, our core values and beliefs. These translated into the curriculum framework and served as a foundation for planning, organising and implementing all learning experiences in the school.

Our inclusive school model:

- An expanded scope of inclusive education that addresses exclusion in all forms rather than limiting it to students with disabilities. Any student could need support and accommodation – temporary or long-term. Therefore individual education plans were made for each and every student instead of singling out students with disabilities.
- Admission policies that encouraged children to attend school. Registration for admission was open all year round. No child was screened or assessed prior to admission. Exclusionary criteria like diagnosis, impairments, residential status and income were not used.
- Built in flexibility enabled social as well as learning needs of all students to be fulfilled. Students belonged to age-appropriate classrooms referred to as 'Blocks'. Each block had a maximum of 30 students with one class teacher and one support staff. Based on assessments, all students were divided into appropriate instructional groups for different subjects, starting from foundational skills up to Grade 5. This system released students from the boundaries of the syllabus at each grade level. They could learn concepts at their own pace and readiness, rather than being dictated by age and grade. There could be two to three instructional groups within the same grade level.
- This model enabled students to attend subjects at different grade levels. For example, a student could attend Math at Grade 3, Hindi at Grade 4 and English at Grade 1.
- Students were assessed every four months and regrouped accordingly giving them the opportunity to join back into appropriate groups after long periods of leave due to medical or family circumstances.

United through learning

Building confident and motivated inclusive educators

Inclusive practices require radical changes in thought and action. Special educators and regular school teachers moved out of their comfort zones. They dropped their titles and took on new roles as 'inclusive teachers'. Instead of 'yours' and 'mine', the students became 'ours'. Teachers were encouraged to search for solutions rather than focusing on the problems. Teachers encouraged older students, including students with disabilities, to accompany the younger students from the bus to the classroom. This enabled the older students to take on responsibility.

Simple words and explanations were used instead of jargon so that staff would feel comfortable. The school leadership organised ongoing in-service trainings, mentoring, group discussions and forums for sharing of experiences. Through these sessions the staff also revisited some deeply entrenched negative attitudes and realised how subtle actions could lead to dependency and exclusion. For example, extra support for students with disabilities deprived them of opportunities to become independent and responsible.

Listening to student voices

Students are an extremely valuable resource. Our students were our best critics, guiding us all the way as we tried out new ideas. They made us truly understand the meaning of 'all children' by forcing us to look beyond the needs of students with disabilities. It was through the students that we learned the importance of understanding their culture and context. For example, when discussing safety in the event of an earthquake, the students explained that they did not have beds or tables in their houses and so could not shelter under them.

The students wanted more formal learning, and complained when there was too much activity-based learning. Students rejected adaptations that increased participation and independence but resulted in exclusion. Students who wrote slowly rejected multiple choice options in favor of extra time.

Conclusion

Our journey towards inclusive education has been challenging but extremely rewarding. Today we may not have all the answers, but at the same time we have a number of successful practices that have evolved in this period. This reaffirms our commitment to continue working towards inclusive education.

One-two-together

About the authors

Kanwal Singh is currently working as Director: Education and Training at Vishwas, India. She has 25 years' experience in the field of special and inclusive education, and spearheaded the establishment of Vishwas Vidyalaya. She has been involved in teacher trainings and curriculum development at the State level ans is a contributing author for textbooks and manuals on inclusive education. She can be contacted at kanwalsingh.vishwas@gmail.com

Ruchi Singh works at Vishwas as Manager of the Research and Training programme. She has been working in the area of disability and development for the past 7 years and played an active role in setting up Vishwas Vidyalaya. She can be contacted at ruchi.singh.0511@gmail.com

[1] Vishwas means belief, and Vidyalaya is a school. Vishwas is also the name of the not-for-profit organisation that established the school.

End corporal punishment in India once and for all!

Professor Shantha Sinha

Children experience violence from teachers in schools and from their family members. This is socially accepted and regarded as legitimate. In this article, Professor Sinha provides examples of this abuse, which has sometimes resulted in the death of a child, and some have committed suicide. She suggests ways in which we can work collectively to bring this practice to an end.

A culture of violence against children

A Class II student in a government school in Delhi died of heat stroke after she was made to squat in the sun with bricks on her back.

Such violent acts are committed by teachers in the name of discipline: slapping, caning, kneeling down, standing or squatting in the same position for long periods of time, walking round the school compound, and other such 'routine acts'. If the child is female, poor, or from a scheduled caste community, such treatment is more common. Such treatment is insulting and humiliating. It damages confidence and self-esteem, and leads to children dropping out of school. Fear of punishment makes children afraid to ask questions and challenge ideas, and so detracts from the quality of education.

A teacher in Jhunjhun, Rajasthan, beat an eight-year-old girl so badly for not doing her homework that she lost her eye.

Corporal punishment is not an isolated incident – it is part of a culture of violence and insensitivity to children and their rights. Parents often use similar methods to discipline their children, and so tend not to challenge the school teacher. Or they may fear that their child will be further victimised if they challenge the teacher. Yet, fear stifles the process of learning. The education system seems indifferent to the negative impact of physical violence on children's learning.

Establishing a culture of respect for children

Violence against children is often justified by teachers because of their poor working conditions, such as overcrowded classes and not enough text books, and the challenge of teaching first-generation learners. But children are not responsible for the problems that teachers face. Teachers need to understand that their professional rights as teachers are linked to children's rights in schools. Inadequate resources in schools should be tackled by teachers' unions and school administrators. Yet violence also happens in well resourced schools:

A class IV student in a private school in Bangalore had his front teeth partially broken when the class teacher hurled a wooden board duster at him for smiling in the class.
A Class VII student, in a private school in Mumbai, was made to sit on the floor outside the principal's office facing a toilet for over six hours, on two successive days, because she had henna designs on her hands.

Currently there is a debate about 'positive discipline' instead of corporal punishment, but even then the teacher and child are still in an unequal relationship. A more appropriate phrase would be 'positive engagement', as this would express a greater equality in the relationship.

If a child is being abused at home, teachers should be supportive of the child and in a position to look for remedies rather than blaming the parents. Thus from a position of power and authority the school teacher should play a role of a mentor and a guide. A law banning all forms of corporal punishment is needed, together with a public campaign against all forms of violence against children. Children, parents and child defenders need to be supported to speak out against corporal punishment.

Striving for better teaching.
EENET Interview: Peter Mwanyalo, Kenya

Enabling disabled people to become teachers can help to challenge negative attitudes in schools and society. Peter Mwanyalo is blind and has changed career from musician to teacher in Kenya. In this interview, Peter talks about his determination to be a better teacher than those who taught him at school.

Why do you want to become a teacher?

People have always told me that because of the way I explain things, I should become a teacher. Even before I started my training, people said I already seemed like a teacher. I certainly felt that I could teach better than the teachers I knew!

In 2007 I attended an EENET seminar in Nairobi about information sharing and inclusive education – this was a new and enjoyable learning experience for me. From then on I decided to develop a career in teaching. I want to improve the quality of education offered to children in my home area, and in the country as a whole.

What training are you doing and where?

I am training to be a primary school teacher at Mosoriot Teachers Training College in Kenya. I will teach languages, music, social studies and religious education. It is a two-year course and I'll finish in July 2012.

What did you do before this training?

I have come to teaching quite late in life. I previously worked as a musician and I ran a café. I have also led groups of people in different activities in my village, and I am a peer counsellor on health issues. My life experiences mean I am confident in dealing with all kinds of people – young and old – which will be useful for teaching children and building good relationships with their parents.

What do you think of the training?

As a blind trainee, I use Braille, but we lack Braille reading materials and sometimes there is a shortage of Braille paper. There is also a lack of mathematical equipment which makes it impossible for visually impaired students to be examined in this subject. There are no qualified lecturers in special education, and only one knows Braille, so there can be challenges when it comes to transcribing and marking exams. I am trying hard in computer training too, so that I can teach using Jaws software and data projectors. My main interest is to read as widely as possible and to learn teaching skills. I also participate in goal ball and athletics.

How do you get along with the other trainees?

They have been very supportive, and have gradually improved as they have given more thought to their interaction with me. Some find it normal to be studying alongside a blind trainee, because they have been taught by teachers who are visually or physically impaired in their schools back home.

What will you do when the training is complete?

I intend to teach in regular schools in my community – I'm not going to teach in a special school just because I am blind. During our teaching practice we are given sighted assistants who help prepare charts, write and draw on the chalkboard, and assist with marking. When a visually impaired teacher is employed, the government pays for assistants. I am still interested in special education issues, and would eventually like to do the special education training course, and get a university degree.

What was your own education like?

I attended a special school for blind children. It was a long way from home, so I only saw my family during the holidays. I definitely want to be a better teacher than my teachers were. In my life experiences, and at the teacher training college, I have acquired skills for teaching that I feel my teachers either didn't know about or chose to ignore when they were teaching me. I can do better!

Peter can be contacted through EENET.

Inclusion in visual workshop activities: Reflections from a blind participant

Addah Arcilla

In September 2011, EENET conducted an inclusive education workshop in Bandung, Indonesia. Workshop participants included members of national education ministries, and staff from several international non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations. Participants came from Afghanistan, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

EENET has been running workshops in Africa and Asia for some years now. The workshops involve participants in drawing and photography in accessible and engaging ways. Addah has a visual impairment, and she participated in a workshop in Bandung, Indonesia. One of the group activities was to create 'mountain diagrams'. This involved drawing a visual metaphor (a mountain with rivers and trees) to show the barriers and solutions to promoting more inclusive practice. Another involved 'reading photographs' – participants discuss photos taken by students and teachers in various education contexts around the world. Who has taken the photos? Why? Later, the actual details about the photos and their contexts are revealed. The planning and timing must be carefully thought out in order to make these activities as accessible and meaningful as possible. In this article, Addah offers her personal reflections on these visual activities.

Drawing mountain metaphors

Our 'mountain diagram' was truly a team effort because those weren't just my drawings. They were everybody's drawings. My group was my eyes, and I was just the hand that drew the lines.

I was confident that I'd be able to do it – but I wasn't sure whether the other members of my group would trust me with the task. I was half expecting to be met with hesitation when I

Addah drawing a 'Mountain Diagram' with her group

said I'd like to draw for them. Fortunately there was none of that. I took a pen and asked them what they needed; they told me where to draw, and the rest, as they say, is history. It would have been hard for me to draw some of the things if no one had told me where a line ends, or where I should put the details that would complete a picture. It felt good that I didn't just sit there while they were all bustling over the diagram; that I actively participated in its creation.
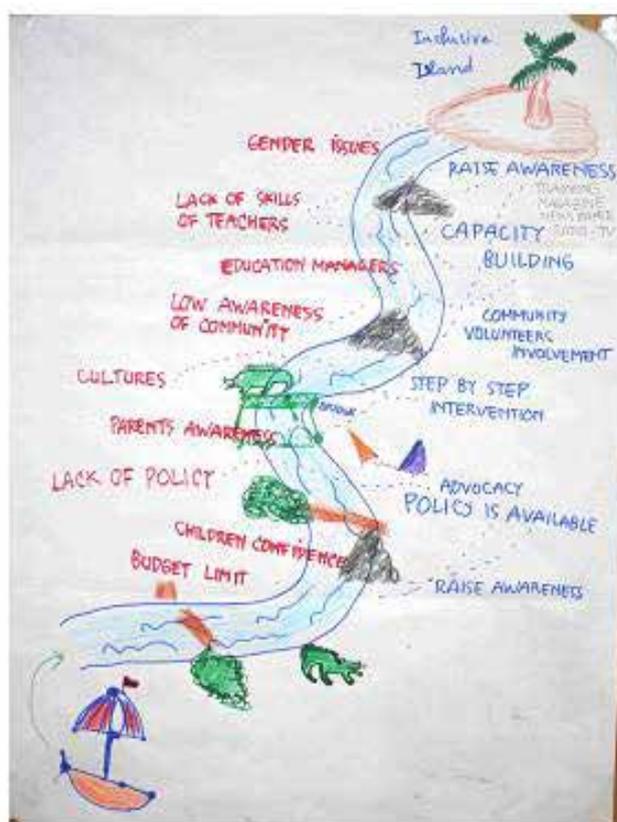
The mountain diagram created by Addah and her group

Photo elicitation

The photo activity was not as easy as the drawing activity. I had to depend on someone to describe the photos for me. My interpretation depended on how much detail was given to me – or on the details which my interpreter found significant in the picture. One person's description might have more details than another's.

The time constraint also made the activity difficult for me. There were 15 photos in the batch and it takes time to describe every single detail in each picture. We could have divided the photos among us; so that two people could work on a sub-set of photos and the other two could work on another sub-set. This way we could have had more time for looking at and describing the photos.

Why did I feel so confident to draw during the EENET workshop? It's because I expect people to trust me, and to be treated as an equal and nothing less.

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Addah's story: The challenge of being a teacher with a visual impairment

Addah Arcilla

I was not born blind. I became visually impaired because of profound diabetic retinopathy. I've had low vision since I was 23, which has slowly regressed into severe low vision due to cataract and retinal detachment.

I graduated from the University of the Philippines where I took a bachelors degree in Family Life and Child Development. I am now taking my masters in Education with a specialization in Special Education at the Philippine Normal University.

Before starting work at CBM, I worked as a preschool teacher for 5 years. I taught classes where children with intellectual and developmental disabilities were integrated. I was forced to give that up, not because of my deteriorating vision, but because my employers thought that I was no longer capable of teaching because of my visual impairment.

I had difficulty returning to teaching because many of the schools I applied to were hesitant to take me in. I've always been honest about my visual impairment. When they saw me coming in with a cane or reading with a magnifier, people would always question my capability to teach and handle a class. I've even applied for online English teacher posts where they use VoIP software like Skype to conduct the sessions, but they were also unwilling to take the chance of employing a visually impaired tutor.

I found work as a freelance web content writer for another visually impaired person who owns a business management and consultancy company. It was a drastic move from teaching very young children, but then again, it was the only job opportunity that was open to me at that time. I worked freelance in the business sector for another 3 years.

I joined CBM in August 2010. While CBM may have taken me further away from teaching, it has allowed me to work on issues that confront me as a person with visual impairment, the children that I would have taught, and the disability sector in general, albeit not in a direct way.

Work is very challenging in CBM, not because I am confronted with prejudices but because it's a new field for me and because of the enormous responsibility that comes with the job. For that I am glad because I am treated as an equal among my peers.

Learning by observing and doing: Indigenous education in South East Asia

Dr. Prasert Trakansuphakorn

This article provides insights into the sharing of knowledge in indigenous communities. Indigenous knowledge accumulates over generations of living in a particular environment and includes knowledge, skills and cultural practices which are continuously evolving. Dr. Trakansuphakorn uses the example of rotational farming and the management of natural resources to explain how this knowledge is shared between different generations within communities. He also explains some of the sacred rituals practised in Thailand and Burma.

Community elders pass on their knowledge to younger generations in indigenous communities – through their words and actions. This process of intergenerational learning is different from formal schooling, as it does not take place in schools or classrooms. Instead, it is embedded in the activities and practices of daily life. This is essential for the survival and further development of indigenous communities.

The example of rotational farming

This practice has been central to indigenous communities' lives and livelihoods for centuries. Leaving the fields to become fallow (not planted) every 5-10 years allows the soil and land to regenerate. The fallow period balances the land, water, forest and wildlife, and supports a system of sustainable agriculture.

This process begins with the celebration of the New Year and continues until the rice harvest is completed. The sharing of knowledge may seem to be hidden, as the younger generations are often unaware that learning is taking place. It allows knowledge to seep slowly, but deeply, into the minds of learners.

Ritual practice

Each stage and each season is accompanied by rituals. At the beginning of August, is the

ritual of feeding the field. About a week before the rice harvest, the community eats roasted, unripe rice while telling folktales. During the rice threshing, children's wrists are tied with a bracelet of white thread to represent the binding of the child to their spirit so they can live together without fear. Before families carry the rice back to their homes from the fields, the evil spirits are driven from the granary; the bird of the rice spirit is called back to heaven. The rice feeding ritual is performed to make the rice last longer.

Knowledge of these rituals is shared through observation and participation. This focuses attention, stimulates interest and builds the capacity of children and young people to retain knowledge. Children and young people enjoy the rituals as they involve celebration and festive food, especially meat – which they do not often eat. They also practise ritual prayers and actions and little by little become proficient.

Learning with parents

In the field clearing ritual, parents and other adults go with their children to look for a suitable place to clear a field. The parents simply tell their children: 'girls go with mother', 'boys go with father', 'go to learn', 'see how the people go together to look for a place to clear a field'. Parents perform the divining ritual by digging some earth from under a tree

and driving out the spirit-owner. Then they pray: 'I will make a field here, I will make a garden here. If the spirit of the land and spirit of the water are here, my eyes look but cannot see the spirits. I ask the spirits to go away and leave this place.'

Children observe everything their parents do, and this seeps into their memory. When the children are old enough to work, their parents provide opportunities for them to participate in the ritual more directly. At first, children often make mistakes, especially with the prayers, which are difficult to remember. After many years of practice, they are able to say the prayers by themselves. Even if the details and content are not exactly the same as their parents' prayers, the children will learn most of the important elements by the time they are around 20 years old.

Non-verbal 'learning by doing': Teaching with words or explaining by describing is believed to be 'taboo'.

Ritual acts in the practice of rotational farming must be performed calmly, with respect and care. If not, the rituals will not be sacred or effective, and the aims of the rituals will not have been accomplished. Therefore, parents and other adults who share this knowledge with children are not permitted to teach through words. At the same time, it is also forbidden for children to ask questions. This method of knowledge sharing increases the dimension of sacredness by giving the learners a sense of reverence. It leads them to be aware that this knowledge should be shared carefully and with meticulous attention to detail.

Through looking at the practice of rotational farming, we can better understand the learning processes involved in the sharing of indigenous knowledge between generations in indigenous communities. These learning processes may seem somewhat different from those involved in formal schooling, but are important to the survival of indigenous knowledge.

Prasert Trakansuphakorn belongs to the Karen people in Thailand. He is the director of the Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples Foundation. He has been a practitioner of social development among indigenous peoples for over 20 years, specialising in indigenous knowledge, natural resource management and rotational farming in Thailand and South East Asia.

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EENET believes that enabling and inclusive education is never 'one size fits all' – knowledge and experience can be shared in different ways. Community respect for sacred spaces and practices, and learning through observation and gradual, careful practice are key ways indigenous knowledge is shared between generations in indigenous communities worldwide.

Differences between formal schooling and indigenous education exist, not just in terms of teaching/learning methods and curriculum, but also in understandings about what knowledge is and who owns and controls it. Indigenous knowledge is not an abstract or separate set of resources for indigenous communities, but very much a central part of who they are and how they live together. Although it draws on a history of tradition, indigenous knowledge is not rigid, or fixed in the past, but is a process which is responsive to change and continuously evolving. Indigenous knowledge is 'owned' by communities, rather than individuals – a different, but valuable and holistic approach to inclusive education!

Responding to 21st century imperatives: A new 'Index for Inclusion'

Tony Booth

In 2011 a radically revised edition of the 'Index for Inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools' was published in England. Here Tony Booth explains the changes and how it is being used.

Building on the past

The previous edition had been used in many countries, and translated and adapted into almost 40 languages. Thousands of schools used it in a variety of ways to review their cultures, policies and practices, create inclusive plans and put them into action. However, it was important to create a new edition that reflected 10 years of experience of using the Index, and developments in my own thinking about inclusion and educational development. The revision was an opportunity to improve on the previous edition and consider the most pressing concerns for education in the next decade.

Responding to imperatives

The new edition is green, dedicated to the decade of biodiversity 2011–2020. We must educate our children and ourselves to limit environmental degradation. This includes the rapid reduction in biodiversity, and global warming from greenhouse gases with their knock-on effects on sea levels, acidification and extreme weather.

An enduring imperative is to help our children recognise the humanity in those they see as different from themselves, and to understand the destruction that can happen when they don't. So the revised Index helps promote non-violent communication and relationships. I have also linked the participation of school staff, children, families and communities to the creation of participatory democracies and an understanding of global citizenship. Citizenship in the Index is learned more from the way schools promote collaborative relationships than from particular lessons in classrooms.

A framework of values

Imperatives are a strong way of expressing values – deep-seated beliefs which act as motives for action. The new Index introduces a framework of values derived through dialogues with many educators around the world (see Figure 1).
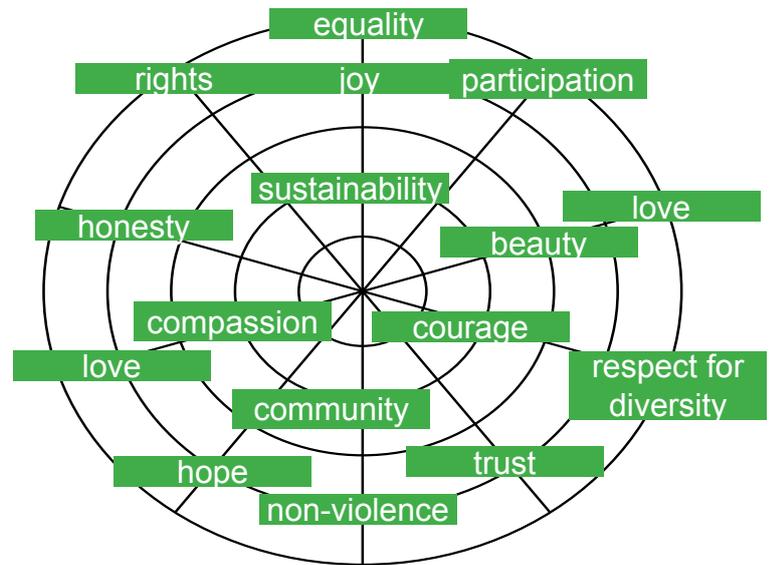

Fig. 1. A framework of inclusive education

The Index promotes 'values literacy': engaging in dialogue about the values behind our actions and how we can connect them to inclusive values. This is complex since our actions are also informed by the excluding values, dominant in many of our societies. But educators have commented on how such discussions help them to recover the values that brought them into education, provide them with a new sense of direction and inform moment-to-moment action.

Building alliances with other principled approaches

The new Index draws together principled approaches to the development of education. These are roots of a common 'inclusive' tree (Figure 2). If they are not connected then innovation can become just a succession of projects with a limited lifespan. New indicators help to bring them into a single approach to inclusive development.

Fig. 2

The biggest impact may come from a new 'curriculum for al' (Figure 3). Traditional curricula are a major barrier to learning. They separate knowledge from experience, and advantage the few young people who are comfortable with this. The 'new curriculum' is for everyone. It reflects rights, inclusive values and imperatives, and a set of inclusive principles such as: 'build learning activities from individual and collective experience'; 'link learning and feelings'; 'build academic knowledge on practical activity'; 'connect education to present realities in the locality and the world'. It allows all members of the community to contribute to teaching and learning activities. Each subject is linked locally and globally, supports economic activity, encourages ethical discussion and draws together an understanding of the past, present and future. It would make sense to people anywhere in the world; in a village or city in Nigeria, Vietnam, Venezuela or the Netherlands.

A traditional curriculum	A curriculum for all
Mathematics	Food cycles
Physics	Water
Chemistry	Clothing and body decoration
Biology	Housing/built environment
Geography	Movement/transport
History	Health/relationships
Language and literature	Earth, solar system and universe
Foreign languages	Life on earth
Art	Energy
Music	Communication/ communication technology
Religious education	Literature, arts and music
Physical education	Work/activity
Personal, health and social education	Ethics, power and government

Fig. 3. Traditional and inclusive curricula

The new Index in use

It has so far been translated/adapted into Spanish in Chile and Portuguese in Brazil, where a very promising Index network is being created in a number of institutions. Translations/adaptations are in progress in Germany and Hungary. Work with 10 schools begins in Bulgaria in December 2012.

Following a successful revised Index pilot with 35 schools in Norfolk, England, the municipal council has funded its dissemination in all its 450 schools. All advisory staff have a copy and the local authority wants to adapt it for use beyond schools.

In Chile, a very strong student movement has responded to widespread privatisation by pushing to reclaim free public education as a right for all citizens. Colleagues from Chile, Spain and myself have run Index workshops with several groups based within the private and public sectors. However, early on we decided to focus on supporting the public sector and met with the leaders of the student movement and their allies. As a result of reports from teachers in our workshops and responses of academics to our conferences, two universities have appointed colleagues to work with the Index in municipalities as part of their posts.

Concluding comment

The enthusiasm with which colleagues around the world are reacting to the new edition is a cause for optimism. Whatever the pressures, many are committed to taking greater control over educational development in accordance with their deeply held, inclusive values.

For more information contact Tony Booth: tonybooth46@gmail.com

Marching for free high quality public education in Chile

The new edition of the Index can be bought from Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE), for £39.50. Website: www.csie.org.uk. Email: admin@csie.org.uk.

Full reference: Booth, T. and Ainscow, M. (2011) The Index for Inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools. Bristol: CSIE.

Inclusive education and civic responsibility in Zambia

Paul Mumba

If you read any manual on inclusive education, it will tell you that inclusive education is a long-term, ongoing process of change involving all education stakeholders, not a fixed solution that can be implemented overnight. EENET has been lucky to observe such a process evolving in Zambia over many years. In 2000 EENET first met Paul Mumba, a teacher in Mpika, Zambia, who was working to bring inclusion and democracy to his class. We have stayed in contact ever since. Paul is still working hard to promote inclusive education. In this article he summarises some of his main work and achievements.

Ministry of Education policy in Zambia aims, as far as possible, to allow children with special educational needs to remain in regular schools. The government's Inclusive Schooling Programme (INSPRO) was initially implemented as a pilot project in Kalulushi district, Copperbelt province in 1997, and a positive evaluation in 2002 led to its expansion throughout Zambia.

Although negative attitudes towards inclusive education, and in particular education of disabled people, continue to act as a barrier, the Ministry of Education has given teachers the freedom to trial ideas that could improve their teaching methodologies. This means teachers have been empowered to take the initiative of translating inclusive policy into action and to make inclusive education a reality in their classrooms. This has not been easy, especially for teachers who have not received specific training in inclusive approaches and/or who are under the supervision of inflexible head teachers.

I was fortunate to work under a head teacher who allowed me to use and develop my child-centred, child-led approaches to inclusive education. I used my earlier experience of the child-to-child participatory and empowering approach, together with action learning methods introduced to me by EENET. Consequently I was able to design a way of including disabled children in my class that involved participation of parents, children and myself, using the strategies I developed through constant reflection and evaluation.

Sensitisation

In preparing to welcome disabled children into class I prepared lessons on disability issues, to raise awareness among the existing pupils about the different types of disabilities that can be found in their communities. I was then able to design other lessons that prepared children for accommodating their disabled peers when they came to school. After the sensitisation stage, children were ready to identify and locate the homes of disabled children in their community who were not coming to school.

Home visits

Home visits were done by both the children and me. Once the homes of disabled children were identified, the children would then lead me to them for a discussion with the parents. I encouraged parents to allow their disabled children to come to school. It was not an easy process. However, I linked the children in my class to these homes to enable a regular outreach programme to be carried by those children who had developed an interest. This continued until the disabled child was allowed to come to school by the parents or guardians.

Twinning

This was a key strategy for children's action. Twinning is the linking of one child with another or several others, and this has been used in my district within child-to-child health education work for many years. Disabled children were partnered with non-disabled children for purposes of socialisation. Non-disabled children were also able to advise the teacher (me) on how to relate to the disabled child, since they were together for a longer period of time.
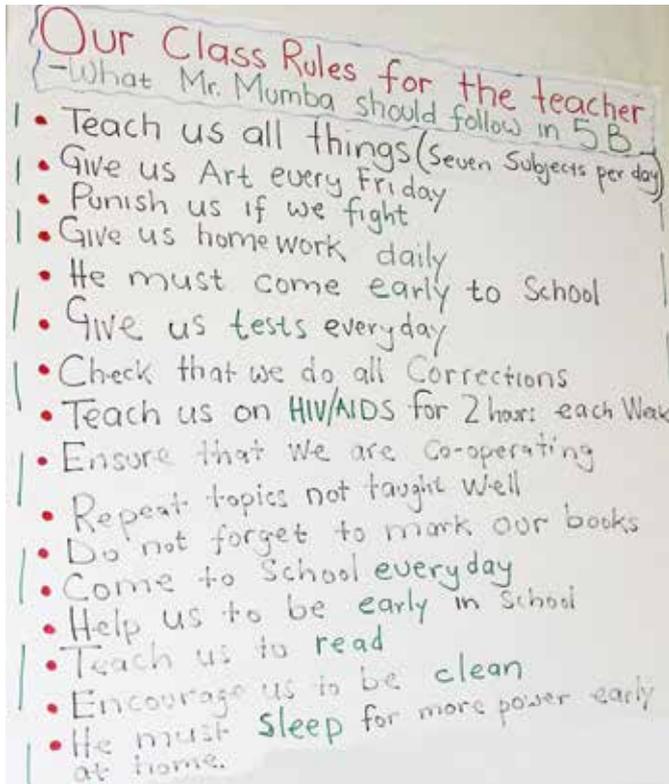
A poster of 'rules for the teacher' created by children in a democratic class

Democratising the class
My interest in democratic education was partly inspired by my government's desire to develop democracy in the country. I thought the education sector would be the best sector to set an example of democracy, particularly among teachers in their classrooms. Since democracy is about participation by all, including disabled children, I decided to introduce children to their rights, create co-operative learning groups and design ways by which children and parents could participate in the school curriculum. This involved classes of mixed gender, mixed social class and mixed ability children. Seventeen years after they had been involved in my classroom, the children were interviewed by a research group to find out about their levels of civic responsibility. They still remembered how my classes has promoted helping others, co-operative learning and gender equality, as part of civic responsibility.

a) Introducing children to their rights
Introducing children to their rights, despite being the most challenging task, helped them to identify their responsibilities irrespective of their abilities and disabilities. It helped them become more responsible.

b) Co-operative learning
These groups were different from the usual groups implemented in most schools. Co-operative learning groups helped to create happy relationships and a good environment. These groups were deliberately set up to include disabled and non-disabled children, mixed gender and abilities. This was a way of eliminating gender differences and closing any of the cultural gaps created between disabled and non-disabled children.

c) Participation in the school curriculum
Parents and children were invited and encouraged to participate in the development of the curriculum of the school through questionnaires and discussions on how best their children learn.

Lessons learned
- I learned that disabled children can be accommodated in the mainstream class without much difficulty if we reflect on our methods of teaching.
- Inclusive education methodologies can only be developed as a result of sharing ideas that have worked. Governments should create forums to identify and share such ideas. I have also learned a lot through networking with EENET.
- The success of inclusive education depends on monitoring practices in schools. Being observed motivated me. It was an opportunity to share and demonstrate my strategies.
- Children should be involved in developing inclusive education strategies. They were able to share with me what worked well in their communities. However, this requires democratic teaching methods.

Challenges
- The biggest challenge is when disabled children move from one school to another, as their new school may not believe in inclusive education, leading to drop-outs.
- There also needs to be more institutions focusing on developing life skills. One intellectually disabled pupil challenged me about the lack of places where they can learn practical skills alongside more academic subjects.

Paul is a teacher and teacher educator in Mpika, northern Zambia. Contact him at: chitimumba@yahoo.co.uk

Leave no-one behind: Disaster risk reduction education for children with disabilities in Indonesia

ASB Indonesia

During disasters, people with disabilities are among the most vulnerable. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Bangkok Action Agenda and Biwako +5 state that the safety and protection of people with disabilities must be ensured. Indonesia's Act No 24 on Disaster Management (2007) also stipulates that disaster management should be non-discriminatory and prioritise vulnerable groups. Yet disaster risk reduction (DRR) programmes targeting people with disabilities remain rare, perhaps because disability programming is perceived as both technically challenging and costly. DRR education for children may be available in schools, but the majority of Indonesia's children with disabilities are out of school – denying them access to potentially life-saving information. This article looks at how a project provided DRR education for children with disabilities who are not yet attending schools.

What is disaster risk reduction?

This is a process of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters. It involves, for instance, reducing exposure to hazards and reducing the vulnerability of people and property. It also involves sensible land and environmental management and improving people's preparedness for disastrous events. DRR education can be provided to children and adults, who can all play a role in reducing risks for themselves and their communities.

Who was involved in the project?

Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB), a German NGO, worked with Gunungkidul and Sleman district governments of Yogyakarta province on a project called 'Building resilience for children with disabilities: strengthening DRR information delivery Indonesia.[1] The project targeted 919 children with disabilities outside of school in all of the districts' 230 villages. A further 7,990 family members and neighbours benefited from the programme. The project used a training-of-trainers approach involving existing community cadres – social workers (usually women) who work voluntarily in a community, for example in data collection, community empowerment, community health, etc. Members of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) collaborated with them as 'role-model' trainers.

What approach and tools were used?

An Information Action (IA) approach was used to simplify the process of working with people with disabilities in DRR and address two questions: Can people with disabilities access DRR information? Can they act on that information? Few existing DRR materials can be accessed by children with disabilities, so ASB developed some simple training resources, such as visual materials/activities for children with hearing impairments. These materials provide a simple point of access for cadres who lack a disability technical background and who work in contexts of generally low disability awareness. Key adaptations to DRR education in relation to disability include focusing on providing family/community support for children who may have difficulty acting on the information they receive; and considering children's ability to evacuate a location either independently or with assistance.

What impact has this work had?

Cadres reported that participating in this project changed their attitudes towards disability and inspired them to engage better with people with disabilities. They also showed a strong commitment to continue training within the wider community.

"… I always felt pity on children with disabilities and thought that they could do nothing. Now, I realise these children are the same as all children. They also can learn if we teach them. I am glad that through this project a communication forum on DRR and children with disabilities has been established..."
(Yuliatiningsih, a village cadre, Gunungkidul)

Support from government is crucial for ensuring sustainability. Using cadres at the sub-district and village levels to provide DRR information and explain procedures to children with disabilities has now been formalised in local regulations. This approach covers all villages in a district, making it highly replicable; it is currently being adapted for use in Ciamis District, West Java.[2] Furthermore, to secure future planning and budgeting of DRR actions for people with disabilities, the district government in Gunungkidul has established an inclusive DRR Action Plan.

Wider impact
More far-reaching impacts have been seen from this project. Most out-of-school children with disabilities, and their families, have limited social interaction within their communities and very low self-esteem. Following trainings by village cadres and DPO members, many children with disabilities and their families demonstrated increased self-confidence.

"Before receiving the DRR training, my child was so shy. He always avoided making eye-contact and ran when meeting strangers. After the training, he started to be more open. We also found he had a talent in drawing. When he showed the drawing to others during the training, he got many compliments. This positive attitude obviously has raised my child's confidence. He now enjoys playing with other children and is comfortable in making eye-contact and is not afraid of meeting strangers." (Subarjo, a father of a deaf child)

Wider access and support for children with disabilities has also been achieved during the project. For instance, 85 children with disabilities are now in school and 66 have received wheelchairs from the government and United Cerebral Palsy Wheels for Humanity (UCP WHP). A further 31 children now receive social protection health insurance from government. This has largely been the result and initiative of cadres and DPO members themselves.

"The trainer suggested I register my child to attend school. Now, he is going to school and enjoys learning so much. He is happy because he has got many friends. I can see some developments after his enrolment at school."
(Martini, a mother of a child with Down's syndrome)

The project has shown that DRR information and procedures can be effectively delivered economically and on a larger scale to children with disabilities, and by individuals from a non-technical background. There is an urgent need to reduce the risk from disasters and to build the resilience of communities, and because this we must include the most vulnerable within DRR.

[1] The project was co-financed by the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).
[2] "Widening participation of women and children with disabilities in community-focused disaster risk reduction", a project co-funded by Australia-Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction

Networking for social justice: The role of self-help groups of blind people, Bangladesh

Gertrude Fefoame, Susie Miles and Diane Mulligan

A self-help group is formed by people facing a common problem or situation. It usually involves pooling resources and information, offering mutual support, and perhaps a combined voice in advocacy. In Bangladesh, blind people have taken a leading role in challenging social exclusion through their role as self-help group members. Supported by Sightsavers and its partners, the self-help groups developed networking relationships with influential community leaders and organisations. Supporting disabled children and their families to access school is part of their role. While Sightsavers' mandate is to support people with visual impairments, its approach to social inclusion advocates a broader engagement with exclusion challenges. Here we show how one activist has challenged exclusion and supported education.

Speaking out for disabled people

The mosque plays a major role in village life. Having a strong religious faith is seen as a valuable community resource. Tareque is the President of the federation of self-help groups and a paid employee of the mosque, leading prayers – a common role for blind men in South Asia.

Friday prayers give him an opportunity to talk about the rights of disabled people, like the right to education. He also has the responsibility of visiting community members, including those with disabilities. He has brought together his dual roles in the self-help group and the mosque to better understand the families' challenges and encourage them to share experiences. As a person with a visual impairment, Tareque is a positive role model for people with disabilities in the community.

Speaking out for social justice

However, Tareque does not only focus on family members with disabilities. He has taken a stand for social justice in general, from his position as a religious leader. His role in the mosque introduced him to a wider range of community members. This story highlights his role in advocating for rights beyond disability:

Fatima was 14 when her parents wanted to arrange her marriage. They received an offer from a potential husband which did not involve having to pay a dowry – an attraction for a poor family. However, Tareque and two influential community elders decided to stop the marriage. They believed Fatima needed to, and had the right to, continue her studies until she was 18.

Fatima was from a very poor family. Neighbours pressured the family to arrange her marriage, as they considered her to be an appropriate age. Tareque and the community elders went to Fatima's house to convince the parents to delay the marriage. They succeeded and Fatima was allowed to stay in school. When she reached 18, her marriage was arranged to a different man, and still no dowry payment was demanded.

Although Fatima's desperately poor parents escaped paying a dowry, they had to support their daughter for four more years in school before she married. Nevertheless, the long-term benefits of preventing early marriage, with its potential to cause further poverty, is clear. The intervention will not just have a long-term impact on Fatima's own life. Because she is educated, the chances of her own children receiving an education and gaining access to health care increase. Educating Fatima has helped in breaking down the cycle of poverty in her family and community.

As an educated blind person, Tareque is acutely aware of the vicious cycle of poverty (and especially of poverty and disability) in his community. This is why he supports self-help group members to generate income and achieve a reasonable standard of living. He recognises the potential of education to provide an escape from poverty, hence leding the initiative to support Fatima's continued education.

Disabling university environments

Dr. Armineh Soorenian

The difficulties experienced by disabled and by international students (as two separate groups) in participating in a university context has been well documented. However, there is far less evidence about the unique double or multiple barriers disabled international students encounter when studying in the UK. In this article, Armineh outlines her own investigations into this issue.

The study
I conducted a focus group and semi-structured interviews with 30 disabled international students in British universities. I assessed the barriers they faced based on their multiple identities as 'disabled', 'international' and sometimes 'mature'; and how some of these barriers were reinforced and exacerbated through the interplay of the students' varied identities. Below are some findings:

Information
The provision of inaccessible (e.g. small print) and inappropriate (e.g. general and irrelevant) information was the first obstacle in the participants' university experience. This limited their choices of suitable British higher education institutions, and increased their anxiety related to being both a disabled and an international student in a new country.

Disability services
Disabled international students did not know how to disclose their impairments in a different cultural and linguistic context. They were not aware of the benefits of doing so, and worried about the negative effects of such disclosure. Many managed without support (e.g. five participants relied on informal support from friends, which at times proved to be problematic).

Learning and teaching
There were difficulties accessing lecture/seminar settings and taught material. Mostly such barriers applied to all disabled students, regardless of nationality.

Social life
Many participants were isolated due to inaccessible social venues and a lack of activities compatible with their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This was often compounded by age-related issues affecting disabled, mature international students' participation in social life. Most social activities were aimed at non-disabled, young, undergraduate domestic students. Consequently, disabled mature international students felt discriminated against on different levels in most university social events.

Recommendations
I proposed a list of recommendations to make the university environment accessible and inclusive for 'all'. These recommendations sought to help disabled international students have a university experience more equal to that of their non-disabled international and disabled domestic counterparts.

I recommended that universities must provide accessible and specific information, both pre and post arrival, on a range of student services. This must describe how to disclose different impairments, and the benefits of doing so. It must also list the range of support services available.

Insights in the field of inclusive education can be used by a range of educational organisations to assist in adopting an inclusive culture. My investigation has direct ramifications for a much more diverse array of students from varied minority backgrounds, all of whom would benefit from inclusive practices in education.

Armineh completed her PhD in Disability Studies in the Centre for Disability Studies at the University of Leeds in 2011. She has multiple impairments and studied at a British university as an international student from Iran. Her research was informed and enriched by her first-hand experience .

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Useful publications

Posters

Teachers can help everyone learn - Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, 2010
This poster accompanies INEE Pocket Guide to Supporting Learners with Disabilities. It summarises key points from the pocket guide, and can be used to encourage people to read the guide. Available at: http://bit.ly/SpKcRG Pocket guide available at: http://bit.ly/WHGB6V Limited numbers of pocket guide and poster hard copies are available from EENET.

Children of Armenia Speak Out… about good teachers (poster) and Children of Armenia Speak Out… about inclusive education (poster), World Vision Armenia, 2011
Two posters featuring children's views gathered during a project evaluation. They highlight what children think inclusive education is and what they think makes a 'good' teacher. They also promote the concept of pupil voice. Available at: http://bit.ly/WHGB6V and http://bit.ly/VBT3Wy

Quality Inclusive Education to End Exclusion – IDDC, 2012
This poster summarises key quality indicators for inclusive education, and highlights important factors that underpin successful inclusive education. Available at: http://bit.ly/P0Sul5 Limited number of hard copies available from EENET.

Toolkits

INEE online inclusive education training module – INEE, 2012
The Education in Emergencies training package consists of modules with PowerPoint slides, facilitator guides and exercises. Module 15 is about Inclusive Education in Emergencies. All modules available at: http://bit.ly/PPxCi7

Realising Rights: Changing Lives. Video user's guide, Babul's story Sightsavers, 2011
"Realising Rights: Changing Lives" is a film showing examples of Sightsavers' work with people with visual impairments. It focuses on social inclusion and can be used for awareness raising. The guide suggests different ways to use the inclusive education section of the film featuring a boy called Babul. 14 pages. Available at: http://bit.ly/WHI6lB Video available at: http://bit.ly/RyHlWx

Reports

Sightsavers Inclusive Education Work in Bangladesh. Summary of a scoping study 2010 Sightsavers, 2012
This summary document provides an overview of Sightsavers' work on inclusive education in Bangladesh. It highlights key lessons learned, as well as experiences and best practices that can be built on or expanded, and areas that still need to be improved. 20 pages. Available online at: http://bit.ly/PPxNdf Limited number of free hard copies also available from EENET.

Guidelines

Community-Based Rehabilitation: CBR guidelines – Education chapter – WHO, 2010
Multilateral agencies have worked together to develop these CBR guidelines. This particular chapter focuses on education and is broken down into sections ranging from early childhood care to lifelong learning. It contains multiple case studies from around the world and a range of suggested activities. 79 pages. ISBN: 978-92-4-154805-2 Available at: http://bit.ly/Xcgx2r (note this is a large download – 4mb)

Books

Implementing Inclusive Education: A Commonwealth Guide to Implementing Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Second Edition) – Richard Rieser, 2012
This book provides an action plan, based on first-hand evidence of what works and ways in which barriers can be overcome to make a reality of the United Nations goal of Education for All. 348 pages. Price: £25. Available from: http://bit.ly/PppyEJ