

Activities used during the 'Inclusion in Action' workshop

Zanzibar, 7-10 February 2006



Published by:

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First published: 12 March 2007

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Availability: This report is available online from the websites of the Atlas Alliance (www.atlas-alliansen.no) and the Enabling Education Network (www.eenet.org.uk).

It is also available in Braille format and in Kiswahili translation, from the Atlas Alliance.

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1. Introduction

1.1. This report

This report provides supplementary information to the main workshop report “Inclusion in Action: Report of an inclusive education workshop, 7–10 February 2006”.¹ The main report details the discussions and outputs from the Atlas Alliance workshop. In this report we explain some of the key activities used during the workshop, and comment on their usefulness. This report should ideally be read in conjunction with the main report.

1.2. Approaches used during the workshop

The workshop sought to help participants to learn from each other’s experiences of, and ideas for, planning, implementing and reviewing inclusive education work within a developing country context. It aimed to help them think about/develop their own plans for further action on inclusive education. The workshop was designed so that, in the process of conveying information about inclusive education, it would also demonstrate participatory processes that participants could use in their work, and demonstrate some of the teaching and learning approaches that often characterise an inclusive classroom.

Active learning

An active learning approach was promoted throughout the workshop. This encouraged participants to take an active role in – and to a certain extent take responsibility for – their own learning processes. This approach promotes finding answers and piecing together information from a variety of sources, rather than just having a teacher/trainer who dictates a set lesson. Because inclusive education is not a simple concept that can be applied in the same way in all places, participants in inclusive education workshops need to be facilitated to find appropriate information for their own specific situations, and to find the best way of moving forward from their own unique starting points.

In addition to the scheduled activities, active learning was supported by encouraging discussions and networking during break times, and by providing a small resource library so that participants could do extra reading if they wished.

Different learning styles

The workshop used group and pair work, as well as plenary discussions, presentations and role play. This range of activity styles helped to increase the likelihood of finding a learning style to suit each participant – since not everyone enjoys or learns equally well from the same type of activity. The use of varied

¹ Atlas Alliance (2007) “Inclusion in Action: Report of an inclusive education workshop, Zanzibar, 7-10 February 2006” – available from the Atlas Alliance website (www.atlas-alliansen.no) or from the Enabling Education Network website (www.eenet.org.uk).

activities to suit diverse learning styles also served to demonstrate how an effective learner-centred inclusive classroom might work.

All experience is relevant

The workshop aimed to promote the idea that you do not have to be an existing inclusive education ‘expert’ to take actions to make education more inclusive. Everyone has ideas and experiences that can be relevant and useful to the development of a more inclusive education system and wider society. The workshop therefore used several activities² to highlight the important role of learning from personal experiences and ideas, in addition to learning from professional, ‘expert’ ideas and experiences.

² For instance, the story-telling interviews (see section 2.6) and the ‘advertising inclusion’ activities (see section 2.7) both drew on participants’ personal experiences, not necessarily within inclusive education work.

2. Communication skills session

2.1. Why did we include this session?

Whether we are giving formal presentations or working in small groups, we need certain communication skills. We need to be able to tell people clearly about ourselves, our work, our experiences or our ideas, and often we need to be able to do this in a very short amount of time. It is common for participants to lack skills and/or confidence as communicators. This can affect the progress and outcomes of a workshop – especially a participatory workshop in which participants are expected to interact, not just listen.

The first day of the “Inclusion in Action” workshop, therefore, sought to help participants become more confident and efficient as communicators and as listeners. This session also encouraged them to express *personal* experiences and skills, to demonstrate that they were not starting the workshop in a powerless position of zero knowledge. Accessible communication and what makes a good workshop were also discussed.

Investing initial workshop time in participant and presenter preparation is a tried and tested way of increasing everyone’s participation in, and benefit from, the overall event.

2.2. Communication worries

Encouraging participants to think about what they want to achieve from the workshop, and what worries them about the workshop, can help facilitators to understand any concerns and needs participants have in relation to communication (and other) issues. A pre-workshop questionnaire was completed by participants. In one section they listed the things they most wanted to learn about or cover at the workshop, and the things that most concerned them about attending the event.³ The following concerns relating to communication were expressed, and the facilitator was able to help participants discuss these.

³ See Appendix 1 for details of participants’ responses.

Participant's comment	Facilitator's response
Time management – worried we won't have enough time for discussions/ presentations	We can all play a role in this by being punctual in the morning and after breaks! We will also do some activities to help you practise succinct 'story telling' and communication
Lack of experience – worried we won't have anything to talk about	Everyone has experiences relevant to this workshop, even if these are not gained directly in the field of inclusive education. You will all have plenty of valuable knowledge to share
Participants are too diverse – it won't be easy to discuss with so many different people, from different backgrounds and levels of experience	Diversity is a positive resource – the fact that there are people from different background means we will learn about inclusive education/inclusive society from a wider range of perspectives
Some people might be reluctant to share the knowledge/ideas they have – how can we 'make' people talk	We are all here to share, and all participants here are equal, so no one should feel nervous or unwilling to share. We will use various activities to help everyone feel comfortable about sharing and talking.
There might be unconstructive/negative criticisms made about what we say/ present	This workshop is not about judging each other's progress towards inclusive education. No one should make critical remarks about other people's work, without offering positive, constructive suggestions and genuine support for improving that work.

2.3. Helping participants to mix

At workshops we tend to want to sit with people we know – it can be daunting to mix with a large group of strangers and talk to people we have never met before. However, if participants don't mix then the workshop becomes a less effective way of sharing experiences and ideas. "Networking swap-shop" is an icebreaking activity which can also be used to stimulate discussions on a particular subject.

Participants were given 'post-its' (sticky notepaper). They were asked to write their answers to these two questions (and their names) on their post-its:

- "In relation to inclusive education I need to know..."
- "In relation to inclusive education I can offer..."

Participants then stuck their 'post-its' onto two posters headed "I need to know.." and "I can offer..."⁴ They were encouraged to find someone who was their match. For example, if a participant needed to know how to work with parents groups, then they

⁴ See Appendix 2 for details of participants' responses.

had to look for another participant who was offering “experience of working with parents”. They then had to sit with their new partner and chat about the issue.

After initial shyness, participants began to find people who matched their knowledge needs/offers, and lively conversations followed. Small groups formed as participants with the same needs/offers began to join existing pairs. As this was just an ice-breaker, the activity was limited to 15 minutes, which was not long enough for many participants to complete their conversations with their pairs. However, the facilitator encouraged participants to continue their discussions throughout the week, during break times etc. The evaluation at the end of the workshop indicates that many participants did indeed make use of such informal discussion opportunities and learned many new things as a result.



Networking swap-shop

2.5. Accessible workshops

Accessibility in a workshop is about more than just the clarity of visual and audio communication or the adaptation of the physical environment in the venue. The atmosphere created during a workshop can play a significant role in participants' sense of inclusion and access to the knowledge they are seeking. Participants can also promote or hinder the accessibility of an event. We therefore spent some time focusing on the issue of atmosphere and other accessibility issues, in order to develop our own 'ground rules' for the rest of the workshop.

Photo elicitation

Participants were shown two photographs of workshops. The images were displayed on the overhead screen and printed photographs were also distributed. Participants worked in groups of 4–5 people. They were asked to discuss the following questions:

- What do you think is happening in each photo?
- Describe the atmosphere in each photo?
- How are people interacting?
- How do these pictures compare to your experiences of meetings and workshops?

There were lively discussions and laughter, among all groups. The photographs stimulated discussions on general issues, such as “how can one do group work with 80 students in a class?”. Participants also made detailed suggestions about the behaviour and feelings of the people in the photographs.



Photograph (a)

Participants highlighted that certain people in this situation looked bored, sleepy, distracted, not paying attention to the presenter, like they were laughing and joking, etc.



Photograph (b)

Participants commented that this image showed more lively participants, ongoing debate, interest in the topic, everyone joining in.

Note: these two pictures were taken just an hour apart at the *same workshop*! The first picture shows the opening session, during which the seats were arranged according to the participants' past experience of workshops. The second image shows how the facilitators changed the seating arrangement to enable more participatory activities to take place.

After being stimulated by the photographs, participants were asked to make suggestions, in plenary, about what makes a good workshop. They drew on ideas from the photographs and their own experiences of workshops and meetings. They concluded the following:

What makes a good workshop?

- accept and respect
- audibility
- cater for special needs: e.g. sign language. Also when working with a visually impaired colleague, two people should describe photographs/images to them
- don't ignore/criticise ideas
- everybody is involved in the discussions (small groups ensure this).
- good time management (though we must also be flexible and not kill learning discussions just to keep to the schedule)
- if someone is not joining in, we can all encourage them
- inclusive
- willingness to share our ideas
- language and understanding (participants need to say if they are not understanding)
- laughter
- learning how to work in groups
- matching the topic and the participants
- need to mix everybody (different countries, gender, by job types, etc)
- objectives clear to everybody (participants need to remind the facilitator to explain if objectives are not clear)
- stimulates the participants by giving them tasks
- the facilitator
- two-way communication
- visual access.

The facilitator also presented an overhead of some other basic accessibility rules:

- don't speak too fast
- face your audience
- use simple words
- avoid jargon and abbreviations
- write in clear large letters on flip charts and overheads, using dark colours
- read or describe what is shown on overheads
- don't squeeze too much text onto a page/flip chart
- take regular breaks
- tell someone if you cannot understand, see, hear or are uncomfortable.

It was stressed that it is every participant's responsibility – not just the facilitators' and organisers' responsibility – to ensure that all of these rules and 'good workshop' elements are followed. During the week several participants did ask speakers to slow down, explain things again, or move so that they could be seen or so that the overhead screen could be seen.

Lessons for including blind and visually impaired participants in photo elicitation activities

- The use of photos and other images is not restricted to activities with sighted workshop participants.
- Ensure that at least two other group members describe the photo to the blind participant (as each person will see/focus on different aspects of the picture).
- Facilitators may need to offer initial support to group members who are not used to describing photographs, or who are struggling to describe an image in sufficient detail.
- Listening to the description of photographs can help blind participants to conceptualise better the issues being discussed, and sighted participants also benefit from having to look more closely at a picture in order to describe it – they may see things they would otherwise have overlooked.
- Photo elicitation, if well facilitated, can be a good way of increasing the active participation of blind participants in group work discussions.

2.6. Story-telling interviews

At workshops we often need to convey information about our experiences or ideas in a very short space of time. We also have to listen to a lot of information given by other speakers. Sometimes we can miss, or misunderstand, important facts, ideas or instructions if we do not listen carefully. The story-telling activity gave participants a chance to practise conveying essential/relevant information about an experience in just five minutes, and to practise listening actively so that they could retell the story. This activity is also designed to help participants to begin reflecting on their *personal* experiences of inclusion and equity issues.

Participants were asked to sit in pairs (with someone they did not already know). They had to think about something they had done to promote inclusion or equal rights for a person or group of people who might otherwise be marginalised (not necessarily in education). They had five minutes to tell this story to their partner. The partner was an active listener, writing brief notes (not transcripts) about key facts from the story. They were not allowed to interrupt. When the storyteller had finished, the listener used their notes to retell the story to their partner. After this they could discuss the story, and then they swapped roles.

A plenary discussion was held about the activity. Participants were asked to comment on how they felt and whether there was anything particularly difficult or useful about the activity.

Difficult

- It was difficult to organise the story in such a short time. I sometimes had to go back to fill in details I forgot.
- Trying to work out the story quickly in my mind was difficult, especially because I had to translate from my own language.
- Not enough time for asking the story-teller questions.
- Such a short timeframe may lead to us telling the things that are easiest to convey, rather than the most important thing.

- Very difficult to listen for five minutes without asking a question. It's a torture in a way!
- It made me anxious to hear the full story.

Useful

- Listening inspired the partner.
- This story-telling brought us really close to each other – and if we were pupils in a classroom, we would be really close to each other.
- Good to 'change environment'.
- Important to write a few points down so you can remember.
- Active listening makes you ask a few relevant questions, so it is not all silent.
- Good to be impromptu.
- Discovered common experience that we need to share.
- I tended to create a picture in my mind, to relate to what my partner was telling.

Participants were reminded that these sorts of focused speaking and listening skills were the kind of skills they needed to use throughout the workshop. They would also be useful skills to use in their day-to-day work.

Some of the challenges participants experienced with brief story-telling can be overcome with practice. If we get used to reflecting on our personal (and work) experiences, we will get better at telling the important – instead of just the easy – elements of the story in a short amount of time.

This activity helped to remind participants that telling the story of one's experience is a vital part of sharing ideas, which is an essential activity in the development of inclusive education. Each time we tell the story we may think of a new piece of important information, or we may find a new way of analysing the information which will help us in the process of creating solutions to problems.

2.7. Reflecting on personal experiences and skills

Aim

Often participatory workshops can be daunting. Participants may worry that they do not know enough about a particular subject, and that they will struggle to join in. Workshops also often cover difficult subjects – problems, things we are struggling to deal with. The following activity, therefore, aimed to help participants start the main workshop feeling positive about what they had already done. It sought to help them recognise the beliefs and skills they already had which would make them ideal people to work on inclusion and equality issues.

Process

Participants were grouped according to the type of job they do. However, they were allowed to choose their category, rather than being told which group they should join. Some participants chose to join groups that the facilitators had not expected, showing that the way we view our work can be different to the way others view it!

The groups were as follows:

- teachers and head teachers
- local staff in international NGOs
- international NGO staff who work in headquarters
- education officers and inspectors (there were many, so they formed two groups)
- parents, parents organisations, disabled people's organisations

Participants were given the following instructions

- **Pretend** that a donor is offering funding to projects, schools, ministries, etc, that can show that they are working on inclusive education or other activities to make society more equal and inclusive for everyone.
- The donor wants applicants to write an advertisement, which shows all the things they have already done to help make schools and/or society in general more inclusive. The advertisement can also explain the positive *skills and attitudes* of the staff in the project/school/ministry.
- It needs to look like an advert (e.g. like you find in a magazine or on a board by the roadside): short, snappy, colourful.
- Before you start making the advert poster – have a discussion in your group to identify the skills, attitudes and experiences that you will mention in the poster.
- You need to be 100% truthful!
- You may find it useful to start with this statement: “We are the ideal project/school/ministry to receive funding for work that promotes inclusive education/society because....”

Participants found this activity quite difficult. Possible reasons for this include:

- *We are not used to thinking about our personal beliefs and experiences in relation to work.*
Our work often encourages us to ‘depersonalise’ issues, and maintain a certain degree of ‘detached professionalism’. Yet it is humans who make society inclusive or exclusive, so we all need to be able to reflect on our own personal attitudes and actions, without fear of losing professional status.
- *We are not used to thinking and representing our ideas in different ways.*
We have become used to preparing very formal documents following a formula, to meet the demands of donors; and we have often received an education that prioritises formality instead of creativity. Therefore, producing a fun, creative advert/poster to convey a message is not something we are all used to doing. But it is still a valid (and for some people a much more accessible) way of communicating information. So we should practise using this sort of creative communication approach, especially when working with children. It was also perhaps not made clear enough by the facilitators that this was a *pretend scenario*. Therefore some misinterpreted the activity as teaching them about a new project proposal methodology.

In this workshop, lack of time prevented each group from presenting their work in plenary. Instead, one person from each group stood next to their poster to offer explanations, while the other participants walked around viewing the posters and discussing their contents. Longer plenary discussions may have helped to clear up any lingering misunderstanding about the activity.

Despite the difficulties with this activity, it produced much group debate and some detailed posters. The activity helped to highlight some of the skills, attitudes or experiences that are ideal for helping us move forward with inclusion work, and which many participants already possess (see list below). Participants were encouraged to look at the posters to remind themselves of their existing skills/experience, if they felt unsure of their abilities at any point in the workshop.

- parents mobilisation skills
- self-advocacy training experience
- knowledge of inclusive education
- knowledge on needs and rights of children
- wide experience in lobbying for inclusion policies
- working with experts and professionals in health, education, CBR
- ability to network with disabled people's organisations and local government authorities
- "together we can do it!"
- "we believe that by committing ourselves, even the little we have can help our society"
- we have:
 - ♦ network of resources (human and material)
 - ♦ experience from multilateral and bilateral relations (governments)
 - ♦ in depth knowledge of community work; special needs; inclusive practices; multicultural expertise; language abilities
- we are experienced teachers. We know how to:
 - ♦ bring parents together to discuss what school is for
 - ♦ organise children to be able to act on their own
 - ♦ organise workshops/seminars for parents and teachers
 - ♦ improvise local equipment for assessment, teaching and learning
 - ♦ listen to children and parents
 - ♦ reach the community through TV and radio programmes
 - ♦ create awareness on attitude change
 - ♦ identify children with disabilities for placement in schools for making them learn.

2.8. Reflecting on the communication skills activities

Participants were asked to comment on how the above communication skills activities could fit in with the practice of inclusive education. They offered the following suggestions:

- I can use them in teacher training and with students.
- Within our school setting we could use a little bit of these activities. Teachers can get into small group to create [teaching/learning] materials.
- The process has been inclusive through building on the diversity within the group.
- The process has been participatory, and such activities can be used in different processes with all stakeholders at all levels when introducing inclusive education.

3. Main workshop activities

3.1. “Agree-disagree”

This is a warm up activity that also encourages participants to engage in debate about the workshop’s chosen topic. Participants stood in one part of the room. On either side of the room, two signs were stuck on the wall; one said ‘agree’, the other ‘disagree’. The facilitators read out statements, and participants needed to position themselves next to the agree or disagree sign, depending on their opinions. If they were unsure or undecided, they stood in the middle. Participants were asked to try to convince others to choose or change sides.

The statements read out in this activity should vary in their level of controversy. In this instance two of the statements did not inspire greatly opposing views from participants. But a statement about whether pregnant girls should continue their education resulted in a very heated and detailed debate. This was an ideal way to get participants woken up for subsequent workshop discussions, while at the same time encouraging them to think about an issue they might not previously have considered to be part of the inclusive education debate.⁵

3.2. Defining inclusive education

This session involved a plenary brainstorm on how participants would define inclusive education. There was a presentation of EENET’s interpretation of inclusive education, which participants were also asked to comment on, add to, etc. Various diagrams were presented which illustrate the different ways of approaching the ‘problem’ of how to deal with excluded learners – from seeing the child as the problem to seeing the education system as the problem. These were also then discussed, and they inspired some detailed discussions about both the definitions of inclusive education as well as wider challenges of how we conceptualise and implement inclusive education.⁶ Using a mixture of brainstorming, presentations and discussions was a good way of encouraging participants to reflect on their own interpretations and understandings of concepts like inclusive education, rather than simply accepting explanations imposed on them by a trainer.

3.3. What does inclusive education look like?

This activity again involved photo elicitation, using photographs taken mostly by school children in Zambia and Indonesia. Participants worked in self-selected groups

⁵ Details of the debates are given in the main report: “Inclusion in Action: Report of an inclusive education workshop, 7–10 February 2006”.

⁶ Details of the brainstorm, diagrams and discussions can be found in the “Inclusion in Action” report.

and were given a set of images to look at. They were asked to discuss the following questions:⁷

- Which pictures do you think show inclusive schools, or schools that are making progress towards becoming inclusive? Why?
- How do the pictures compare to the image you have in your mind about what an inclusive school is like?

Ample time was provided to study, reflect on and discuss the images, and they were also discussed briefly in plenary as well. This activity helped to illustrate clearly to participants that inclusive education is multi-faceted – there are many possible challenges and solutions to making education more inclusive, and different stakeholders may see different challenges/solutions even within the same situation. We cannot use just one photograph to prove that a school is or is not inclusive.

3.4. Inclusive education is an ongoing process of ensuring presence, participation and achievement of learners

This part of the workshop was covered primarily through presentations and plenary discussions. The details are provided in the main report: “Inclusion in Action, Report of an inclusive education workshop, 7–10 February 2006”.

3.5. Barriers and solutions

In addition to some short presentations from the facilitator,⁸ five main activities were used during the workshop to help participants to reflect on and discuss the issue of barriers and solutions to inclusion: photo elicitation, mountain diagrams, personal writing, school visits, and role play.

3.5.1. Photo elicitation

Participants, working in randomly selected small groups, were given a set of six photographs. Each group had different photographs. They were asked to look at the images and find as many barriers to inclusion as possible. They were advised to look for obvious and less obvious barriers, and to look for all types of barriers (physical environment, attitude, policy, practice and resources).

In plenary, the participants then listed the different barriers they thought were being depicted by the photographs. They were encouraged to think about which type of barrier it was, and who was affected by that barrier. The use of photographs stimulated lively discussions. Different people interpret photographs in different ways and have different ideas about who is or is not affected by a particular barrier.

⁷ Details of the photographs used and the resulting discussions can be found in the “Inclusion in Action” report.

⁸ See the “Inclusion in Action” report for details.

An additional brainstorm was also carried out in this session around the concept of multiple identities; the idea that every person has many different characteristics and that they may face barriers to inclusion based on one or more of these characteristics or identities. Given that most participants were from disability organisations/projects, they were asked to brainstorm the other identities that a disabled person might have.

These activities were useful for reinforcing the message that inclusive education is a complex process that reaches beyond just issues of disability, environmental accessibility and resources.

3.5.2. Mountain diagrams

This activity helps participants to think about:

- what they want to achieve (the goal at the top of the mountain)
- the barriers they have to overcome to reach the top
- the signs of hope they have already encountered on the journey, or the ideas they have for solutions to the barriers.

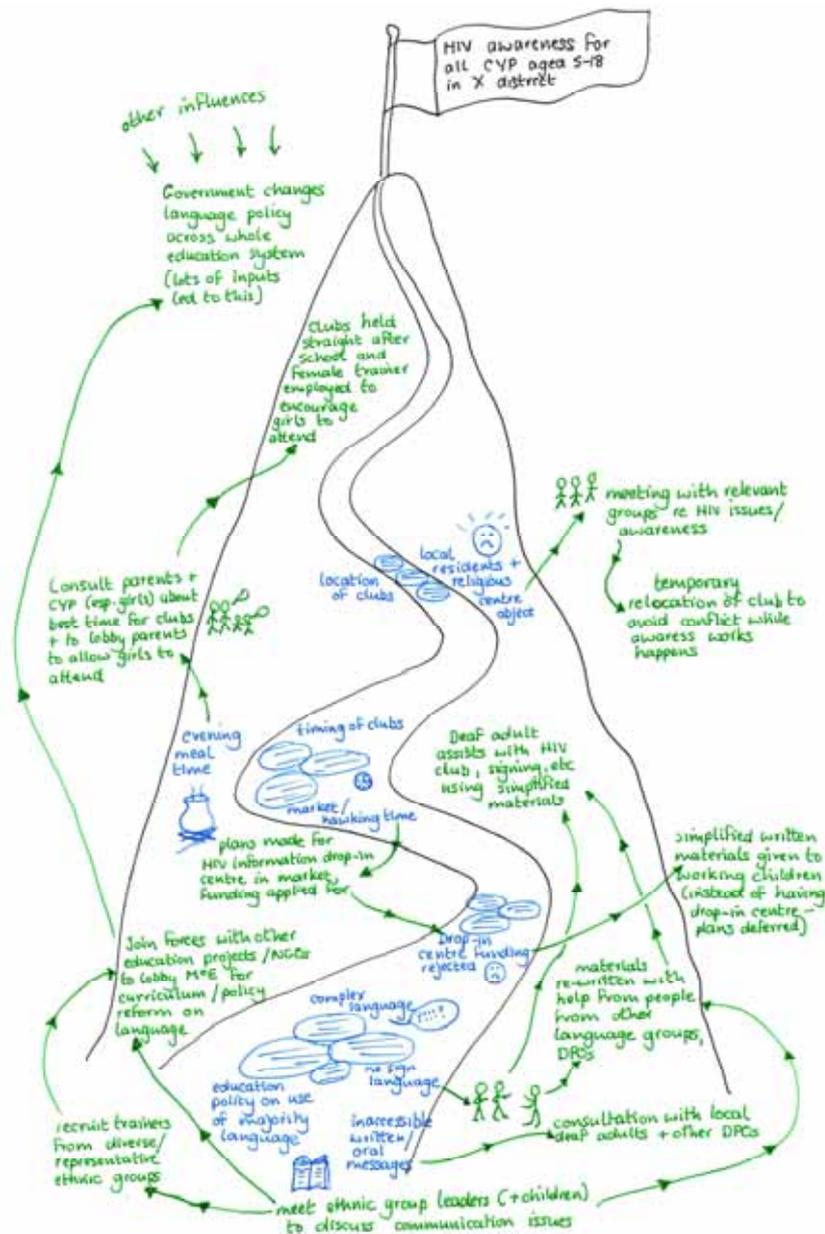
It is a more engaging way of talking about and recording these issues, than simply holding a discussion and writing notes. It can be particularly helpful for participants who may be shy about talking, or who may not be so good at writing.

Groups were asked to draw a mountain on a flipchart sheet. At the top would be their vision or goal relating to inclusive education. They were asked to add the path they would take towards that goal, and depict the barriers or problems they would encounter, or have already encountered. They could use drawings, symbols and/or words to mark the barriers. Participants were reminded not to focus only on physical and financial barriers. They should also mark on who would be affected by each barrier, and if possible, who could help them find out more information about each barrier.

In the early stages of the activity they focused mainly on identifying the barriers, and solutions were added to the diagrams later. An existing diagram depicting an HIV project goal, was shown briefly as an example of the concept (see below).

Participants were grouped to work with people from the same country, or with whom they would be likely to work in real life. Facilitators initially spent time with each group, explaining the activity and encouraging participants to think as specifically as possible about the barriers they would depict on their mountains. It was emphasised that more specific descriptions/drawings of the barriers will enable us to make more specific – and thus more appropriate and successful – solutions. A significant amount of time was dedicated to the mountain diagram activity, spread over three days. This enabled participants to revisit their diagrams in light of ideas they may have gained through other presentations, the school visits, etc.⁹

⁹ See the “Inclusion in Action” report for details of the mountain diagrams created by participants.



Example of a mountain diagram about an HIV awareness project

3.5.3. Personal reflection and writing

Once participants had drawn the barriers on their mountains, they were asked to spend about 15 minutes on personal reflection and writing, without discussing. Each participant selected a barrier from their diagram, and wrote a few paragraphs about how they could solve this problem (or how they have already solved it).

Towards the end of the 15 minutes, the facilitators began to discuss the writings with some participants, to see if the solutions were specific enough to form the basis of concrete actions. To test whether the solutions were specific or too general, one facilitator asked a participant to read aloud their solution. As she listened to the information, she attempted to draw pictures of the solution. If there was insufficient information to work out what to draw, she asked the participant a question to find out more information.

Interestingly one participant wrote a piece which suggests the activity was interpreted as an invitation to tell the donors in the room what the partner needed to be given. The piece concluded with: “thanks in advance”. As we mentioned in Section 2.7, this suggests that partners/practitioners have perhaps become too accustomed to a certain way of working when donors are present, and perhaps even to waiting for the donor to deliver the solutions. Activities which ask participants to decide on solutions for themselves, using a different methodology from usual, therefore need to be more actively encouraged, to avoid all inclusive education work following too rigid a formula.

3.5.4. Role play

Because participants had spent quite a lot of time working on the mountain diagrams within their country/colleague groups, it was important to allow more opportunity for sharing and discussion *between* countries and projects. A press conference role play activity was therefore used on the final day. Three or four groups gathered at either end of the large room. One group pretended to be the ‘interviewees’, while the members of the other groups were the ‘journalists’. The journalists had to ask questions to find out about the interviewees’ mountain diagrams. In particular they had to ask about how the group proposed to solve the problems they had depicted, or for more information about solutions mentioned on the diagrams. The facilitators first performed a short role play to demonstrate how this could be done.

The activity was incredibly lively, with the journalists asking often difficult and probing questions. This form of questioning inspired many, though not all, interviewees to present detailed and insightful ideas for ways of solving particular barriers. It also offered them opportunities to present their experiences of tackling inclusive education so far. The journalists were also allowed to offer suggestions for solutions, based on their own experiences, or based on stories they had heard elsewhere. As new solutions were discussed, the interviewees were encouraged to make notes on their mountains. Each mountain group was questioned for about 15 minutes, before swapping roles. This activity offered an exciting and interactive method of sharing the results of group work, instead of relying simply on formal presentations of flip charts in plenary.

3.5.5. School visits

School visits were held on the third day of the workshop. At the end of day two, a short session helped participants to prepare for the visits. Such preparation is essential, to ensure that study visits are more than just tourist trips. The aim of the school visits was to help participants to reflect on their discussions about inclusive education so far, through seeing the reality of schools that are trying to become more inclusive. The visits were also opportunities for two-way sharing between the visitors and the hosts.

Participants were briefed on the logistics of the school visits. There would be one group of about 6-7 people per school. When they arrived at their school, each group would divide into three smaller groups and rotate through the following three activities:

1. classroom observation
2. in-depth discussion with the head teacher, where possible
3. discussions with other teachers/pupils – individually or in groups

These activities would last for about an hour in total, and would be followed by a larger meeting of teachers and community/parent representatives.

Each group would contain one or two 'motivators'. These would not be chair people or formal facilitators. Their role would be to help start conversations if no one else was brave enough to speak, or to remind participants of the three tasks, if they forgot what they had to do. Motivators were selected by the facilitator, with an attempt to ensure that each group had a Northern and Southern motivator. The groups were also divided by the facilitator to ensure North/South balance within every group, and to provide each group with some Kiswahili speakers who could act as translators if necessary.

The schools had been briefed, via Zanzibar Association for People with Developmental Disabilities and the ministry staff, that the visitors needed to see the school 'in action'. They were asked not to prepare special welcomes, refreshments and performances, as this would distort the visitors' views of the school.

Classroom observation

Classroom observation is about active looking and listening. It is a good idea to create a checklist in advance of the things you would want to look for (behaviour, interactions, resources, teaching methods, etc). It is also good to take notes while observing – if this can be done discretely, without intimidating the teacher or pupils. Participants were shown one possible approach to note-taking which involves dividing the page into two columns, as follows:

Bare facts about what you saw	Thoughts and analysis about the observation
Only boys speak in class	Why isn't the teacher asking the girls? She seems to be excluding the girls.

This approach can help you when you look at your notes in future – particularly if you want to compare how other people have analysed the same observation.

During the preparation session for the school visits, participants brainstormed a list of things they might want to look for during their classroom observations (see below). Readers are encouraged to think of additional things they could observe during school visits.

- number of pupils
- physical accessibility
- teachers' attitude to students
- gender, disability and other identities of children – and their participation
- seating plan
- teaching methods applied
- furniture
- display of learning materials and their relevance
- behaviour of pupils
- pupil/teacher ratio
- activities of the learners – how active are they?

They were reminded that they would not be able to observe everything in a short session, but could perhaps create a shortlist of things to observe.

Talking to teachers, pupils and head teachers

Participants were reminded that it is important to be prepared, even for informal discussions. Although they would not be formally interviewing people at the school, they were advised to think about some questions in advance – things they really wanted to know about schools and inclusion in Zanzibar. Participants were also reminded that they had to share their own experiences and ideas with the host school, so they should think overnight about some key experiences/stories they could tell. After the visits they would be asked to recount one lesson they had learned, and one experience or idea they had shared, during the visit.

Feedback

A long feedback session was held on the afternoon following the visits.¹⁰ First, each participant was given 'post-it' notes, and was asked to write down at least one thing they had learned during the visit, and one thing they had shared with the hosts. In their school groups, participants then moved on to discussing more detailed feedback. Each group was given flipchart sheets containing the following questions:

1. How was the school the same as your school(s)?
2. How was the school different to your school(s)?
3. What barriers to inclusion did you see or hear people talk about in this school?
4. What solutions to the barriers did you see or hear people talk about in this school?
5. What impressed or concerned you so much that you will go home and tell your colleagues about it?

They were encouraged to discuss each other's observations and notes, and the situations in their own countries, in order to answer these questions. Discussions were lively, and most groups easily filled 5 or 6 flipchart sheets with their answers. It was clear that, even in very different countries, participants found similarities between their observations in the Zanzibar schools and their own experiences. There was insufficient time for every group to feedback all of their answers in plenary. A 'lucky-dip' was used – each group selected a piece of paper with a number on it, and presented their answers to the corresponding question. It was clear from the discussions and presentations that the school visit process had assisted participants to notice and debate a wider range of issues relating to inclusion, beyond disability, resources and environmental accessibility.

¹⁰ A separate document is available detailing all of the feedback provided by participants.

4. Warm-up activities

The following activities were used throughout the workshop. Some are fun energisers, other have underlying messages relevant to the theme of inclusion.

4.1. Fun energisers

Life boats

This activity gets people moving physically, and also helps facilitators to get people into randomly mixed groups. Participants stand up and walk around in an open space. They are told that they are on a sinking ship. Lifeboats are coming, but they have a very specific capacity. When the facilitator shouts “lifeboats are here, the capacity is 3” participants must quickly get themselves into groups of three. This activity can be done several times with different size groups being called each time, until the participants are in the correct size groups for the following activity.

Body spelling

This activity is a quick and simple wake-up activity, mid-way through a session. Participants are asked to spell a short word, chosen by the facilitator, without speaking or using their arms or hands. They roll their heads to make the shape of the letters.

Refreshing ourselves

Participants are asked to pretend they have been given a bottle of soda. They must hold the bottle, open the top with a bottle-opener, and drink the contents (making appropriate sound effects for each movement!).

What's changed?

Participants get into pairs. They must spend a few seconds looking at each other. They then turn their backs on each other and must make one change to their appearance (e.g. remove glasses). When the turn to face each other again, they must try to spot what has changed about their partner.

Be nice

Participants get into pairs. They must quickly say something complimentary about their partner.

4.2. Energisers linked to inclusion

No mukaka, no manure

Mukaka means milk in the Bemba language (Zambia). This activity asks participants to look at a picture of a child – she is coming to school, and she is lonely. How do we think about her? What is important for her? We are not, but how she interacts with the other children is very important to her. Play is very important for her. It is energising. Without play she won't have motivation and energy (just like without mukaka/milk there is no manure!). The facilitator teaches participants to sing a song

“no mukaka, no manure!”. They move in a circle singing the song and following the facilitator’s lead on different dance movements, which get faster and more energetic.

Travelling station

This activity is a physical energiser, but also encourages participants to talk to people they may not have spoken to yet during the workshop, and helps them to reflect on their learning or ideas so far. Participants stand in two circles, one inside the other. The people in the inner circle stand still (they are the stations). The outer circle moves round (they are the train). After a while the facilitator says “stop”, and the moving participants have to stop at the station/person closest to them. The train participants must tell the station participant about a topic chosen by the facilitator. In this workshop we chose to have participants talk about “what I have learned so far at this workshop”. After a minute the train participants move again until the next station stop is announced. The two circles can also swap, so that everyone gets a chance to be the train and a station.

Cycle of exclusion

This activity helps to demonstrate how discrimination/exclusion is a cycle. In society we have stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. People are born into this system, they learn about the stereotypes, they act out the discrimination and so the cycle keeps spinning. We have to break the cycle – stop it spinning, stop people believing stereotypes and acting discriminatorily – if we want to create a society where everyone is included.

Participants stand in a circle and move round. A few participants are chosen to stand outside the circle. They are told they must stop the circle from spinning. They can use persuasion, humour, threats, physical actions, etc (but not violence) to make people stop moving so that the circle is interrupted. This activity helps to show the many different approaches we can take to stop the cycle of exclusion and discrimination in society. We can use advocacy, lobbying, education, dramas, loud demonstrations, etc, to help change people’s attitudes and behaviour so that the cycle is weakened or broken.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participants' hopes and fears for the workshop

Before the workshop, participants completed a questionnaire, which included questions about what they most wanted to learn at the workshop, and what most concerned them about attending the workshop.

Hopes

The hopes for learning can be grouped and summarised as follows:

Sharing experiences/ideas (16 people)

- learn from others' experience
- hear problems and compare problems
- exchange of ideas and materials
- discuss barriers to inclusion met by others
- make contacts for future exchange of ideas, literature, materials etc.

Wanting basic information about (4 people)

- what is meant by inclusive education?
- why inclusive education?
- what are the results of inclusive education and is it always the answer?

Starting inclusive education (6 people)

- how to plan, implement and evaluate inclusive education projects
- how to start at district level up to national level
- how to spread information.

Practical ways of teaching/helping children with disabilities (6 people)

Other topics raised:

- role of parents, NGOs, governments
- how to get co-operation from governments, etc
- how to ensure inclusive education remains within education policy
- after initial enthusiasm and funding cease
- funding/resourcing
- support.

Specific issues in inclusive education:

- severely disabled
- hearing impairment
- HIV/AIDS
- learning disabilities
- use of itinerant teachers
- plans for school leavers and adult education/life long learning
- how child-to-child approaches work/are brought into class
- how inclusive education improves education for non-disabled as well
- use of individual evaluation and learning plans in resource-poor countries
- teacher training.

Fears

The fears/concerns can be grouped and summarised as follows:

- Time** Can we do justice to all topics in the time?
Will the field trip be long enough?
- Experience** Fear that I have little/minimal experience to share with other participants.
I come from country where inclusive education development is limited.
Do I have less knowledge than other participants?
- Discussion** Will experience be too divers for us to harmonise?
Will others appreciate what we have done so far?
Will there be reluctance to share experiences?
Will discussion be at levels too different/advanced?
Will our work/country backgrounds be too different?
Will everyone be more concerned with discussing obstacles than finding solutions?
- Criticism** Will it be possible to avoid unconstructive criticism?
- Content** Fear that the workshop may not deal adequately with developmental disability in favour of physical disability.
- Other** Lack of distribution of papers presented and audio tapes.
People in positions of responsibility won't be challenged to explain their plans.

Many had no fears/concerns.

Appendix 2: Networking swap-shop

The following responses were written by participants on 'post-its' during this activity. Where possible we have included the names of the people who made each comment. We encourage workshop participants to carry on networking – if you see that someone in the list below has experience or skills you need, or is asking a question you can answer – then take the initiative, and get in touch with them.¹¹

In relation to inclusive education, I know / I can offer...

- How to co-ordinate education activities in the district. (Ahmed)
- Talking about my experience through showing video tapes. Share with colleagues about brochure of inclusive summer camps. (Akram)
- Planning of implementing. Parents' mobilisation. (Beda)
- Experience from being a pupil in an inclusive school. Worked with inclusive education for a year. (Bergdis)
- Parents' view. What is inclusion. How can NGOs be a watchdog works towards inclusive education – system and parents (Bikko Ragna Langlo)
- To give all the necessary support to implement inclusive education. (Doya)
- My experience as a teacher for 18 years. (Edwina)
- How to conduct baseline study before inclusive education implementation. (Evena)
- Some ideas about how teachers can be motivated. (Geir)
- Barriers of inclusive education. Accessibility of building an inclusive school. (Hamadi)
- What is required to start inclusive education and how to advocate and lobby for it.
- How to create awareness to pupils, parents and community. (Henry)
- How to get started and how to get rehabilitation officers to work with education officers. (Johan)
- Exchange ideas on how to sensitise education officers. Training of regular school teachers in inclusive education. Share experiences on how to start inclusive education in a regular school/class. (Kalumuna)
- Humble experience on strategic planning of implementing inclusive education. (Lillian)
- How we include people with disabilities in Norway. Where Atlas alliance works with inclusive education – and not much more really. (Line)

¹¹ Contact details for workshop participants are available in the main workshop report: "Inclusion in Action".

- I am a teacher trainer in special education. Share experience in providing assessment/screening techniques. (Matemoho)
- Skills on how to work with community on disability issues. (Mathabo)
- Training skills to teachers starting inclusive education. Development of teaching/learning materials. Improve the learning/teaching environment for all children. (Menya)
- Experiences of attitudes in the community towards disability and inclusive education. (Mpaji)
- Importance of inclusive education to individuals, community and national development. Importance of involving different stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education programmes. (Mussa)
- Experience of introducing inclusive education in our country. (Mwanaidi)
- Definition/advantages of inclusive education. Disadvantages of exclusion. Traits of exclusion. (Noel)
- Help on how to work with CBR issues. (Nthama)
- We need to start now about inclusive education. (Obeid)
- How to make local devices for children with physical disabilities. (Owerudumo)
- The way Mpika inclusive education project works in Zambia. (Patrick)
- Information sharing on resources that exist and which can be helpful tools at policy and implementation level. (Ragnhild)
- Sharing experience with other people about inclusive education into my working area. (Samson)
- Experience with transforming special schools into resource centres for inclusive schools. Experience with educating teachers for inclusive education. (Siri)
- Long experience from CBR in Uganda, government/civil society. (Svein)
- How to implement inclusive education. (H. Tbuye)
- Monitoring skills to projects dealing with hearing impaired pupils. (Tommy)
- Experience from bi-lingual education. (Trond)
- Starting up inclusive education in local governments. (Wadenya Charles)
- I can help some teaching learning materials in establishing inclusive education in Zanzibar. (Wadi)

In relation to inclusive education, I need to know...

- Hear about teachers' experiences. How do Ministries implement inclusive education?
- How do MoE get convinced about it?
- How to integrate blind and deaf children into normal classrooms.
- How to motivate teachers handling special needs children. Develop sign language skills. (Ahmed)
- To know the relationship between inclusive and special education. What the teachers can do inside classroom with slow learners and learning disabled students. (Akram)
- Planning national implementation strategies. (Beda)
- How can you work with inclusive education in a school with many children. (Bikko)
- What is inclusive education, why do it, how can it be implemented? (Doya)
- More ideas on how people are doing in other countries. (Edwina)
- How to handle deaf and those with learning difficulties in a classroom situation. (Ellena)
- How to change people's/policy makers' attitude to inclusion. (Evena)
- How to motivate teachers. How to put inclusive education policy into action. (Geir)
- Methods used in inclusive education. How to make policy on it. (Hamadi)
- How to write a policy about inclusive education. How to assist children with disabilities at secondary and higher levels. (Henry)
- How to develop a curriculum which is inclusive, but does not slow children without learning problems to move as fast as they should. I am new in the sector of inclusive education. I am eager to learn from experienced people in that domain. (Jennifer)
- Different pedagogical methods that are more inclusive. How is it that non-disabled end up learning more with a changed, more inclusive pedagogic? (Johan)
- How other people plan inclusive education programme. (Kalumuna)
- How people relate to Education for All and inclusive education. How to include severely disabled persons in education and everyday life. (Lillian)
- More generally about inclusive education - I am a "new beginner". How is the inclusion really working in practice – do people believe in it – in developing countries? (Line)
- Basic knowledge on what should be included in the legislation (regarding disabilities).

- How best learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties can be supported effectively in inclusive setting. (Matemoho)
- How to include learners who are severely disabled in a mainstream classroom situation. For example: mentally challenged, physically challenged. (Mathabo)
- How best to network with others providing inclusive education. Best methods to use in implementing it. Planning an effective inclusive education workshop for all teachers. (Menya)
- How to handle children with multiple disabilities in an inclusive classroom. How to handle autistic children in an inclusive learning setting. (Mpaji)
- Best strategies of involving different stakeholders in inclusive education. Best methods of involving pupils of different learning needs in lessons. (Mussa)
- Sensitise the community in accepting inclusive education. (Mwanaidi)
- How policy and legislation can be changed to accommodate inclusiveness. (Noel)
- How to work with learners with a hearing impairment who are in the mainstream classrooms. (Nthama)
- How inclusive education is doing in different countries. (Obeid)
- The methods of teaching children in an inclusive education. (Owerodumo)
- How other countries are doing on introducing inclusion in school setting. (Patrick)
- Special school teachers are not interested to start inclusive education programme, because they get frightened to lose their job. So I would like to know how to encourage them to start the programme. (Pramilla)
- About the barriers to inclusive education which are experienced in the region or the local level and how these can be overcome. (Ragnhild)
- Classroom management. More information about inclusive education. (Shauri)
- Examples of successful reforms in special teachers education towards inclusive education. Examples of systems of resource centres for inclusive education. (Siri)
- How is inclusive education practically organised in the school and community. (Svein)
- How to make parents enrol children with disabilities in school. (H. Tillya)
- I really need to know how one can teach easily a class with children of different disabilities. (Tommy)
- How we can improve the curriculum for teacher education. (Trond)
- Whether inclusive education will help increase opportunities in employment for the affected persons. (Wadenya Charles)
- How can we teach a large class of more than 80 students with 5 different disabilities efficiently? (Wadi)

Appendix 3: Suggested reading

The following documents provide ideas for running participatory events and/or workshops that deal with issues of inclusion, non-discrimination and diversity.

“Access for All: Helping to make participatory processes accessible to everyone” (Save the Children UK, 2000)

This document provides advice on making meetings accessible to a wide range of participants. It draws on direct experience from a participatory global seminar organised in Swaziland. The guide is available on CD-ROM from EENET, or online at: www.eenet.org.uk/key_issues/communication/communication.shtml. It is available in English, English large print, Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

“Inclusive education study tours: Lessons learned from an EENET-facilitated study tour, Mpika, Zambia, May 2005” (EENET, 2005)

This short report details the experience of running a study tour for education officials visiting Zambia from Ethiopia. It provides useful recommendations for others wishing to make their study tours more participatory and effective, for both the hosts and the visitors. The report is available in hard copy from EENET, or online at: www.eenet.org.uk/key_issues/action/action.shtml

“Learning from Difference: An action research guide for capturing the experience of developing inclusive education” (EENET, 2005)

This set of guidelines takes practitioners and communities through a process of reflecting on and recording their experiences, and then developing new ideas and actions for making education more inclusive. It uses participatory activities very similar to those used during the “Inclusion in Action” workshop. The guide is available from EENET in printed format or on CD-ROM (the latter contains extensive additional material: background reading, video/audio clips, etc).

“Making a Difference: Training materials to promote diversity and tackle discrimination” (Save the Children UK, 2005)

This comprehensive training manual provides many ideas for participatory workshop activities. These activities can either be used as a complete training course on non-discrimination and diversity, or individual activities can be selected and adapted for use within other workshops and seminars. The guide is available on CD-ROM from EENET, or online at: www.eenet.org.uk/bibliog/scuk/scuk_home.shtml.

To obtain any of these documents from EENET, please contact:

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