Creating Conversations:
An inclusive approach to the networking of knowledge about education in Southern contexts

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the Faculty of Humanities

2009

Susie Miles

Acknowledgements

It is not possible to name the many individuals who have helped me on this thoroughly enjoyable journey since it started so many years ago, but some deserve a special mention.

The late Professor Ken Newell, of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine: for taking an interest in my work in Swaziland, and for telling thought-provoking stories which shed so much light on complex development issues.

Hugo Slim and Helen Charnley, with whom I worked in Save the Children UK: for insisting that I could write and had something worthwhile to say.

Disabled friends and colleagues in southern Africa from whom I learned so much about the nature of discrimination: two Basotho friends stand out in particular – Mamonyane Mohale, a community health worker who taught me more about village life in Lesotho than I could ever have learned from a book; and Ntate Thoso, one of the unsung heroes of the southern African disability movement, who died prematurely, but whose stories of growing up in an institution, and losing contact with his family, will stay with me forever.

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Madeline Church: whose PhD thesis demonstrated to me that it is possible to write about networking in a personal and scholarly way, while exciting and gripping the reader.

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Colleagues and friends all over the world who have encouraged and supported me: but especially Andy Howes for critiquing the almost final draft of this thesis and the last journal article; and most especially Kevin Woods for being both firm and rigorous in his guidance, and for teaching me about the nature of doctoral work.

Friends and family: in whose homes I have spent many hours, sometimes days, writing, when my own home was too distracting.

My family: for not taking me too seriously, for reminding me what really matters in life, and for tolerating my many absences.

Huge thanks and appreciation to all fellow travellers and networkers!

Contents

Abstract

Creating Conversations: An inclusive approach to the networking of knowledge about education in Southern contexts, 2009

Susie Miles, PhD by Published Work, University of Manchester

This thesis provides a synthesis of knowledge about inclusive networking in an international context, derived from the experience of stakeholders in education in countries of the South. It is suggested that inclusive networking facilitates the telling of stories, challenges stereotypes, humanises headlines and promotes contextually relevant research.

The research question: “What are the key principles for the development of an inclusive international network?” was developed as a guide to this study. Using a process of autoethnographic analysis, I identified my tacit knowledge of inclusive networking through a continual analysis and cross-referencing of the ten publications presented here, and a wider search of the literature.

This thesis is presented as a narrative in three parts. In the first part I trace my motivation for becoming involved in international networking as a strategy to address global inequality, review the literature on networking most relevant to this thesis, and identify some of the barriers to publishing faced by education stakeholders in the South. In the second part, a case study of the Enabling Education Network (EENET) is presented and a wide range of networking dilemmas identified, related to the way information is collected and shared across diverse Southern contexts. The overarching dilemmas of northern dominance and deficit thinking are discussed in the context of oral culture and the global digital and communication divide, and the difficulties in promoting genuinely *critical* conversations.

In the third part, it is argued that contextual detail and transparency about authorship are critical to the construction of stories and accounts if they are to be meaningfully networked across diverse contexts. However, it is suggested that investing resources in the development of documentation, reflection and analytical skills in education stakeholders is an essential part of inclusive networking, if ‘promising’ practice is to be captured from a Southern perspective.

Following this, the penultimate chapter puts forward four key principles relating to the development of an inclusive international network that emerged from the analysis of publications and the wider literature:

1. sharing of information, knowledge and stories between contexts;
2. knowledge creation: through reflection, documentation and analysis;
3. balancing insider and outsider knowledge and perspectives; and
4. developing appropriate responses at community level.

I conclude with some possible future directions for research, and with a personal story which encapsulates the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Declaration

PhD by Published Work, University of Manchester

Candidate Name:	Susie Miles
Faculty:	Humanities
Thesis title:	Creating Conversations: An inclusive approach to the networking of knowledge about education in Southern contexts

Describe briefly:

1. The nature and extent of the candidate's own contribution, and the contribution of co-authors and other collaborators, to each of the publications presented.

I have submitted ten publications; four are single-authored; five are co-authored (and I am the lead author of all five); and one is an EENET newsletter which I co-edited. My co-authors have each signed a statement confirming their co-authorship and the extent of their contribution.

2. What proportion of the work presented has been completed whilst the candidate has been a member of staff of this University?

Eight of the ten publications have been published while I, the candidate, was a member of staff of this University.

3. Whether any (and if so, which parts) of the work presented has been submitted in support of a successful or pending application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other University or of any professional or learned body.

None of the publications have been submitted as part of any other qualification.

I confirm that this is a true statement and that, subject to any comments above, the submission is my own original work.

Signed : Date :

Copyright statement

Qualifications and research statement

I have worked at the University of Manchester since 1997. I began as the founding Coordinator of the Enabling Education Network (EENET), when I was employed on an 'academic-related' contract. EENET is a unique international resource on inclusive education which uses processes of research and inquiry to document and disseminate innovative practices from all over the world. In this thesis EENET is presented as a case study. In 2005 I was appointed as Lecturer and Course Director of the MEd in Inclusive Education, and in March 2008 I completed my probationary period and the Humanities New Academics Programme.

Professional qualifications and registration

1977–81: University of Manchester
BA Honours, Class II Division II
Combined Studies
Full time
Degree conferred July 1981

Qualified teacher status

1977–81: University of Manchester, Postgraduate Certificate of Education
University Certificate for Teachers of the Deaf
Teacher Service Number: 80/43782
Full time
Degree conferred July 1981

Continuing professional development

2002–03 Completed two 20 credit course units in the MSc in Educational Research, on Qualitative Research methods: data generation and data analysis.

Research grants

Grant holder / lead researcher

International Deaf Children's Society (IDCS) £6,500, 2006–07

A research project to identify parents of deaf children and their organisations and support their documentation of their own experience for an IDCS publication, *Family Friendly*, published 2008. IDCS is now known as Deaf Child Worldwide.

Grant holder / lead researcher

Centre for Excellence in Enquiry Based Learning £3,000, 2005–06

Using Participatory Image-Based Research to Inform Teaching and Learning about Inclusion in Education.

Grant holder / Lead researcher

Leonard Cheshire International (LCI) £1,500, 2005

Commissioned to write a discussion paper about the situation of inclusive education in the South which was later published by LCI as a chapter in a book entitled 'Inclusive Development'. LCI is now known as Leonard Cheshire Disability.

Grant holder / lead researcher

International Deaf Children's Society £7,900, 2004–05

A research and development project to facilitate the participation of IDCS Southern partners at the International Conference on the Education of the Deaf, Maastricht, July 2005.

Grant holder / lead researcher

International Deaf Children's Society £8,700, 2003–04

Research to identify good practice in the support of deaf children in Southern countries, and collect and edit accounts written by Southern practitioners for IDCS web site launch.

Co-researcher

Sight Savers International (SSI) £2,700, 2004

Research paper about the education of visually impaired children in developing countries for SSI's national campaign.

Grant holder / lead researcher

Department of International Development (DFID) £50,000, 2001–03

Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education. An action research study.

Grant holder / lead researcher

Department of International Development (DFID) £28,000, 2003–05

Dissemination of the 'Writing Workshops' approach developed as part of the action research study.

Grant holder / Lead researcher

Save the Children UK (SC UK), £5,000, 2000–02

Lead author of a book and poster, both entitled 'Schools for All', which synthesised SC UK's inclusive education work.

Grant holder / lead researcher

Save the Children Sweden, £8,000, 1999–2002

Researched parent group involvement in promoting inclusive education in five Southern and two Northern countries. Author of 'Family Action for Inclusion in Education', which was based on the research findings.

Grant holder / Lead implementer of EENET

Atlas Alliance, Norway	£140,000	(1997–2004)
Save the Children – Sweden	£50,000	(1997–2001)
Save the Children – UK	£25,000	(1999–2002)
Christoffel Blinden Mission	£7,000	(2004–2005)
Sight Savers International	£5,000	(2004–2005)
AIFO – Italy	£8,000	(1997–1998)

List of publications

Part I

Publication 1

Miles, S. and Medi, E. (1994) Disabled children in post-war Mozambique: Developing community based support. *Disasters*, **18** (3), 284–91

Publication 2

Miles, S. (1996) Engaging with the disability rights movement: The experience of community based rehabilitation in southern Africa. *Disability and Society*, **11** (4), 501–18

Publication 3

Miles, S. and Ahuja, A. (2007) Learning from difference: Sharing international experiences of developments in inclusive education, 131–45. In L. Florian (ed) *Sage Handbook of Special Education*. London: Sage

Publication 4

Miles, S. and Singal, N. (in press) The Education for All and inclusive education debate: Conflict, contradiction or opportunity? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*

Publication 5

Miles, S. (in press) Engaging with teachers' knowledge: Promoting inclusion in Zambian schools. *Disability and Society,* **24** (5), 611-624

Publication 6

Miles, S. and Kaplan, I. (2005) Using images to promote reflection: An action research study in Zambia and Tanzania. In *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, **5** (2), 77–83

Part II

Publication A

EENET (2007) *Enabling Education*, Issue 11. Manchester: EENET

Publication B

Miles, S. (1999) Creating conversations: The evolution of the Enabling Education Network (EENET). In E. Stone (ed) *Disability and Development in the Majority World*. Leeds: The Disability Press

Publication C

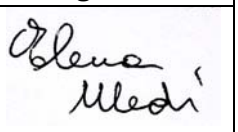
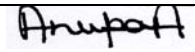
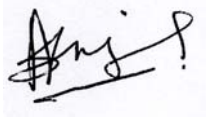
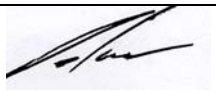
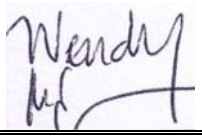
Miles, S. (2002) Learning about inclusive education: The role of EENET in promoting international dialogue. In P. Farrell and M. Ainscow (eds) *Making Special Education Inclusive* London: Fulton

Publication D

Miles, S. and McCracken, W. (2009) Educational audiology in developing countries. In B. MacPherson and R. Brouillette (eds) *Audiology in developing countries*. Nova Publishers: New York

Jointly Authored Work

As co-authored on the published work submitted by (name of candidate) **Susie Miles**
for the degree of PhD by Published Work we sign here to confirm that his/her contribution was that as given against each of the published works listed below.

Publication Number (Note 1)	**Title of Publication** (Note 2)	**Names of all co-authors** (Note 3)	**Contribution of the Candidate** (Note 4)	**Co-Author confirming Candidate's contribution** (Note 5)	
				Name	**Signature**
1	Disabled Children in post-war Mozambique	Miles, S. & Medi, E	Major	Elena Medi	
3	Learning from Difference	Miles, S. & Ahuja, A.	Major	Dr Anupam Ahuja	
4	The Education for All and Inclusive Education debate	Miles, S & Singal, N.	Half	Dr Nidhi Singal	
6	Using images to promote reflection	Miles, S. & Kaplan, I.	Major	Ian Kaplan	
(part ii) D	Educational audiology in developing countries	Miles,S. & McCracken, W.	Half	Wendy McCracken	

Notes

1. Numbers in this column should correspond with the numbered list of publications required under regulation 5(b)(ii). Only jointly authored publications should be listed here. As an example, for a candidate submitting four publications the first three of which (publications numbered 1,2,& 3) are not jointly authored, the first number in this column would be '4' and this would be only the publication listed.
2. Titles in this column may be abbreviated.
3. **All** co-authors must be listed here.
4. The contribution of the candidate should be stated as one of the following: major contributor (state "MAJOR"); contributions about one-half ("HALF"); minor contributor ("MINOR").
5. Where there are more than two authors to any item of published work only one of the co-authors need sign to confirm the candidate's contribution.
6. It is the responsibility of candidates to obtain the signature of the co-authors confirming their contribution.

Thesis:

Creating Conversations:
An inclusive approach
to the networking of knowledge
about education
in Southern contexts

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Context

This thesis provides a synthesis of knowledge about inclusive networking in an international context, derived from the experience of stakeholders in education in countries of the South, where contextually relevant and accessible information is scarce, and material resources seemingly inadequate. This synthesis is rooted in an autoethnographic reflection on a personal paradox; that of finding myself in isolated professional roles in which I felt the need to engage in and create networks to overcome the isolation.

I first experienced isolation – as a professional, as a practitioner, and as an English person – in southern Africa where I worked as a teacher of deaf children in schools and clinics (1983–87); and then as Save the Children UK's Regional Disability Advisor (1988–94), when I had the privilege of making regular visits to community-based projects focused on health, education and empowerment in seven countries over a period of seven years. My only contact with friends and colleagues in the UK during these years was through annual visits, 'slow mail' and very occasional phone calls. It was in this role, *cut off from the UK*, that I wrote Publications 1 and 2.

I became the founding Coordinator of the Enabling Education Network (EENET) in 1997 – this was another lonely role. By establishing a formal networking role in the UK I was able to make use of the knowledge and insight gained from networking in sub-Saharan Africa. This also had a personal benefit as it helped to ease the pain I felt in leaving Africa, and assuaged some of the feelings of guilt about having abandoned the people I had lived and worked with for so many years, and having the luxury of being able to choose to live in a safer part of the world. It was in this role, *cut off from Africa*, that I wrote Publications B and C.

In 2005 I took on an academic position, as Director of a Masters degree in Inclusive Education, while continuing to focus on networking as a key research interest. It is in this less isolated role that I have been able to theorise my

understanding of inclusive networking over the last 20 years, and where I have written the remaining publications.

1.2. Introducing autoethnography

Networking, for me, facilitates the telling of stories, challenges stereotypes, humanises headlines and promotes contextually relevant research. The image of Africa for most Europeans is one of, “Hunger; skeletal children; dry, cracked earth; urban slums; massacres; AIDS; throngs of refugees without a roof over their heads, without clothing, without medicines, water or bread” (Kapuscinski,1998:228). This thesis offers an insider perspective, one which goes beyond the perspectives revealed by outsider research. I contend that, through inclusive networking, it is possible to learn about education and development from an insider perspective – a perspective that goes beyond stereotypical deficit images.

The term autoethnography has been in use for over two decades, but its precise definition and application are difficult to determine (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Although I have been most influenced by Ellis in my understanding of autoethnography, the following quotation clearly expresses the way I have used this methodology:

> “Autoethnographies are accounts in which writers/researchers tell stories about their own lived experiences … In some cases autoethnographies focus on aspects of the research process, for instance, reflecting on the writing process or on the researcher’s experiences in the field”, Wellington *et al* (2005:157).

I have studied two distinct periods of my professional journey from an autoethnographic point of view: my career as a development worker, when I was a user of information, based in a Southern country; and my experience as a professional networker, when I generated and shared information, based in a university in the North. This thesis identifies the origins of this professional knowledge and how it relates to my personal interest in networking; to the EENET Network; and to the literature on international networking. In adopting

this approach, I am making my life, not just my work, open to critique (Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

Using an autoethnographic analysis this thesis is presented as a narrative in three parts: addressing global inequality; a case study of EENET; and contextualising knowledge of inclusive education. The fifth chapter draws together four key principles relating to the development of an inclusive international network that emerged from the analysis of my publications and the wider literature. This mode of thesis presentation seemed to be a more appropriate way of tracing the conceptual development of my professional journey, than presenting it as a traditional empirical research project with discrete sections dealing with literature review, methodology and findings.

The thesis begins in Chapter 2 with an exploration of the origins of my personal and professional motivation for, and knowledge of, networking, and a discussion of the development and research projects presented in Publications 1 and 2. The sensitive sharing of information across cultures, I argue, can make a small, though valuable, contribution to addressing global inequality. In Chapter 3 I present a case study of EENET and consider some of the dilemmas of networking internationally, as discussed in Publication 3, and Publications B and C. In Chapter 4 I analyse the way contextualised stories can contribute to the creation of conversations; the development of a knowledge base in Southern countries; and a global debate about inclusion. I cite arguments presented in Publications 4, 5 and 6 to further develop the themes presented in this chapter. Finally, in Chapter 5 I present the theory which connects the arguments presented in the first three chapters.

The writing of this thesis has involved a slow and careful analysis of my own narratives and publications using the constant comparative method (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). I identified my tacit knowledge through a process of continual analysis and cross-referencing of my *publications*, and a wider search of the *literature*. I developed the following research question as a guide to this study: “What are the key principles for the development of an inclusive international network?” This process enabled me to articulate and critically appraise my knowledge of inclusive networking as I continued to search the

literature. I did this by creating a set of colour-coded cards representing the arguments presented in the chapters, the essential ingredients of inclusive networking, a qualitative data summary of the arguments presented in each publication, and the arguments presented in the literature which had been most influential in the writing of this thesis.

I created a conceptual map with these cards, adapting them as the four key principles (which form the basis of the theory of inclusive networking) developed. (See Figure 1.1.)

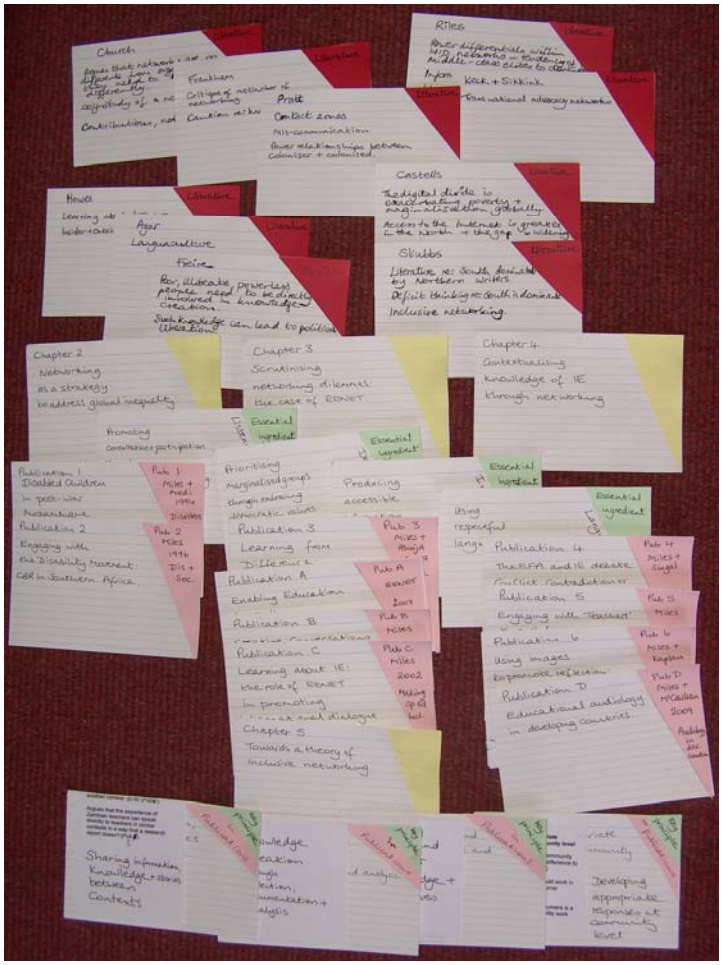


Figure 1.1: Analysing the data through constant comparison

This process involved a confirmation of my own learning and the extension of ideas in the literature, and ultimately a new synthesis and an overarching theory of inclusive networking in the context of global inequality.

I am conscious that I am telling the story of my developing understanding of networking some years after leaving the full-time networking role. Distance has

enabled me to make sense of the experience, but my perspective has inevitably changed over time. The evidence of the development of networking knowledge and the value of relevant information in the publications are, therefore, critical in triangulating this autoethnographic research.

1.3. Ethics and validity

Ethical issues are complex in autoethnography. For instance, I published Publications 1 and 2 long before I had any formal training in the ethics and practice of research. Yet these publications tell the stories of vulnerable individuals – stories I am now scrutinising from a new perspective.

In telling my story I am also telling the story of my networking colleagues and of the individuals whose stories have been told as part of the networking process. For example, when conducting the research for Publication 1, I did not check Annita's story with her before publishing it, yet it tells of the landmine explosion in which she lost her legs and her younger sister ultimately lost her life. In re-presenting Annita's story in this thesis I have not made any attempt to consult her, as this would be extremely difficult in the Mozambican context. It is also highly unlikely that this thesis will come to the attention of Annita, or anyone who knows her. As far as I can recollect, we created pseudonyms for all the children featured in Publication 1 in keeping with BERA's Ethical Guidelines (2004, section 23, p.7, 'privacy'). I would argue that the potential benefits of telling Annita's story to an audience beyond Mozambique far outweighs any potential harm. In general, EENET users have voluntarily offered their written contributions to the network because they are keen to be recognised, as explained in Publication 6. Essentially, I can consider the ethical dilemmas in this study, but I cannot solve them. I have addressed the ethical questions raised by the use of autoethnography, and by the telling of stories about the lives of marginalised people, as they arise in the thesis.

This self-study approach also raises issues of validity. I can explain the process I used to explore my own work, but its validity is harder to demonstrate. Scott-Hoy (2002:276) makes a convincing case for the validity of writing herself, from an autoethnographic point of view, into the account of a study of people's

reluctance to take simple preventative measures against eye disease in Vanuatu:

> "I had misrepresented the experience and betrayed the people. Writing the traditional ethnography I seemed invisible, yet in absolute control … I had concerns about questions of identity and selfhood, voice and authenticity, and cultural displacement. I had learned *from* the ni-Vanuatu, not just about them. I was as much the taught as the teacher. That knowledge did not appear to be present in my first ethnography, because I was not present … I wanted to re-present what I learned in a way that was appropriate for them … I turned to autoethnography, a blend of ethnography and autobiographical writing that incorporates elements of one's own life experience when writing about others."

In researching my own experience of networking in inclusive ways, and in analysing the way I re-presented people's lives in southern Africa, autoethnography has helped me to write myself into the story in order to better understand myself and the networking task in Southern contexts.

1.4. Defining key terms

Before I begin my exploration of inclusive networking, I will explain some of the terminology and key concepts used in this thesis.

North and South

The 'North', sometimes referred to as the 'global North', includes the industrialised countries of Europe, North America and Australasia. The 'South', or 'global South', includes countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as countries in political transition, such as the former Soviet Union. Increasingly these terms can also be used to refer to pockets of deprivation in Northern countries as well as wealthy areas within Southern countries.

I have used these terms because they are most prevalent in the literature, not because of their adequacy in expressing the enormity of the inequality between the two contexts. They are, in fact, unsatisfactory because they express

economic differences in geographical and spatial terms, and do not adequately convey the complexity of the imbalance of power in the world. In fact they could be accused of concealing global inequality.

The following dichotomous terms – coloniser/colonised; rich/poor; developed/developing; Majority World/Minority World – over-simplify the dynamics of global power relationships. Although not binaries, the terms First and Third World divide people hierarchically according to economic systems. The First World consists of the rich, industrial nations, the Communist Second World has ceased to exist since the Cold War ended, and the Third World is the equivalent of the South. Although rarely used, the term Fourth World refers to socially excluded groups, and stateless, marginalised nations (Center for World Indigenous Studies, no date).

By recognising that the terms North and South are highly unsatisfactory, I seek to distance myself from their inadequacy in expressing the true extent of inequality in the world.

Inclusive

To behave in inclusive ways is deeply challenging for most human beings. We all discriminate against those whom we perceive to be different from ourselves in significant ways – in gender, age, culture, language, ability, appearance, class and power. We therefore need help in overcoming our discriminatory tendencies. To be inclusive is to welcome and celebrate difference, and see it as a resource rather than as a problem. To strive to be inclusive can be seen as an individual challenge, but also as an organisational, societal, cultural, national and international challenge. It requires constant monitoring, since it does not come naturally. Becoming inclusive is essentially about listening to less powerful and unheard voices, prioritising marginalised groups, addressing poverty, challenging social injustice, using respectful language, and producing accessible information (Publication A, p.19).

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is a confusing and controversial term whose meaning is contested internationally. In Publication B (p.77) it is described as “a dynamic

process that is still evolving", and in Publication 5 (p.615), this process is described as "increasing the presence, participation and achievement of *all* students in their local schools with particular reference to those groups of learners who are at risk of exclusion, marginalisation or under-achievement" (cited in Miles *et al*, 2003:9). It therefore goes beyond the inclusion of disabled learners and those identified as having special educational needs, to an examination of the threats to equity which may exist in a particular context. The children of sex workers in Bangladesh, for example, are an especially vulnerable group (see Publication 5).

Stubbs (2008:40) has proposed a much broader definition which reflects both my professional experience and the publications:

> "Inclusive education refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education. It acknowledges that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life, and includes learning in the home, the community, and in formal, informal and non-formal situations. It seeks to enable communities, systems and structures in all cultures and contexts to combat discrimination, celebrate diversity, promote participation and overcome barriers to learning and participation for all people. It is part of a wider strategy promoting inclusive development, with the goal of creating a world where there is peace, tolerance, sustainable use of resources, social justice, and where the basic needs and rights of all are met".

Bearing in mind this broad definition, I argue in this thesis for the term to be defined in a culturally and contextually appropriate way, and against the transposing of definitions from Northern contexts.

Inclusive networking

Inclusive networking requires networkers to be conscious of global injustices, since the networks operate in a climate of gross inequity, social injustice, widespread conflict, lack of sustainability, and environmental crisis (Stubbs, 2004). It is common for Southern countries to be seen as 'the problem', as

disease-ridden, poor and helpless. Yet they face barriers to development caused by poverty and injustice; unjust trade laws, legacies of colonialism, the global imbalance of power and environmental degradation (*Stubbs, 2004*). Inclusive networking involves acknowledging tensions and engaging with uncomfortable issues. There is a need for "clarity and transparency over who the stakeholders are" (Publication A, p.18), what roles they play in the network, and about the network goals. It also requires resources to be used efficiently, growth to be slow, and time to be spent on processes, not just outputs. Initially EENET's international steering group included a disabled person from India and a parent activist from Lesotho, reflecting a particular concern with disability. The new steering group includes representatives from various regions in the world from a network user perspective. Where possible, these representatives also have personal experience of marginalisation from education.

Creating conversations

The term, 'creating conversations', features in the title of this thesis and of Publication B. It is the term that EENET uses to describe its approach to the process of generating and sharing stories, ideas and experience. The term was 'coined' by Memmenasha Haile Giorgis, a university student and EENET co-worker, and has become central to the practice of the network. By focusing on 'creating' conversations, EENET is acknowledging that the networking process is not outcomes-based, but process-led.

Chapter 2: Networking as a strategy to address global inequality

In this chapter I analyse the influences of my professional journey, and identify my motivation for becoming involved in international networking as a strategy to address global inequality. I also analyse the bridging and 'brokering' role (Wenger, 1998) I played as Save the Children's Regional Disability Advisor for Southern and Eastern Africa in which I became a go-between and a sharer of stories. I explore some of the literature associated with international networking more broadly, although my specialist focus is on inclusive networking and the sharing of information about inclusive education between Southern contexts.

2.1. Learning about development and global inequality

In writing this thesis I have frequently reflected on, and questioned, my motivation for working on international issues, and have found the following challenge to be particularly helpful in this regard:

> "It appears that the act of extension, in whatever sector it takes place, means that those carrying it out need to go to 'another part of the world' to 'normalise it', according to their way of viewing reality: to make it resemble their world" (Freire,1990: 95).

The training I received as a prospective International Voluntary Service (IVS) volunteer emphasised the importance of *sharing skills* while at the same time *showing respect* for local traditions and languages and not importing foreign concepts and practices by making our 'extension' work resemble the world we knew in the UK. This training has contributed to the self-questioning demanded by autoethnography. It also provided a strong foundation for the development of my ontological beliefs about language, culture and the respectful relationship which expatriate workers should ideally have with their host communities. Agar (1994) claims that it is not sufficient to learn the mechanics of a language, but that the key to communication is an understanding of the context and culture of conversation, something he calls 'languaculture'. Yet many expatriate workers do not attempt to learn even the basics of local languages. I was asked by IVS to document the process of learning SiSwati, as I was one of very few

volunteers who did so (Miles, 1985). The aim was to inspire volunteers to learn the languages of their host countries, but also to challenge the attitudes of those who made no effort to do so and highlight the importance of ‘languaculture’.

My study has been of a communication divide which is more profound than digital inequality. Fundamentally, it is about different ways of looking at the world and about the influence of power and globalisation on cross-cultural relationships. In my networking role I have been moving between different communication genres and different world views, in a space which Pratt (2008) calls a ‘contact zone’. I have spent most of my working life facilitating communication in zones characterised by an imbalance of power, miscommunication, and a reluctance by the most powerful players to listen to, and learn, the language of those who are less powerful, both literally and figuratively. Pratt (2008) warns of the dangers of miscommunication in the contact zones between representatives of (former) colonial powers and those who have been colonised. By contrast, in his study of international volunteers working in Indonesia and their Indonesian counterparts, Howes (2001) demonstrates the richness of shared learning about difference.

My first experience of professional and cultural isolation was when I worked as a teacher of deaf children in a residential school, and later in hospitals and clinics in Swaziland. The depth of the cultural and communication divide in which I found myself, and the difficulties I faced in making sense of it, have become more apparent through the writing of this thesis. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that I looked forward to the arrival of ‘Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) News’ four times a year. Published by an organisation based in London, it contained short articles about community-based responses to disability from a wide range of mostly Southern countries – it was like gold! ‘CBR News’ was the only publication at that time which discussed the kinds of dilemmas I was facing on a daily basis.

The consequence of a lack of relevant information was often life-threatening. One stark example was an encounter with a five-year-old deafblind child and his mother at an outreach clinic in Swaziland in 1986. I had no idea what to do and struggled to offer his mother advice. I wrote to SENSE, an organisation devoted

to supporting deafblind people in the UK, and adapted the information they sent with the child's mother in mind. When I next visited the child's home area a few months later, it was too late, the child had died. Although the materials I created subsequently helped other mothers, realising that a lack of information can lead to death gave me a new insight into the phrase 'knowledge is power', and a realisation that appropriate and accessible knowledge and information has the potential to transform and save lives.

In presenting the results of an exploratory study of the situation of disabled children in post-war Mozambique, I and my co-author, Elena Medi, provide further examples of the life-saving potential of information. Five babies were born with cerebral palsy in an area of Mozambique, but only one child survived to the age of four. He had literate parents, and his father was a health worker (Publication 1, p.285). The potential power of information to keep people alive and healthy is illustrated throughout the article. We suggest that "a transfer of knowledge and skills" (p.287) can enable families to help themselves. We also call for emergency workers to become better informed "about the experience of disabled people in war" (p.290) so that their needs can be met by mainstream services, if they exist, rather than by specialists.

2.2. Networking to promote information-sharing

In developing a coordinated approach to disability work across the southern Africa region, I chose not to adopt the more usual role of outside expert who provided advice and maintained a dependence on external support and funding. Instead I interpreted my advisory role as that of 'a catalyst for change', identifying and making explicit the tacit knowledge of the professionally isolated practitioners. I made connections between a wide range of stakeholders across southern and eastern Africa and ensured that they had opportunities to exchange ideas and experience.

One of the main arguments in Publication 2 is for "a consumer-controlled approach to CBR" (p.509) and for greater value to be placed on indigenous knowledge and expertise. I present evidence from my experience of supporting CBR programmes in the southern African context and from a series of meetings which promoted consultation with, and the participation of, marginalised groups

at community level. My role was “to act as an information broker, to develop south-south networks and to support the development of innovative community-based initiatives” (Publication 2, p.506). Too often, policy makers and technocrats are more influenced by global frameworks, than indigenous knowledge (Kisanji and Saanane, 2009).

The importance of nurturing local knowledge is stressed throughout Publication 2, as is the value of cross-cultural learning and information exchange between similar contexts (see p.515). Making connections between people and organisations, and between ideas and approaches, strengthened the work of individual programmes. Education stakeholders were able to see a variety of approaches to including disabled people in families, schools and communities with minimal specialist expertise. This helped to make the familiar context unfamiliar for a short period of time, and so enabled critical reflection (Delamont, 1992). This key theme in EENET’s work is discussed in Publication C.

Publication 2 contains some of the seeds of the theory of inclusive networking put forward in this thesis: disseminating information as part of empowerment and capacity building. My resistance to looking for external solutions is also highlighted, “the [CBR] programme is moulded by the skills and interests of the people involved, rather than by prescriptive manuals and the received international wisdom on the issue” (Publication 2, p.507), while cautioning that “the pace is necessarily slow” (p.508).

I worked on the principle that people have invaluable tacit knowledge of their own situations and that an outside facilitator’s role is to unlock that knowledge and expertise. In turn this enables people to act on what they know and believe, and to share that knowledge with others, in line with Freirean (1996) approaches to the development of social capital by marginalised individuals.

In writing Publication 1, I was clear about two things: that language should be used carefully and respectfully; and that sharing real life stories is an important way of communicating the experience of disability in the context of poverty. These two factors have continued to guide my work. The four short stories of

individual children known personally to the second author, illustrate that the children were not ‘victims’, their lives had not suddenly stopped at the onset of their injury or impairment, and that through community-based support they could benefit from home-based rehabilitation and eventually attend their local school. The stories also illustrate the impact of war, instability and poverty on individuals and their families.

2.3. Barriers to networking

The process of researching Publication 1 gave me first hand experience of the challenges of academic writing in a Southern context in relative isolation. However, it was only when I used an autoethnographic approach to reflect on the experience of writing this publication, and then constantly compared these reflections with the findings emerging from studying my publications in the light of the literature review, that I began to make sense of this early experience of academic writing in a Southern, non-English speaking context. The barriers to publishing and sharing documentation through networking that I have identified through this process are as follows:

1. There is very little baseline information available about disability and inclusion issues.
2. Information (if it is available) tends to be produced by international aid agencies and is not necessarily based on rigorous research, as my own experience demonstrates.
3. Locally produced research reports, if they exist, are not always easy to find.
4. UN and other international agencies tend not to be interested in disability and inclusion issues.
5. There is little support available for those who wish to document their experiences or conduct research.
6. Written documentation produced by Southern practitioners is extremely hard to find.
7. Most information is available in English.
8. Libraries are difficult to access.

In relation to the first three points, we state in Publication 1 (p.286) that “data are scarce”. This was a major challenge in my work in southern and eastern

Africa and continues to be cited as a barrier to progress today. Peters (2007:125) concludes that the literature on inclusive education in Southern countries “is recent and focuses on in-country reports, making definitive patterns and trends difficult to discern”. When researching Publication 1, we tried to obtain information from the United Nations (UN) offices about the number of disabled Mozambican refugees in camps in Swaziland and South Africa, but no such records existed. We made a deliberate decision not to be openly critical of the UN and did not report this in the article. Engaging with UN and other agencies about disability and inclusion issues in a meaningful and consistent way continues to be difficult.

It became clear when researching Publication 1 that documentation in English predominates – only two sources written in the Portuguese language were cited. Only one of the sources cited was written by a Mozambican (in English), a senior civil servant who had studied to a high level in Europe (see point 6 above). I was conscious of a widespread shortage of all kinds of literature when I was living in Swaziland, but the situation in Mozambique was substantially worse. I realise now that direct experience of the barriers to accessing useful and relevant information in sub-Saharan Africa, identified through this autoethnographic process, have guided my subsequent work.

2.4. Networking theory

> “Networks are on the one hand revolutionary technologies for social organisation and on the other hand simply an enhancement of what ordinary people do” (Riles, 2000:68–9).

Networks are not new. Informal networks have been, and continue to be, at the heart of families and communities. Networks can provide a focus for the development of common goals while ensuring tolerance for difference. They are horizontal structures in which the views and convictions of a single individual person or organisation should not be imposed on others, as might happen in a hierarchical organisation. Although some networks date back to the campaign against slavery, the number, size and professionalism of international networks has grown considerably in the last three decades (Keck and Sikkink, 1999), and

it is only relatively recently that they have linked people across national boundaries.

In contexts where access to electronic communication is commonplace, international networking has been transformed by the Internet, the use of which has grown from 16 million users in 1995 to over 400 million in 2001, and is projected to reach 2 billion by 2010 (Castells, 2001:3). The sheer scale of networking, made possible by the Internet, has outperformed all previous understanding and experience of networking as a concept (Castells, 2001). The flattening of the world through technology has enabled new forms of information sharing which could not have been imagined a few decades ago: “We are now connecting all the knowledge centers on the planet together into a single global network, which … could usher in an amazing era of prosperity, innovation and collaboration” (Friedman, 2006:8). Yet Publication 5 (p.611) argues that “this is an illusion, since the ability to access information with the click of a button is only available to a privileged few” and that exclusion and marginalisation are in fact increasing.

Indeed, Castells’ (2000) writing warns of the potentially devastating implications of the global digital divide, as it further reinforces the already profoundly unequal relationships between countries. Capra (2003:126) also voices his concerns about the exclusionary nature of the networks associated with global capitalism which exclude “all populations and territories that are of no value or interest to their search for financial gain. As a result, certain segments of societies, areas of cities, regions and even entire countries become economically irrelevant”. He goes on to suggest that the “challenge of the twenty-first century will be to change the value system underlying the global economy, so as to make it compatible with the demands of human dignity and ecological sustainability” Capra (2003:229), and that networks have a major role to play in this process.

Social change networks can be “characterized by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange” (Keck and Sikkink (1999:91). One of their main objectives is “to share information with a view to exchanging learning, avoiding duplication, pooling resources and facilitating

advocacy" (Church, 2005:61). Although there is a great deal of collaborative activity, it is still possible to retain individual autonomy, and this is arguably one of the great strengths, but also one of the major weaknesses, of the network form of working. The fundamental change this brings about in terms of power relationships is perhaps the main attractive feature of networking, but the new horizontal relationships are extremely difficult to understand.

A formal search of the literature reveals vast quantities of literature on networking, primarily focused on Northern contexts, much of which looks at how organisations, rather than individuals, relate to each other, and a great deal of which is focused on business. Yet following a review of international non-governmental organisations' (NGO) attitudes to decentralisation, Waljee (2003) concluded that there is little literature available on networks and how they function. The focus of this thesis is on networking processes between individuals and organisations committed to an agreed set of values and principles (see Publication B, p.81), and the telling of stories, originating primarily in Southern contexts, through these networks.

Waljee (2003:9–10) claims that, "there is much that the NGOs and networks know intrinsically … but do not have time to reflect on". This finding is supported by Church (2005:69) who documented conversations between UK-based network coordinators, and noted that: "it was really the first time any one of us had had the opportunity to sit with our work and talk about it analytically and in conversation with others who did not need copious explanation". This has a strong resonance with EENET's experience.

In a review of the relevance of networking to education, Muijs (2008) puts forward a typology of four theoretical perspectives within network theory: constructivist organisational theory, Durkheimian network theory, social capital, and 'new social movements' theory. All the literature and examples provided in this article originate in Northern contexts. Nevertheless, EENET's work is most closely aligned with social capital theory, since its encouragement of conversation and networking across contexts has involved Freirean (1996) approaches to encouraging marginalised individuals to recognise their own social capital. EENET's work could also be loosely linked to the theory of 'new

social movements', since it plays a part in advocating for an end to discrimination and marginalisation in education in the South. However, research in this area has largely focused on Northern contexts (Diani and McAdam, 2003).

Church (2005) has researched her own and others' experience of coordinating international social change networks through a deeply personal and ethnographic research process located in the reflective paradigm. One of her most stimulating findings is the reversal of the concept of a 'needs assessment' to the idea of a 'contributions assessment'. She contests that the language of need emphasises deficits rather than possibilities, and that active and sustainable networks focus on the sharing of 'wealth', not on meeting needs. This links to the principle of identifying and building on indigenous tacit knowledge, discussed in Publication 2. Enabling people to act on what they know and believe, and to share that knowledge with others, resonates with Freirean (1996) approaches to the development of social capital discussed earlier.

There are some striking similarities between Church's (2005) research and my own. Church's thinking has been influenced by Chambers (1992), Freire (1996) and Castells (2000), and her research focused on externally-funded international networks, whose role extends beyond the sharing of information (Church *et al*, 2003). She discovers, as I did, that South-focused networking is under-researched, and that network coordinators often have a lonely professional experience, despite the fact that conversation is central to the task (Church, 2005). She researched her own motivation for networking through her experience of being bullied at school, her career as an actress, a political activist, and finally a networker campaigning against political violence in Colombia. However there are also some key differences: Church (2005) explores her knowledge of the functioning and structure of the 'network' (the noun), whereas my focus has been on the process of 'networking' (the verb).

While Church characterises her work in the context of international social change networks, Keck and Sikkink (1999) and Hudson (2001) use the term 'transnational advocacy networks', and Bebbington and Kothari (2006) refer to

‘transnational development networks’. These terms reflect the many different kinds of network which are preoccupied with Southern issues. However, Keck and Sikkink (1999) observe that, although the term ‘network’ has been used by the actors themselves for the past two decades, scholarly interest in networks is a relatively new phenomenon.

Keck and Sikkink (1998:9) have identified five core areas in which transnational advocacy networks have been particularly effective: “human rights, the environment, women, infant health, and indigenous peoples”. Education is noticeably absent, although it is relevant to all these issues. In his review of international efforts to eliminate poverty, Hulme (2007) does not mention the conferences held in Jomtien and Dakar in 1990 and 2000 respectively, on Education for All (EFA), and which education stakeholders consider to be so central to current debates (see Publications 3, 4 and 5). I can only speculate on the reason for this, but suspect it is because education is not seen as a fundamental need, and not essential to survival. It may also be because EFA primarily concerns children who rarely campaign for their own education, whereas the other issues are more adult-centred.

The importance of shared values in networking is emphasised by Hudson (2001:348): “Relationships are the building-blocks of networks, and are balanced and prioritised on the basis of values”. EENET also has a strong focus on shared values, as outlined in Publications B and C. Keck and Sikkink (1999:98) stress that values are central to advocacy networks, and that such networks include “those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services”. However they warn that “the social and political contexts within which networks operate contain contested understandings as well as stable and shared ones. Network activists can operate strategically within the more stable universe of shared understandings at the same time as they try to reshape certain contested meanings” (Keck and Sikkink,1999:90–1). This analysis is particularly true of the complex challenge of sharing information about inclusive education cross-culturally, as discussed in Publication 3.

A fierce critic of networks, Riles (2000) sees them as ineffective, self-congratulatory and self-serving consumers of resources. Her study of Women in Development (WID) networks in Fiji, and their links with regional and international WID networks, is rare in its exposure of the day-to-day functioning of South-based networks. In challenging romantic notions of networking and its assumed inherent benefits, Riles (2000:3) asserts that:

> "for those concerned with the intersection of modernist epistemologies and liberal political philosophies, the Network offers a poignant case study of institutionalized utopianism, an ambition for political change through communication and information exchange."

Riles (2000:68) distinguishes between the process of *Networking* as a professional activity and *networking* which is a process engaged in naturally through friendship: "Personal relationships were an underbelly of network activity, often the very means of achieving network effectiveness". Yet, complaints were made in the Fiji context about some individuals who were careerist in the way they networked, doing it for professional gain rather than as part of their friendship or commitment to women's issues.

Although friendship supplemented formal networking activities, personal differences often had repercussions within the networks. One of the consequences of personal disagreements was that information was sometimes shelved rather than shared: "Since the Network professed an ethic of inclusion and expansion, stopping the flow of information usually was accomplished in a 'personal' rather than an institutional guise" (Riles, 2000:61). She reveals that the women's networks tended to be controlled by middle class urban elites who rarely visited income-poor women in rural areas. At the root of much of these power struggles was the struggle for resources, often to attend international conferences, and the urban women were adept at holding on to their power.

2.5. Voice and the power of writing

I had no idea when I started writing in southern Africa that there would be any interest in my writing beyond the Save the Children audience. The realisation that writing can be powerful and that I had an audience only came when I met

people at conferences in the UK who had read, enjoyed and used my articles in their studies or in their work. Realising that writing is powerful, when it is read by people who most need it, was extremely motivating.

I was pleased that I had been able to communicate some of the key messages I had learned through the process of working with African colleagues, but disturbed that it was only my voice that was being heard. Indeed, in Publication 2, I raise concerns about the fact that, “disabled people’s voices, especially those from the South, are rarely heard in the CBR debate or reflected in the literature” (p.504). How could Southern writers be enabled to enjoy the taken-for-granted luxury of attending international conferences as speakers, or have the opportunity to publish articles in respectable journals in the so-called ‘public domain’? Spending time in influential universities and the ‘right’ conferences where people have read their work is a logistical impossibility for most researchers from the South. Furthermore, writing about their reality from a Southern point of view is difficult for Southern practitioners because of the hegemony of Western academic traditions (Weber, 2007; Smith, 2005).

In this chapter I have explored my role as a broker of indigenous knowledge, and the difficulties faced in negotiating my way through various ‘contact zones’, with their potential for misunderstandings. I have discussed the importance of identifying stakeholders’ tacit knowledge of their own contexts, and the barriers to the publishing of this knowledge. Finally I have reviewed some of the literature on networking most relevant to this thesis, in the light of the fact that the voices of the least powerful tend not to be heard. Promoting the flow of information between Southern countries, and ultimately from South to North, is one of EENET’s main objectives. It is to this enormous challenge that I now turn.

Chapter 3: Scrutinising networking challenges and dilemmas: the case of the Enabling Education Network

In this chapter I introduce the rationale for EENET and its efforts to model inclusion through its networking behaviour. I also introduce four essential ingredients of inclusive networking, and go on to explore some of the inherent dilemmas in networking across different cultural contexts.

3.1. Introducing EENET

The original purpose of EENET was to contribute to the development of effective, relevant, appropriate and sustainable education policy and practice internationally through the sharing of information (Stubbs and Ainscow, 1996). EENET was established in 1997 at the University of Manchester with the support of a wide range of international agencies, including the United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). It is currently managed by a part-time coordinator in Manchester, with the support of groups of committed individuals in Asia, southern and eastern Africa, and South America. Some of the key initial objectives were to:

1. “disseminate existing documentation to relevant personnel
2. actively promote south-south and south-north information flows
3. establish a regular newsletter
4. strengthen existing local, national and regional resource services
5. promote the development of new documentation, research and resource materials” (Stubbs and Ainscow, 1996:4).

One of the motivating factors behind the establishment of the Network was the firm conviction, based on the work of Save the Children UK and UNESCO, that lessons from experience of implementing inclusive education in Southern countries had a great deal to teach practitioners in Northern contexts. EENET aimed to become the mechanism for this experience to be documented and shared, by transforming information into knowledge and knowledge into action.

By creating conversations between practitioners in different contexts, EENET aims to challenge, and ultimately reverse, the movement of information,

knowledge and ideas from North to South. Central to EENET's philosophy is the sharing of experiences between similar cultural contexts. It is committed to meeting the information needs of education stakeholders in Southern countries, who may live and work away from 'main road' development (Chambers, 1997), and whose work is therefore overlooked by urban elites and busy foreign consultants.

In acknowledging this positive discrimination policy, EENET raises awareness of the current unequal distribution of resources and lack of equal access to information. At the same time it encourages a discerning approach to information dissemination by making information available in a non-directive way, only rarely becoming directly involved in its application. The EENET slogan 'the medium is the message' is critical to the sharing of information in inclusive ways. Information is made as accessible as possible, since the format (font size, readability, use of colour, etc) of the documents convey messages about the Network's commitment to inclusion as much as the content.

Promoting networking between Southern countries on the issue of inclusive education involves a set of complex social processes. In the case of EENET, these have been developed both consciously and intuitively, based on sound knowledge of the challenges facing people in economically poor contexts. A key focus has been to use stories and accounts to communicate Southern realities, and the newsletter and web site have provided the mechanism for this cross-cultural sharing. I share Ellis and Bochner's (2000:748) conviction that stories:

> "bring us into worlds of experience that are unknown to us, show us the concrete daily details of people whose lives have been underrepresented or not represented at all, help us reduce their marginalisation, show us how partial and situated our understanding of the world is."

Schwabenland (2006:8) claims that stories "make audible the voices of the silent and bring multiple perspectives to bear". She also suggests that they have the potential to be subversive, 'disrupt certainties' and generate new insights, but she cautions that "the misuse of storytelling, conscious or not, bears an uncomfortably close relationship to propaganda" (Schwabenland, 2006:22).

Editing stories in a Northern University which have been written by Southern practitioners could be seen as contradictory, even a form of propaganda, if not handled very carefully.

Many writers find it extremely difficult to write a concise account in only 700 words, which is the required length of a one page newsletter article, so EENET staff provide guidance on editing for authors. Some journalistic editing is also necessary to 'hook' the reader, while retaining the essence of the story and its unique context and the author's 'voice'. This sometimes involves changing the order of the text and writing a short summary. Efforts are made, through editing, to ensure that the article is mostly written in standard English. Sometimes it is important to retain aspects of the version of English used by the contributing author to ensure that the account 'sounds' genuine. I have included Publication A, 'Enabling Education' Issue 11, in this thesis to illustrate and make explicit EENET's editorial policy. Ensuring that stories are clear, lively and accessible, and not a form of propaganda – while being true to the original voice and meaning - is one of EENET's networking challenges.

3.2. Essential ingredients for inclusive networking

Through the process of reviewing the literature and my publications, the following 'essential ingredients' of inclusive networking have emerged:

1. promoting consultation and participation through listening, learning and sharing;
2. challenging marginalisation and prioritising marginalised groups;
3. producing accessible information; and
4. using respectful language.

3.2.1. Promoting consultation and participation through listening, learning and sharing

I begin with a brief exploration of the way in which EENET accesses and elicits useful information from Southern practitioners, with a particular focus on the newsletter, 'Enabling Education', which is a central networking tool. EENET's particular style of networking had, to some extent, been internalised and institutionalised in the practice of its two staff members, myself (1997–2005) and Ingrid Lewis (2002–present). In the process of writing this thesis I have

attempted to make EENET's style of networking explicit. I explore the values and ethical principles on which it was established, while recognising the unique role played by the international steering group members who saw themselves as the guardians of the principles: a strong emphasis on self-criticism; a conscious avoidance of offensive language; and a commitment to genuinely participatory and emancipatory processes.

In researching the development of the first newsletter for this thesis, I identified the following trends in the production of newsletters by international agencies:

1. Articles are written by North-based professionals following a visit to the South (for example, the publications of UNESCO; Handicap International). Accounts of visits to projects in culturally unfamiliar environments present a Northern perspective on Southern experience, sometimes including direct quotes from practitioners.
2. The authorship of articles is hidden and the writing has been edited to ensure that the organisation's policies and points of view are clearly represented (for example, UNESCO; Child Rights Information Network).
3. Articles are written by field workers, who are increasingly Southern practitioners working as expatriates in another country (for example Help Age International). These articles are written from the perspective of the organisation they represent. The authors have their own unique Southern perspective, but they do not necessarily have direct experience of being marginalised from, and within, educational settings.

The agencies mentioned above may participate in intra- or inter-agency networks, but their publications publicise their own work and so do not have a wider networking role. Riles (2000:52) was told by networkers on the periphery of activities in the South Pacific that "the sunny, friendly, personal tone of newsletters … actually blocked the flow of information" since they were written in a superficial tone, were inward-looking and often contained out-of-date news items. Networkers who were not part of the inner circle therefore felt alienated from the networking process. Riles (2000) reports that the networks professed to be networking both face-to-face and through newsletters. The newsletters could have provided a valuable point of information sharing in between biannual meetings, but she found little evidence of either.

In developing the style of EENET's newsletter, I looked to the tried and tested model, provided by 'CBR News', of sharing contextually relevant ideas in concise, attractive formats. 'Enabling Education' has since become one of the main sources of contextualised information about inclusive education internationally. The following excerpt from an email is an example of a positive evaluation by a teacher educator from Ghana: "The video and the two issues of EENET's newsletter have broadened my horizon and made me 10 inches taller in knowledge and in experience in inclusive education" (EENET, no date, p2).

The newsletter began with the aim of sharing information about groups of learners who are marginalised from, and within, education. The term 'news' letter is actually a misnomer since it is 28–32 pages long, does not contain short-term news items, and is produced annually. It is more like a journal since it has a long shelf life, appeals to a wide range of stakeholders in education, and is increasingly cited in peer-reviewed publications. A more news-orientated publication, containing adverts for international conferences, would be of little use to people living in remote areas who may receive the newsletter after the events (which they could not afford to attend) have taken place.

When I set about the task of producing the first newsletter in 1997, the co-founders of EENET told me that they had enough material of their own to produce several newsletter articles. If I had used this material, the first newsletter would have risked following the example of all three approaches identified above. It is easy to see why Northern agencies adopt these approaches, since they save time and money, and they also guarantee that the writing is of good quality and so requires minimum editing. This satisfies donors who need to see how their money is being spent and who may find it easier to identify with a Northern perspective on a Southern situation.

It is a much riskier and more time-consuming approach to rely on stakeholders who may have little confidence in their written English skills. This more user-led approach to documentation requires good links with policy makers and practitioners all over the world. It also requires editors to engage in dialogue with contributors living in economically poor countries, where publishing is likely to be the least of their priorities and where the basic infrastructure, which is

taken for granted in Northern countries (paper, pens, computers, electricity, telephones, etc), is not always easily available or affordable. One of the strengths identified in a recent evaluation of EENET was “the neutrality that comes from being independent and not affiliated with any government organisation, bigger NGO or other pressure group” (Little and Waljee, 2006:33).

The authors featured in EENET’s first newsletter responded to a call for articles, sent out mainly by post. Articles were reviewed and edited by EENET staff and partners. The following brief analysis demonstrates the range of perspectives represented, as well as the authors’ connection to EENET:

- the educational impact of family breakdown as a result of mafia activity in Sicily (the Sicilian author had attended a workshop led by one of the co-founders);
- a congratulatory piece about the importance of EENET (written by a Chinese graduate from the University of Manchester);
- a short summary of research about the Intifada in Palestine and the subsequent development of national disability policy (the Palestinian author was a PhD student in Manchester who volunteered in EENET);
- an account of the formation of a national parents’ group in Lesotho (written by a former colleague of mine from Lesotho who later became a member of EENET’s international steering group);
- a description of a new video package developed in Lesotho to prepare teachers for inclusive education (also written by a former colleague of mine, a Zimbabwean woman who worked in Lesotho);
- a case study of the inclusion of a boy with severe impairments in his village school in Iceland (the Icelandic schools advisor who wrote this article was known to one of the co-founders).

In this first issue we set out to provide an overview of EENET’s mission to support initiatives where children do not attend school because they are poor, disabled, or caught up in conflict. We also sought to transmit a clear message about the potential of enabling forms of education to transform whole education systems. Issue 1 sent a signal to ordinary people that their stories, ideas and experiences were valuable, and that EENET would share their stories with

people who face similar challenges all over the world. Individual practitioners, policy makers, young people and parents were encouraged to publish – the majority for the first time. We welcomed accounts from North and South: about disability and wider social exclusion; countries in conflict; individuals; parents and their organisations; and policy makers and practitioners. The diversity of the experience represented was identified by the team that evaluated EENET in 2006: “The ability to hold and communicate a global perspective on IE [inclusive education] and on concrete IE initiatives in the South” (Little and Waljee, 2006:33).

The stimulus provided by EENET to its readers and potential writers encourages conversation with EENET staff and with each other. In some cases articles are co-edited. The conversations generated through this process have often been just as important for networking as the finished articles. The evaluation report asserts that EENET: “facilitates but refuses to direct. It has worked, instead, to establish an exchange of experiences, to debate central concepts of inclusion and to provide space and profile to the concrete, on-the-ground initiatives of the South” (Little and Waljee, 2006:11). Although such a positive affirmation of EENET’s work is welcome, we continue to grapple with challenges and dilemmas, such as the extent to which debate is really encouraged and alternative perspectives shared.

EENET was committed from the beginning to a ‘hard copy’ policy. Documents are disseminated by mail to Southern readers since useful information is so scarce in some countries and access to the Internet was rare in 1997. Although this situation has improved a great deal, accessing information in soft copy is still unaffordable for many. In fact, as the divide grows wider, impatience with people who are ‘digitally illiterate’ increases, and the need for ‘slow mail’ intensifies. “The dilemma for EENET is how to balance these increasingly rapid, high-tech forms of communication … with the needs of the most excluded and marginalised groups” (Publication B, p.86).

This section has focused on the sharing of written information, yet one of EENET’s main concerns is to reach people who live and work in oral traditions

and who have little access to written materials. Slim and Thomson (1993:20) assert that:

> "If the voice of poor communities is to be heard more often, it will have to be predominantly through oral encounters and exchanges … This is not as simple as it might seem. Many literate people lack the skills needed in an oral culture – skills like listening, asking, telling, using ritual expressions, memorising and handing on information by word of mouth alone."

Publication 6 provides an account of research which used oral and visual methods to complement written methods of data collection. EENET continues to prioritise oral testimony and find ways of sharing information in non-written formats. Yet "all too often, the tendency in development circles remains the same: if it is not written, it is not heard or discussed" (Slim and Thomson, 1993:20). Encouraging people from oral cultures to document their experience in writing is perhaps one of EENET's greatest networking dilemmas.

3.2.2. Challenging marginalisation

The networks of the EENET founders, coordinator and steering group members were crucial in establishing the initial mailing list and in identifying potential contributors to the newsletter and web site. These initial contacts have continued to be extremely valuable, although they are less fundamental to EENET's current networking activities; in the last year alone 95,500 people in over 200 countries and territories have accessed the web site, and EENET's mailing list has more than 2,000 individuals and organisations, compared to 200 in 1997. Nevertheless, an ongoing networking dilemma is the temptation to rely on known individuals and organisations to supply articles rather than making an effort to source material from education stakeholders in countries which are harder to reach. Although there is now a wider range of people who submit articles, accessing previously unknown contributors is still difficult.

The most successful newsletter in including new authors was Issue 10 (EENET, 2006), perhaps because its focus was on the broad topic of teacher education. Eight of the sixteen articles were written by previously unknown contributors,

four of whom were from the South. Of the remaining eight articles, five were written by Southern practitioners and the others by expatriates either working or doing research in Southern countries. Little and Waljee (2006:33) identified this ability to promote Southern writers as a strength in EENET's practice: "The development of relationships with inclusive practitioners world-wide" and "the reputation for responding in a friendly, open, inviting manner to every enquiry and to draw in not just the big players, but the isolated teacher, parent or youth worker in a big bureaucracy or in a remote spot who is trying to promote inclusion". Yet conversations do not just happen, they need to be nurtured, facilitated and encouraged and this takes time and commitment.

The constant comparison of the findings in the literature and in my publications has led to a deeper appreciation of my own internalised knowledge of networking. Through this process, I have come to the realisation that my knowledge of living and working for over a decade in the South, and of the difficulties faced in writing Publication 1, had a considerable influence on the way in which the newsletter was developed in the early years. The informal editorial policy that has emerged over the years is therefore that EENET:

- publishes the stories of ordinary people;
- provides support to potential writers;
- edits articles so that they are easy-to-read and easy to translate;
- supports and promotes locally-led research studies;
- develops materials in a range of languages;
- makes existing information more accessible; and
- enables direct communication to take place between contributors.

The often taken-for-granted skills of producing useful information are reflected upon by an EENET user in the following quote from the evaluation:

> "… its [EENET's] ability to be accessible, to present complex ideas in simple ways, to engage in a debate about inclusion and what it means, to skillfully edit the [newsletter] material…the content it puts out, the style, who features in it and who contributes to it … the way it encourages critical debate, the examples it presents. Not just soppy stories but real,

> concrete examples that demonstrate the pioneering work done in the South" (Little and Waljee, 2006:19).

Although, from its inception, EENET expressed a commitment to countries that may be resource-rich, but information-poor, such as the Gulf States, it has proved almost impossible to establish links with stakeholders in these countries. It is possible that EENET's core values of democracy and human rights do not sit easily with the dominant culture in the Gulf. The tendency to rely on known contributors further reinforces this dilemma. A conscious effort to network with practitioners in these countries should be part of a future direction.

3.2.3. Producing accessible information

The suggestion that each page of the newsletter should address a particular stakeholder group was made by a member of the steering group, Palesa Mphohle, who was a parent activist from Lesotho. She requested that it should be designed so that articles could be easily photocopied and used to lobby policy makers. It was particularly important that the articles were short and prefaced by a clear summary since government officials are unlikely to read long documents. This example illustrates the way some EENET users see themselves as part of a transnational advocacy network (see Section 2.4).

Each newsletter contains at least one page on the following issues for a range of audiences:

- teacher education;
- policy – aimed both at policy makers and campaigners;
- young people's perspectives;
- parents' perpsectives; and
- an issue of exclusion not previously tackled, e.g. child marriage.

In addition, various pages encourage interaction: a talking point which tackles controversial issues; an interview; regional news; letters and emails; and useful publications. In order to reach as large an audience as possible, articles are written and edited to meet the needs of readers who only have basic English language skills. The principle behind this policy is that writing which is easy to read is also easy to translate, and can be understood by the majority. In

networking against political violence, Church (2005:68) points out that she had "to speak the language of the rural poor, the language of the aid agencies, and the language of the politicians all at once". EENET primarily communicates through written and visual forms in a way that the majority can understand, rather than producing different forms of written language styles.

3.2.4. Using respectful language

Using respectful language is an ongoing theme throughout the thesis and is a necessary component in the first three essential ingredients (as outlined in Sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.3.3 above). The training I received as a volunteer emphasised the importance of showing respect for local traditions and languages. In my work with deaf children of South Asian heritage in the UK and deaf children in Swaziland – all of whom were taught in the medium of English and denied access to Sign Language and their home language – I gained additional insight into the complexity of multi-lingual learning. The inextricable link between language and inclusion, and the issue of mother tongue teaching, were the main focus of Issue 12 of 'Enabling Education' (EENET, 2008).

A key networking challenge is the cost, and often the inaccuracy, of translation given EENET's small annual budget. Some information is available in minority languages, such as KiSwahili, but EENET primarily focuses its attention on translation into the major world languages, leaving further translation work to regional partners. Most of the information disseminated by EENET is in English which increases dependency on the Anglophone countries of the North. Carmen (1996) warns of the pervasiveness of English as a world language, made possible through modern technology.

Since English is a dominant world language, "the careful use of language is crucial when communicating with culturally diverse countries" (Publication C, p.54). The importance of clarifying the terms 'special', 'integrated' and 'inclusive' is emphasised in Publication C, although the terms tend to be used interchangeably in many countries, and have different meanings in Latin languages. In Publication C, I discuss the reason for choosing the term 'enabling' education. This consciousness about the use of language has always

been a major concern in my work, for example, in Publication 1 I used the term landmine 'survivor', rather than 'victim'.

The use of accessible language and terminology is an ongoing challenge in the sharing of stories internationally. It is difficult for readers to appreciate the work involved in transforming a dry article, written more in the style of a report, and using language which is unintentionally patronising or insulting, into one which engages the reader and uses respectful language. Editing often requires the movement of text into new positions, creating eye-catching sub-headings, lifting key phrases out of the text to highlight them, and developing a summary statement.

Throughout the editing process a great deal of attention is paid to language. Stories are edited into a universal form of plain English in order to enable useful dialogue and communication to take place, and to facilitate translation into other languages. Every effort is made to retain the story teller's voice. Derogatory phrases are questioned, placed in quotation marks or removed. All this is done in consultation with the authors. The evaluation report recognises this aspect of EENET's editing style: "the ability to produce deceptively easy to read newsletters and other material that in fact are 'cutting edge' in terms of research, debate and contributions, through skilful editing and being able to distil and present the core of the issue or practice in question … [and] the rare skill to be both accessible in its language to its users and yet raise and deepen the debate on conceptual issues of inclusion" (Little and Waljee, 2006:33).

3.3. Scrutinising networking dilemmas

Northern dominance

Several networking dilemmas, related to the wider dilemma of Northern dominance, have already been identified in this chapter: engaging stakeholders from oral cultures to document their experience in writing (3.2.1); the digital divide (3.2.1); embracing democracy and human rights (3.2.2); and communication difficulties with practitioners who do not use English (3.2.4).

I have always been aware of the existence of the radically unequal relationship between the EENET office in Manchester and its users worldwide. This

relationship could be perceived as neo-colonial, given the dominance of the English language in EENET's networking activities. Although the steering group includes Southern members, there is still a tendency for the Network to be dominated by the North and for decision-making to take place in Manchester. My awareness of this dilemma has been heightened through the process of writing this thesis, and through analysing the links between my ontological beliefs about international development and networking inclusively.

Pratt's conceptualisation of the relationships between those who represent imperialism and those who have been colonised (Pratt, 2008) has helped to provide some insight into these relationships, and to the way that contributors may (mis)represent themselves through written articles, in order to please EENET staff and regional partners. The nature of cross-cultural relationships in the networking process has tended to be neglected in the international development literature. Yet I would argue that relationships are critical to the quality of the conversations created and to the challenging of Northern dominance. Howes (2008:23) draws attention to the fact that, "Development rhetoric sometimes appears to take little account of the contingencies of relationships, activities and events, as if human interaction and understanding is being written out of the process".

Publication B raises concerns about, "the distorted ways in which much information about the South is processed, and the ways in which those in the North set the agenda for what is and is not processed about those in the South" (p.80). In processing information, EENET faces a dilemma of inadvertently promoting Northern agendas – to ensure that this does not happen requires constant vigilance in all networking activities. In setting out EENET's vision, "to create space for people in the South to set their own agendas and present their own experiences" (p.80), Publication B demonstrates EENET's commitment to counteracting Northern dominance by listening, learning and sharing. Conversations taking place between the EENET coordinator and practitioners in South Africa and Portugal are illustrated in two short accounts: the first highlights the urgent need for relevant information; and the second the need for information to be translated. Publication B illustrates the way EENET positioned itself, "as a post-Salamanca initiative which aims to broaden the concept of

inclusive education beyond the classroom to include community based strategies" (p.78) – an approach which receives far too little attention in the Northern literature.

Deficit thinking

In a critical review of the literature on disability and education in the South, Stubbs (1995) found that only a small number of articles had been written by Southern authors, many of whom were South Africans. The majority of books and articles had been written by Northern academics and development workers. Stubbs revealed the deficit thinking in much of the Northern writing, which talked of superstition, non-existent services and lives of neglect and destitution. Her writing raised questions about the need to support Southern writers and the role of development agencies in enabling this to happen, and she subsequently played a key role in the establishment of EENET. The portrayal of whole countries as being poor and incapable is conceptualised by Stubbs (1995) as the 'deficit model of development'. Northern writers and researchers on disability issues have tended to see Southern countries as helpless; rather than as innovative, knowledgeable and conscious of sustainability.

It is not only in written documents that negative information about Southern countries is disseminated. Images can also be used to disseminate and reinforce negative assumptions. Alam (2007:8) asserts that "nine out of ten photos of the Majority World are taken by white Westerners". He goes on to express concern about the structural and institutional barriers which prevent Southern photographers from presenting their own reality in the global media.

There is a tendency for Southern writers to reproduce Northern ideas and deficit thinking in order to have their work accepted in journals, illustrating Escobar's (1995) claim that non-Western knowledge systems have been marginalised and disqualified by the dominant Western one. When deciding on titles for articles and photos to include in the newsletter, EENET is faced with the ongoing dilemma of how to challenge, rather than reinforce, deficit thinking.

Creating critical conversations

Networking dilemmas identified earlier in this chapter include: editing stories so that they are clear, lively and accessible (readable), while being true to the original voice and meaning (3.1); the tendency to rely on known contributors (3.2.2); and doubts about the extent to which debate is encouraged and profile given to alternative perspectives (3.2.1). In response to an imbalance in the generation and publication of knowledge, the tendency of information to flow from North to South, and the dominance of Western knowledge systems, EENET aims to support stakeholders to become *critical* thinkers and writers.

In Publication 3, we argue that practitioners should be encouraged to reflect critically and analytically on their own context, as this is more likely to help bring about real change in the long term and correct the imbalance of power caused by global inequality and the communication divide. We suggest that interventions by outsiders should start from where people are, assisting them to construct a concept of inclusion through a careful analysis of their own context. Publication C advocates for EENET's role in promoting critical thinking about inclusive education in the context of international efforts to promote EFA, and argues that "isolation from information marginalizes and further impoverishes excluded groups" (p.63). The cautious sharing of knowledge about inclusive education between North and South, and across Southern contexts, given the dangers of decontextualisation, is an ongoing dilemma in EENET's work.

Encouraging readers to adopt a critical and discerning approach to all written materials, and providing an inclusive and democratic forum for the exchange of ideas and information, are two of the ways in which EENET attempts to overcome the publication barriers faced by education stakeholders in the South (see Section 2.3). By referencing a large number of documents contained on EENET's web site in Publication 3, we risked the editor's criticism that such articles were neither publicly available nor peer-reviewed. Our aim was to demonstrate that the information collected by EENET represents the foundation of a Southern knowledge base.

I have developed a role for myself as a bridge between two different knowledge systems: dominant Western knowledge; and the knowledge contained in the

grey literature. The peer-reviewing of books and journal articles takes place in the context of the largely inaccessible dominant knowledge system, contained in Northern libraries. I would argue that the information on EENET's web site is more publicly available than Northern libraries, and that EENET exists in a different peer-review setting. EENET's knowledge system has a different authority and legitimacy – one which has a great deal to offer the more dominant knowledge system. Supporting the development of grey literature, as well as peer-reviewed literature, written as far as possible by critical Southern practitioners and researchers, is essential in creating *critical* conversations.

In providing a case study of EENET, I have identified networking challenges and dilemmas which relate to the way information is collected and shared in the context of Northern dominance and deficit thinking. In summary, EENET faces a major challenge in engaging with education stakeholders who live in an oral culture and have little access to digital and other forms of modern communication. Related concerns include: guarding against the use of stories as propaganda; an over-reliance on known contributors; the dominance of the English language; doubts about the extent to which debate is really encouraged; potential conflict between EENET's core values of democracy and human rights, and the anti-democratic tendencies in some parts of the world. The high cost of translation, together with the challenge of ensuring that the language used in documents is accessible and does not reinforce deficit thinking, are also core concerns which require constant vigilance.

Chapter 4: The role of stories in networking contextualised knowledge of inclusive education

> "Why are we so intellectually dismissive towards narrative? … Why are we inclined to treat is as a rather trashy, if entertaining, way of thinking about and talking about what we do with our minds. Storytelling performs the dual cultural functions of making the strange familiar and ourselves private and distinctive." (Jerome Bruner interviewed by Crace, 2007:11).

In this chapter I build on the earlier discussion of the role information sharing can play in addressing issues of global inequality, despite the inherent dilemmas in cross-cultural networking. I also consider the way contextualised stories and accounts of practice can be used as a basis for sharing experiences about inclusive education across diverse cultural contexts. I begin by considering some of the dangers of moving decontextualised information between diverse educational and cultural settings.

4.1. Understanding context through stories

One of my main aims in facilitating the telling of Southern stories is to challenge commonly held stereotypes about economically poor countries, such as those highlighted by Kapuscinski (1998); and to celebrate the cultural richness and dignity of individuals and communities in the South (Stubbs, 2004). It is essential that relevant contextual details are woven into the stories if they are to be helpful in other contexts. A discussion about classroom organisation, for example, would be meaningless if contextual detail about class size, learners' hunger, paid adult support, availability of furniture and textbooks, temperature and light, were not included.

Yet the proliferation of networking activities has led to an increase in the sharing of decontextualised knowledge across diverse contexts. One of the consequences is that, "knowledge is conceptualised as transportable and transposable" (Frankham, 2006:671). Based on her experience of participating in a 'learning network' between English schools, Frankham (2006) raises important questions about the uncritical acceptance of the new networking

discourse in educational research and about the persuasive power of the metaphor of 'networking'. King (2002) has critiqued the World Bank's approach to 'knowledge transfer' across contexts, and the inherent dangers in its ambition to become the world's knowledge bank. I argue in this chapter that contextual detail and transparency about authorship are critical to the construction and sharing of accounts of inclusive practice across different contexts.

In the spirit of using stories to communicate realities in different cultural contexts, I will begin with an account written by the father of a deaf child in Uganda, Henry Sempala. This account is rich in contextual detail and illustrates the global communication divide. In very few words, Henry describes his search for basic information about schools for deaf children in the absence of a telephone, a mail box and a computer.

Henry's story

"I do not have much education myself ... My loved wife gave birth to Abel with his disability, but it took quite a long time to realise it. We took him to hospitals and they gave him tablets. Eventually the doctors drew a conclusion that Abel was deaf. I was broken down … I approached different people with disabilities, they told me to see the Member of Parliament and Minister of people with disabilities. I was warmly welcomed by them, but was told they did not have the resources to help me … I gave up on Abel's education, until I met a friend … [who] advised [me] to go to the Internet, but I did not know anything about computers. I explained my problem to an attendant at an Internet café and he started to search for organisations that could help me with Abel. We found many organisations within Uganda and others abroad … Then I found EENET's email address. I wrote to EENET and they asked for my postal address. I did not know about that, I never had a postal address before … We started to look for some money to open up that postal address immediately. I kept on checking with the post office and I was much surprised by the books EENET sent us. One day I met another friend … [who] said he knew a school in Masaka that could help. He helped me get Abel enrolled and he helps me pay half the school fees. Abel is doing well in class. Thanks very much to EENET and I am ready to encourage other parents with similar problems to join EENET in information sharing." (EENET, 2007: Uganda section of world map)

A theme running through all my publications is the use of ‘stories of practice’ to illustrate challenges and solutions in contexts which are largely unfamiliar to Northern readers. Church (2005) uses terms such as ‘storying’ and ‘weaving’ to illustrate the networking process. The use of stories is, arguably, one of the most powerful ways of communicating Southern realities to Northern readers whose knowledge is rooted in highly resourced contexts and who struggle to appreciate that services can be delivered with a less than ideal level of technical expertise and material resources.

Publication D reports on desk research carried out to identify knowledge of audiology services in the South, and of inspiring examples of community-based services. The importance of developing affordable and appropriate educational audiology services at community level is highlighted by the accounts which aim to demystify audiology. We suggest that audiologists should work with, rather than against, influential traditional healers who are often more numerous than medical professionals. It also advocates for a close working relationship between parents and professionals, acknowledging the central role parents and other family members play in their deaf children’s lives.

Resources need to be invested in developing documentation skills, and nurturing South-South and South-North information flows, if the networking of contextualised stories is to have an impact on policy and practice. It has been EENET’s aim to guard against the telling of stories by outsiders, yet inevitably a proportion of the accounts shared are written by expatriate workers. Keck and Sikkink (1999:92) observe that “the ability to generate information quickly and accurately, and deploy it effectively, is their [advocacy networks] most valuable currency”. However they go on to stress that, in a transnational campaign, information tends to be produced in haste, and collected by expatriates, travelling scholars and the media. Therefore, “there is frequently a huge gap between the story’s telling and its retelling – in socio-cultural context, in instrumental meaning and even in language” (Keck and Sikkink (1999:96). EENET is conscious of this danger and tries hard to guard against the mis-telling of stories.

The development of conversations between Southern contexts is illustrated in Publication 3 through a series of short examples of innovative practice, which draw on EENET's knowledge and experience. Care was taken to provide essential details about the cultural context in which the accounts were located. We discussed the dangers associated with the World Bank's approach to knowledge transfer and the assumptions made about the so-called global phenomenon of inclusive education. Aimed at students of special educational needs and inclusive education, Publication 3 is an authoritative account of current thinking in development and research work in the South, and is the only chapter in the book that cites real life Southern accounts. It addresses the challenges of disseminating research-based knowledge in the field of inclusive education between different socio-economic and cultural contexts, and the arguments presented have been influential in relation to the policies of international organisations such as Save the Children UK and the World Bank.

4.2. Developing and sharing contextualised knowledge

The globalised knowledge economy could provide opportunities for cross-cultural learning. However, Publication 5 argues that such sharing does not happen unless a conscious effort is made to do so, despite technological advances. Publication 3 argues that practitioners in Southern countries still tend to look primarily to the literature and higher education institutions in English-speaking industrial nations for knowledge and information about inclusive education (see 3.3). Yet Northern countries do not have all the answers, and it would be dangerous to suggest that any one country has "discovered the secret of inclusion" (Dyson, 2004:615). Pressure continues from international agencies to identify so-called 'good practice' in inclusive education, rather than to acknowledge the complex and aspirational nature of inclusion. In an effort to avoid the binaries of 'good' and 'bad', EENET encourages the concepts of 'hopeful' or 'promising' practice in the North and the South.

Publication 4 argues for a more coherent and sustainable international response to marginalised groups of children who do not attend school, and greater transparency about the different versions of inclusive education put forward by international organisations. For some, it is about 'overcoming barriers to learning and development' for all children (Booth and Ainscow,

2002), and therefore in tune with EFA, while others have chosen to champion the rights of particular groups of disabled children. Disproportionate amounts of money are spent in uncoordinated ways and unreasonable demands made by Northern agencies, often with conflicting understandings of inclusive education, on Southern governments. Stakeholder groups, who are most affected by the lack of access to quality education, are rarely involved in the discussions and see little evidence that they have taken place. We argue that a disability-only approach to inclusive education is unhelpful and that efforts should be made to encourage greater synergy between inclusive education and the EFA agenda. One of EENET's inclusive networking goals is to encourage greater transparency about international agendas on inclusive education for the benefit of education stakeholders in the South.

4.3. Researching relevant local knowledge

The motivation for EENET's action research study, referred to from now on as the 'Writing Workshops' project, arose from the difficulties EENET faced in obtaining accounts of inclusive practice written by Southern practitioners. The study took place in Zambia and Tanzania, from 2001–3, and was followed by a dissemination phase from 2003–5. It aimed to enable policy makers, teachers, parents and children to overcome communication barriers associated with language, age and understanding in documenting their experience of inclusive education (Miles *et al*, 2003).

This study raised a new set of ethical questions relating to EENET's 'research behaviour' as distinct from its information dissemination activities. The following guiding principles were adopted by the research team to ensure that the Writing Workshops research project would:

1. "be of direct help to people in the contexts involved;
2. inform the development of policies and practices elsewhere;
3. demonstrate rigour such that the findings are worthy of wider attention;
4. inform the thinking of the 'outsider' research team" (Stubbs, 1995: 41-42).

The importance of context was stressed throughout the research. Essentially the aim was to create conversations through stories of inclusive practice, while

realising that, "… stories should, where possible, provide not only a narrative of action but also a history of genealogy of context" (Goodson, 1995:96). The Writing Workshops guidelines (Lewis and Miles, 2005) present contextualised examples of action research activities tried out with a wide range of participants with varying degrees of literacy skills. They were based on a set of guiding principles: using existing knowledge; building on experience, collecting information, working together, listening to different voices, creating conversations and evaluating experiences. The guidelines claim that "conversations can lead us to see our own situation differently and thus inspire important changes in the way we practise education" (Lewis and Miles, 2005:12).

Publication 5 draws on the experience of EENET's Writing Workshops project and illustrates the potential power of teachers' accounts of inclusion in Northern Zambia. I argue that reflective writing can be a helpful form of teacher development and that the experience of Zambian teachers can speak directly to education stakeholders in similar contexts in a way that a research report does not. Such opportunities can also help develop a culture of collaborative problem-solving, and discourage dependency on outside specialist support. The study had to be sensitive to the pressures Zambian teachers face as they are expected to teach ever-increasing numbers of children with diverse needs with little policy guidance or practical training. The research process was, therefore, planned around routine teacher development activities, and the pace was slow.

The teachers' accounts are used in Publication 5, as a vehicle to debate the use of reflective writing in teacher development and to challenge traditional approaches to both teacher education and research about inclusive education. I argue that this problem-based approach to teacher development is more effective than the theory-based pre-service courses delivered at teachers' colleges, partly because it does not rely on outside expertise, but also because it builds capacity, confidence and competence. Access to contextualised accounts can help to guide teachers in their development as inclusive practitioners, as well as support them in generating and sharing their own knowledge. In contrast to ethical practice in the North, the names of the Zambian teachers were published in the EENET publication at the teachers'

request since they wanted their work to be recognised. However, the children's identities were anonymised.

Publication 6 reports on the use of photo elicitation as part of the Writing Workshops study. Images provide stakeholders "with an opportunity to reflect on the way inclusive education is interpreted and implemented in another context" (Publication 6, p.78). This can, in turn, lead to the creation of locally relevant knowledge. One of the aims of the action research study was "to find ways of working effectively in an oral culture…" (Publication 6, p.79) and involve groups of people who may otherwise be marginalised. The study found that photo elicitation is an effective way of working with a range of stakeholders whose culture and traditions are predominantly oral.

The use of participatory photography forced a much needed debate about ethical issues within EENET. For instance, an ethical decision was taken during the study not to use disposable cameras since it could encourage a 'throw-away' mentality. Although it is unlikely that such a mentality would develop in this context, digital photography was adopted in the interests of sustainability. Instructions in digital photography were provided by EENET staff during visits to Zambia, and cameras and a printer were purchased so that participatory photography could be used in future development and research.

Ensuring informed consent and anonymity proved challenging when supporting Zambian teachers to do action research from a distance. Efforts were made in subsequent image-based research work in Zambia to ensure that the children's consent was sought. This included: signed formal consent to their involvement and for their photos to be used in other contexts; the choice not to participate; and identities concealed (BERA, 2004). Yet in practice, the lead researcher, who was also a local teacher and child rights trainer, signed on the children's behalf.

EENET's Writing Workshops guidelines aimed to address the lack of contextualised action research training materials relevant to inclusive education in Southern contexts, and was one of the outcomes of the study (Lewis and Miles, 2005). The guidelines encourage practitioners to analyse their own

context before trying to develop programmes or conduct research. Stakeholders are encouraged to use the guidelines to produce their own toolkits containing relevant examples. According to Freire's (1996) notion of a pedagogy for oppressed peoples, participating in the creation of knowledge gives poor people control over their destiny and the potential for political liberation. EENET has institutionalised this approach into its routine work in supporting stakeholders to document their experience.

All my publications emphasise the value of stories in illustrating both the barriers and the opportunities involved in promoting inclusion in Southern contexts. Yet one of the many dangers of networking is the possible decontextualisation of stories when they are shared across diverse contexts. I have argued in this chapter that contextual detail is critical to the construction of stories and accounts if they are to be meaningfully networked across different contexts. I also argue that transparency about authorship of accounts is central to this process. However, I caution that the sharing of accounts across Southern contexts does not happen easily. It requires the investment of resources in developing documentation, reflection and analytical skills in education stakeholders. Yet international agencies tend to emphasise the importance of identifying so-called 'good practice', without necessarily investing in the skills required to develop reflective practitioners who are competent in documenting 'hopeful' or 'promising' practice.

Chapter 5: Towards a theory of inclusive networking

In this chapter I explore four key principles which I have identified through the writing of this thesis as underpinning successful inclusive networking with, and between, education stakeholders and researchers in the South:

1. sharing of information, knowledge and stories between contexts;
2. knowledge creation: through reflection, documentation and analysis;
3. balancing insider and outsider knowledge and perspectives; and
4. developing appropriate responses at community level.

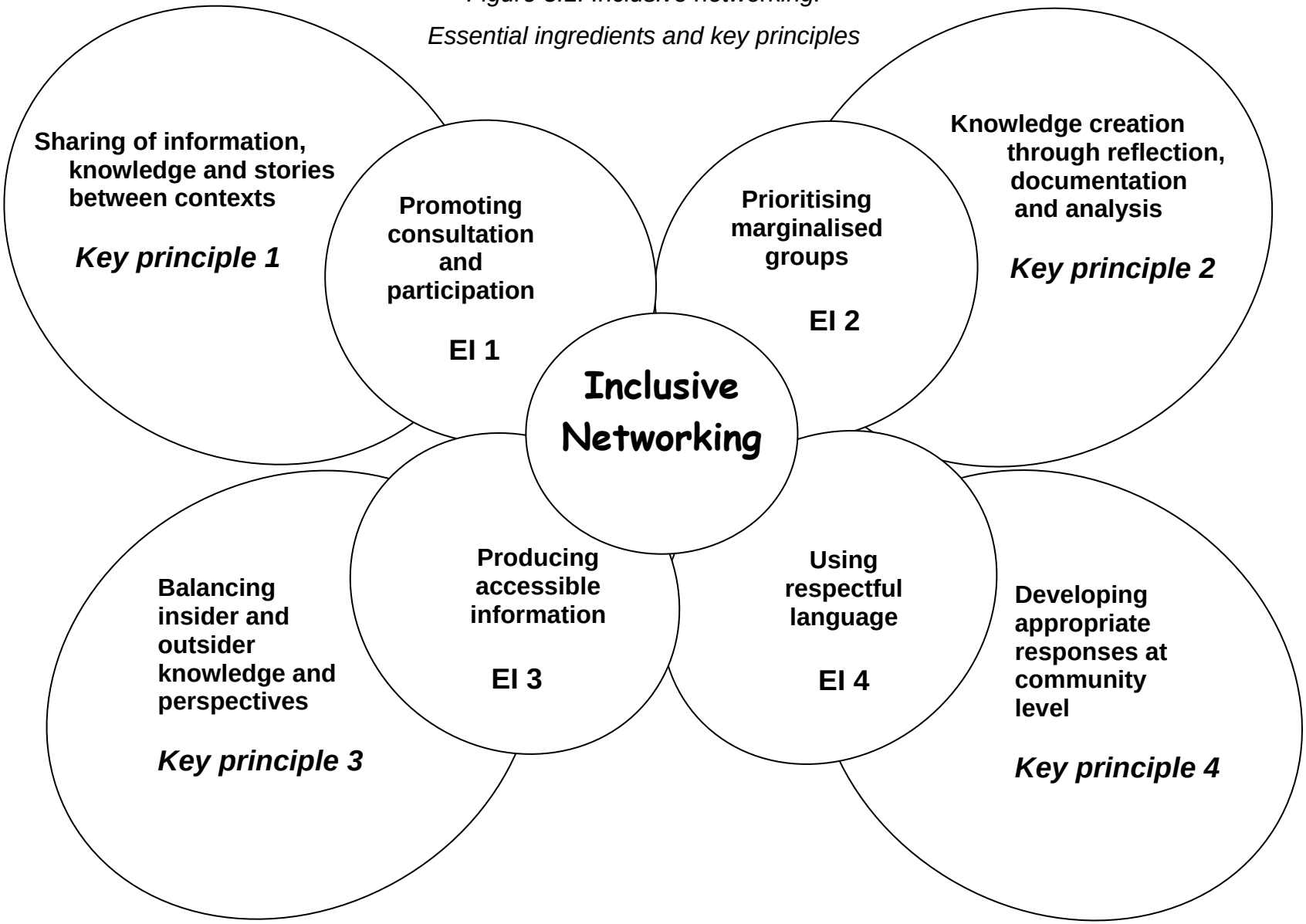
The key principles emerged from a unique synthesis made from an interaction between a wider reading of relevant literature and an analysis of my publications, with particular reference to the essential ingredients for inclusive networking (see Figure 5.1 below). This involved a constant comparison between this synthesis and the arguments presented in the literature. This process helped me to determine the claims I am making regarding the creation of new knowledge on inclusive networking.

5.1. Sharing of information, knowledge and stories between contexts

The sharing of information across diverse contexts is a key principle which emerged as a strong theme in my analysis of Publications 1 and 2, written during my time as a development worker. It is also at the heart of EENET's mission. Publication 3 argues that insiders know their context well, but are unlikely to share that knowledge unless they gain skills of reflection, analysis and documentation (see 5.2 below). It also argues that the concept of inclusion needs to be constructed in context and that outside interventions should start from where people are and assist them to be more skilful at analysing their own context (see 3.3 above). When insider knowledge is respected, knowledge about inclusive education can be transferred across borders, albeit in a cautious and contextually sensitive way. In this way, important lessons can be learned by practitioners in the North from experiences in countries facing economic hardship.

Figure 5.1. Inclusive networking:

Essential ingredients and key principles



Nevertheless there are considerable limitations to this process. For instance, the sharing of written information can exclude people who live in traditional oral societies (see 3.2.1 above), and is limited to the number of languages into which the information is translated. EENET is aware of this and supports regional groups which are more able to respond to the information needs of their regions. Publication A provides direct examples of the kind of information shared by EENET, while Publications B and C consider some of the pitfalls and possibilities of EENET's approach to the sharing of information across cultures and contexts.

5.2. Knowledge creation: through reflection, documentation and analysis

Creating culturally and contextually relevant knowledge is closely linked to the first key principle of sharing information between Southern contexts. The quality of the information shared is likely to be higher if support has been provided with reflection, analysis and documentation. Yet knowledge creation frequently takes place in a vacuum, with little baseline information and inadequate support for research and writing. This was the situation I found myself in when writing Publication 1 in Mozambique. This publication contributed to the collection of baseline data on disability by documenting disabled children's lives (see 2.3 above). One of the aims of writing Publication 1 was to challenge the marginalisation of disability issues in both academic and grey literature.

There is an ongoing tension in EENET's work between the concern for the majority of users who live in the context of an oral (rather than a literate) culture and tradition, and the international pressure exerted on Southern governments by development agencies to provide education for all children in schools which pay little attention to the richness and educational potential of oral culture. This was one of the dilemmas at the heart of Publication 5 which argued that teachers' tacit knowledge tends to be overlooked by international agencies (see 4.3 above). The action research study, described in Publication 5, aimed to address EENET's difficulties in obtaining analytical accounts written by Southern practitioners. The study concluded that opportunities to reflect upon, and question, practice has great potential in in-service teacher development initiatives, since reflective practitioners are more likely to develop a culture of

collaborative problem-solving. This would, in turn, discourage dependency on external support.

5.3. Balancing insider and outsider knowledge and perspectives

In supporting the creation of knowledge so that it can be shared across cultural contexts, EENET has to guard against the inappropriate imposition of 'outsider' knowledge. The earlier discussion about the production of the newsletter graphically illustrates this dilemma (see 3.2.1 above). The current international focus on EFA, led by large international agencies, is another example, but on a much grander scale. Concern about Northern debates about inclusion being imposed on Southern contexts through large-scale inclusive education initiatives is expressed in Publication 4 (see 4.2 above). We argue that greater awareness is needed of conflicting positions on inclusive education among Northern agencies; that there is a disconnection between international debates and local realities and contexts. We also argue for greater collaboration between the parallel initiatives of EFA and inclusive education, in order to lessen confusion at grass-roots level and to conserve precious resources. Also of great concern is the way indigenous initiatives are overlooked by these large-scale campaigns. Publication 3 argues that action research can help support a process of reflection and evaluation which has a more long-term impact than the often insensitive interventions by outside 'experts' (see 4.1 above).

Similarly Publication 5 argues that teachers' insider knowledge can be valuable in developing locally appropriate responses to exclusion, but that outsiders can play a role in supporting a process of reflection, analysis and documentation (see 5.2 above). The sharing of stories is a powerful way of learning about Southern country contexts (see 3.1 above).

Publication 6 considers an experience of learning about difference between Southern contexts. It brings together the insider understanding of a rights-based approach to inclusive education in Zambia with the outsider perspectives of the Tanzanian research participants through the use of participatory photography (see also Publication 6, p.41). The approach was used to overcome the difficulties associated with low levels of literacy and the learning difficulties of some of the participants. The Zambian photographs were used to stimulate

debate about the meaning of inclusive education in Tanzania. The outsiders were very critical of the classrooms being organised into groups, for instance, and this stimulated a debate about inclusive pedagogy. The photographs provoked rapid reactions in the participants and led them to reflect on their own experience of education and how teachers can teach more inclusively in the Tanzanian context.

When I worked in southern Africa I was able to gain an insider insight while retaining my outsider perspective. Having the benefit of both insider and outsider perspectives was an advantage in developing programmes, organising study tours, exchange visits and regional seminars. The aim was to facilitate discussion between stakeholders and this was the beginning of my commitment to networking. The aim of this kind of information sharing was not to encourage people from one country to copy the practice in another country, but rather to make the familiar unfamiliar by supporting stakeholders to re-think their approach and reflect on the best way forward in the light of these opportunities for exchanging ideas.

5.4. Developing appropriate responses at community level

I argue in Publication 2 that information has the power to address and challenge inequality, and that local knowledge should be nurtured and developed so that it can inform interventions at community level (see 2.2 above). Although EENET is not an operational agency and does not manage projects in Southern countries, its long-term aim in cultivating and circulating information, and supporting the creation of contextual knowledge, is to influence policy and practice. A combination of insider and outsider perspectives, such as the accounts of consumer-led community-based interventions described in Publication 2, is arguably the most desirable form of development.

Most of the publications describe interventions at community level, including stories and accounts to illustrate aspects of practice. The writing is therefore based both on community-based initiatives and research projects. For example, I drew heavily on EENET's data base of correspondence with Southern practitioners when researching the writing of Publications B, C and D, as well as Publication 3.

It is important to continue to be self-critical about my contribution to knowledge, as it relates to effective, inclusive networking in the context of poverty and inequality. I have attempted to do this by scrutinising networking dilemmas (in Chapter 3), and by critiquing the way contextualised stories about inclusive education are developed and networked (in Chapter 4).

5.5. Reflecting on my contribution to knowledge

The ideas presented in this thesis are radical and have radical implications for the way international agencies work with education stakeholders in Southern countries. The key principles presented above may seem obvious, yet they are continually overlooked by international agencies and networks. I would argue that the sharing of information and knowledge internationally would be more effective if greater attention was paid to both the essential ingredients and key principles of inclusive networking.

Insider education stakeholders know their context well, but they each have their own particular perspective. Ideally, a combination of insider perspectives should be considered: government and non-government representatives; teachers and learners; policy makers and policy implementers; and those with direct experience of marginalisation from education. It is rare for international meetings and networks to include the full range of insider perspectives – yet it should be possible to do so. Although international meetings are not a central part of EENET's networking activities, they can play an important role and for many organisations they are the only networking activities which take place. In 1998 EENET helped to organise a five day seminar in Agra, India for 50 participants, the majority of whom came from 20 Southern countries (EENET, 1998). The agenda was created collaboratively, with the support of a team of facilitators who listened carefully to the insider perspectives represented (essential ingredient 1). Individual support was provided to enable the participants to reflect upon and analyse their experience (key principle 2) so that they could re-develop their presentations for the audience of knowledgeable insiders. One participant told me that she had brought a lot of work to do, but was unable to do any due to the highly participatory nature of the seminar.

Key principle 2 relates to knowledge creation through reflection and analysis. In order for relevant knowledge to be created in an international meeting or through a piece of research, a culturally and contextually relevant definition of the concept of inclusive education needs to be agreed by all stakeholders. Outside interventions can only be effective if they respect insider knowledge (key principle 3), by starting from where people are, and by assisting them to be more skilful at analysing their own context. If such fundamental principles are overlooked, it is highly unlikely that the new knowledge created will be respected and published, or that appropriate community-level initiatives will be developed (key principle 4).

I would argue that there could be implications of not developing an inclusive approach to the networking of knowledge about education in Southern contexts. Networks run the risk of reproducing the kinds of neo-colonial relationships which prevent the sharing of experience: large and expensive international meetings are likely to continue to be attended by technocrats who have little appreciation of the harsh realities for people living in remote rural areas (see 2.2 above); lip service will continue to be paid to the value of insider knowledge; and outsider understandings of exclusionary processes in Southern contexts will prevail. To network inclusively requires self-critical awareness, patience and a great deal of effort.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

> "Networks are *communicative structures*" [which] "influence discourse, procedures and policy" (Keck and Sikkink, 1999:90).

In my role as the founding coordinator of EENET – considered by many to be the world's leading resource on inclusive education in Southern contexts – I set out to develop a network that would be different from other North-based information and resource centres. The image of an information-hungry person (myself) – professionally isolated, restricted by the communication divide, and negotiating a contact zone containing potentially contradictory world views – was an ever-present reminder of the complexity of the imbalance of power in the world.

Using an autoethnographic approach, I have explored my own learning about networking in an international context, derived from the experience of education stakeholders in the South, as reported in my publications. The process of researching my own networking experience, and linking my theory to other theorists working in this field (Freire, 1996; Chambers, 1992; Church, 2005; and Riles, 2000), has revealed that much of my practice in EENET was predicated upon my professional journey in southern Africa and the writing of Publications 1 and 2. Understanding the context in which my theory was developed is critical to an understanding of the theory. I had, in fact, developed an approach to networking before I theorised the practice of it.

I have developed a theoretical and practical synthesis of my networking knowledge in relation to the global imbalance in access to information about education, and inclusive education in particular. This practical synthesis led to the development of four essential ingredients which were rooted in my experience of networking, both in southern Africa and in EENET:

1. promoting consultation and participation through listening, learning and sharing;
2. prioritising marginalised groups through embracing democratic values;
3. producing accessible information;
4. using respectful language.

I developed the following research question as a guide to this study: “What are the key principles for the development of an inclusive international network?” Using a process of autoethnographic analysis and the constant comparative method, I identified my tacit knowledge of inclusive networking through a continual analysis and cross-referencing of my publications, a contemporary, comprehensive literature review, and a constant re-evaluation of EENET’s approach to networking.

In the first part of the thesis, I reviewed the literature on networking and highlighted key arguments from Publications 1 and 2, in relation to the use of networking as a strategy for addressing global inequality. In the second part, I identified a wide range of networking dilemmas as part of a case study of EENET. I discussed the overarching dilemmas of Northern dominance and deficit thinking in the context of oral culture and the global communication divide, and the difficulties in creating *critical* conversations. In the third part, I argued that the contextualisation of stories is essential if they are to be meaningfully networked across contexts. I suggest that if Southern perspectives on ‘promising’ practice are to be documented, an investment in the skills of documentation, reflection and analysis is essential.

Finally, I presented four key principles of inclusive networking as the basis of a theory of inclusive networking:

1. sharing of information, knowledge and stories between contexts;
2. knowledge creation: through reflection, documentation and analysis;
3. balancing insider and outsider knowledge and perspectives; and
4. developing appropriate responses at community level.

I now turn to the implications of this study for future research.

Implications for future research

Further research is clearly necessary to elaborate, refine and validate the theory of inclusive networking presented here; particularly in the light of negative criticism that the concept of networking may attract (see 2.4 above). This could be done in a narrow way by scrutinising the way EENET’s regional partners

have applied the theory to their Southern contexts. Existing relationships with regional partners would make this approach relatively straightforward.

A more ambitious way of testing the theory would be to explore its wider application, and evaluate the outcomes, in a highly resourced Northern context. Identifying the specific context in which to explore the theory would be the first challenge. Although a lack of access to relevant information is the key factor to which EENET has responded in Southern contexts, the experience of personal, professional or cultural isolation in a highly resourced setting can also lead to isolation from relevant information, and so would be a key factor. Developing a network for mature university students, or students from Southern countries, may, therefore, provide an opportunity to explore the theory further. Teachers of learners who have recently arrived from Eastern Europe may also form a networking group. If these groups were interested in establishing inclusive networking, and were to start from the essential ingredients (EI) and key principles outlined in this thesis, the theory would predict that the resulting networking endeavour would be inclusive in both policy and practice. Producing accessible information (EI 3) about life as a mature or international university student or about teaching English as an additional language to East Europeans; using respectful language (EI 4); and employing democratic processes (EI 2), would be a first step towards effective and inclusive networking, even in a relatively well-resourced context.

Epilogue

In this thesis I have traced my involvement in a *professional* Network which addresses global inequality through information sharing. Yet networking is also a *personal* activity based on friendship. Indeed, Riles (2000:68) identified personal relationships in Fiji as, “an underbelly of network activity, often the very means of achieving network effectiveness”. In the personal story that follows, I highlight key aspects of the theory of inclusive networking, since the theory has relevance to both personal and professional experience.

As I was writing the conclusion of this thesis, I received a cry for help in an email from my 18-year-old son, Thabo, who was alone and very ill in a backpackers’ hostel in Kenya. In the days that followed, my thesis was brought into sharp focus. I was reminded of the early networking lessons I had learned in southern Africa: that information has the potential to save lives (Publication 1); and that the interdependence of African community members is so fundamentally different from Western individualism that it is unwise to transfer policies and practices from North to South (Publication 2). I was also conscious of the need to balance insider and outsider knowledge (key principle 3) as I negotiated Thabo’s care from a distance.

Before arriving in Nairobi, Thabo had spent eight months travelling alone in India, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines. He had become ill in India some weeks before, and by the time he sent the incoherent email message to everyone in his electronic address book, he was delirious with fever. The first person to reach him was a Kenyan social worker, Mercy, with whom I had corresponded for four years in both a personal and professional capacity. Mercy took him to Nairobi Hospital on public transport. His network had yielded immediate results: he was no longer alone.

I picked up the message on my way home from work on an icy December evening, many hours after it had been sent. I phoned everyone I knew who had contacts in Nairobi or who might know someone there. Within an hour of making the first call, a Kenyan man in his mid-twenties, Alex, set off with his brother in the family car to look for Thabo. I did not know Alex. He was a personal friend of

a colleague of mine – we had recently written a book together about the experience of parents of deaf children in Southern countries. My network had again yielded a speedy result: Thabo now had extra support and access to private transport.

Alex found Thabo with Mercy, and drove them to the Aga Khan Hospital, following the advice I had been given. By this time it was late at night. Nairobi can be a very dangerous city after dark, the distance between the hospital and the residential area where Mercy and Alex lived was considerable, and severe traffic jams mean that it can take hours to travel across town. The stress and exhaustion of that long evening was alleviated when, at last, I was able to speak to Thabo, with Alex's help. Although Thabo was very ill, I slept well that night, reassured that he was in good hands.

The following morning Alex sent a text to say that Thabo had not been admitted to hospital the previous night, but that he was now back at the hospital. It emerged during the day that the hospital administrators did not believe that Thabo could pay. I spent many hours on the phone to the hospital to convince them that I could pay the bill; to the Consular office in London; and to the insurance company who were doubtful that Thabo's backpacker policy was valid. I was already sick with worry, and the thought that Thabo could die in the waiting room for want of a credit card number was horrifying. Yet I knew this better than most mothers of today's young Northern travellers would ever know.

The harsh reality that large numbers of people die from preventable conditions and from an inability to pay for treatment (as discussed in Publication 1) had faded from my memory. This was an extremely painful reminder of the day-to-day reality of such gross inequality. Theorising about inclusive networking for this thesis had perhaps distanced me from this reality. It was after midnight on the second day that Thabo was finally admitted to a bed, shortly after being threatened with expulsion because of the dispute over payment. Nevertheless, through my personal and professional networks, I had gained access to life-saving information about Nairobi hospitals, and had been able to orchestrate Thabo's admission to hospital and subsequent care from medical staff and new found friends – all by telephone. The total hospital bill of £3,000 was thankfully

paid by the insurance company. I could have afforded to pay the bill, if necessary, and was able to reimburse Alex and Mercy, but such an unexpected expense can bankrupt families and send them into a downward spiral of chronic poverty from which it is often impossible to recover.

When I flew into Nairobi a week later, Alex and three of his family members met me at the airport and drove me to their house, where I was shown ‘my room’ and Thabo’s belongings. His clothes had been washed and ironed, yet there was no running water in the house. It was this family that accompanied us back to the airport when Thabo was finally discharged, and who have continued to send messages of love and concern. Altogether ten individuals prioritised my son over their daily routines for almost two weeks! In the three days I spent in Nairobi I found myself in a ‘contact zone’ – one which contained people with vastly different communication genres, world views, life experiences and values. Most Kenyans were bewildered by Thabo’s independence, and the frank way in which he addressed adults. Such freedom at a young age is highly unusual in contexts where people live so interdependently.

In my introduction, I referred to the stereotypical negative images of Africa so deeply ingrained in most people in the North. I made the claim that networking can facilitate the telling of stories behind the headlines, and by so doing can challenge stereotypes. Thabo’s experience of high quality medical care and of deeply caring and committed people, who gave up their work and other responsibilities to sit with him each day, stands in sharp contrast to the media images of ‘tribal’ violence following national elections the previous year. Although thousands of Kenyans continue to live in refugee camps within their own country, and there are genuine fears that the violence could break out again, our experience was of immense kindness and generosity.

This was, undoubtedly, one of the most stressful experiences I have had as a parent – it is ironic that it should have happened as I was immersed in my theory of inclusive networking. However it illustrated many of the arguments related to the complexity of the global imbalance of power, and the depth of the communication divide, developed in my publications: premature death and disability are a direct consequence of a lack of access to basic services

(Publication 1); personal relationships are key to networking (see 2.4 above); real-life stories can shed light on global inequality in surprising and illuminating ways (Publication D).

I offer this thesis as a small contribution to a more balanced knowledge of the wealth of experience in Southern contexts, and to a greater appreciation of the power of inclusive networking, based on the theory presented here. I suggest that inclusive networking approaches make it possible to learn about education and development from an insider perspective – a perspective that goes beyond the often stereotypical perspectives revealed by outsider research.

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Publications

Part I

Publication 1

Miles, S. and Medi, E. (1994) Disabled children in post-war Mozambique: Developing community based support. *Disasters*, **18** (3), 284–91

This publication argues that disability is a normal part of life and disabled people are part of all communities, therefore international development agencies' emergency responses should include disabled people; community support provided through mainstream services can make an enormous difference to people's lives; and such services should be seen as part of sustainable development programmes, rather than as separate specialist services.

The publication illustrates the way people become disabled in conflict situations, both directly – through landmines and gunshot wounds – and indirectly – through starvation and the inaccessibility of services. It provides four short accounts of individual children known personally to the second author. Each story graphically illustrates the impact of war, instability and poverty on individuals and the wider impact on their families. The publication also illustrates the potential power of information to keep people alive and healthy, and to transform lives. The research revealed the absence of baseline data on disability and disabled people's lives in Mozambique, and so this publication provides a foundation on which other researchers could build. A great deal of attention was paid to the positive use of language in writing the publication.

The power of real-life stories and accounts (researched while developing a community-based service) in illustrating insider experience is clearly demonstrated in this publication. The development of appropriate community-based responses to disabled children following decades of conflict is also highlighted (key principle 4).

Disabled Children in Post-War Mozambique: Developing Community Based Support

SUSIE MILES and ELENA MEDI

War, combined with poverty and recurrent drought, has increased the incidence of impairment, leading to disability in children in Mozambique. Prevalence, however, is unlikely to have increased, because disabled children, as one of society's most vulnerable groups, have had little chance of survival in the harsh conditions arising from the war. Lack of treatment, starvation and simply not being able to flee in the face of an attack are some of the reasons for disabled children not surviving. Scarce resources and negligible specialist facilities mean that the majority of disabled children have no access to adequate health care or educational facilities. In such conditions, but with the new opportunity of peace in Mozambique, the Ministry of Social Action has embarked upon an innovative training course for social workers, the main thrusts of which are to challenge negative social attitudes towards disability and to provide simple, but appropriate, rehabilitative care for disabled children in their homes.

Disability can be seen as a social issue rather than an individual one. Problems experienced by disabled children in developing countries are related to the fundamental issues of all development programmes: poverty, ignorance and injustice. Yet the needs and rights of disabled children are rarely prioritised in development work (Stubbs, 1993). It is estimated that 4.5 per cent of people in developing countries have moderate or severe impairments (Helander, 1993, p. 32). Causes of disability[1] related to underdevelopment and poverty range from malnutrition, vitamin deficiency and the spread of infectious diseases to problems in pregnancy and childbirth and a general lack of resources, particularly in the health and education sectors.

Although poverty is certain to be accompanied by an increase in the incidence of impairments, however, it does not necessarily mean an increase in prevalence of impairment leading to disability (Finkelstein and Zinkin, 1991). Lack of recognition of disability in very young children and the early death of disabled children are some of the factors accounting for lower prevalence rates in developing countries. A stark example of this is the huge difference in life expectancy between White and Black people with spinal injuries in South Africa. Black people are more likely to die from bed sores and kidney infections because of their poor living conditions (Coleridge, 1993, p. 91). Indeed, medical technology, ageing and

industrialisation are some of the reasons for the higher prevalence rates of disability in economically developed countries, where prevalence has been estimated at 7.7 per cent (Helander, 1993, p. 32).

Interventions in most conflict situations to date have tended to focus on the impairments of individual disabled people: people with mine injuries and post polio paralysis being the main target groups. While an essential part of a medical rehabilitation service, these vertical programmes (which provide orthopaedic and prosthetic skills and equipment) do not address the wider issues of disability. Handicap International (HI) is an example of one NGO to realise the limitation of their prosthetics work in Mozambique and to introduce a programme of social reintegration in Inhambane (Torres, 1991).

WAR AND MOZAMBIQUE

At Independence in 1974, the Frelimo government embarked upon a radical programme of social transformation, formally declaring itself a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party in 1977. By 1982, the proportion of the national budget spent on health was higher than any other country in the world. Primary school enrolments tripled and illiteracy dropped. Advances made in those early years, however, though highly impressive, have largely been lost as three decades of almost continuous warfare have now taken their toll. An estimated 1 million people have died as a result of the war of destabilisation fought by Renamo. More than a million fled the country as refugees and between 3 and 5 million people have been displaced within Mozambique (UNICEF, 1993). By 1990 more than 1000 health centres had been destroyed, amounting to one third of the country's primary health network. Almost 3000 primary schools, or 40 per cent of the total, were also destroyed. In the same year, 40–45 per cent of Mozambique's budget was spent on defence (Da Silva, 1991).

In 1992 Mozambique was judged by the United Nations to be the world's poorest country and 1993 statistics show it alongside Angola as having the highest infant mortality rate in the world at 170–220 per 1000 children between one and two years old (UNICEF, 1993). Estimates of absolute poverty levels range from 60–80 per cent (Green, 1991). The situation has been exacerbated by the International Monetary Fund's economic readjustment programme which started in 1987.

WAR AND DISABLED CHILDREN: THE INFORMATION CHALLENGE

Disabled children are powerless. They rarely feature in reports and are conspicuous by their absence. Little is known of their experiences; rather a series of assumptions are made. It is often said that disabled children are neglected or simply not fed, particularly in impoverished and conflict situations, but parents with no access to appropriate advice about how to care for children with severe disabilities, and with the further problems of living in a war situation, find it difficult to ensure that their children do survive. We know of five babies born with cerebal palsy, at around the same time in Mocuba, Mozambique. Four years later only one had survived: his mother was literate and his father a health worker.

Recent oral testimony collected from disabled Mozambican refugees in SCF-supported projects in the refugee camps and settlements in Swaziland and the South African homelands, gives some insights into disabled children's experience of war. This personal testimony comes from children and adults, some of whom were born with disabilities and others who were injured in the fighting. In particular, their stories revealed that they

had been carried to safety over extremely long distances by relatives, a fact which seems to challenge the assumption that disabled children are left behind in war situations.

Although data are scarce, it can be assumed that the war has contributed to an increase in the incidence of impairment, both directly and indirectly. Prevalence, though, is unlikely to be higher, especially among children, because of the harsh conditions brought about by the war (Finkelstein and Zinkin, 1991). The majority of data on disability are comparative and survey-based. Prevalence rates can be estimated based on survey results from a variety of developing countries and on what is known about patterns of disability worldwide, adjustments being made for the specific conditions of war and underdevelopment in Mozambique (Miles and Saunders, 1990).

Good practice suggests that it is more ethical and more useful to disabled people to collect data once comprehensive and reliable services have been established, and not through isolated surveys. Current services in Mozambique, however, are overstretched and do not reach the majority of disabled children. Health services reach only 30 per cent of the population. Schools are overcrowded, able to cater only for approximately 40 per cent of school age children. Specialist resources are scarce and located primarily in Maputo and to a limited extent in provincial capitals. Accurate and representative information about the situation of disabled children is therefore a major aim of the new Mozambican Community Based Support programme, and when it has been fully established, it will provide a reliable source for service-related data collection.

SOCIAL POLICY IN MOZAMBIQUE

It has been the policy of the government to develop community centred policies adapted to the needs of children, thus reversing the colonial policy of institutionalisation. In social policy and planning there has been a strong focus on the needs of children and child welfare has been seen as an integral part of community development during and after war (Kanji, 1990). Social Action was a department in the Ministry of Health until 1990 when the Secretariat of State for Social Action (SEAS) was created in its own right, charged with the care of particularly vulnerable groups in Mozambique. Children separated from their families, children living on the streets or in institutions and orphaned or disabled children are the main groups classified as vulnerable, or in difficult circumstances. SEAS is developing clearly stated policies in the area of child-care based on principles of community participation, sustainability, community based care to provide a 'voice' for children in contrast to residential care and institutional approaches. It is in line with these principles that the concept of Community Based Support for disabled children was conceived.

MOBILIZING COMMUNITY BASED SUPPORT FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

At Independence, Mozambique inherited a number of institutions for disabled and elderly people and four special schools. SEAS has responsibility for the overall supervision of these centres. In 1991 SEAS had a radical rethinking of its disability work and began the process of developing a national policy based on the community centred approach, resulting in the development of 'Atendimento Baseado na Comunidade' or Community Based Support (CBS) for disabled children. This is based on WHO principles of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), but emphasises social integration rather than medical interventions. SCF provides technical and financial support to this programme. The

focus of this work is on enabling families of disabled children to help themselves through a transfer of knowledge and skills, and on finding ways to change and adapt society to reflect the needs and rights of its disabled members. Although the long-term goal is to integrate disability within a general development framework, integration should not be assimilation. The aim is not to 'normalise' disabled children, but rather to find ways of changing society to reflect their needs (Stubbs, 1993).

A modular course in CBS activities was started in May 1993, the first of its kind in the Portuguese speaking world. Trainees were selected from five of Mozambique's eleven provinces, Maputo, Gaza, Zambezia, Niassa and Cabo Delgado. Divided into three modules, the course will run for a total of nine months. Supervisory visits are conducted between the modules by SEAS staff from central level. The second module is currently in progress in Chamanculo, near Maputo, where the first CBS work was started.

CBS workers come from the region in which they work and are well acquainted with local beliefs and prejudices about disability. The tasks of the CBS worker are to identify the needs of disabled people and the problems that can lead to impairment. They are to promote and facilitate training and, in particular, to teach simple techniques that can be implemented by disabled people or their families: exercises; positioning; or the production of aids with locally available materials (Medi, 1993). Social Action workers make up the majority of the sixteen trainees, with one teacher, one Red Cross worker, three members of Mozambique's main disabled people's organisations (ADEMO and ADEMIMO)[2] and two community members. Involving disabled adults in the programme is essential if disabled children are to grow up with positive role models. A further seventeen 'activistas', or volunteers, have been identified to work closely with the trainees in the community.

Since June 1993 the trainees have worked extensively in the rural areas where they are based. Two hundred and forty families have been identified as requiring support and 108 families are visited on a regular basis. The impact of the course is being felt beyond the individual disabled children and their families, as the CBS work draws in interested neighbours, teachers and community leaders and challenges some of the discrimination previously felt by the children and their families.

THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS OF WAR

War can affect disability directly or indirectly. The weapons of war can cause impairments which directly begin the process of disabling a child. The social and economic results of war such as displacement, hunger and the breakdown of services then serve as a rapid multiplier of disability. As a wartorn society is increasingly under stress, the number of ways in which it can disable children rises still further. CBS workers have found that having a disabled child exacerbates an already desperate situation. The family invariably becomes poorer, it is difficult for the mother to go out to work, and not infrequently, the remaining money is spent looking for a cure. This spiral of impoverishment acts also as a catalyst of increasing disability as options in every area of the child's life are reduced.

The following case studies show how the war has exacerbated the already difficult situation in which disabled children are living in Mozambique, illustrating the distinction between war's indirect impact on disability and its more direct links such as mine injuries. The case studies look at the experience of three children and the improvement in the quality of their lives brought about by the SEAS intervention.

Indirect links: Breakdown of health services

The systematic destruction of more than a third of all hospital and health centres in Mozambique and the deliberate targeting of health personnel by Renamo has resulted in the near collapse of health services, especially in rural areas. Injuries and illnesses such as malaria, tuberculosis and meningitis are treated late, resulting in impairments that could otherwise have been prevented. Mozambique's Expanded Programme on Immunisation has been very successful in the urban areas. Ninety five per cent of children under two years have been fully vaccinated in the capital city of Maputo (UNICEF, 1993). Coverage in the rural areas has been more sporadic because of the war. It might have been expected that the incidence of polio would have been high in a situation of civil strife but, with only two cases reported nationally in 1993, the Ministry of Health feels that the situation is reasonably under control.

Pedro lived in Lugela in Zambezia province until 1988 when he and his family were forced to flee from Renamo. It was about the same time that Pedro, aged nine, became ill with the tuberculosis, which affected his spine and ultimately caused paralysis. Pedro, as the eldest of six children, felt a great sense of responsibility for the rest of the family, especially since his father had left. His mother, whilst staying in the hospital with him, unused to life in the town, had been run over by a car, and was partially paralysed as a result. One of Pedro's sisters had been sent to live with a relative far away in the safety of the provincial capital because she had epilepsy. After being discharged from hospital, Pedro went to live in Mocuba with his uncle. SEAS's first CBS module was held in Mocuba and it was during the course that Pedro was identified. The CBS trainees made a pair of crutches and a walking frame for him and helped him plan for the reunification of his family, for whom, at the age of 14, he felt so responsible.

Indirect links: Lack of food security

The combined effects of war and drought have had severe consequences for food production and food security and, in turn, for the nutritional status of children. Attacks on rural populations forced people to flee to the towns or to neighbouring countries, thus increasing malnutrition and starvation. In 1982, in Memba district of Nampula, thousands of people died and others became paralysed as a result of eating bitter cassava containing cyanide. They were short of food because of a local drought and ate this high risk food out of desperation. This situation has arisen again throughout the war because of lack of access to rural areas in the northern provinces of Mozambique. Many people have knowingly eaten the cassava because there was nothing else.

Tomas is eight years old and has lived in Namacurra in Zambezia province with his mother since the signing of the Peace Accord. His older sisters are all married and live far away. During the war the family lived in the bush in hiding where Tomas's father died because he knowingly ate poisonous mushrooms, so great was his hunger. Both Tomas and his mother became paralysed after eating poisonous cassava. Cecilia, the SEAS CBS worker in that area, visits them regularly and has built parallel bars outside their house for Tomas to practice walking. They have helpful neighbours who assist with the tasks of daily life. Tomas has started attending school since the intervention of the CBS worker. For the time being his friends carry him to school, but Cecilia plans to make him a small cart.

Direct links: Conflict, torture and mutilation

Savage mutilation was characteristic of Renamo attacks. The cutting off of the hands, noses, lips or ears, even of children, was not uncommon. Thousands of children were traumatised as a result of witnessing the murder or mutilation of their loved ones. The psychological trauma resulting from such experiences has been well documented (Richman, Ratilal and Aly, 1989). Children have suffered immeasurable physical and psychological abuse throughout the war. Impairments resulting directly from conflict situations include a small number of sensory impairments caused by explosions, and a range of physical injuries. Thousands were captured and put to forced labour by Renamo soldiers. Many have impairments as a result of repeated beatings and being made to carry heavy loads for long distances. Far from medical care, those with serious injuries had little chance of survival and the life expectancy of the survivors was reduced by the impoverished conditions in which they were forced to live, both in the bush and in the overcrowded urban settlements.

Maria was 12 when she came to live in Maputo with her family who fled the atrocities and starvation in Gaza Province. Maria had been shot in the back during an attack and was unable to walk. Life in Maputo was difficult. The family built a makeshift house in the 'bairro', or squatter settlement of Chamanculo, on the outskirts of Maputo. To begin with, the family took Maria to the physiotherapy department of the central hospital on a regular basis but she soon became too heavy for her mother to carry. Transport was too expensive, so she stopped taking her. Maria had been given an old wheelchair, but is was too heavy to push around and was too wide to get through their door. The CBS team first met Maria in 1992 when they started their work in Chamanculo. They visited Maria and her mother regularly, to help Maria with bathing and comfortable sitting positions. Plans were made to send Maria to the local school. Then came the Peace Accord and the family decided to return to Gaza, where Maria died soon after from a kidney infection.

Direct links: Landmines

Landmine accidents are a long-term hazard in Mozambique. For the foreseeable future an anticipated 550 men, women and children will be killed or injured by mines each year (Croll and Sheehan, 1993). Mines have become a greater hazard since the peace as the population has become more mobile. Children are particularly vulnerable to the unexploded debris of war. Injuries of the hands and face are common as newly found 'toys' suddenly explode in their hands. They are less likely, though, to survive the extensive injuries resulting from mine blasts because they are physically smaller and weaker than adults. This was evident in a sample of clients interviewed at an ICRC centre in Beira, in which children only accounted for 6 per cent of those waiting to receive prostheses (Africa Watch, 1994).

Anita, aged 10, and her sister, Sandra, aged nine, were on their way to their old 'machamba', or small plot, which they had been unable to cultivate because of the war. They climbed over a fence into a minefield laid to protect a major water supply just 40 km outside Maputo. They did not see or perhaps could not read the signs. Sandra stepped on a mine and Anita, following close behind, got the worst of the blast. A nun working nearby heard the noise and ran to their assistance. She lifted them into her van and drove them to Maputo's central hospital. Anita had lost both her legs, and Sandra's

injuries appeared less serious. Sandra died, however, while waiting for her prosthesis to be fitted. She was younger, and obviously less strong. Anita is being trained to walk with prostheses while she waits for hers to be made. She will receive support from a social action worker when she goes home and, hopefully, returns to school.

RELIEF POLICY: THE CHALLENGE OF DISABILITY

War is undoubtedly a major cause of poverty and disability. The last decade has seen the death of more than 1.5 million children worldwide as a direct result of conflict. At least 4 million children have been burned, blinded, deafened, or have lost limbs due to landmines, and countless millions have become disabled by disease or stunted by famine as an indirect result of war (Werner, 1993). Disability is, however, a fact of life. In war and in peace, whether a country is economically developed or seriously underdeveloped, a proportion of its citizens will be either born, or become, disabled as a result of their impairments. The effects of this will be felt not only by the individual but also by their families, and will be an added complication in the already difficult situation of living in areas of conflict.

Disabled children have the same basic needs for food, clean water, love and shelter as non-disabled children. Their needs and rights are clearly spelled out in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the charter which guides SCF's work. The tendency is, however, for them to be excluded from mainstream society and for their needs to be marginalised, or reduced to a narrow medical definition with medical rehabilitation as the only solution offered. While a small number of journal articles have been published about the experience of disabled adults in war situations, little has been written about disabled children. This is testimony to the unfortunate reality of disability itself being a marginalised issue within relief and development work.

The challenge ahead is to accommodate the *individual* needs of disabled children within all relief and development programmes and to build an *inclusive* society free of discrimination even in times of extreme crisis. Involving disabled adults in this process is considered essential. The recently initiated CBS programme in Mozambique, which looks at disabled children holistically and does not only 'treat' their impairments, represents a vision of what is possible, even in the desperate situation of post-war Mozambique. Community Based Support for disabled children can be seen as the democratisation of rehabilitation. By enabling families and community members to carry out simple rehabilitative techniques, services can be decentralised and personalised to the needs of individual disabled children. At the same time, wider social issues are tackled, such as equal access to education and employment, the challenging of negative attitudes and superstitious beliefs, and the raising of awareness about the politics of disability and development. The new peace in Mozambique has allowed this programme to get off the ground. The main aim of the emergency policy makers and practitioners in humanitarian assistance programmes should now be to ensure sufficient quality and quantity of information about the experience of disabled people in war and disaster, enabling timely and appropriate response to the emergency needs of disabled people.

Notes

1. The definitions of impairment and disability used in this article are those of the Disabled People International. Impairment is defined as 'lacking part or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organism or mecha-

nism of the body'. Disability is defined as 'the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from the mainstream of social activities'.

2. ADEMO, or *Associacao dos Deficientes Mozambicanos* (Association of Disabled Mozambicans) was the first organisation of disabled people to be formed (1989). ADEMIMO, or *Associacao dos Deficientes Militares Mozambicanos* (Association of Disabled Mozambican Soldiers) was formed in 1992 and includes people from both Frelimo and Renamo armies.

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Publication 2

Miles, S. (1996) Engaging with the disability rights movement: The experience of community based rehabilitation in southern Africa*. Disability and Society*, **11** (4), 501-18

This publication explores the concept of community-based rehabilitation (CBR), which was developed by the World Health Organisation, as a Western notion, and presents evidence of the way it was adapted to the southern African context. Drawing on professional experience during a seven-year period of promoting CBR in five countries in the southern African region, the publication discusses the tensions between CBR and the role of disabled people's organisations (DPOs). One of the causes of this tension was that CBR tended to focus on meeting the needs of individual disabled children, while DPOs tended to focus on the empowerment of disabled adults. The development of a series of appropriate community-based responses (key principle 4) across the southern African region is highlighted in this publication. These initiatives promoted consultation with, and the participation of, marginalised groups at community level (essential ingredient 1).

The publication considers ways in which CBR can be adapted so that it is more culturally appropriate by being more sensitive to the collective (rather than individual) nature of African communities. It argues for the involvement of disabled adults and their organisations, as well as parents and their organisations, where they exist, in CBR programmes. Its primary argument is that greater collaboration between the often parallel initiatives of DPOs and CBR programmes would be beneficial to all stakeholders at community level. It also argues for greater value to be placed on indigenous knowledge and expertise.

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CARFAX

Engaging with the Disability Rights Movement: the experience of community-based rehabilitation in southern Africa

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ABSTRACT *This paper argues that unless community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programmes enter into genuine consultation with the disability rights movement they are in danger of repeating the mistakes of institution-based rehabilitation. Partnership between CBR programmes, and disabled people's and parents' organisations in southern Africa has led to the development of a more consumer focused approach to CBR Where disabled adults and parents have been fully involved in the design and implementation of programmes, CBR workers have a clearer understanding of disability as a development issue. Education, employment and poverty alleviation have been given a higher priority than medical rehabilitation in these programmes. The evolving concept of CBR and its relationship with the disability rights movement has been observed and documented by The Save the Children Fund, and forms the basis of this paper.*

Introduction

Prevailing attitudes among rehabilitation workers tend to dismiss the strength, and thus the value, of engaging with the disability rights movement. In so doing they risk both missing out on an essential part of their education and alienating disabled people's organisations (DPOs) because of their reluctance to relinquish control of the rehabilitation process. The transition from omniscient professional to facilitator in the community requires an enormous shift in thinking and, too often, institutional attitudes are carried over. I will argue here that community-based rehabilitation is in danger of repeating the mistakes of institution-based rehabilitation (IBR) if it does not enter into genuine consultation with DPOs.

The World Health Organization (WHO) formalised CBR into a strategy for developing countries in 1976. Since then the concept of CBR has spread rapidly, though implementation strategies are diverse. Twenty years on, CBR is no longer considered to be a blue print or ready-made solution; instead, it is a philosophy

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which can be tailored to suit the cultural context in which it is applied. Greater attention is now paid to the informal CBR support networks which pre-date WHO's initiative and the need to validate indigenous practices is increasingly recognised.

In southern Africa the disabled people's movement is relatively strong and the enfolding philosophy of CBR in the region has been well seasoned with disability rights. CBR implementers are struggling to achieve a balanced perspective between delivering quality services, and empowering disabled people and parents. This struggle has been observed and documented by The Save the Children Fund (SCF) and it forms the basis for this article. In 1994, SCF brought together staff and partners working in disability programmes in 17 different countries to exchange experiences (SCF, 1994). SCF's global disability work can be divided into three categories: CBR, Integrated Education and the support of consumer organisations. A follow-up meeting was held in southern Africa to establish areas of common interest between CBR, and disabled people's and parents' organisations, develop a mutually supportive relationship and agree on a more co-ordinated way of working. The ideas and views expressed here are both a reflection of observations made by myself, as SCF's Regional Disability Advisor, and of the discussions held at the meetings.

The first section of this paper outlines some of the problems with IBR, describes in general terms the content of CBR, and stresses the need to reconceptualise CBR in the context of African communities and the collective way in which they operate. This is followed by a brief look at the way in which key writers on CBR view the role of disabled people and their organisations.

CBR is both a philosophy and a strategy for providing rehabilitation services in the community in a more equitable, sustainable and appropriate way than can be provided in a health or educational institution. Institution-based rehabilitation (IBR) in developing countries is expensive, often inappropriate and only available to a 'lucky' few. Rehabilitation services are not considered a high priority by most African governments and, even if they are, the cost of providing high quality rehabilitation institutions for those who require such services would be prohibitive. More importantly, the type of rehabilitation available in a highly professionalised institution, is unlikely to be of benefit to the majority of people whose home environment is in stark contrast to the institution. Furthermore, limited places mean that IBR is beyond the reach of the majority, and the cost of travelling long distances to and from centrally located institutions makes IBR unaffordable for impoverished families.

CBR was pioneered at a time when many rehabilitation professionals were beginning to question the validity of their institution-based work, often as a result of visiting disabled people in their communities on an outreach basis. In many cases such visits provided professionals with the information and experience required to launch CBR programmes, though many so called community-based programmes have continued to function as outreach programmes.

There are arguably as many different types of CBR as there are programmes in existence. Most CBR programmes, however, include the following activities: the selection and training of village-based CBR workers; the identification, assessment

and referral, where appropriate, of disabled children and adults; the design of aids and appliances by local craftsmen; and the teaching of simple rehabilitative techniques to family members for use with their disabled child. Awareness raising, public education, counselling, multi-sectoral collaboration, community development and the promotion of integrated education are also key ingredients of CBR programmes. CBR services may be integrated into existing health, education or social welfare structures or they may be vertical programmes run by NGOs. Increasingly CBR services are being developed at village level as part of community development programmes, with relatively little input from rehabilitation professionals. Although a CBR programme may contain some or all of the ingredients discussed above, its flavour will depend upon the cultural context in which it is implemented. Each programme is therefore unique. Differences exist not only between CBR programmes in different cultures, but also between villages in one geographical area.

CBR and the Tension between the Individual and the Community

It is very important to place the development of CBR in Africa in the context of a collective consciousness. In Africa the needs of the collective, or community, are paramount, whereas in the west it is the individual whose needs come first. Although the true essence of CBR does not conflict with this cultural principle, CBR has been packaged and marketed from a western individualistic perspective and there tends to be a strong focus upon correcting or minimising the impairments of individual disabled people. Focusing exclusively upon the rehabilitation needs of individuals is likely to be counter-productive unless the informal support networks and the basic needs of the whole community are recognised and addressed. Serpell *et al.* (1993) contrast the emphasis in the West on the promotion of autonomy or independence with the tendency of African parents to cultivate social responsibility in their children, and discuss the implications of this when working with the families of children who have learning difficulties. This tension between the community and the individual, between Africa and the West would perhaps render the already contentious concept of Independent Living inappropriate in the African context. Interestingly, however, centres for Independent Living in the UK are aiming to achieve a degree of *inter*dependence which is closer to the African concept, than to the western principle of independence (Barnes, 1993).

Vanneste (1995) cites a disturbing example of a CBR programme which effectively destroyed the pre-existing informal mutual support network upon which a family had depended. A neighbour had been helping the family of a severely disabled child, but when a CBR worker began to visit the child, the neighbour withdrew her support. Later, when the CBR worker stopped visiting, the neighbour refused to resume her visits, leaving the child and her family in a worse situation. This could have been avoided if the traditional coping or CBR mechanisms had been respected.

Ideally, the CBR implementer or animator should unlock and place value on indigenous knowledge about disability, and balance the local expertise with the sensitive application and adaptation of knowledge gained outside the community.

CBR can be seen as a vehicle for the exchange of information between communities and governments, and between disabled community members and national DPOs. If CBR workers are to fulfil this role for disabled people's groups and if they are to develop a co-ordinated way of working, a level of commitment to the disability rights philosophy is desirable.

A range of attitudes and ways of working with disabled people and their organisations is reflected in the CBR literature. Implementers of CBR programmes increasingly recognise the importance of involving disabled people in the CBR process, rather than seeing them as recipients of services. However, the extent to which disabled people and their organisations are actively involved in the process is difficult to determine. The Zanzibar and Mauritania CBR programmes were set up by national DPOs whose leaders are well known in the international disability movement, but unfortunately these are isolated and little known examples. Definitions of CBR have developed and changed in response to field experience and there is an arguably healthy lack of consensus. Unfortunately, though, disabled people's voices, especially those from the South, are rarely heard in the CBR debates or reflected in the literature.

The recent joint statement on CBR by UNESCO, ILO & WHO (1994) emphasises the importance of partnership with disabled people as individuals, by stressing that CBR should be implemented through the *combined efforts* of disabled people, their families and communities, and the appropriate government services. Helander (1993) recognises the value of working with local parents' and disabled people's groups, but bemoans the fact that DPOs too often develop from the top-down rather than at grass roots level.

Some writers place more emphasis on the family, rather than on disabled people. This is especially true of programmes that prioritise children and particularly children with severe disabilities, whose experience and needs tend to be neglected by the disability rights movement. O'Toole (1994) asserts that the greatest resource in developing countries for helping disabled persons lead lives which are fulfilled and productive is a well advised and supported family.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is concerned about broader issues such as integration and, although the main focus is on service provision, it acknowledges the increasing importance of the disabled people's movement.

> A new development, which also makes its way gradually into rural areas, is the emergence of associations of disabled people. This development will sooner or later replace a patronising form of planning for disabled people by a planning process which involves the target beneficiaries. (Momm & Konig, 1989, p. 6.)

David Werner goes a step further and argues that disabled people should be in control, involvement is not enough. He recognises that families of disabled people have an equally important role to play. His views are substantiated by his experience, both as a disabled person and as a staff member of Project Projimo in rural Mexico. This is run and almost entirely staffed by disabled villagers, and maintains high standards of appropriate and affordable rehabilitation.

> Only when programmes *for* disabled people are led and controlled *by* disabled people (and/or their families) are they likely to help disabled persons gain self-determination and a respected, equal position in society. (Werner, 1993, p. viii.)

It is worth noting that Werner is one of very few disabled spokespersons on CBR. Sadly, there appears to be very little cross-fertilisation of ideas between CBR writers and implementers, and the disabled people's movement, and so attitudes tend to remain unchallenged. In southern Africa, however, interaction between CBR programmes and DPOs has led to the development of a more consumer-focused approach to CBR.

The Southern African Context and SCFs Involvement

This section will focus on SCFs role as facilitator and provider of technical and financial support for the work of both governmental and non-governmental initiatives in disability and development work. The nature of the support varied according to the national and political context in which it was provided, and these will be briefly described. This section will also highlight the role of the Southern Africa Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (SAFOD) as agent provocateur and ally in SCF's journey from service provision to politics. This journey, or process, has involved a redefining of rehabilitation needs through community consultation, and a greater focus on the empowerment of parents and disabled people.

The disability rights movement in southern Africa has its roots in Zimbabwe. In the mid-1970s a group of physically disabled people began to organise themselves in the institution in which they lived and worked. Charlton (1993) has charted this development through a series of interviews with key individuals, one of whom, Joshua Malinga, became the main link with Disabled People International (DPI) from its inception in 1981 and was later elected chairperson. The disability movement in southern Africa was therefore strongly influenced from its early stages by international disability politics. Malinga was instrumental in establishing SAFOD in 1986. SAFOD is the umbrella body to which all national DPOs have become affiliated and, in turn, it is affiliated to DPI. SAFOD's original aims were to support the formation of DPOs, both local and national, to strengthen existing ones, and to promote leadership training.

The southern Africa region has been fraught with political conflict, drought and an unequal distribution of resources, and it has not been easy to foster the development of altruistic and committed leaders in this context (Leaman & Fricke, 1991). Although the struggle against apartheid in South Africa has had a profoundly negative effect on the whole region, it has provided a revolutionary context from within which the disability rights movement has emerged and with which it has identified its own struggle. The relative cohesion of the region, which, ironically, is partly due to South Africa's political and economic influence, is one of the factors contributing to SAFOD's success as one of DPI's regional bodies.

It would have been conceivable, though arguably unethical, for SCF to have supported the development of CBR initiatives without reference to the disability

rights movement. SAFOD was, however, a rich resource upon which to draw in the late 1980s when CBR was a little understood concept in southern Africa. SCF's involvement began in 1988 with the appointment of a Regional Disability Advisor whose responsibility was to act as an information broker, to develop south-south networks, and to support the development of innovative community-based initiatives which would provide models for evaluation and training (Saunders, 1987).

To date, SCF has supported 10 programmes in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho. These include a national Integrated Education programme run by the Ministry of Education in Lesotho; five CBR programmes, four of which are health-based and a fifth which is located in the Ministry of Social Action in Mozambique; two institution-based outreach projects run by a local NGO in Zimbabwe, which preceded the regional disability programme; and development programmes run by two DPOs. Interestingly, only three of the 10 programmes have a national brief and are run by government ministries, only one of which is a Ministry of Health programme. This programme has stimulated thinking on disability issues in Swaziland, as has the Integrated Education programme in Lesotho, but policies have not yet been developed. The Zimbabwean government has taken the issue of disability seriously ever since it came to power at Independence and, recently, a disability act has been passed. In both Mozambique and South Africa disability policy is currently being developed. SCF has only employed two expatriates in southern Africa, both of whom were requested by government ministries: the Ministry of Social Action in Mozambique and the Ministry of Education in Lesotho.

Historically, the dividing line between SCF-supported CBR programmes and DPOs was their target groups, with SCF focusing on children and DPOs on adults. However, this proved to be a naive and unrealistic distinction as implementers of CBR programmes were faced with the changing needs of the children as they grew into adulthood. It was crucial, however, to define the CBR workers' relationship with disabled adults so that they were not simply seen as an extension of their client group, but instead as valuable participants in the CBR process.

The ILO has stressed the importance of establishing the different needs and therefore the different types of assistance required by disabled adults (Momm & Konig, 1989). Whether assistance means access to services or help with the establishment of self-help groups and/or empowerment, it is important to recognise the very different nature of the relationship between CBR workers and adults from the one that is likely to exist between CBR workers and children. Children do not have a voice and tend to be passive recipients of services, whereas disabled adults are either recipients of services, potential leaders of programmes or they may choose not to be involved at all. The difference in the relationship is arguably more crucial than the different type of assistance required.

Assuming that a more equal relationship develops, the opportunities for the greater involvement of DPOs in CBR increases. The need for positive adult role models for disabled children in CBR has prompted CBR implementers to challenge DPOs to become more involved with children's and parents' issues. However many of the region's DPOs lack the capacity to involve themselves in anything other than

the development of their own organisations. Others are reluctant to get involved because of their uneasiness about the underlying philosophy of rehabilitation, which places the power firmly in the hands of the professionals.

The continued use of the word 'rehabilitation' is, in itself, a source of conflict and debate. The following section will examine the difficulties arising from the word 'rehabilitation' and will describe the development of programmes in Lesotho and South Africa which prioritise disabled people's access to education and employment, rather than to medical rehabilitation.

CBR Without the 'R'

The ideas represented by the term CBR have sparked off disability initiatives in communities in most countries in Africa and Asia and the term has been interpreted in many different ways (Miles, 1993). For those projects that work in partnership with disabled people, it would be preferable to find a term that encapsulates the idea of a community-based strategy which promotes equality of opportunities. It should reflect the fact that disability is not only a health or social welfare issue, but also one of politics, economics, development and human rights. Community-based support (CBS) for disabled people is an example of an alternative term. It was adopted by the Ministry of Social Action in Mozambique as a deliberate move away from the medical model which emphasises the treatment and rehabilitation of impairments (Miles & Medi, 1994). In the meantime, the term CBR will continue to be used here as a catch all, but it is accepted that it may outlive its usefulness.

The adoption of a more consumer-focused approach to CBR, by the Scott Hospital CBR team in Lesotho and the Amawoti Disabled People's Association in South Africa, has enabled disabled people and CBR workers to work together on a more equal basis. By approaching disability as a community development issue, disabled adults and parents of disabled children have become active participants in the CBR process. This has resulted in a type of CBR which places less emphasis on the 'R' and instead prioritises education and employment issues.

I will now briefly describe the context in which the Scott and Amawoti programmes are working, the main aspects of the work and the similarities between the two. This will be followed by a discussion of the role of home visiting and multi-disciplinary teams in CBR. It is argued that when disabled people and parents are actively involved in CBR, the programme is moulded by the skills and interests of the people involved, rather than by prescriptive manuals and the received international wisdom on the issue.

Scott is a mission hospital serving a sparsely populated rural community in the foothills of Lesotho of approximately 170,000 people. In the mid-1980s, Scott pioneered a Home Nursing programme which targeted elderly people and those who had suffered a stroke. The need to address disability as an issue in the community arose both from the Primary Health Care (PHC) team's consultation with the Village Health Committees and from the nurses' growing awareness of disability through the Home Nursing programme. Lessons learnt from mistakes made in the implementation of PHC ensured that the PHC team entered into genuine consul-

tation with the community in order to establish community ownership and involvement in the disability work.

The long-term goal of SCF's support for this CBR programme was to provide Lesotho and the Ministry of Health, in particular, with a model for evaluation and training. This has proved to be a very slow process within Lesotho, but the impact of Scott's work has been felt both regionally and internationally, through SCF's dissemination of lessons learnt. However, the Ministry of Education's Integrated Education programme, which is also supported by SCF, is also taking the lead in promoting disability issues at a national level.

Amawoti is an informal peri-urban community situated 30 km north of Durban in South Africa. With a population of 100,000, it is a community marked by poverty and an associated lack of services (Philpott, 1995). The Amawoti Disabled People's Association grew out of the concern of one of the local civic committees about the needs of disabled people in their area. Support was provided by the staff of a community-based PHC project in Amawoti which viewed health not as a medical problem, but as a broader question of access to power.

Prior to South Africa's first elections in 1994, all pioneering work in the field of disability and development was carried out by NGOs, although between 1990–94 dialogue was initiated by the government. Since 1994, however, considerable progress has been made by the government with the support of the national DPO to develop a comprehensive policy on disability.

Scott and Amawoti are small projects which have pioneered a different approach to CBR and have had an impact on the development of thinking in the region about community disability work. Despite their very marked differences, they have the following aspects in common:

- Disabled people and parents have been involved from the beginning, many as volunteer CBR workers.
- Disabled adults are seen as partners in the CBR process rather than potential clients.
- The disability work has emerged from PHC and has a strong community development focus.
- Medical rehabilitation has not been the main priority, with education and employment issues taking precedence.
- Poverty alleviation is considered to be an essential part of CBR.
- Attitude change in the community is seen as crucial.
- The pace is necessarily slow.
- Home visiting is carried out when necessary, but is not a routine activity.

Home visiting, together with attitude change and the empowerment of disabled people, has always been thought of as one of the cornerstones of CBR. Home visits provide a crucial, though time-consuming, therapeutic and support service to those disabled people and their families who would otherwise be unlikely to have regular access to rehabilitation services. While not wishing to devalue the efforts of CBR workers to provide therapy and support to individuals, I would argue that, in some cases, home visiting is in danger of becoming an institutionalised activity which has

lost sight of its original purpose. Interestingly, home visiting is given much less importance in the Scott and Amawoti projects. Some of the possible reasons are as follows:

- Home visits take place naturally as part of everyday life rather than as scheduled activities.
- Disabled adults and parents are so involved with the running of the programme that they no longer feel so isolated and are therefore in less need of home visits.
- Disabled adults and parents are learning the skills they need in other situations, for example, at community meetings, in support groups, creches or while knitting in the income generating groups.

Although the projects have prioritised attitude change, income generating projects and empowerment, home visiting has not been ruled out. In fact, home visits were made in the initial stages in order to identify disabled children and to train key workers. Parents in both projects are beginning to express their interest in learning simple rehabilitation techniques, in order to reach disabled people and their families who are not already involved in the programme. If home visiting is adopted as one of their strategies, it will be an activity defined and controlled by the community, rather than one performed or monitored by outsiders.

Similarly, roles and responsibilities in Scott and Amawoti have been defined according to the abilities and priorities of those involved, and this has led to the development of a multi-disciplinary team approach. These are not the multi-disciplinary teams associated with highly trained professionals and case conferences, but a collection of committed individuals with a variety of skills to offer. Tasks are assigned according to the abilities and interests of the individuals, in contrast to the WHO approach of training a cadre of workers who each carry out an agreed set of tasks.

In Amawoti a conscious decision was made not to train individual CBR workers, but to assign tasks according to need. The Scott project has abandoned the CBR worker strategy in favour of supporting the development of parents' and child-to-child support groups from which key individuals have emerged as resource persons and leaders. A variety of specialist services are on offer in both programmes including literacy teaching; creche facilities; examination of new-born babies; knitting machine instruction; income generating activities; the manufacture of aids and appliances; and the child-to-child approach in schools. Further training in these specialist areas will be sought, where possible, for the key individuals who have shown the greatest commitment.

Developing a Mutually Supportive Relationship

The move towards a consumer-controlled approach to CBR has necessitated the formalisation of the working relationship between CBR programme implementers and their DPO counterparts. This process is far from complete in southern Africa, but initial discussions have been held to establish common areas of interest, while

clarifying potential sources of conflict and differing priorities, for example, between adults' and children's issues. CBR workers tend to have more contact with the families of disabled people than with the disability rights movement, especially in programmes which prioritise the needs of children, and therefore do not necessarily feel that they should be accountable to DPOs. They may have contact with disabled adults as individuals or they may be involved in facilitating the development of self-help groups of disabled adults, but this does not necessarily bring them into contact with the disability rights philosophy and they may never be forced to confront their own negative attitudes.

Similarly, there is a tendency for DPOs to assume that rehabilitation workers are not interested in disability rights issues, and for the two to be perceived as being mutually exclusive or incompatible, as illustrated by the following quote:

> Service providers would not be interested in the philosophy and objectives of the Movement. They suspect the Movement is there to sabotage them. (Mbewe & Lee, 1991, p. 30.)

However, the movement sees itself as a watchdog whose responsibility it is to monitor the quality and availability of services. Furthermore, disabled people feel they have a duty to educate rehabilitation workers and transform them into supporters of the movement (Charlton, 1993).

In response to proposals for funding from SAFOD, SCF produced a discussion document (Miles, 1992) to clarify SCF's disability policy and funding capacity, and to open up discussion on common areas of interest with a view to developing and formalising a mutually supportive working relationship. In 1992 SCF secured funding for two DPOs, who aimed to develop stronger links between themselves and CBR programmes. These were the Amawoti Disabled People's Association and the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of Disabled people (LNFOD)'s development activists' training programme whose impact will be examined later.

How best to work with DPOs had become a major issue for CBR workers throughout the region and attitudes to this varied enormously. The need to consult and confront DPOs about the role of CBR in the disability rights movement came about through discussions between project staff and SCF's advisor which culminated in a series of meetings held both regionally and globally (SCF, 1994) to review SCF's disability work. An interesting comparison was made at the final regional meeting between the very similar aims of the CBR programmes and DPOs represented. A sharing of resources and the development of a more co-ordinated way of working seemed the obvious way forward, but first differences in philosophy and approach needed to be discussed as honestly and openly as possible. From the CBR perspective it was felt by some that DPOs tended to be undemocratic, disorganised and led by elite groups of physically disabled people. It is difficult to encourage the development of decentralised and egalitarian DPOs when their membership and agendas are urban-based and largely middle-class (Werner, 1995). The tendency was to bypass them, or to inform them of CBR activities, but not to enter into genuine consultation about the needs of their common target groups. An example of a more co-ordinated approach to the needs of rural disabled people follows.

Where There is No CBR: the Role of Development Activists

This section highlights the role that DPOs can play in promoting the concept of CBR in the absence of CBR programmes. The mobilisation of disabled adults living in rural areas through LNFOD's development activists' training workshops has resulted in their increased confidence and motivation. A good working relationship between LNFOD, and the CBR and National Integrated Education programmes in Lesotho has ensured that disabled children's issues are high on the agenda.

LNFOD is a cross-disability national umbrella organisation and since 1993 it has consisted of four member organisations, representing people with physical, visual and hearing impairments, and learning difficulties (and their parents). Over a 3-year period LNFOD has trained 30 rural disabled people per year as development activists in a series of three 1-week workshops. Places on the training programme were shared equally between the member organisations and 50% of all trainees were women. In addition, the CBR programme was allocated places for disabled adults who were potential leaders in the programme.

The courses included an introduction to disability as a development issue, consciousness raising on disability rights issues, advice on how to set up and run local committees, and ideas on income generation. There was also some orientation on disabled children's issues and visits were organised to both segregated and integrated schools. The organisation of these courses and the follow up in the communities were the responsibility of the one salaried person within LNFOD and its volunteer committee members.

The main impact of the training has been in the raising of self-esteem and confidence of the individuals trained. The mutual support systems which have developed through the workshops and subsequent local meetings have fostered a greater sense of self-worth in the trainees and of control over their own lives:

> We used to feel isolated and suffered in silence—now we meet and make our own decisions. (du Toit, 1995.)

Similarly, the parents who have been trained have experienced a change in their attitude towards their disabled children and a greater appreciation of disability issues:

> Being involved with disabled people has taught me to handle my situation. My disabled child is now active in my family. (du Toit, 1995, p. 18.)

Finally, disabled adults now feel committed to CBR-type activities such as the challenging of negative attitudes, and the counselling of other disabled people and their families about education, employment and rehabilitation issues. They consider themselves responsible resource people in their communities and in particular they are concerned to support parents of disabled children:

> I now have the courage and understanding to approach parents to change their view of their children with disabilities, to seek education for them and to organise for self-help. (du Toit, 1995, p. 17.)

The development activists have formed support groups in which they plan their

activities, such as holding community meetings and establishing self-help groups. Their awareness of CBR issues has given them the confidence to provide advice and information to families, and in this way they are performing part of the function of CBR workers. In fact, LNFOD has taken over the management of an NGO run CBR programme in the south of Lesotho and this provides them with the opportunity to integrate the two approaches.

The following section describes the reverse situation, where CBR workers are involved in setting up local disabled people's support groups, often with very little input from the national DPO.

The Role of CBR Where There is No DPO

CBR programmes invariably operate in communities where there is no DPO and CBR workers are often instrumental in facilitating their development. In the following examples the CBR workers provide a vital link between local groups and the national DPO and relevant government departments. They act as a channel of information and ideas, and are therefore in a position of power. The way in which this is handled is crucial to the long-term sustainability of the local group. Local DPOs are in danger of either becoming totally dependent on the CBR programme and, therefore, being ineffective, or of being left to develop so independently that they lack support and resources and so flounder.

One of Africa's earliest rural CBR programmes in Kibwezi, Kenya, began without the involvement of disabled people, but its staff have come to realise the drawbacks of this way of working. The Kibwezi programme targeted disabled children up to the age of 16 and neither provided services for adults nor considered helping them to set up a local support group. In 1990 the programme was evaluated and this lack of involvement of disabled adults was highlighted as an issue of concern (Saunders & Zinkin, 1990). As a result of this a local group began to meet as a separate entity from the CBR programme. The co-ordinator of the programme is now convinced of the importance of starting CBR programmes with the full involvement of disabled adults, if they are to be sustainable.

In Mozambique, the community-based support (CBS) team attached to the Ministry of Social Action in Mozambique provided a meeting room for a group of deaf school leavers who had failed to make their voices heard in the national DPO. The group prioritised the development of a national sign language and became involved with teaching small groups of deaf children as part of the national CBS programme. The group will soon form itself into an association and will apply for affiliate membership to the national DPO. The CBS team played a crucial role in supporting a neglected group of disabled people who, in turn have made an invaluable contribution to the community disability work by supporting the development of groups in many different provinces.

In South Africa a working relationship between disabled people and occupational therapists has existed since the mid-1980s with the advent of an organisation known as Rural Action on Disability (RURACT), which is affiliated to the national DPO. Its responsibility is to promote CBR, and develop networks through-

out South Africa and the surrounding countries. RURACT has provided a useful forum for the development of thinking on CBR issues in the context of the disability rights philosophy.

The Alexandra Health Centre's CBR programme in South Africa had, as one of its original aims, the establishment of a support group of, and for, disabled people. The process of facilitating the development of the Alexandra Disability Movement (ADM) has been documented from the point of view of the CBR implementer (Cornielje, 1993). The creation of a body of disabled people to whom rehabilitation workers would be accountable was one of the original objectives. Despite the difficulties of working in a politically divided society and the lack of quality leadership, ADM is increasingly playing a vital role in the development of rehabilitation services.

In Amawoti, disability was identified by the local civic committee as an issue to be addressed and a committee was formed of concerned persons which included disabled people and parents of disabled children. Sub-committees of interest groups have since been formed so disabled people meet separately as a sub-group, but they come together with the parents and civic committee members to form the Amawoti Disabled People's Association as they do not wish to isolate themselves from the rest of the community. They consider it their role to raise awareness of the fact that disabled people are members of the wider group of disadvantaged and impoverished people in Amawoti and they encourage others to be inclusive in their approach to development (SCF, 1994).

In Lesotho the Scott CBR programme established contact with the national DPO, primarily to solicit help with the training of CBR workers and teachers. Close contact between the CBR programme and the DPO has been possible because Lesotho is a very small country and because of a good working relationship between the respective leaders. Parents' groups have been set up and, as membership is open to disabled people, the need for a separate DPO has not been identified.

In the above examples, the CBR programmes have provided the initial funding for the establishment of local DPOs and parents' groups, and it is unlikely that these groups would have been set up without this support. The local groups all have a role to play in the CBR programmes with which they are associated. In the case of Alexandra, this role was predetermined and with the others it is being defined as the programmes develop. The Amawoti programme is somewhat different as it does not use CBR terminology and it is a single organisation which is fulfilling both functions. Finally, membership of local DPOs is not always restricted to disabled people, and it is very common for disabled adults and parents to work together at a local level. The CBR programmes described are moving towards greater partnership with disabled people and parents. This is a dynamic process which necessitates the continual re-appraisal of roles. One of the main purposes of SCFs regional meeting was to clarify the role of CBR workers in relation to DPOs and it was agreed that this should be as follows (Miles, 1994):

- Mobilisation of parents and disabled people.
- Help with the formation of local parents' and disabled people's groups.

- Networking and dissemination of information between local and national DPOs.
- Empowerment and capacity building of disabled people and their organisations.

The greatest and most urgent need was considered to be the capacity building of DPOs. DPOs, especially at a local level, tend to lack funds, administrative and logistical support, and are generally less well-resourced than CBR programmes. More co-ordinated planning in the deployment of scarce resources would improve the situation, but the empowerment and capacity building process will inevitably be slow—slower than most donors are likely to tolerate.

Parents as Activists

This final section addresses the issue of parents, their involvement in both CBR programmes and the disability rights movement and the way in which they have come to realise their common oppression with disabled adults. It is recognised that there are important differences between the experience of disabled people in Africa and that of disabled people in the UK, for example, and that very real, often insurmountable problems and conflicts exist between organisations of and for disabled people in industrialised countries. Similar tensions and conflicts have already arisen in southern Africa, and attempts have been made to understand and resolve them.

In southern Africa, the term 'parents' rather than 'families' tends to be used, as they have organised themselves into pressure groups, and are active in promoting and implementing CBR activities. In practice, they are primarily mothers' groups, as many women are abandoned by their husbands as a result of the birth of their disabled child, or upon diagnosis (Kisanji, 1995). Economic pressure to produce healthy children is very strong.

Although mothers have been extremely effective in organising themselves into support groups, they have not achieved the same levels of recognition or success as the disability rights movement and what they have achieved is poorly documented. A major reason for the disparity between the two groups in southern Africa is undoubtedly gender-related, as DPOs tend to be led by men and parents' groups by women who are primarily the sole breadwinners for their families (Miles, 1994). SAFOD's progressive gender policy will in time redress this imbalance, but the fundamental inequalities between men and women in relation to childcare are likely to continue.

As parents have become more involved in the setting up of their own organisations and in CBR programmes, they have come into contact with broader disability issues. Parental involvement in the struggle for disability rights has effectively challenged the predominant attitude in SAFOD that parents neglected, over-protected and discriminated against their children. This attitude had been compounded by the lack of interest shown by DPOs in children's issues in general, but more specifically in those with profound and multiple disabilities and in the consequences

for their families. Not surprisingly, parents were unsure of their role and did not see disabled adults as their natural allies.

A lack of concern for children's issues among DPOs is not peculiar to southern Africa as the following quotation from the UK illustrates:

> I had been active in disability politics for more than ten years, but it was only when I became a parent that I realised that the moves forward that we have achieved for ourselves as adults with disabilities have not reached the lives of disabled children at all. (Rieser & Mason, 1992, cover note.)

In Lesotho and South Africa parents have argued that they are disabled by virtue of being the full-time carers of severely disabled children and that, together with their children, they are affected by the stigma of disability. As a result parents' organisations have been accepted as affiliate members of DPOs which enables them to pursue their own agendas, which are quite distinct from those of disabled adults, while maximising the opportunity of being an ally of the disability rights movement.

Parents also have a role to play in service provision. CBR implementers have trained mothers of disabled children as CBR workers in Lesotho and South Africa and in many instances they have proved to be more effective and more dedicated than health workers, as McGlade & Aquino (1995) testify from their experience in the Philippines. Ideally, both parents and disabled adults should be employed as CBR workers, or as CBR team members.

In this way the needs of disabled children for role models and of parents for support are more likely to be met. Tensions inevitably exist between the two groups, especially where resources are scarce. However, through a process of constructive dialogue and a commitment to working in partnership, a mutually supportive relationship can be developed through which disabled adults and parents can teach each other a great deal.

Conclusions

The long-term goal of all CBR programmes should be to facilitate disabled people to take control of their own lives and to play a decisive role in any services that are created. In a recent survey of people living with acquired impairments in the UK, services were seen as tending to remove choice and control because they were provided by others on their behalf (Todhunter *et al.*, 1995). There is enormous potential in developing countries to leapfrog over the professional hurdles created by the rehabilitation industry in the West and to work directly with disabled people and parents to ensure that the services which are created are those that are most needed. The cultural bias in Africa towards collective, rather than individual, needs and responsibilities, should be fully exploited by CBR.

Resource-driven service provision, based on the western model, is not sustainable and is of questionable value. Disabled people need access to mainstream services and to appropriate information in an accessible form. CBR has the potential to unlock and validate existing indigenous knowledge and information systems while facilitating access to relevant information and ideas outside the community. I have

argued that this should be done with the active participation of the consumers themselves and with an understanding of disability as a development issue.

The danger inherent in CBR is that it may simply become a community version of IBR with the power still firmly in the hands of professionals, and with disabled people and their families in the role of passive recipients. It is important that programmes strive to develop services which have appropriately high standards while at the same time ensuring an equal partnership between consumer and professional. This will inevitably call into question some of the fundamental aspects of CBR, such as the practice of home visiting. The development of a mutually supportive relationship and an honest discussion of the different agendas of CBR workers, parents and DPOs have helped in redefining CBR as a consumer-focused strategy in southern Africa.

In summary, CBR workers have a key role to play in the development and capacity building of DPOS, especially at community level. They have access to information and resources which need to be shared. By feeding information about disability work at community level to the policy makers at national level they can provide an essential link between local and national issues. CBR teams should work together with DPOs to address poverty, and to tackle education and employment issues. At a political level, they can support the efforts of DPOs to run advocacy programmes and to develop policy and legislation on disability. It is crucial that CBR workers and donors recognise that the pace will inevitably be slow and that it is in the long-term interests of disabled people to work with, rather than against, the disability rights movement.

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Publication 3

Miles, S. and Ahuja, A. (2007) Learning from difference: Sharing international experiences of developments in inclusive education, pp131-145. In L. Florian (ed) *Sage Handbook of Special Education*. London: Sage

This publication argues that important lessons can be learned from the experience of implementing inclusive education in countries facing considerable economic hardship, and that EENET has played a key role in knowledge creation (key principle 2) in Southern countries by promoting networking between education stakeholders. It also argues that knowledge about inclusive education can be transferred across borders, as long as it is done in a cautious and contextually sensitive way. This argument is based on the belief that insiders know their context better than outsiders ever can (key principle 3), but that they sometimes need help in gaining skills of analysis and documentation. In turn this can lead to a process of reflection and evaluation.

Networking between Southern contexts is not presented as a straightforward activity. Globalisation and improved communication bring both pressures and opportunities for practitioners in Southern countries. This publication therefore discusses the challenge of communicating the complex and contested concept of inclusive education across cultures. It claims that inclusive education does not require a minimum level of resources, and argues that the development of inclusive education is more about complex social processes than expensive technological solutions. Evidence is provided of the development of inclusive practice in southern Africa and central Asia with minimal financial resources and readers are challenged to think about inclusion in a new way in the light of these accounts.

This publication provides a historical account of EENET, while scrutinising some of the dilemmas associated with promoting networking between countries of the South. It argues that the sharing of accessible information (key principle 1) about inclusive education through EENET's network is a valid, peer-reviewed process.

10

Learning from difference: sharing international experiences of developments in inclusive education

Susie Miles and Anupam Ahuja

This chapter considers ideas about how inclusive education can be shared across national borders. We argue that important lessons can be learned from international experiences, including from countries facing considerable economic constraints, but that this is a complex process because cultural and linguistic differences sometimes create barriers such that accounts of developments in a particular context can easily be misinterpreted and misconstrued, therefore making it difficult to learn from each other.

Building on our experience of cross-cultural learning within the Enabling Education Network (EENET), an international, information-sharing network, we explore ways of overcoming such difficulties. We set this argument in the wider context of current debates about the nature of inclusive education and Education for All (EFA) in Southern contexts. We also consider the way knowledge about inclusive education is constructed in such contexts, given the pressures and opportunities of globalisation and knowledge networking.

Bearing in mind that published literature on inclusive education in Southern contexts is relatively scarce, we go on to discuss some of the challenges of documenting experience in a way that it can be widely shared between Southern contexts and, indeed, between countries of the South and the North. More specifically, we illustrate what this involves by reflecting on a recent action research project in which practitioners were supported in articulating their own knowledge about attempts to support and promote inclusive education.

LEARNING FROM DIFFERENCE

Our own interest in educational inclusion stems from our earlier work as teachers, but more recently from our work as researchers, networkers and external consultants (for example, Abiroux & Ahuja, 2004; Ahuja, 2003; Ahuja & Ibrahim, 2004; Miles, 2002a, 2005; Save the Children, 2002). We share a concern that the term 'inclusive education' is too often exclusively associated with children identified as having a special educational need or a disability. At the same time we appreciate that in some contexts children with

particular impairments may face considerable hardship, discrimination and exclusion from education, not only because of their disability, but also because of their gender, ethnicity, health status, or the extreme poverty in which they live (Jones, 2001).

Translating research and practitioner knowledge into forms that teachers can use to improve their practice is inherently difficult, even in rich countries (Hiebert, Gallimore & Stigler, 2002). How, then, can we advocate for information sharing between stakeholders in inclusive education in countries of the South, where access to information and technology is limited, and the provision of quality education an enormous challenge?

In recent years we have been involved in supporting the process of knowledge creation within Southern countries and the cautious 'transfer' of knowledge across cultural borders. These experiences lead us to believe that the sharing of examples of innovative inclusive practice can inspire practitioners. However, they also lead us to be sensitive to the nature of the knowledge that can be moved from place to place, and the sorts of barriers that make this difficult. Here it is helpful to make a distinction between 'generalisations' that attempt to determine patterns that are assumed to be relevant to any country, and 'transferability', where there is an emphasis on the importance of understanding contextual factors in shaping how ideas are interpreted (Heshusius, 1989; Iano, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1984).

This distinction leads Fuller and Clarke (1994) to caution that local meanings have to be taken into account by researchers when working internationally to improve schools, in other words, we ignore local culture at our peril. Similarly, in her influential book, *Education and Disability in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Peters (1993) argues that the assumption that a country is a homogeneous unit should be avoided and that a historical perspective is vital to a deeper analysis of an educational context.

With these warnings in mind, we have found it helpful in our work to explore forms of knowledge transfer that take account of the way local circumstances, histories and cultures shape ideas that are introduced from elsewhere. This leads us to argue that accounts of practice from elsewhere, and ideas that emerge from reflection on such accounts, can help people to think more analytically and, perhaps, in new ways about their own contexts. The argument we develop illustrates how this can be helpful in moving thinking and practice forward by pointing to possibilities that extend ideas about what might be possible; by providing explanations of practice that might be adapted for use in different contexts; and, most important of all, by challenging the unstated assumptions that inform existing ways of working. This is what we mean when we say, 'learning from difference'.

PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR ALL

Considering how we might 'learn from difference' begins with an understanding of international developments towards inclusive education, efforts to promote Education for All (EFA), and the impact of the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 1994).

The first 'World Conference on Education for All', held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, was particularly significant because it acknowledged that large numbers of vulnerable and marginalized groups of learners were excluded from education systems worldwide. It also provided a vision of education which was much broader than schooling, indeed the right of all citizens to receive an education and to achieve a basic level of literacy was upheld at Jomtien. However it is important not to underestimate the challenges facing education systems in some of the world's economically poorest countries. Although 652 million children worldwide are enrolled in primary education, the out-of-school population still stands at over 100 million children, 80 per cent of whom live in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (DFID, 2005). In India

alone, it is estimated that at least 35 million children are not in school (DFID, 2001). Families trapped in multidimensional poverty are excluded from educational opportunities and health facilities (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2005). Urgent economic solutions are clearly needed to eradicate poverty and ensure that all children have equal access to appropriate and affordable education.

The key challenge identified at the Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, when progress was reviewed in the 10 years since Jomtien, was 'to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies' (UNESCO, 2000, para. 19). Following Dakar, a set of international development targets was developed to help governments and international development agencies to focus their efforts on eliminating poverty. These targets, collectively known as the Millennium Development Goals, provide countries with an opportunity to work together on a set of measurable objectives, the second of which is to achieve universal primary education, by ensuring that all boys and girls *complete* a full course of primary schooling by 2015. This is unlikely to be achieved, however, unless the necessary financial support is put in place (Global Campaign for Education, 2005).

The Right to Education of Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion is one of nine EFA Flagship initiatives. Flagship members work in partnership with the United Nations and other international agencies on the development of inclusive national EFA action plans, in order to ensure that learners with disabilities are included in EFA plans (UNESCO, 2004). However, the Flagship initiative is facilitative. It does not have the authority to ensure that these plans are clearly conceptualised or that countries are supported to develop their own contextually appropriate inclusive practices. A recent analysis of 17 EFA plans from the South and South-East Asia region concluded that inclusive education does not appear as a theme; special schools and residential hostels are suggested as a strategy for meeting the needs of disadvantaged students; non-formal education is seen as the solution to marginalised groups; issues of equity are not addressed in the education sector as a whole; and the increasing role of private education is not discussed (Ahuja, 2005).

Providing education for the most disenfranchised and marginalised groups in the poorest countries in the world remains an enormous challenge. Disabled children, though not a homogeneous group, tend to be identified internationally as a group of children who are excluded from education in countries of the South in disproportionately large numbers (Mittler, 2005). In the previous chapter, Peters noted that it will be impossible to realise the goals of EFA if the majority of disabled children continue to be excluded from education. Moreover, as Stubbs (1995) points out, definitions and perceptions of disability and special needs are culturally and contextually determined. This is highlighted in the inconsistency in the numbers of children being reported as disabled or having special educational needs in Southern countries. Stubbs further argues that a focus on demographic data and accurate statistics obscures problems associated with negative attitudes, policies and institutions which exclude children, leading us to emphasise the importance of analysing indigenous understandings of fundamental concepts such as 'play', 'children' and 'teaching and learning', which can carry very different meanings in different contexts (Miles, 1999).

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the apparent enormity of the challenges in countries of the South and to adopt a negative deficit approach to an analysis of educational activities in such environments. Most of the literature paints a negative picture of education systems struggling to cope with poorly trained teachers, inadequate budgets, large class sizes and, more recently, the HIV/AIDS crisis. Access to the latest technological developments in special education, for example, is unlikely to be an option for children in

Southern countries who tend to be perceived by visiting experts as being in need of such interventions. While we do not wish to romanticise resource-poor environments, we believe that education practitioners in resource-rich countries can learn some very useful lessons for their own practice if they engage with experience of efforts to promote inclusion in the South. Our intention, therefore, is to highlight some of these possibilities, while drawing attention to the complexities of such cross-cultural information sharing. In so doing, we set out to show how innovative programmes in the South have a great deal to teach the economically wealthy countries of the North, where public services are increasingly faced with diminishing resources, and where access to resources is sometimes a cause of conflict. There are lessons to be learned from the experience of overcoming seemingly insurmountable resource barriers. These lessons are essentially about long-term social processes, in which stakeholders work together to address barriers to participation and learning, rather than about resource-intensive and specialised technological solutions.

MAKING SENSE OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In this volume, Susan Peters notes that most of the literature from Southern countries is recent and is mainly focused on in-country reports. She notes that such literature rarely takes account of how local circumstances have shaped what happened (Peters, 1993). Similarly, in the search for generalised explanations that will be of value to readers in different countries, reports published by international agencies tend to provide relatively superficial and oversimplified accounts of developments in countries and in regions (UNESCO, 1995, 2001a, 2001b). At the same time they tend to be written by authors from Northern countries whose experience of the countries they analyse may be limited.

The dangers of such an approach are vividly illustrated by the work of a Tanzanian academic and special educator, Joseph Kisanji – one of the few African scholars to challenge the relevance of Northern concepts of inclusion and to provide evidence of indigenous educational responses to disabled children. Kisanji documents his experience of growing up partially sighted in a Tanzanian village in the 1960s where he was exposed to a form of education which he describes as 'customary' or 'indigenous', both prior to and during the period of his 'Western' schooling. He reports that 'children with severe and profound physical and intellectual impairments were involved [in the customary education] to the best of their abilities' (Kisanji, 1998, p. 59), and so challenges the widely quoted, yet unsubstantiated assertion by UNESCO, that less than 2 per cent of disabled children attend any form of school in Southern countries (Mittler, 2005). Kisanji goes on to argue that 'the customary education principles of universality, relevance, functionality and community localization are central to the success of an inclusive education system' because 'inclusive education is a "return to the basics" in a technologically advanced world' (Kisanji, 1998, p. 54). Consequently, he proposes the development of a research base which reflects cross-cultural realities.

In a similar way, accounts by South African scholars illustrate their distinctive approach to inclusive education, which arises from the need to equalise educational opportunities following a long history of racial segregation (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1999; Porteus, 2003). A report produced jointly by the South African National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and the National Committee on Education Support Services (Department of Education, 1997) argued that a range of needs exists among *all* learners. The education system is expected to address those factors that lead to the failure of the system to accommodate diversity, or which lead to learning breakdown (Muthukrishna, 2000). Naicker (1999) has suggested that mainstream educators, rather than specialists,

should take ownership of the management of diversity in the South African education system. The policy development process which has taken place since the end of apartheid in 1994, as reflected in the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), has been both progressive and inspiring, since difference and diversity are central to the transformation of the education system, rather than marginal issues championed by specialists.

Singal (2005) describes how the ongoing influence of Western discourses on special education in India has resulted in a narrow interpretation of the term 'inclusive education'. In her review of Indian literature she asserts that, 'the field of inclusive education continues to be driven by a narrow and limiting perspective that does not critically engage with the system as a whole' (p. 346). She highlights the discrepancies in the use of language and the fact that most of the published literature in India is highly theoretical. She explains how, alongside increased discussion of imported ideas about inclusive education, there has been an increase in the number of special schools from approximately 1,035 in the early 1990s to about 2,500 at the turn of the century.

In her critical review of the literature related to the education of disabled children in developing countries, Stubbs (1995) provides further arguments as to why attention has to be focused on how ideas about inclusion are constructed socially within particular contexts. In so doing, she notes two striking features: the paucity of accessible published literature and the dominance of a small elite of Northern writers. Reflecting on the process of carrying out a literature review a few years later, she raises some important doubts about the authenticity of published literature focusing on Southern contexts: it lacks references to indigenous knowledge (which tends to be communicated orally), and where written accounts do exist, they tend not to be accessible to a wider audience (Stubbs, 1999).

Despite these concerns, published literature in the field is still heavily influenced by Northern perspectives. For example, in her introduction to a special issue of the South African journal, *Perspectives in Education*, Muthukrishna (2003) notes that the inclusion/exclusion debate has been dominated by Northern countries. She goes on to assert that this has led to attempts to generalise paradigms, theories and policies and practices which have been developed in the very different contexts of Northern countries to countries of the South.

This situation has been further encouraged by other policy and technological developments. In 1996, for example, the World Bank announced its intention to become the world's 'Knowledge Bank' (King, 2002), in recognition of the increased role of knowledge in economic and institutional development evident in the industrialised countries of the North. The relatively new ability to move information around the world at the 'click of a button' has enormous advantages, of course, but it creates an illusion that access to knowledge has increased globally. Yet the 'digital divide' between North and South, and the broader 'communication divide', which includes access to telephones, are enormous. Although the situation is changing rapidly, the distribution of internet hosts in July 1999, for example, was heavily weighted towards the North: Canada and the US had 65.3 per cent, developing Asia-Pacific 3.7 per cent and Africa just 0.3 per cent (DFID, 2000).

Although globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge economy could provide opportunities for learning to be shared between Southern countries, and even for Northern countries to learn from experience in the South, in practice this tends not to be the case. Practitioners in Southern countries still tend to look to the literature and higher education institutions in English-speaking industrial nations, primarily, for knowledge and information about inclusive education. However, Northern countries clearly do not have all the answers. For example, in England, despite considerable efforts to promote inclusive education, school attendance and drop-out rates are a matter of considerable

concern, and although the proportion of children placed in separate special education provision has steadily declined over the last 20 years, there are disturbing variations between education authorities (Norwich, 2002; Rustemier & Vaughan, 2005).

Reflecting on such evidence, Dyson (2004) warns of the danger of any one country being perceived to have 'discovered the secret of inclusion' (p. 615). This leads him to stress the importance of understanding policy and practice within particular contexts. He goes on to warn against the imposing of solutions that may not work in different contexts, and instead suggests that countries should be vigilant about the many different threats to equity which can arise in education systems.

Nevertheless, the World Bank remains committed to global knowledge networking because of 'powerful examples of how specific local needs could be met by relevant local experience elsewhere' (King, 2002, p. 316). King highlights the tension, however, between in-context knowledge and 'best practice' as approved, in most cases, by an outside expert. Artiles and Dyson (2005, p. 43) share similar concerns in relation to understanding the global phenomenon of inclusive education by suggesting that: 'If the common language of inclusion is not simply to over-ride local concerns and conditions, the global inclusion "movement" must engage in dialogue with – and be engaged in dialogue by – the local and specific context.'

The argument we draw from these sources is perhaps best summarised by Booth and Ainscow (1998) who warn against two pitfalls of comparative research: 'the idea that there is a single national perspective on inclusion or exclusion and the notion that practice can be generalised across countries without attention to local contexts and meanings' (p. 4). Their study of developments in eight countries looked at inclusive education in the context of highly resourced schools and well-developed policies in a range of countries, each with its own literature. Comparisons could therefore have been made, but the authors argued against doing so, partly because they do not consider the search for 'good practice' to be a worthwhile exercise. They argue that it is likely to distort reality, and, in order to learn from the practice of others, it is essential to 'uncover' the way in which perspectives are politically and culturally constrained.

ENABLING EDUCATION

In order to explore some of the complexities of cross-cultural learning, we draw on our own experience as initiators of, and participants in, the Enabling Education Network (EENET). EENET was established in 1997 with the technical and financial support of a group of concerned international non-governmental organisations and with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Its mission is to support and promote the inclusion of marginalized groups in education worldwide (Miles, 2002b) by sharing information between similar contexts in Southern countries, primarily through an annual publication, *Enabling Education*, and through its website. The EENET website has been visited by people in 186 countries, with about 9,000 visits to the site per month.

The word 'enabling' was chosen as a deliberate strategy to encourage a broad vision of inclusion. It was felt that the words 'special', 'integrated' and 'inclusive' were too often associated with the education of children identified as having special educational needs and that the words would prove to be problematic in the long term, especially in the context of global poverty and international efforts to promote EFA. Indeed, Slee has recently argued that the idea of inclusive education is showing signs of jetlag, losing its freshness and increasingly used to mean too many different things, though when the term was first used it was a radical idea, which rebelled against medical and psychological explanations of educational difficulties (Slee, 2004).

Unfortunately, some efforts to promote inclusion have involved new forms of segregation, albeit within the mainstream settings,

through the use of what Slee (1996) calls 'dividing practices'. For example, in some of the richer countries we have seen the proliferation of largely untrained classroom assistants working with the most vulnerable children who tend to follow individual programmes in mainstream schools. When such support is withdrawn, teachers feel that they can no longer cope. Meanwhile, the legal requirement for individualised education plans has encouraged colleagues in some schools to believe that even more children will require such responses, and so putting school budgets under considerable strain in some countries (Ainscow, 1999).

Conscious of these dangers and guided by a clear set of values and principles developed by its steering group, EENET shares information about inclusive education written and generated by, and for, a wide range of stakeholders including children, parents and consumer groups, as well as policy-makers, academics, teacher trainers and teachers themselves. Although the network is located at the University of Manchester's School of Education, it adopts a non-academic style to ensure wide accessiblity to readers who use English as an additional language. Documents posted on the website are not necessarily representative of inclusive education practice, nor are they peer-reviewed. Practitioners are simply encouraged to share their experience, their ideas and their training materials. Nevertheless the EENET website is regarded by many as an important emerging database and a unique international resource on inclusive and enabling education. Most of the evidence for this has so far been anecdotal. However, a detailed analysis was recently carried out of all correspondence received and the final report contains many examples of the way EENET information is used, by whom and in which countries (Lewis, 2003).

Owing to the inequities of access to digital technology, EENET prioritises the dissemination of materials in 'hard copy'. Its annual paper publication, *Enabling Education*, is disseminated annually to almost 2,000 individuals and organisations in around 150 countries. Though many network users have access to computers and can send emails, few have affordable access to the Internet to search for information. Increasingly, CD-ROMs containing key documents are compiled for EENET readers, as this saves the relatively high cost involved in downloading big email attachments or documents from the Internet in countries where telephone charges and printing costs are simply unaffordable. The world is further divided by language, and there is a tendency for experiences in English-speaking countries to be disseminated more widely than experiences in other parts of the world. In response to this imbalance EENET has made some of the most well-used documents available on its website in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic and Russian. However, correspondence in these, and other languages, remains limited.

EENET also compiles information and has organised international seminars to promote debate about the specific issues and challenges related to deafness and inclusion in the South. For example, accounts of sustainable and innovative approaches to community-based education for deaf children in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo and Papua New Guinea can be found on EENET website. This is particularly important as the communication needs of deaf children, and their right to use sign language, are highlighted in Article 21 of the Salamanca Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994) which suggests that education in special schools or special classes attached to mainstream schools may be more suitable for deaf children.

In recent years we have moved towards more regionalised activities. For example, Anupam Ahuja is a member of the South, South-East and Central Asia editorial team that produces the EENET Asia newsletter. This was launched in June 2005 and published in both English and Bahasa (a language spoken by approximately 300 million people in South-East Asia). EENET's activities have increasingly been regionalised in order to

promote wider dissemination of information. Committed individuals and organizations in Brazil, Hong Kong, Kenya and Egypt have been promoting EENET as a resource and translating key documents into relevant languages.

More recently, discussions have taken place with a team of practitioners committed to adapting the *Index for Inclusion* for use in countries of the North and South (Booth & Black-Hawkins, 2005). Influenced by the educational discourse in South Africa, the Index is a set of materials devised in England for supporting the learning and participation of all learners, not only those categorized as having special educational needs or disabilities. It contains four main elements: key concepts; a planning framework; indicators and questions; and an emphasis on an inclusive process (Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, and Shaw, 2002). Key documents related to the use of the Index internationally are now available from the EENET website, and it is hoped that this will enable users of the Index to share their experience with a wider audience.

CREATING CONVERSATIONS

The main approach taken by EENET is one of 'creating conversations' between practitioners and others within local communities who are attempting to develop more inclusive forms of education. This approach starts from the assumption that there is more knowledge available than is currently being used. Furthermore, it is assumed that some of the most relevant and interesting knowledge tends to remain within individuals whose voices are rarely heard. The challenge, therefore, is to find ways of getting such people to share their stories.

Many of the stories that we have been able to collect and disseminate focus on small-scale community-based projects in countries facing economic hardship, where class sizes are large (sometimes more than 100) and where material resources are scarce. These stories demonstrate the way 'insider' practitioners can engage with 'outsiders' as critical friends, and how this can lead to mutual learning and a greater appreciation of the meaning of inclusion in different contexts. The following brief examples illustrate some of the shared learning taking place:

- A lecturer in psychology in Namibia wrote to say that her colleague was convinced that the idea of inclusion was born in England and would only work there. She revised her opinion after reading examples from Mozambique and Zambia.
- A Zambian head teacher had paid little attention to the four children being educated in a special unit for children with learning difficulties. After reading *Enabling Education* he assessed them and placed them in regular classes where they achieved high grades.
- A group of Ethiopian teacher trainers and district officials visited Mpika, Zambia, to observe the way a set of action research guidelines were used to promote teacher reflection on inclusive education. All 89 teachers involved in the training in Ethiopia have subsequently agreed to teach disabled children in their classes for the first time.

In a study of inclusive education for the World Bank, Peters (2003) referred to examples of inclusive education in the South as 'islands of excellence', implying that the practitioners involved in these 'islands' are cut off from each other. This is certainly true in many cases and it was with the aim of reducing such isolation that EENET was established. As the examples of what we have come to call innovation and instructive practice above demonstrate, it is necessary to be mindful that the context in which these short accounts have been produced, and the knowledge developed, is crucial to the understanding and use of that knowledge, and that, 'knowledge without context is in fact not knowledge at all' (Denning, 2001, p. 135).

The following vignettes illustrate some of the ways in which barriers to the learning and participation of disabled children have been overcome in Southern Africa and Central Asian countries with minimal financial resources. It is difficult in such short examples to do justice to the richness of each example and there is a great danger that generalisations may be made without appreciat-

ing the complexity of each cultural and political context. However we offer these examples not for export to a different situation, but as 'interruptions' (Ainscow, this volume) to thinking about inclusion, and to perhaps encourage us to look at more familiar contexts in different ways.

FOCUSING ON PARENTS IN LESOTHO, SOUTHERN AFRICA

Following the adoption of a progressive national policy on integrated education in Lesotho in the late 1980s, a parents' organisation, the Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons, was formed with support from the Ministry of Education and a Norwegian parents' organisation. All the teachers in each of the 10 pilot schools, one in each of Lesotho's 10 districts, received in-service training on inclusion (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka, and Stubbs, 1995). This was a deliberate strategy to avoid the situation that tends to arise in England, for example, where one teacher tends to be appointed as the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator. There were only two centrally based advisers in the Ministry when this national programme began. The parents' organisation took the following initiatives to support the advisers and develop a knowledge base among parents of children with learning difficulties:

- A group of 'resource parents' were trained to pass on their knowledge and skills to the other branch members of the organisation (Mphohle, 2000).
- Meetings were organised in the parents' communities for chiefs, health workers, parents and school children to raise awareness of the needs of disabled children, and of their right to attend school.
- The parents adopted a problem-based approach to the development of expertise in schools and provided advice to teachers.
- Parents became involved in pre-service teacher education through occasional lectures and by accompanying the student teachers on home visits.

The teachers soon began to use their new knowledge in responding to all children in their classes who experienced difficulties in learning and who were considered to be in 'difficult circumstances', such as children affected by HIV/AIDS, although they expressed uncertainty about the definition of inclusive education and whether it included all vulnerable children.

FOCUSING ON COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL ASIA

Alleviating poverty and challenging the segregation and discrimination of disabled children and their families are the two main objectives of the Save the Children UK supported inclusive education programme in Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan and Tajikistan. Disability is sometimes seen as a punishment, yet the importance of helping those who are weaker is underpinned by strong religious beliefs. The perception that disability needs to be cured, and that disabled children need specialist treatment and are unable to learn alongside their peers, is reflected in the current educational legislation, as was the case under the Soviet system. (See Ainscow and Haile-Giorgis, 1998, for more information about the particular challenges of promoting inclusive education in the countries of south-east Europe.) Government is highly centralized in all three countries, and much of the education system was destroyed by civil war in Tajikistan. Despite this difficult context, the inclusive education programme mobilised civil society to participate in the management and monitoring of educational services, using the following strategies:

- Community Education Committees and Parent Associations were formed.
- Community assessments included the mapping of all 'out of school' children.
- The information collected was entered into a database and used for planning purposes (in Uzbekistan).
- Children's Clubs were established – their members conduct home visits, encourage parents to send their children to school, raise awareness in schools, and lead extra-curricular activities.

The process revealed that children excluded from the education system were child drug users, street-based children, working children, children in conflict with the law and child sex workers, as well as disabled children.

Some of the practices highlighted by these examples may not prove to be sustainable in the long term due to their reliance on external agencies for funding and technical support. Nevertheless they are instructive of what is possible in extremely difficult circumstances. We understand that the parents' organisation in Lesotho has faced many challenges recently and so cannot guarantee that the activities are continuing with such high levels of commitment. However, the national inclusive education programme is still supported by the government, and a video-based training package based on the work in Lesotho has been widely disseminated by EENET.

AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

The many accounts of practice from economically poor and isolated contexts that have been disseminated by EENET over the last eight years give encouragement to the idea that we can find ways of learning from difference. At the same time, we feel that we have still only scratched the surface of the rich vein of expertise and experience that exists internationally. With this challenge in mind, EENET embarked upon an action research study in collaboration with practitioners in Zambia and Tanzania in 2001 funded by the UK Department for International Development (Miles et al., 2003). The main purpose was to develop ways of helping practitioners within particular contexts to analyse and document their experience of promoting more inclusive practices in education. The study was based on the assumptions that it is more relevant and useful for ideas about practice to be exchanged between similar cultures and contexts, than to continue to export inappropriate models from the richer countries of the North; and that the process of developing analytical and writing skills within a community will promote moves towards more inclusive practice. Teachers were involved in identifying exclusionary factors in schools and communities, which both exclude learners from attending school, and from activities once they are in school. Having identified the barriers to inclusion, they were encouraged to develop strategies to overcome these barriers.

The methodology for the study was developed by teams of facilitators in Tanzania and Zambia, with support from the EENET team in the UK. It was based on the principles of 'collaborative inquiry' (Reason, 1988; Reason & Rowan, 1981) which emphasise the value of group processes and varied methods of recording. The study was also informed by Participatory Learning and Action, as developed by Chambers (1994) and refined by Stubbs (1995) and Ainscow (1999) for use in educational contexts. Gosling and Edwards (1995) argue that such approaches involve a particular form of qualitative research that can be used to gain an in-depth understanding of a community or situation. This methodology was unusual, as it was both an intervention, carried out in partnership with colleagues in the field, and the main strategy for collecting and analysing evidence in relation to the overall research agenda.

The writing of accounts by teachers was one of the significant outcomes of the study and some of these were published by EENET (2003). However, the appropriateness of collecting text-based data in the context of an oral tradition was a major tension in the study. The lead researcher in Zambia, for example, described the role of the school-based teams set up to monitor the action research as one of coordinating, supporting, communicating and sharing ideas in the school. The words 'writing, recording, and documenting' were noticeably absent.

The teachers found writing extremely difficult, as can be the case even in literacy-based societies. Towards the end of the study, the research team began to explore the potential of photo elicitation (Harper, 2002) as a more appropriate way of promoting reflection and analysis in an oral culture (Miles & Kaplan,

2005). Participatory photography, and other image-based approaches, can offer a more engaging and relevant alternative to traditional text-based research approaches and can help overcome linguistic and cultural barriers, as Wang (1996, p. 1392) has stated, 'The visual image is a communication tool that can educate, inspire and influence decisions'. At the same time images can enable the views of students to be presented to teachers in unusual and striking ways (Ainscow & Kaplan, 2005; Lewis, 2005).

Writing proved difficult, but the teachers were highly motivated by the prospect of their work being published and disseminated through EENET and wanted their names to appear in the publication. In the wider context of international networking, and publicity within Tanzania and Zambia, anonymity and confidentiality would have denied the teachers the recognition they deserved. This raised inevitable dilemmas for the UK-based research team who were accustomed to anonymising children's identities. As EENET engages with education practitioners, it assumes some responsibility for raising awareness about child protection issues, which relate directly to the ethical considerations associated with carrying out such practitioner-led research.

Facilitating the documentation of experience in one district, Mpika, involved a process of knowledge generation and construction about inclusive education in the context of Northern Zambia. Mpika is a small provincial town situated 600 kilometres from the capital. Schools in the Mpika area range from government-funded institutions which are well established, to those that are still in the process of being built by community members in more remote rural areas, and which receive very little government funding.

Although the teachers in some of the Mpika schools already used the language of child rights, democracy, participation and social justice, they regarded the teaching of children identified as having special needs or disabilities as a specialist activity, for which they were not qualified. Yet only two of the 17 schools taking part had specialist 'units' in which specialist teachers were based: one for deaf children and one for children with learning difficulties. The teacher responsible for facilitating the action research study had no specialist training, either as a researcher or as a special educator, but he had experience of including children with a wide range of educational needs in his class, and of documenting his experience over many years (Mumba, 2000).

The language of special education and inclusion proved to be a barrier in the developments that occurred. The lead researcher in Zambia led a process of de-constructing the teachers' understanding of terms such as 'special education' and supported them in constructing their own knowledge and understanding of 'inclusion' in the context of Mpika. The teachers began to realise that they already included a wide range of children in their classes, some of whom had disabilities, while others experienced discrimination because they had become pregnant, were affected by HIV/AIDS, could not afford to buy uniforms, or had exhausting domestic responsibilities and chaotic home lives.

Defining inclusive education in the context of Mpika was a slow process requiring skilled facilitation, but it was a more sustainable way of promoting inclusive education than the more usual approach of 'transferring knowledge' from more 'developed' settings. It was also consistent with the move away from the individual focus of a special education approach towards an examination of the many other exclusionary pressures within society and its schools (Ahuja, 2002), as advocated by UNESCO in its *Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom* (UNESCO, 1993). The key to progress, it seems, is to start from where people are and assist them to be more skilful at analysing their own context.

CONCLUSION

Providing practitioners with an opportunity to reflect on the way inclusive education is interpreted and implemented in other con-

texts can help to shed new light on their own practice which can lead to change and development. At the same time, the accounts of practice disseminated by the EENET open up a further interesting possibility – that those who live and work in the economically richer countries of the world can also learn from experiences in the South.

However, as we have seen, encouraging practitioners to document and share their experience is not an easy task. The majority of EENET network users come from a strong oral tradition, where stories are told rather than published, and most use English as an additional language. Approaching the development of inclusive education by encouraging documentation is a slow process and tends to be less high profile than some of the 'quick fix' examples where donors want to see rapid results for their money. Yet we believe that reflection and documentation can lead to a more sustainable set of social processes in communities, which are more likely to make an impact on practice in the long term.

In their work in the UK, Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (in press) have highlighted the importance of 'interrupting' the thinking of teachers and other practitioners, in order to stimulate them to think differently about their own situations by making the familiar unfamiliar. This echoes the idea of Delamont (1992, p. 45) who argues that familiarity can be a problem and suggests devising strategies for 'making the familiar bizarre, unusual and novel' so that 'the familiarity is thus thrown into relief by the unfamiliar'.

Often it is assumed that inclusive education can only be implemented in contexts which have a minimum level of resources. Indeed, in the well-resourced classrooms of Northern countries, resistance to inclusion on the grounds that 'there are insufficient resources' is very common. As we have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, some pioneering education practitioners in the South are embracing the philosophy of inclusion in their classrooms and communities, and are working within available resources to include all children in education.

Ainscow (1999) reports that in the richer industrialised nations there is worrying evidence of a significant increase in the proportions of children being categorised in order that their schools can earn additional resources. This is a continuation of the important analysis provided earlier by Fulcher (1989), who suggested that the increased bureaucracy that is often associated with special education legislation, and the struggles that take place for additional resources, have the effect of escalating the proportion of children who come to be labelled as disabled.

Initiatives to enable all children to gain access to, and complete, primary education have stimulated a more complex debate about the changing role of special education in the context of Education for All. The current trend to move towards more inclusive education within the context of Education for All has major implications for the future development of both general and special education in the South. Practitioners in the South have the potential to 'leapfrog' over some of the expensive and exclusionary practices developed in special education over recent decades. Networking and information sharing can help practitioners to avoid some of the mistakes and pitfalls, while constructing their own knowledge base and response to difference and discrimination in education. Difference, it can be argued, is in itself our greatest available resource, rather than a problem to be solved – regardless of the level of material and financial resources in a particular context.

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Publication 4

Miles, S. and Singal, N. (in press) The Education for All and inclusive education debate: Conflict, contradiction and opportunity. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*

This publication argues that there is a disconnection between international debates and local realities. It warns of the dangers of transposing Northern debates about inclusion onto Southern contexts, and challenges the rhetoric associated with the inter-related, yet often parallel, international agendas of EFA and inclusive education. Examples are provided of discrimination in policy and practice as a result of these parallel debates, and the inappropriateness of developing segregated specialist provision in Southern countries.

Drawing on the authors' expertise in sub-Saharan Africa and India respectively, the publication provides evidence of 'separate thinking' about disability by governments and international agencies, as well as examples of inclusive practice at community level. It calls for the inclusion of disability issues in development programmes in order to encourage system change, and provides examples of fragmented approaches to disability and special educational needs, largely led by Northern donors.

This publication demonstrates the value of bringing together insider and outsider knowledge and perspectives, while highlighting the tendency of outsiders to overlook insider expertise. It also attempts to contextualise inclusive education by providing examples from the authors' own research.

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The Education for All and Inclusive Education debate: conflict, contradiction or opportunity?

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This paper begins with an exploration of the history of the international Education for All (EFA) programme and its tendency to overlook some marginalized groups of children, in particular those seen as having 'special educational needs' or impairments and disabilities. The exclusion from 'mainstream' education programmes of the estimated, though unreliable, figures of 90 or 98% of children in Southern countries has, until relatively recently, been largely unchallenged. The explanation lies in the still prevalent view that some children are 'ineducable' and that overcrowded and under-resourced schools would not be able to cope. Consequently, a largely parallel, international debate has developed about 'inclusive education', within which many conflicting positions exist. We suggest that there is an unhelpful and wasteful polarization between EFA and inclusive education. Although inclusive education is defined by some writers in terms of overcoming barriers to learning and development for all children, in the context of Southern countries it tends to fill the gap left by EFA and so focuses almost exclusively on disabled children. This paper challenges some of the rhetoric, but also highlights the opportunities created by the current international interest in, and apparent commitment to, delivering quality education for all children. The paper concludes by offering a re-conceptualization of the relationship between EFA and inclusive education, argues for greater collaboration and synergy between these currently parallel initiatives, and suggests ways in which practitioners and policy makers can develop more sustainable, and context-appropriate, policies and practices.

Keywords: Education for All (EFA); inclusive education; disability

Introduction

The primary aim of this paper is to explore the two interrelated, yet often parallel, international agendas of Education for All (EFA) and inclusive education. We highlight the tendency of EFA programmes to overlook some marginalized groups of children, in particular those seen as having 'special educational needs' or disabilities.[1] Although much of the rhetoric of inclusive education is about 'overcoming barriers to learning and development' for all children (Booth and Ainscow 2002) and therefore in tune with EFA, some disability-focused international organizations have chosen to champion the rights of particular groups of disabled children rather than to engage with the need to improve teaching and learning environments for all children. Increasingly, though, efforts are being made by international organizations to bridge the gap which has existed between their general focus on development and the work of specialist agencies.

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Our concern here is to draw attention to some of the inherent conflicts and contradictions of the current international discussions on EFA and IE, respectively. We do not want to polarize the debate further, but aim to challenge some of the rhetoric, and highlight the opportunities that both EFA and IE provide in fulfilling the international commitments to deliver quality education for all children. We argue here that opportunities currently exist internationally to align inclusive education and EFA more closely in the interests of developing more coherent and sustainable responses to the educational needs of marginalized groups of children. However, we also caution that attention needs to be paid to the cultural and contextual appropriateness of educational programmes which address social and educational inequities.

Our expertise and knowledge of educational developments are firmly rooted in the English-speaking countries of Africa and India, respectively. We are conscious that we have not been able to cite examples of practice from South or Central America, although we know that such examples exist. This is partly due to the additional language barriers facing practitioners in South and Central America in documenting and disseminating their experience, and partly due to the lack of our own professional contacts in those countries. We also know that the Enabling Education Network (EENET), which promotes the sharing of information on inclusive education and prioritizes the information needs of the income-poor countries of the South (Miles 2002), has relatively few links with practitioners in this part of the world (Little and Waljee 2006).

The dilemma

Before we explore some of the current thinking behind EFA and inclusive education, we present three scenarios which help to illuminate the history, and continued dominance, of 'separate thinking' about disability. In some countries responsibility for disabled children does not lie with the Ministry of Education, but in Health or Social Welfare, because of the attitude that some children are 'ineducable' (Booth and Ainscow 1998). By implication, therefore, disabled children are not always considered to be part of humanity. Indeed, it was only 35 years ago that responsibility for the education of all children, including those with intellectual impairments, was taken over by the UK equivalent of the Ministry of Education (Mittler 2002). It is hardly surprising that the EFA movement and many large international non-governmental organizations have been influenced by this way of thinking and so tend to treat this group of children separately.

A large international charity, based in Western Europe, supports orphans and abandoned children in over 100 countries. It provides institutional care of a very high standard, but its admissions policy denies access to orphans who have physical, sensory or intellectual impairments.

In Romania special schools were found to be largely populated by Roma children who had struggled to cope in mainstream schools and were perceived to have 'special educational needs', largely associated with language, culture and prejudice. Yet children with severe disabilities remained at home, not considered to be able to attend school (Ainscow 1999).

In the slum communities of Bombay, India, UNICEF introduced an innovative pre-school programme. All children were welcomed to join these new pre-schools, except those who were perceived to have disabilities (Alur, cited in Booth and Ainscow 1998).

These are recent examples of exclusionary thinking in three very different contexts: a 'developed' country in Western Europe; a country which is in political transition, and a southern country with a rapidly growing economy. They reflect a history of separate thinking which separates disabled orphans from non-disabled orphans, Roma children from

non-Roma children who have severe impairments, and poor children living in slum communities from other poor children who happen to be disabled.

Given this history of socially constructing children into separate groupings, we will now explore the concept of Education for All, highlight some of the inherent contradictions, and identify some of the opportunities presented by this global effort to provide equal access to education for all children.

The narrowing of the Education for All agenda

EFA represents an international commitment to ensure that every child and adult receives basic education of good quality. This commitment is based both on a human rights perspective, and on the generally held belief that education is central to individual well-being and national development, as the following quote from the UK Department for International Development (Department for International Development/H. M. Treasury 2006) illustrates:

> Education benefits not just children, but families and communities, and whole countries. It improves job chances and prosperity; promotes health and prevents disease. (Foreword)

Education, it is argued, enables people to live with dignity, develop their full capacities, participate fully in development and improve the quality of their lives (UNESCO 1990). It also has a role to play in promoting 'the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice' (UNESCO 1996, ii). Yet, it also has the potential to be used as a vehicle in the reinforcement of authoritarian, discriminatory and anti-democratic practices in society. The role of teachers in the Rwandan genocide is a particularly stark example of this (Harber 2002). A less dramatic, but equally disturbing, example is the influence of 'gender violence' perpetrated by male pupils and teachers in schools in Zimbabwe and Uganda, which socializes girls into accepting male violence in society and by governments (Leach 2003). Tomasevski (2003) provides further examples of the abuse of education and its prejudiced and anti-human rights policies and practices. Yet education has played a role in national reconstruction. It has helped in the elimination of child labour in some countries (Tomasevski 2003) and Oxfam (2004) claims that young people who have completed primary education are less likely to contract HIV than those who have not been to school.

International efforts to promote EFA intensified following the 1st World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. This conference was particularly significant because it acknowledged that large numbers of vulnerable and marginalized groups of learners were excluded from education systems worldwide. It also presented a vision of education as a much broader concept than schooling, beginning with early childhood, emphasizing women's literacy and recognizing the importance of basic literacy skills as part of lifelong learning. This was a landmark conference in the development of thinking about inclusive education (even though the concept of inclusive education was not used at this juncture).

Progress towards achieving EFA was reviewed at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 and the following key challenge was identified:

> to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All ... must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs .... (UNESCO 2000, expanded commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, para. 19)

The broad vision of EFA lives on in the six EFA goals which are now articulated as follows: to expand early childhood care and education; provide free and compulsory primary education for all; promote learning and life skills for young people and adults; increase adult literacy by 50%; achieve gender equality by 2015; and improve the quality of education (UNESCO 2000).

The commitment to EFA was reiterated in the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developed by the international community (United Nations 2000). The MDGs are seen as part of a broader commitment towards building a better world in the 21st century by eliminating global poverty, promoting gender equality, education and environmental sustainability. The importance of education as a strategy in poverty reduction is made explicit in these international targets which seek to end the vicious cycle of exclusion from education leading to chronic poverty and further social exclusion.

It is therefore a matter of great concern that the international EFA agenda has become increasingly focused on the second MDG, 'ensuring that all boys and girls *complete* a full course of primary schooling by 2015' or Universal Primary Education (UPE). The rhetoric of educating *all* has gradually been reduced to a narrow focus on five years of compulsory schooling. An interesting example of this reduction of the EFA agenda is evident in the Indian context. The Constitution of India sets out an obligation for providing a minimum of eight years of education for all 6–14-year-old children. However the District Primary Education Programme, started in 1994 as one of the largest education programmes, sponsored primarily by the World Bank, focused on five years of schooling, from 6 to 11 years (District Primary Education Programme 2000). This significantly reduced the constitutional commitment and reinforced a belief that five years of schooling are adequate.

The Department for International Development (2000) notes strong links between levels of education and economic growth:

> in enabling poor people to develop skills, education enhances productivity and provides an essential underpinning for economic growth. ... There is a close parallel between the rates of economic growth of a country and the overall level of education of its economically active population. (p. 2)

More recently, Tilak (2003) argued that there is growing evidence that primary education is not sufficient in enabling people to break out of poverty:

> It is only when people have at least completed middle/upper primary level of education, the relationship between education and poverty becomes negative and important; and the negative relationship becomes stronger when the level of education is raised to secondary and above. (pp. 49–50)

The narrowing of the initial EFA goals to the completion of five years of primary schooling is a worrying trend in the context of developing economies. In such a scenario, economic growth and wider development goals are unlikely to be achieved – primary education is no longer enough.

Disability overlooked

Although the initial vision of 'EFA by the year 2000' was extremely broad and ambitious, the rhetoric of 'all' has overlooked the issue of disability and failed to reach the poorest and most disadvantaged children, especially in those countries which are unlikely to achieve the second MDG by 2015. Our concern in this paper is to highlight evidence of the continued

exclusion of disabled children from the international agenda and planning, such as the failure of UNESCO's EFA Global Monitoring Reports to address the education (or lack of it) for disabled children. These reports do not engage in any great depth with the educational status of disabled children, yet other 'at risk' groups, such as girls, have been part of more mainstream efforts.

Although not a homogenous group, disabled children tend to be identified internationally as a group of children who are disproportionately excluded from education (Mittler 2005). It is often claimed that disabled children are among the poorest and the most disadvantaged in their communities, and that they have been systematically excluded from more 'mainstream' EFA efforts (Savolainen et al. 2006; Rieser 2005). Some have justified the need for a narrow focus on the education of children with disabilities to enable stronger advocacy at the national and international level for a group of people whose needs have largely been ignored by mainstream development programmes, such as EFA initiatives.

The EFA flagship, 'The right to education for persons with disabilities: towards inclusion' was established in 2002 as a result of such concerns (UNESCO 2004). EFA 'flagships' have been set up to champion a range of different interests and concerns within EFA; teacher education, HIV/AIDS, early childhood, for example. The aim of these flagships is to promote knowledge sharing and global partnerships. The 'disability' Flagship has taken on the responsibility of ensuring that disabled learners are included in national EFA action plans. While it is argued that the creation of this Flagship will help to raise awareness of the rights of disabled children to be included in EFA, there is a danger that disability could become further separated from more mainstream debates, and perceived as an issue for 'specialists'. The result could be continued exclusion and neglect of disabled people from policy and practice. By the same token, the Flagship's campaign for disabled children's broader right to education (rather than inclusive education) reinforces the notion of a right to a range of provision, which includes segregated special schools – an issue which receives little attention in EFA and UPE debates, but to which we will return later.

Although the overall theme of this paper is to warn against the dangers of polarizing the debate further and of categorizing children, we still think it is important to highlight the fact that it was only relatively recently that disability was included in the agenda of international development agencies (as indicated by a review of the international literature undertaken by Singal 2006). It will not be possible to implement EFA or inclusive education if some children continue to be invisible or overlooked.

The invisibility of disabled children in mainstream development programmes provides specialist agencies with the justification that they need to continue to focus specifically on disabled children, or even only on children with a single impairment, such as blindness. Nevertheless, there is a growing consensus among some international agencies that action needs to be taken to meet the needs of the millions of out-of-school disabled children and to promote more meaningful dialogue and collaboration between specialist agencies and those concerned with broader development issues (for example, World Vision UK 2007). Save the Children UK has been promoting a more inclusive approach to disability, education and development work for the last two decades (Miles 1995; Save the Children UK 2006).

It was the perceived invisibility of the disability issue that prompted an international campaign to develop the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Disabled people's organizations and other non-governmental organizations worked on an equal basis with representatives of national governments to achieve this outcome. One of the most contentious debates was about Article 24 which focuses on education. This paper now requires all signatories to ensure that all disabled children can access an inclusive, quality, free primary and secondary education (United Nations 2006).

A focus on statistics

The latest EFA Monitoring Report estimates that only 10% of disabled children are in school and that one-third of the 77 million (6–11-year-old) children currently out of school have a disability (UNESCO 2007). The other two-thirds are said to be children from poor families, those living in poor households, and children whose mothers have no education. International statistics relating to out of school children need to be scrutinized very carefully as definitions of this term are not comparable across national boundaries.

The absence of reliable data regarding disabled children is problematic, and largely related to the enormous challenge of standardizing definitions of disability across cultures, and of collecting any form of reliable data in many countries, especially those affected by conflict. In a World Bank publication, Peters (2003, 12) asserted that '40 million of the estimated 115 million children out of school have disabilities' and that 'children with disabilities are likely to have never attended school' and 'fewer than 5% are believed to reach the goal of primary school completion'. As long as the majority of disabled children continue to be excluded from education, the second MDG and the wider goals of EFA will not be achievable in the near future (Peters 2003).

Evidence suggests that disabled people are disproportionately over-represented in the poorest of the poor (Department for International Development 2000; Yeo and Moore 2003). In a World Bank-commissioned study, Elwan (1999) estimated that disabled people may account for as many as one in five of the world's poorest, yet they remain absent from most mainstream research, policies and planning. It will be a very long time before any reliable international statistics exist. In the meantime the absence of data presents considerable challenges to organizations arguing for a greater political and resource commitment at an international level to the inclusion of disabled children in education. Yet it is well known that the majority of disabled children in Southern countries do not attend school! In the long-term these statistics will be an important step towards holding governments accountable for their actions and of ensuring that the issue is recognized and mainstreamed.

The development of inclusive education

The Salamanca Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO 2004) considered the implications of the pledge made by the world community in 1990 to include disabled children and other marginalized groups of learners in education. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action was signed by the 92 participating countries and some have argued that it is the most influential document in recent times in inclusive education (Ainscow 1999).

The Statement has a strong focus on the 'development of inclusive schools' in relation to the international goal of achieving education for all. The notion of *all* was expanded upon and discussed in detail:

> schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas and groups. (UNESCO 1994, 6)

Yet the fact that the Salamanca Conference needed to take place at all is further evidence of the history of separate thinking referred to earlier. It was organized by the then Special Needs Education department in UNESCO's Paris headquarters to maximize the opportunities created by Jomtien in 1990.

Salamanca could arguably be used to legitimize the exclusive concerns of some practitioners and international agencies with disabled children and those identified as having special educational needs. Yet Salamanca has been very influential in challenging attitudes within 'special needs and inclusion' circles, but it is only in these circles that it is discussed and taken seriously – yet its focus is on *all*. A broader notion of all and a greater appreciation of difference in the education system could hold the key to improving the quality of education for all children (Ainscow 1999). We will return to this issue later.

Since Salamanca, the term 'inclusive education' has taken on multiple meanings across the globe. It is sometimes used in England to describe practices within special schools (Spurgeon 2007). In some UK contexts inclusive education is no longer associated with disability or special needs, but rather with school attendance or behaviour (Ainscow et al. 2006). Slee (2004) has argued that the idea of inclusive education is showing signs of jetlag and is increasingly used to mean many different things. He bemoans the fact that it has lost its original radical meaning, which rejected medical and psychological explanations of educational difficulties.

Ainscow *et al.* (2006, 15) have developed a typology of six ways of thinking about inclusion:

- Inclusion as a concern with disabled students and others categorized as 'having special educational needs'.
- Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion.
- Inclusion in relation to all groups seen as being vulnerable to exclusion.
- Inclusion as developing the school for all.
- Inclusion as 'Education for All'.
- Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.

These different interpretations of inclusive education indicate that there is conceptual confusion surrounding this issue, but perhaps also that it necessarily takes different forms, depending on contextual concerns. Essentially it is a process of challenging exclusion in schools and communities and of being 'vigilant about whatever threats to equity arise' (Dyson 2004, 615).

However, in the same way that Jomtien provided a broad framework with little guidance on implementation but failed to adequately spell out the mechanics of *how* to achieve education for all children, Salamanca has led to a divergence of views and a lack of clarity on implementation. International consensus on the issue of inclusive education, and its relationship to EFA, is perhaps less important than the development of coherent and sustainable policies at country level. The extent to which more inclusive educational practices are promoted at country level will depend on the development of a clear understanding of the concept of 'inclusive education for all' in the cultural contexts in which it is developed.

Generalized definitions developed by international agencies, such as the Salamanca Statement, may help in promoting initial discussions, but are likely to be less helpful when practitioners attempt to make sense of inclusive education. In her analysis of international policy and practice concerning inclusive education, Peters (2003, 1) concluded that it is a 'complex issue' and that 'no coherent approach is evident in the literature'. She goes on to state that not only is inclusive education implemented at different levels, but it also embraces different goals, is based on a range of varied motives, reflects different classifications of special educational needs and provides services in different contexts. Although this allows for the development of culturally and contextually appropriate understandings of inclusive education to emerge, there is a 'danger that wishful thinking about the way it is

used or applied may distract people from exploring the realities of practice' (Booth and Ainscow 1998, 3). These concerns are evident in contexts, where inclusion is seen as being exclusively focused on concerns for disabled children or used as a reason for their continued segregation.

Despite this conceptual confusion, cross-cultural learning between southern countries can help to contextualize global debates. Miles and Ahuja (2007) offer the following advice:

> it is helpful to make a distinction between 'generalisations' that attempt to determine patterns that are assumed to be relevant to any country, and 'transferability', where there is an emphasis on the importance of understanding contextual factors in shaping how ideas are interpreted. (p. 132)

Establishing dialogue between policy makers and practitioners both within and between countries facing similar challenges can be beneficial as they work towards the common goal of providing meaningful, quality education for all children. The extent to which more inclusive educational practices are promoted at country level, however, will depend on the development of a clear understanding of the concept of 'inclusive education' in the cultural contexts in which it is being developed.

Non-formal education

The underlying principles of EFA and inclusive education are about addressing 'all', but they have differed in the way they have approached these concerns. In inclusive education there is a tension between the needs of disabled individuals on the one hand and the notions of equality and social inclusion on the other. In EFA there has been insufficient scrutiny of the two central concepts of 'education' and 'all'.

Although the EFA Framework recognizes that 'the main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling', it also states that supplementary and alternative programmes can help meet the basic learning needs of children with limited or no access to formal schooling. This is an interesting caveat which has resulted in the proliferation of multiple systems across many countries. The quality of education provided in these alternative systems is highly questionable. In India, for example, there was a significant rise in the number and spread of alternative systems. Non Formal Education (NFE) and the National Institute of Open Schooling are two such examples of systems which have been criticized as offering poor, sub-quality education (Taneja 2001; Nambissan 2000; Dreze and Sen 1995; Juneja 1997; Shukla 1986). An evaluation of the NFE programme in nine states covering 114 000 centres highlighted the fact that 12% of the children dropped out before completion of the course, and 42% of these left during the first nine months. It also revealed the low quality of instructors, who had been poorly trained for periods lasting from a week to a month. Thus NFE has been accused of dilution of learning achievement, while its characteristics of flexibility, localization and need specific strategy have often been used as loopholes for offering sub-quality education. Similarly, popular perceptions of open learning suggest that it is an 'easy access to degrees' (Mukhopadhyay and Parhar 1999). These alternative systems were intended to be developed as a temporary stop-gap or a last resort (Berntsen 1995), yet they have become recognized parallel systems of education. Children who are regarded as 'weak' academically tend to be pushed out of the mainstream system into schools run by the National Institute of Open Schooling (Jha 2002). Notably, in recent years special schools are also being added to this list of alternative schools in India, without any acknowledgement of the exclusionary practices and reduced life opportunities associated with this approach.

In a recent analysis of seventeen EFA plans from the South and South East Asia region, Ahuja (2005) concluded that inclusive education was not even mentioned. In fact, special schools and residential hostels were put forward as a strategy for meeting the needs of a wide range of disadvantaged students, and non-formal education was seen as a solution to the educational needs of marginalized groups. This is a worrying trend especially given the negative effects of institutionalization, especially on vulnerable groups of children in under-resourced contexts (United Nations 2005).

The disability factor

Recent studies in Southern countries have highlighted the fact that inclusive education is primarily understood as being about disabled children. Singal (2004) noted that inclusive education, though a part of the Indian government's policy rhetoric, is focused solely on providing education for disabled children. Mainstream teachers in Zambia who participated in an action research project began with the assumption that inclusive education only concerns children identified as having special needs or disabilities, and that these children are the sole responsibility of specialist teachers (Miles et al. 2003). There are considerable pressures to regard the educational concerns of disabled children as being separate from, and different to, the concerns highlighted in the broader education system. The focus then is on setting up special classrooms, special schools and/or rehabilitation centres, which still cannot accommodate the large numbers of out-of-school disabled children. Nor can this specialist approach address the large numbers of children overlooked within existing classrooms who struggle to learn and tend to fail exams and repeat whole school years at great cost to their families.

Although very little research has been done in this area, findings emerging from Southern countries indicate that special schools tend to be unregulated and of poor quality. They are often a watered down form of schooling for the small minority of disabled children who attend them. Yet the number of special schools has doubled recently in India (Singal 2006), despite the government's commitment to inclusive education.

A study of 15 special schools was recently carried out in Uganda in order to 'develop proposals for the existing and new special schools to meet basic requirements and minimum standards' (Kristensen et al. 2006, 139). This was in response to a government report which concluded that special schools did not meet minimum standards. This study needs to be seen in the context of Uganda's progressive rights-based legislation on education, including a policy of positive discrimination in primary education towards girls, and towards disabled girls and boys since 1996 (Ndeezi 2000). Government commitment, therefore, to providing education for all children, as far as possible in an inclusive system, is considerable. Nevertheless Kristensen et al. (2006, 139) found that the quality of education and education materials in the special schools was poor, and children were often 'admitted to special schools without proper assessment of their educational needs and the resources are not available to provide them with an appropriate range of experiences'. This study highlights the lack of 'specialist' expertise and resources in so-called 'special' schools. Yet it strongly recommends that deaf children and others with 'severe' disabilities should continue to be educated in special schools – *with improved facilities* (our italics), alongside the government's commendable policy of inclusive education. The authors do not state whether it is feasible for Uganda to build and adequately equip enough special schools for all its deaf children, or for those with 'severe' disabilities. Given the economic constraints this is highly unlikely.

The development of 'units' attached to mainstream schools has the potential to reach more children and develop expertise at the local level. In a rural area of Uganda, parents and teachers are reported to have overcome prejudice and scepticism, and their lack of specialist knowledge in enabling deaf children to access education for the first time (Wilson et al. forthcoming). Over the last five years 'integrated schools' (units attached to primary schools) have been set up in each county of Bushenyi District to act as resource centres for schools in the surrounding area and as training sites for teachers. Despite initial resistance, teachers and parents have been helped to learn sign language by deaf adults and have seen the benefits of education for their deaf children – demonstrating that so-called 'specialist' expertise can be developed in rural communities, enabling deaf children to remain with their families. In this example community involvement in the educational initiative has helped to prevent the 'integrated school' from becoming a smaller version of a special school, which can easily happen with specialist units.

The inclusive education debate has undoubtedly helped to raise concerns about disabled children in international fora. However it has also highlighted the many dilemmas and tensions which result when disability is seen as a separate issue. Disabled children are not a homogeneous group. They may identify more strongly with other aspects of their overall identity, such as their gender, economic status, ethnicity, etc. Belonging to one or more of these groupings significantly increases their vulnerability. For instance, the range and quality of life choices available to a young disabled girl growing up in a poor family living in a village in India are different from those available to a disabled boy in the same family, and also to a disabled girl living in an Indian city. However, efforts aimed at children with disabilities do not take account of such *inter-sectionalities* and multi-vulnerabilities. Disability should be recognized as one of many issues of difference and discrimination, rather than as an issue on its own, and broader developmental efforts should take account of the multidimensionality of such differences.

An inability to see disability as part of the human condition tends to mean that disabled people are overlooked. This was evident in post-tsunami relief efforts where Kett et al. (2005, 10) observed that:

> the disability sector operated within a 'cocoon' and didn't really engage with important mainstream development issues. Networking and collaboration tended to suffer from 'vertical dominance' with poor communities remaining largely 'out of the loop'.

This resulted in the continued chasm where the needs of disabled people remained outside mainstream concerns, primarily due to their inability or reluctance to engage with mainstream efforts, and on the other hand, the inability or ignorance of mainstream efforts to incorporate disability-related needs within their work.

It is likely to be impossible to establish common ground on this issue. While many in the field argue that there needs to be a focus on 'all', there is arguably still a need for a particular focus on disability issues – sometimes called a 'twin-track' approach. This, in itself, can be problematic. Minow (1990) refers to this problem as the 'dilemma of difference' where the special treatment of difference further perpetuates disadvantages for members of oppressed groups. However if this difference is not recognized there is the likelihood of it not being addressed. Proponents of inclusive education (such as Ainscow et al. 2006) have argued that initiatives focused solely on disability tend to undermine and distract from broader efforts to promote system and organizational change, which is the central focus of inclusive education, as it was originally intended.

Conclusion

The opportunities presented by the Education for All (EFA) movement since 1990 have been unprecedented. The emergence of education as a rights issue, the realization that education is central to developing economies, the growing disability movement, and a deeper realization that education is essential for global tolerance have all provided a strong impetus for change. Both the EFA and inclusive education initiatives are evidence of this growing global concern.

Yet, the enormity of the challenge of providing universal primary education in countries of the South can seem overwhelming, and the analysis presented by many international agencies tends to adopt a deficit approach, with educational systems portrayed as 'struggling to cope with poorly trained teachers, inadequate budgets, large class sizes, and more recently the HIV/AIDS crisis' (Miles and Ahuja 2007, 133). From a Northern perspective, the challenge of educating all children, including those identified as having disabilities, in the context of income poor countries can seem impossible.

Education is, however, a much broader concept than the acquisition of skills. Inclusive education aims to promote democratic principles and a set of values and beliefs relating to equality and social justice so that all children can participate in teaching and learning. Through its championing of marginalized groups, inclusive education has the potential to promote such values and beliefs, and so has a great deal to offer the current EFA debate.

The 'value added' nature of inclusive education is not only in its raising of issues of quality of education and placement, but more importantly it brings to the forefront issues about social justice. Inclusive education provides an opportunity for society to examine critically its social institutions and structures. It necessarily challenges didactic, teacher-centred teaching practices, such as rote learning, and so opens up opportunities for developing better pedagogy and greater competence. EFA often fails to explore such broad issues. Inclusive education offers an opportunity for EFA to begin to make distinctions between 'moral' and 'mechanical' reforms. A commitment to providing education for all children is not about 'bums on seats', but about revisiting our conceptions about schooling and the purpose of education. It is an opportunity to engage in debates which are otherwise seen as being the prerogative of philosophers.

The coming together of EFA and inclusive education helps us to ask some fundamental questions, such as 'What is the role of education?' Is the primary task of education to develop a literate and numerate individual with economically relevant attributes as put forward in the human capital approach and in the educational policies of many governments across the globe? Or are the 'core educational values' shaped by a range of other social and human development outcomes of education that concentrate on the 'enhancement of human lives and freedoms' as argued by Sen (1999).

Emphasis has shifted in EFA from the original focus of 'access', to more recent concerns about quality and completion. However by focusing on *individual groupings*, such as disabled children, rather than examining the system as a whole, we run the risk of reinforcing existing dichotomies between access to learning opportunities (quantity) and knowledge acquisition or competence development (quality). It is only by examining these as central issues when undertaking radical reforms of education systems that we can respond to the needs and concerns of a new global era.

Radical changes are required in education systems, and in the values and principles of the people involved in delivering education, if the world's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children are to gain access to their local school. Singal (2004) has argued that inclusive education is not only about addressing issues of input (for example, access), and those

related to processes (for example, teacher training), rather inclusion involves a shift in underlying values and beliefs held across the system. As these values and beliefs are reflected in the policies we frame (at the national, school and classroom level) and the education systems that we build.

In summary, thinking more deeply about the concept of 'all' can enable policy makers and practitioners to explore existing opportunities within country contexts, rather than looking for technological solutions from outside these contexts. Developing local understandings of the complex concepts of 'education', 'all' and 'inclusion' is critical to the development of appropriate and sustainable policies on teaching and learning. South–South collaboration is essential in the ongoing development of innovative, and culturally and contextually appropriate education policies and practices. The eighth Millennium Development Goal is arguably the most crucial of the Millennium Development Goals as it challenges the international community to establish a global partnership to make the goals a reality, and North–South and South–South collaboration is central to the achievement of this goal.

Note

1. As authors, we discussed the relative merits of the terms 'disabled people' and 'people with disabilities' and agreed to go with the first author's preference for disabled people, as used in the UK. We are aware, however, that internationally the term 'people with disabilities' is becoming more commonly used. We also acknowledge that in many developing economies person first language can help to reduce the stigma associated with disability.

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Publication 5

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This publication argues that teachers know a great deal more than they use, and that this knowledge tends to be overlooked by international agencies when introducing inclusive education programmes, modelled on western notions of special education. It also contrasts the exclusionary impact of the global digital and communication divide on a country such as Zambia, with current international efforts to promote EFA.

The action research study aimed to address the difficulties faced by EENET in obtaining analytical accounts written by education stakeholders, and to explore the barriers which prevent people in Southern countries from learning about the experiences of other stakeholders facing similar challenges. The findings of the study revealed that opportunities to reflect upon, and question, practice has great potential in in-service teacher development initiatives. Such opportunities can also help develop a culture of collaborative problem-solving (which can help generate locally relevant knowledge about how to overcome attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers), and discourage dependency on outside specialist support.

Teachers' knowledge about their contexts is tacit, and so they often need support to reflect upon, and analyse, their approach to pedagogy so that they can access that knowledge (key principle 2). The process of uncovering this tacit knowledge does not need to be resource-intensive, but does involve social processes which take time – such processes tend not to be seen as attractive funding opportunities by international agencies.

This publication demonstrates the importance of identifying insider knowledge and the contribution it can make to teacher development programmes. The knowledge generated by the Zambian teachers has successfully been translated and adapted for use in other similar cultural contexts.

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Engaging with teachers' knowledge: promoting inclusion in Zambian schools

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Current efforts to ensure that every child completes a full cycle of primary education are hampered by chronic poverty and prolonged conflict in the South. It is estimated that 75 million children of primary age are out of school and that one-third are disabled. This paper contrasts the exclusionary impact of the global digital and communication divide with the international rhetoric of education for all. Access to information has increased in our brave new world, but inequitably. In this paper insights are explored from a study carried out by the Enabling Education Network in schools in Northern Zambia, in which reflective writing played a role in generating locally relevant teachers' knowledge. Although there was only minimal evidence of the benefits of the digital revolution, the Zambian teachers successfully developed a problem-based approach to including disabled children in education as part of their commitment to child rights.

Keywords: inclusive education; education for all; teachers; Zambia

Introduction

> The world in which we now live is in some profound respects thus quite distinct from that inhabited by human beings in previous periods of history. It is in many ways a single world, having a unitary framework of experience (for instance, in respect of basic axes of time and space) yet at the same time one which creates new forms of fragmentation and dispersal. (Giddens 1991, 4–5)

Inequity within and between education systems worldwide is an example of the fragmentation referred to by Giddens. Providing an effective education for all children and young people is arguably the biggest challenge facing school systems worldwide. Young people in the South[1] struggle to access education for financial reasons, such as the need to grow or sell food, and the cost of books and uniforms. Large numbers drop out of school, not only due to poverty, but also because the lessons seem irrelevant to their lives. Meanwhile, in Northern countries many young people become disaffected and leave school with few worthwhile qualifications (Ainscow and Miles 2008).

Access to information and knowledge has increased globally, yet I argue here that this is an illusion, since the ability to access information with the click of a button is only available to a privileged few. Modernity has, in fact, produced 'difference, exclusion and marginalisation' Giddens (1991, 6). As access to digital technology has

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grown exponentially for some, it has had little impact on the quality of life of the majority of the world's population, and the digital divide between North and South is widening:

> In September 2000, of a total of about 378 million Internet users (representing 6.2 per cent of the world's population) North America's share stood at 42.6 per cent, while Asia represented 20.6 per cent of the total (including Japan) ... and Africa a meagre 0.6 per cent (with most users being in South Africa). (Castells 2001, 260)

He disturbingly predicted that the digital divide 'may ultimately engulf the world in a series of multi-dimensional crises' (Castells 2001, 271). Although there are signs of hope, with increasing investment in digital technologies and the growth of mobile phone use across sub-Saharan Africa (Moon 2006), the pace of change in the income-rich countries of the North means that the gap is growing wider.

It is in the context of this fragmented, and profoundly unequal, post-Cold War world that an unparalleled number of world conferences were held in the 1990s to develop international consensus on such wide-ranging issues as gender equality, environmental protection and child rights. This global conferencing culminated in the eight 'Millennium development goals' (MDGs): 'the world's biggest promise – a global agreement to reduce poverty at historically unprecedented rates through collaborative global action' (Hulme 2007, 2). Enabling all primary age children to complete primary education is central to this 'global promise'.

One of the aims of writing this paper is to contrast the exclusionary impact of the global digital and communication divide[2] on countries of the South with the monumental international efforts being made as part of 'Education for all' (EFA) to ensure that, by 2015, girls and boys everywhere will be able to complete a full course of good quality primary schooling (United Nations 2000). The process of researching teachers' knowledge in Northern Zambia revealed that teachers are under pressure to teach increasing numbers of children with diverse needs as part of EFA, yet teachers receive little support or information about how to do this from outside their own communities and computer access is negligible. I argue that teachers have tacit knowledge about their contexts, but that they often need support to reflect upon, and analyse, their approach to pedagogy so that they can access that knowledge. This does not need to be resource intensive, but does involve highly complex social processes. It is not a quick fix of the kind often sought by international agencies.

One of the Enabling Education Network's (EENET) core beliefs is that some of the most interesting and pioneering practice in making education accessible and equitable for all is happening in countries of the South, contrary to the commonly held view in many Northern countries that a minimum level of resources is required for inclusion to be successful (Miles 2002). EENET promotes the inclusion of marginalised groups in education worldwide. It was established in response to the expressed needs of Southern practitioners for simply written information about how to make education more inclusive. The EENET website is regarded by many as an important emerging database and a unique international resource on inclusive education. It has been accessed by people in 213 countries and territories in the last two years.

However, sharing information about the contested concept of inclusive education across different cultural contexts is not easy (Miles and Ahuja 2007). Relevant curriculum materials for the training of teachers on how to teach inclusively are in short supply, yet effective teacher education is central to the achievement of good quality, inclusive EFA (Moon 2006). Teachers need access to contextually relevant

information to guide their development, as well as support in generating and sharing their knowledge. They also need opportunities to reflect upon and question their practice and develop a culture of collaborative problem solving. This is a major challenge for practitioners in Southern countries, despite the technological advances of our brave new world.

In this paper I reflect on insights gained from a study which explored understandings of inclusive education in Zambian schools. I will argue that, with minimal support, stakeholders can generate and share their own locally relevant knowledge, thus supporting Karangwa's (2006) assertion that international support can only be effective if it respects and supports local beliefs and practices. The study was designed partly to address the difficulties faced by EENET in obtaining analytical accounts written by Southern practitioners. One of its aims was to explore the barriers which prevent people in Southern countries from learning about the experiences of other practitioners facing similar challenges.

Education for all?

The first major EFA conference (UNESCO 1990) was based both on a human rights perspective and on the generally held belief that education is central to individual well-being and national development. The significance of this first conference was that it acknowledged that large numbers of vulnerable and marginalised groups of learners were excluded from education systems worldwide. The Salamanca Conference was called to discuss the implications of EFA for children identified as having 'special educational needs' and disabilities and put forward a 'Framework for action', whose central focus was on inclusive neighbourhood schools (UNESCO 1994). Salamanca has influenced policy debates in both North and South, with the New Labour government in the UK, for example, endorsing Salamanca when it first took office (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE] 1997, 44). The United Nations (2006) has enshrined inclusive education as a right in the new *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*.

Each year the *EFA global monitoring report* produces statistics on out of school children and current estimates suggest that 75 million children of primary age do not attend school (UNESCO 2008). Threats to equity in education vary enormously according to context, but in some contexts inequitable practices affecting particularly marginalised groups have become entrenched. For instance, in Bangladesh the children of sex workers are among the most marginalised from educational opportunities (Ahuja and Ibrahim 2004). In Afghanistan the enrolment of girls in school was little more than 0% in 2001, and had only risen to 35% by 2006 (Azimi 2007). Although disability cuts across all issues of equity, it is rarely seen as a cross-cutting issue by international agencies and so disabled children are often separated out as a homogeneous group of learners and excluded from education in disproportionately large numbers (Mittler 2005).

Despite increasing efforts to safeguard the right to education for all learners, UNESCO (2006) has estimated that less than 10% of disabled children go to school and that one-third of out of school children are disabled. Few Southern countries have mechanisms for assessing disability, as it is understood in Northern contexts, or for including it in national census data. The discrepancy in disability prevalence rates between 1% in Kenya and Bangladesh and 20% in New Zealand is a stark illustration of this (Mont 2007). Stubbs (1995) has argued that, since disability is culturally and

contextually determined, a focus on demographic data and statistics obscures more complex contextual problems associated with negative attitudes, policies and institutions. A lack of data is also frequently used as an excuse for not developing services.

One possible explanation for the largely unchallenged exclusion of disabled children from education on such a grand scale lies in the still prevalent view that some children are 'ineducable' and that overcrowded and under-resourced schools would not be able to cope. Although the term 'inclusive education' tends to be associated with special education, many international agencies use the term to mean wider issues of equity, such as the inclusion of girls and children from minority ethnic communities. This would be a cause for celebration if disability was seen as a cross-cutting issue, but many agencies do not consider the inclusion of disabled children to be relevant to EFA and instead see it as a marginal, specialist issue. A study of four national education policies revealed that inclusive education tends to be conceptualised as a disability and special educational needs issue, teacher training on inclusive education is not mentioned and there is a lack of clarity around resource allocation for inclusion (Lewis 2008).

Despite concerted international action on EFA and the ease with which knowledge transfer can now take place, efforts to ensure that all children gain access to education appear to be fragmented. Afako et al. (2002) reported a high drop-out rate of disabled children in Uganda following the introduction of free education, which was attributed partly to harsh or hostile treatment in schools and partly to a lack of specialist expertise. Yet special schools do not necessarily contain specialist expertise. A study of 15 special schools in Uganda found that the quality of education was poor and specialist education materials almost non-existent (Kristensen et al. 2006). However, the authors still recommended that deaf children and those with 'severe' disabilities should continue to be educated in special schools, with improved facilities. The building and maintaining of such facilities for all who are perceived to need them is, however, not feasible in most Southern countries.

'Disability-inclusive development' is now part of the World Bank agenda. Since almost half of education loans are spent on construction, the Bank is in a strong position to influence the building of accessible schools:

> In order for the disabled to participate in education, both universal design for physical access to schools and academic access to curriculum and instruction requires appropriate support ... [however] ... the World Bank and other donors have yet to agree on a disability policy for school construction. (World Bank 2007, 16)

Such discussions represent major progress at an international level, yet the pace of change is disconcertingly slow.

The Zambian context

Zambia is ranked 165 of 177 on the 'Human development index' and life expectancy for its population of almost 12 million people stands at 40.5 years (United Nations Development Programme 2008), 68 per cent of whom live in poverty on less than $1 per day (Department for International Development 2008). Public education was made accessible to all in Zambia with the introduction of free basic education in 2002. By 2004 the net enrolment rate had risen to 82.7%, up from 68.1% in 2000 (Global Campaign for Education [GCE] 2005). In response to the increase in school

attendance hundreds of new classrooms and schools are being built, existing schools refurbished and textbooks and other equipment made available. However, pupil teacher ratios are still high, with many schools operating double shifts. The increase in teacher numbers cannot keep pace with increasing enrolment and is offset by the rising number of teacher deaths: 457 in 2002, 824 in 2004 (GCE 2005). Not surprisingly, the completion rate has only marginally improved.

Inclusive education in Zambia is regarded as an extension of special education, which is administered in parallel to the mainstream school system (Simui 2007). Efforts to make the education system more responsive to disabled children and those identified as having 'special needs' have, therefore, been patchy and had little impact on the education system as a whole. A study by Kasonde-Ng'andu and Moberg (2001, ix) concluded that existing legislation in Zambia 'does not obligate or support development of inclusive education sufficiently'. They also reported that 'a disproportionate number of children with special educational needs are in the community, receiving no education at all' (Kasonde-Ng'andu and Moberg 2001, viii) and that their exclusion is due to poverty, long distances between home and school and illness – factors which affect all children in Zambia.

Rationale for the study

The rationale for this exploratory, small-scale study[3] is closely bound up in the values and principles of EENET, which prioritises the needs of practitioners in countries with limited access to information. We began with the assumption, based on previous research (Ainscow et al. 2003), that the only possible way forward to increase access and equity for excluded and vulnerable groups is to work with mainstream teachers to change the way they teach and with school communities so that they become welcoming and inclusive environments. Inclusive education was defined in this study as being 'the process of increasing the presence, participation and achievement of all students in their local schools with particular reference to those groups of learners who are at risk of exclusion, marginalisation or under-achievement' (Miles et al. 2003, 9).

The study was designed and managed at a distance by researchers associated with EENET, in collaboration with teachers in Northern Zambia and a Tanzanian researcher in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. For the purposes of this paper I will focus exclusively on the study as it relates to practice in the Zambian primary and basic[4] schools.

The opportunity to work with the Zambian schools arose through a long-standing link between the leader of the research in Zambia (a primary school teacher) and the UK-based Child to Child Trust.[5] The interest in inclusive education in these schools grew naturally from a rights-based approach to education and a commitment to democratic classroom practices in which learners played a central role (Mumba 2000). Indeed it was in response to hostility between the children in the main school and the five children who attended the 'special unit' that the teachers began to use child to child approaches to promote a more inclusive ethos. The unit had been constructed with donor funds for children identified as having learning difficulties (referred to as 'mentally handicapped' in the Zambian context) without any consultation with staff.

In response to the creation of the unit, an informal community survey was conducted by pupils to identify children who did not attend school (Save the Children UK 2002, 29). They found 30 children with learning difficulties, and many others who had dropped out of school because they felt it was not relevant. After

some difficult negotiations the children identified by the survey were allowed into the school. The five children who had originally been placed in the unit were also included in the main school. 'Twinning for inclusion' was the name given to the project to provide disabled children with buddies on their journey to school and in the classroom (Mumba 2001). Initially a disabled adult acted as an adviser to the project, but when he died no replacement could be found. It is interesting to note that the teachers in this small community had been greatly influenced and inspired by the international debates on child rights and disability rights, despite their limited access to electronic communication and the lack of national guidance on implementing inclusive education.

Most of the teachers believed that inclusive education was not their responsibility. They saw it as a specialist issue associated with 'special needs' and disabilities. Many teachers expressed a need for specialist training, but this was only available in the capital, Lusaka, 600 kilometres away, in the form of a one year course. Nevertheless, the teachers seemed to think that they were being denied access to special knowledge and that without this knowledge they could not engage in this new initiative known as 'inclusive education'. This is understandable, but in so doing they were overlooking the skills they already had in managing large classes with very few resources. Such attitudes are hardly surprising when most initiatives to promote inclusion in schools in Southern contexts have tended to emphasise externally led training activities, often based on Northern models, led by special educators and lacking local ownership. It is ironic that mainstream teachers tend not to be directly involved in the management of inclusive education initiatives.

Developing a process of inquiry

The study was exploratory, short-term and small scale and was carried out on a low budget in each country. The methodology was unusual in that it was the basis of the intervention in each of the contexts and, at the same time, the means of collecting and engaging with evidence in relation to the research questions. The particular form of collaborative inquiry developed for this study was inspired partly by Reason and Rowan (1981), but also by participatory rural appraisal (PRA), as promoted by Chambers (1992) and developed by Stubbs (1995) for use in educational settings. We also drew on the experience of participatory research, which is 'often associated with social transformation in the Third World' (Kemmis and McTaggart 2003, 337) and which, like PRA, is informed by the work of Freire (1996). PRA, later renamed 'participatory learning and action', was described by Chambers (1992, 1) as 'a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act'. It is particularly useful in situations where people have limited literacy skills, as the methods are practical and visual. The behaviour and attitudes of outside facilitators are crucial. There is an emphasis on respect, self-critical awareness and 'handing over the stick' and it is common for outside facilitators to become redundant.

The research process began with 17 interested teachers in six schools, supported by a research facilitator. The facilitator kept in close email contact with myself in the UK and his co-facilitator in Tanzania. An initial exploratory workshop, held in Tanzania, led to the development of research procedures, which included a variety of techniques to encourage the sharing of ideas in groups in order to analyse existing practice and plan further initiatives.

The research facilitator encouraged the teachers to look more carefully at the way attitudes, institutions and the environment constituted barriers to the full participation of vulnerable children in their schools, while keeping the following research question in mind:

> How can people with different knowledge, skills and perspectives be helped to think about, document, and learn from, their efforts to address barriers to the learning and participation of all children?

It was essential that participation in this study was beneficial to the teachers. The design of the study, therefore, had to be built into their routine activities. The research facilitator worked as a classroom teacher in the mornings and as a peripatetic in-service trainer for eight other schools in the afternoons. In line with policy requirements, he led informal discussions in routine meetings and training sessions (Miles et al. 2003) and so built the capacity of practitioners to articulate their own practice in both oral and written accounts, using diary writing, mind mapping and lesson observation. The transformation of statutory meetings into an exciting research process meant that the teachers remained motivated and the study did not make unreasonable demands on their time. The meetings were a crucial part of the process of encouraging teachers to learn from, and challenge, each other's practice and interpretations of inclusion and develop greater analytical and writing skills. The large meetings were videotaped and played back to teachers in other schools to stimulate reflection. One-to-one discussions between the lead researcher and individual teachers were audiotaped for the same purpose

Such locally responsive in-service training is an excellent resource, but is inevitably fraught with problems, with its dependence, for example, upon sympathetic headteachers, adequately maintained and available transport and roads being usable – none of which can ever be taken for granted. The impact of the global communication divide was felt throughout the study, since the researchers in the UK and Zambia only had face-to-face contact for a total of three weeks during the two year project. Telephone contact proved unworkable, postage was slow and unreliable and email contact was frequently disrupted by storms and unaffordable bills. Email discussions were, however, invaluable as a stimulus for reflection and as a data source.

Towards the end of the study photographs taken by researchers in Zambia were used in Tanzania to stimulate discussion about the meaning of inclusion (Miles and Kaplan 2005). This was an attempt to move away from a reliance on written accounts and develop research methods which were more sensitive to oral culture. The discussion stimulated through photo-elicitation was rich and enabled more equal participation of children and adults who did not speak English or who had learning difficulties. A subsequent research project was carried out to explore the use of participatory photography[6] in promoting inclusion and to consolidate the action research work in the Zambian schools (Kaplan, Lewis, and Mumba 2007).

Teachers' accounts

One day a parcel arrived in Manchester containing 36 handwritten accounts from 21 teachers working in five different schools (Miles et al. 2003, 77). They included issues such as: school improvement; teaching and learning; attendance; over-enrolment as a result of free education; 'late-coming' and truancy. Six accounts were about disability

issues; five focused on gender, including early marriage; two on the educational impact of HIV/AIDS. The accounts were organised into themes, published and disseminated (EENET 2003). They have been translated by EENET users into various African languages and into Spanish for use in Chile (Lopez 2006), showing that practice can be cautiously shared across cultural borders with relatively few resources (Miles and Ahuja 2007).

The teachers demonstrated that they were confident in addressing challenges associated with large classes, teenage pregnancy, early marriage and gender discrimination and the impact of HIV/AIDS. However, those who chose to write about the inclusion of disabled learners expressed a lack of confidence, coupled with an awareness that they were trespassing on territory normally occupied by specialists. This reflects the national education policy, which is bold and comprehensive in its stand on threats to equity, such as gender, poverty and ill-health, but which is traditionally medical in its response to the issue of 'special educational needs' and disability, advocating referral, treatment and placement in specialist facilities (Ministry of Education 1996).

Although this study was underpinned by a broad philosophy of inclusion, for the purposes of this paper I have included quotes from three of the six accounts which focused on individual disabled children. This is because they raise issues which are rarely discussed in the literature, such as the link between school sanitation and inclusion. The teachers wanted recognition for their work so their true names are given here, but the children's names have been changed.

Anton

Anton has albinism and was attending school for the first time. The aim of the lesson was to teach the pupils 'to socialise with an albino freely, communicate with him, accept him as a member of our class'. However, when he sat down 'the other pupils ran away'. The teacher noticed 'that all the other members of the class were looking at him'. She decided to take the children outside to do physical education. However, 'some pupils from other classes started staring at him'. The teacher was also afraid:

> Worse still, myself as a teacher, I was not so free with him, I feared his hands, he had sores on them ... my belief was that whenever you see an albino you have to spit saliva on your chest.

But she overcame her fear:

> I just forced myself and I did not want to show it to the pupils that I was not happy with him. We rubbed hands together for the first round, pupils were again surprised to see me do this.

This is a rare insight into the very real fears and learned prejudice of an educated member of a rural Zambian community. It also demonstrates her ability to think quickly and react flexibly – a taken for granted skill among all good teachers. Towards the end of the day Anton's visual difficulties became apparent: 'I wrote letter C for the pupils to copy. Anton wanted to write but he did not see properly. ... I discovered that he had problems in visual perception'. Of course, in an ideal world these would have been identified beforehand, but action has subsequently been taken to address these difficulties. Although the barriers may have initially seemed enormous, a great deal of progress was made on the first day, and Anton has since remained in school.

The process of reflective writing enabled the teacher to record the micro-decisions she made on Anton's first day and externalise her own irrational responses so that she could discuss them with her colleagues. Such negative social attitudes are universal and not confined to income-poor countries. In the Ugandan example cited earlier the negative attitudes were not addressed and the children dropped out of school.

Daniel

Teachers identified Daniel as an 'out of school' child and invited him to attend. Daniel was 15 years old, disabled by polio and used to attend a residential special school which his parents could no longer afford. The teacher wrote about a home visit he made to find out why Daniel did not always come to school. In trying to understand why Daniel was frequently absent from school the teacher learned a great deal about environmental barriers to inclusion.

> I found the boy crawling ... the callipers were taken for repair by his father. ... I asked him if he could not just use crutches and he told me, 'I cannot move without callipers, I need both the callipers and crutches' ... I asked him if this was a common problem and he said, 'Sir, my parents are poor and therefore even welding these callipers is not easy. Sometimes it takes days for them to be repaired due to lack of money and this means that all these days I should not report to school'.

Daniel's mother added:

> This boy has problems when going to the toilet and moving about in the surrounding where people urinate anyhow. ... The father does not want to dine with him since he crawls all over the place with bare hands.

This prompted the teacher to ask about the school toilets. Daniel's response was that he had never used them.

It is not usual for teachers to make home visits in any country, yet they can provide enormous insights into pupils' lives and promote better home–school communication. This visit raised a range of issues which would not usually be the concern of classroom teachers. Daniel was already known to the teachers, but they had not thought of inviting ti the school him until the inclusive education initiative began. The cost and logistical challenges associated with the maintenance of callipers continues, but the teacher's findings led to the construction of an accessible latrine at the school. It also brought new insights into everyday challenges which were shared with other teachers. I would argue that this problem-based approach to teacher development, which does not rely on outside expertise, is more effective than the theory-based pre-service courses delivered at teachers' colleges. Moon (2006) argued that continuing professional development is a more appropriate response than pre-service training to the rapidly changing world of teacher mobility and the teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

Patience

In the third account a teacher explained how she felt inadequate for the task of teaching Patience, who is disabled as a result of undiagnosed brittle bone disease and was formerly educated in the unit for children with intellectual impairments. The

account began with a bold statement, indicating a level of pride in the school's efforts to be more inclusive, 'We have dynamised our school by practising inclusive schooling very seriously for some years now'. Yet the teacher still felt unsure of herself in this new situation.

Patience was seven years old and 'not able to write properly. She had bent bones both in her legs and hands. This resulted in stunted growth, she is very quiet, cannot work properly and she's short'. One of the challenges Patience faced was the size of the school furniture. In the unit she had been expected to use the same size of desk as her peers. She had also not been allowed to learn mathematics. Despite the fact that the teacher in the unit had clearly not catered to her particular needs, the teacher described her feelings of inadequacy, 'that Patience's problem cannot be handled by me for a simple reason that I am not trained in special education'. She also faced objections from one of the pupils, 'Why should we learn with Patience in the mainstream and yet there is a unit?' The teacher's colleagues 'believed that I was overloading my work in order for Patience's work to be prepared'.

Nevertheless, the teacher persisted:

> I created a friendly environment with Patience such that I used to spend some time every day with her discussing various issues concerning her personal experiences due to her disability. This included how she eats at home, plays with friends, if she can dance and sing.

In addition to these efforts to get to know her, she also made some changes in the classroom:

> My main target was how to improve her handwriting. Firstly I improvised two infant chairs specifically for her. ... I did so because due to her disability, normal desks are too high for her. As a result, she used to stretch her hands and used a lot of energy to scribble something readable.

Just as the teacher in the first account observed the negative reactions of others when she welcomed Anton into her class, this teacher faced disapproval from her colleagues. Many of the teachers assumed that including disabled children is disruptive. The teachers who opted to be involved in the study, however, showed a high degree of commitment to the philosophy and practice of inclusion and a willingness to take risks.

The teachers' accounts challenge the deeply held belief that the barriers to the educational inclusion of disabled children are insurmountable in income-poor countries. This reflective writing process encouraged innovative thinking and developed confidence, providing evidence for the claim that teachers are able to do a great deal more than they realise (Ainscow 2008). By writing about and discussing their strategies, lessons learned and, perhaps most importantly, their mistakes, the teachers were able to access their own tacit knowledge and generate new, shared knowledge – all of this was possible with minimal outside support. The day-to-day commitment of a small number of teachers, who motivated over 20 of their colleagues to commit to a process of research, was critical. It is possible that one of the reasons for their success was the minimal presence of specialists – only two in the 17 schools involved in the study.

The study concluded that the lack of a shared understanding about inclusive education is a major barrier to progress; an understanding of context is critical in

determining the way inclusive education initiatives develop; teachers' lack of agency and ownership of the inclusive education process leads to a reliance on specialists (often non-existent!) whose knowledge of inclusion tends to be inadequate.

Although the study demonstrates that teachers have the necessary skills and knowledge to promote inclusive practices in education, a significant number of teachers chose not to become involved in the study and continued to teach in the way they had always done. The lead researcher still works as an in-service trainer in these schools, but many of the teachers have been moved to other schools by the government and so their collective expertise has been dissipated. Several teachers have since done consultancy work in neighbouring countries, enabling them to share their experience more widely. However, as I was finalising this paper an email arrived announcing the untimely death of one of the most inspirational Zambian teachers.[7] His death is a great setback and illustrates the fragility of such innovative community-based projects which rarely receive national guidance or international recognition.

Conclusion

I began by contrasting the exclusionary impact of the global communication divide on Southern countries with international efforts to achieve EFA. In suggesting a way forward for a more equitable EFA process which genuinely attempts to include disabled children I have challenged the perception that specialist expertise is essential. I have argued for engagement by practitioners in a process of critical reflection and questioning, using oral, written and visual methods, in order to generate locally relevant knowledge about attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers to inclusion. The teachers' accounts portray a picture of a far from ideal world, but they provide evidence that greater understanding of barriers can provide a focus for collaborative action.

The achievement of EFA is dependent upon teachers, but their training needs are largely overlooked and their voices are rarely heard (Moon 2006), yet governments trust them to enact national policy on a day-to-day basis. International agencies and national governments could make a greater commitment to the process of knowledge creation in Southern contexts in order to build capacity and demystify the concept of inclusive education.

The EFA global monitoring reports highlight many worrying trends: an alarming increase in orphans and the number of children growing up in child-headed households, limited access to pre-school education and rural poverty, with its isolation and inadequate numbers of qualified teachers (UNESCO 2006, 2008). Yet the form of inquiry used in our study has the potential to address these issues in a practical, affordable and sustainable way. Reflective writing can help teachers to become more self-critical while, at the same time, producing accounts of practice which engage with, rather than overlook, teachers' knowledge. Although this is a relatively low cost initiative, it relies, initially at least, on minimal outside intervention, an investment in good working relationships between outside facilitators and insider teacher-researchers and a commitment to participatory methodologies. However, this takes time. The electronic communication of the brave new world can enhance such studies, but the kind of human interaction required is more commonly associated with an older, more traditional world order.

Our experience of working with Zambian teachers to encourage more reflective practice raises important questions about teacher education, competing international

agendas, sustainability and the imbalance of power between outside facilitators from Northern universities and poorly resourced school communities in the South. Teacher education is not keeping pace with developments in policy and practice and teacher education methods and materials are often out of date. Governments in sub-Saharan Africa are under pressure from the international community to perform miracles with often diminishing resources and teachers are, in turn, faced with 'issue overload'. The promotion of inclusive education as an extension of special needs education by many donors makes it difficult for under-resourced education systems to develop more radical inclusive approaches to EFA. Yet the challenging of exclusionary teaching practices and the development of more inclusive pedagogy would benefit all learners. Although rural African communities are mostly cut off from EFA rhetoric and electronic communication, they have enormous human resources, which tend to be overlooked by agencies seeking to introduce western notions of special or inclusive education. A lack of political will, limited material resources and unclear national policies are barriers which can, arguably, be overcome through community action and by investing in teachers' knowledge.

Notes

1. I will use the term 'South' to denote income-poor countries in the world, which are also often referred to as 'developing' countries and sometimes as the 'majority world'.
2. The 'digital divide' is a term used to emphasise differences in access to electronic communication between countries. The 'communication divide' is a wider term which incorporates various forms of communication, such as telephones and postal systems. At the time of EENET's inception in 1997 access to telephones and computers was very limited in many Southern countries.
3. Funding was obtained from the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) to carry out this study entitled, 'Learning from difference: Understanding community initiatives to improve access to education', 2001–2003.
4. Basic schools cater for children aged 7 to 15 in Grades 1–9.
5. 'Child-to-Child' is an approach to health education and primary health care promoted by a worldwide network of health and education workers and coordinated by the Child-to-Child Trust, which is based in London. The objective of the Trust is to protect and preserve the health of communities worldwide by encouraging and enabling children and young people to play an active and responsible role in the health and development of themselves, other children and their families. See www.child-to-child.org/about/index.html (accessed 16 January 2009).
6. Participatory photography involves the taking of pictures by community members in order to tell their stories and inform policy-makers about issues of concern.
7. Patrick Kangwa was an invaluable member of the research team. He was a natural facilitator who was deeply committed to child rights.

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Publication 6

Miles, S. and Kaplan, I. (2005) Using images to promote reflection: An action research study in Zambia and Tanzania. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, **5** (2), 77–83

This publication reports on a study in which photographs taken in Zambia were shown to Tanzanian research participants to elicit their ideas and understanding of inclusive education and to produce contextually relevant knowledge (key principle 2). It puts forward an argument for the use of photo elicitation as part of action research in order to promote reflection on inclusive education, and to make research more accessible to people in Southern contexts where oral traditions predominate (key principle 3).

This study was pioneering in its use of images in research with education stakeholders in Southern contexts who have low levels of literacy. Although participatory photography has been used widely in Southern contexts, the use of images in action research on inclusion in sub-Saharan Africa is new.

Although it is difficult to portray abstract concepts and invisible impairments in photographs, this limitation was used to the researchers' advantage since it ensured that discussions about inclusion were as open as possible. The publication argues that textual clues should be used cautiously so that the impact of images is maximised. For example, a photograph of a small number of deaf children in a special unit was interpreted as a place where children were punished, and this led to a valuable discussion among the Tanzanian young people about the ill-treatment they received from some of their teachers. The picture of children seated in groups and on the floor stimulated a lively debate about appropriate forms of classroom organisation. The quality of the debates was superior to those generated simply through discussion, and so generated valuable knowledge as well as awareness of gaps in knowledge and understanding of the inclusive process.

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Using images to promote reflection: an action research study in Zambia and Tanzania

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Key words: inclusive education, image-based research, action research, Africa.

This paper focuses on the use of images to promote reflection and analysis of inclusive practices. The image-based work was set in the context of a two-year action research study, which took place in Tanzania and Zambia, 2001–2003, in collaboration with researchers from the Enabling Education Network (EENET), based at the University of Manchester's School of Education. This study, entitled, 'Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education' involved the use of a wide range of processes to promote reflection, analysis and documentation, including a range of different types of images. We reflect here on the learning, which took place among the researchers in all three countries in using images as a basis for reflection on inclusive education.

Setting the scene

School communities in Mpika, Zambia, and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania provided the context for the action research study within which this image-based work took place. Using images to promote reflection was one of a range of action research methods developed collaboratively by researchers linked to the Enabling Education Network (EENET)[1] at the University of Manchester and colleagues in Zambia and Tanzania. In this article we describe the overall context of the action research study entitled, 'Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education', and go on to reflect on the lessons learned from using images as part of an action research approach.

Despite international commitments to provide every child, youth and adult with educational opportunities through Education for All, children continue to be marginalised from educational opportunities (DFID, 2000a). Children from economically poor backgrounds, female children, children from nomadic and other minority ethnic families and those affected by HIV/AIDS all face marginalisation from, and within, education. Disabled children may belong to any one of these marginalised groups and tend to be disproportionately represented in the out-of-school population. Some children, such as those with multiple impairments, often experience greater marginalisation from services than others. By contrast children with unrecognised difficulties in learning tend to repeat classes and eventually drop out of school without ever having these difficulties recognised. As long as children from marginalised groups continue to be excluded from educational opportunities, the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education for all will not be achieved and the cycle of poverty and educational exclusion will continue.

Because there is no agreed international definition of inclusive education, it is defined here as being 'the process of increasing the presence, participation and achievement of all learners in their local schools, with particular reference to those groups of learners who are at risk of exclusion, marginalisation or underachievement' (Miles, Ainscow, Kangwa, Kisanji, Lewis, Mmbaga & Mumba, 2003, p. 12). Inclusive education is considered to be a central strategy in achieving social inclusion, and is closely linked to social justice, democracy and human rights. It is not only an issue of disabled children's access to mainstream education. The UK Department for International Development has asserted that: 'Inclusive education in a developing country implies the equal right of all children to the "educational package", however basic that package may be' (DFID 2000b, p. 12).

One of the key reasons for the establishment of EENET – the urgent need for documentation on inclusive education in the South – was also one of the main motivations for initiating the action research study. The long-term aim of the study was to improve the quality of information which the network shares, primarily between similar contexts in Southern countries, but increasingly between diverse situations. However, practitioners expressed their need for support in producing documentation about their work.

Delamont suggests that familiarity can be a problem in qualitative research. She suggests devising strategies for 'making the familiar bizarre, unusual and novel' so that 'the familiarity is thus thrown into relief by the unfamiliar'

[1] The Enabling Education Network (EENET) is a participatory international network that provides information about including all children in education, focusing on income-poor countries. The network makes easy-to-read information about inclusive education available through its website and newsletter, and by responding to individual enquiries.

(Delamont, 1992, p. 45). Providing practitioners with an opportunity to reflect on the way inclusive education is interpreted and implemented in another context can help to make the familiar unfamiliar and so bring new insights into routine work.

EENET has faced many difficulties in collecting written accounts. Supporting practitioners who work in the context of a predominantly oral culture to document their work has proved to be particularly difficult. In tackling this dilemma the work of Slim and Thomson (1993) was very helpful. Because practitioners are often over-loaded and lack confidence in their writing abilities, they tend not to realise that their stories will be of value to others working in similar cultural contexts, where material resources are limited and class sizes are large – classes of over 50 learners are not uncommon.

Researching inclusion

The main aim of this collaborative action research study was to explore appropriate and sustainable ways of building the capacity of key stakeholders in education to reflect, analyse and document their experience of promoting inclusive education. By developing analytical and writing skills, the study indirectly aimed to build the research capacity of education practitioners (EENET, 2000).

Dissemination was a central strategy in the study because this is an integral part of EENET's day-to-day work. EENET has inspired practitioners in Southern contexts to promote more inclusive practices through the dissemination of contextually and culturally relevant information (Miles, 2002). The study involved an investigation of a process designed to facilitate improved discussion and sharing of ideas on inclusive education in Southern contexts. It is a process, we believe, that can help teachers, parents and children themselves to move away from a reliance on external help to conduct formal research and produce documents. By taking a more active role in research projects, they can make a more informed contribution to the development of inclusive practices in their own school communities.

The research approach adopted involved a combination of collaborative inquiry methods, as used in English schools (Ainscow, Howes, Farrell & Frankham, 2003; Reason & Rowan, 1981), and Participatory Learning and Action, as practised primarily in Southern countries (Chambers, 1999). This combined approach involved both group processes and visual methods of recording.

In Tanzania the study focused on five primary schools and one special school in Dar es Salaam, which had all been designated as pilot inclusive education schools by the Ministry of Education. In Zambia 12 primary and basic schools in the Mpika area were involved in the study, including two schools which had special units attached. In both countries there was already some experience of implementing inclusive practices – with a particular emphasis on disabled children and those identified as having special needs.

The study was exploratory, short-term and small-scale. It was also carried out on a very low budget in each country – approximately £10 000 in each country over two years. A deliberate effort was made to support a sustainable approach to action research. The action research methodology used in the study was unusual in that it was the basis of the intervention in each of the contexts, and, at the same time, the means of collecting and engaging with evidence in relation to the overall research questions. The study assessed the extent to which the development of analytical and writing skills can lead to a process of reflection and evaluation, and to changes towards more inclusive practice in schools and communities. The following quote from the final research report highlights the importance of linking research with practice:

> 'It has generally been assumed that the gap between research and practice is a result of inadequate dissemination strategies. The implication being that educational research *does* speak to issues of practice, if only the right people would listen. Yet research findings will continue to be ignored, regardless of how well they are communicated, because they by-pass the ways in which practitioners formulate the problems they face and the constraints within which they have to work. The methodology used in this study required a newly formed group of stakeholders to engage in a search for a common agenda to guide their enquiries and establish ways of working that enabled them to analyse their existing experience, and collect and find meaning in different types of information. Such an approach aims to overcome the traditional gap between research and practice' (Miles et al., 2003, p. 17).

Using photography

The use of images as part of this study has been experimental throughout. Our ideas about the purpose and role of images in action research developed mid-way through the project when their potential became clearer. The action research process grew organically and was not laid out as a set of prescriptive instructions and actions. The research facilitators were unfamiliar with image-based work and needed time to develop their skills and capacity during the course of the study.

Prosser acknowledges the fact that the use of images in educational research is relatively new in the field of qualitative research. As a result 'it lacks a history of accepted ethical practice or a range of theoretical positions on which to base ethical judgements' (Prosser, 2000, p. 116). Instead of being entirely pre-conceived, our own ethical stance has evolved as we engage with this particular form of image-based research. Initially we were very concerned about child protection issues and were careful to conceal the identities of individual children. However, over time, more subtle ethical dilemmas emerged such as the desire of participants for their identity to be known, rather than anonymised. These ethical issues continue to be debated in our research team.

Our use of photography began in a small way when we gave the Zambian facilitator a 35 mm camera with the sole purpose of capturing aspects of the research process visually. The main idea at this point was to find ways of working effectively in an oral culture and so avoid a reliance on writing and text-based forms of representation. The research facilitators did not provide any specific instructions on how the camera should be used, other than to record the action research process. The camera was used both by the Zambian research team and by the school children, and the photographs that were taken give a flavour of school and community life in Mpika. However, the quality and content of the photographs varied. The adults mostly took staged and formal shots because few people possess cameras and photography tends to be seen as a way of formalized recording of identity, rather than as a form of art or expression. The children, by contrast, took more action shots, including close-up pictures of other children working together in groups. These photos gave the impression that the children were using the camera in a different way, and being more experimental with this new form of expression.

A research facilitator took a set of over 200 digital photographs on a visit to Zambia, in July 2002. Great care was taken not to take close-up photographs in order not to intrude, and to be conscious of child protection issues. Much effort was also made to take natural, rather than posed shots. It is important to acknowledge the difference in the approach adopted by a person who has had over two decades of experience in taking photos and in appreciating their impact, in contrast to those who are new to photography.

A decision was taken midway through the study to use photographs to elicit responses in focus groups and during workshops. This decision was inspired by recent literature on photo elicitation and image-based research (e.g., Prosser, 1998). 'Photo elicitation' involves using photographs to elicit responses as part of research interviews, and so far, nearly all elicitation research has been based on photographs (Harper, 2002).

The research facilitators in the UK selected pairs of digital photographs. The photographs were printed in black and white in size A4 paper for use in the field. Although the photographs have been reprinted in this article, a brief written summary of each photo has also been included for the benefit of readers who are blind or who have low vision.

This set of three pairs of photographs represents some of the images that were sent to Tanzania as a suggested activity for the Dar es Salaam writing workshops. The aim was to encourage research participants to reflect on their own situations using the photographs from Zambia as a stimulus.

The photographs were given to focus groups of children, parents and teachers, who were asked to respond to the following questions, prepared by the research facilitators in Tanzania:

- What do you see in each pair of photographs?
- What information on inclusive education can you gather from each pair?
- Brainstorm, and then discuss the main features of each pair.
- List the agreed features.
- Group the features into main categories. (These may be the same as before or there may be additional ones.)
- Which pictures reflect practices in your school? Discuss.

The photographs provoked a great deal of excitement in the group discussions and comments included:

- 'Our school is not like this.'
- 'This classroom is not inclusive – it is too crowded.'
- 'We do not sit in groups like this.'

The photographs did not lead to any discussions on the particular issues related to disabled children in inclusive education because the deaf children and those with mild learning difficulties could not be identified. However the images did provoke substantial debate, which was recorded and later grouped, into the following three themes that are central to the development of inclusive education, in its broadest sense:

Image 1: (a) A neat and tidy concrete school building arranged around a courtyard planted with shrubs and grass; (b) A rural school with a thatched roof and no walls constructed by villagers

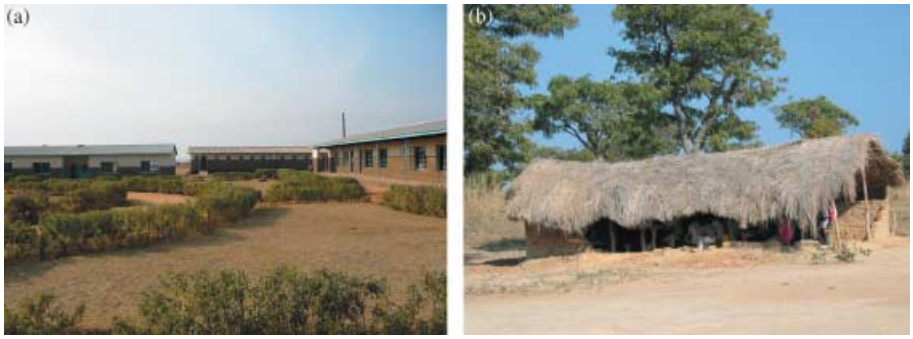

Image 2: (a) A girls' class organised into groups; (b) A mixed class where half of the learners are seated on the floor in groups

Image 3: (a) A class organised in groups with an 'albino' boy seated with his peers; (b) A class of seven learners, two of whom are sitting alone in a bare classroom which has many empty desks. The children are deaf and being educated in a special unit, but this can not be seen from the photograph

- school environments (both outside and inside the classroom)
- teaching methodology and training
- collaboration, including listening to children's voices

Each focus group was asked to draw a mind map based on one of the themes. Most groups of teachers and parents chose to focus on the environment, whereas most groups of learners worked on teaching methodology.

The Tanzanian facilitators were present in Zambia when the photographs were taken, and so would have been able to fill in any information gaps for the participants as they studied them. However, they chose not to do so. It was also decided not to attach captions to the photographs. This was done to ensure a more open discussion, based on the participants' reactions to the photographs, not on what they were told the photograph might depict.

For example, the participants made some interesting responses to the second image in the 'disability' pair of photographs. The photograph of the deaf children in their special unit had been chosen to stimulate discussion about units and their role in promoting or preventing inclusion. Although there was no caption explaining that the photo was taken in a unit, the research participants' comments show that the picture was still useful in stimulating thoughts on inclusion and exclusion in classroom practice:

Teachers: 'Some children are working in a group, two others are sitting separately on their own with no activity; this class is not inclusive.'
Parents: 'A very small class; children working on their own.'
Learners: 'It looks like some children have been punished to sit alone; they may be naughty.'

The content of the discussion would have been quite different if it had been explained that these learners were deaf, and were being educated separately. It would then have been possible to discuss the reason for the small numbers of children, and questions may have been asked about the lack of hearing aids, the learner who was sitting alone, and the pros and cons of special units.

The decision not to use captions to explain the images was in keeping with the open, rather than closed, approach to asking questions in the study as a whole, and to encourage as broad a discussion as possible about the concept of inclusion, and the impact of exclusion. However, if the

workshop facilitators had wanted to encourage a more focused discussion about the specific issues relating to female children, for example, then a set of captions giving information about the particular contexts shown in some of the photos might have facilitated this discussion. One of the photos showed an all-girls class. Such classes have been introduced in some schools in Zambia in an attempt to overcome the barriers to academic achievement that many girls face, possibly as a result of them being in mixed classes. The lack of a caption explaining the picture, however, meant that the issue of all-girl classes and gender issues in the classroom were not discussed by the participants who were considering the image.

Captions can be useful in highlighting a particular aspect or understanding about what is depicted in a photograph and that photograph's context, however it would be misleading to consider a caption being 'proof' as necessarily a definitive statement about a photograph. Captions, as any other claims about, or readings of, a photograph need to be considered cautiously and not taken for granted as truth.

Methodologically, it made sense to use the images to stimulate an open discussion about inclusion (Banks, 1998). The use of photos to elicit responses enabled a discussion to take place that went beyond disability, which is so often a central concern in the inclusive education debate. It also gave the facilitators a good idea of the way the research participants were thinking about the issue, and so enabled them to begin to analyse their existing ideas and experience. A great deal was achieved in a relatively short amount of time within a one-day workshop which involved a range of other related activities. In a teacher development context, this exercise could be used to great effect to address the specific issues related to the challenge of implementing inclusion, but more time would have to be allowed to ensure that the issues could be discussed thoroughly.

Our long-term plan is to develop this image-based approach to practitioner-led action research and to understand better how this community uses photography. Thus it will be helpful to consider how they have viewed photography historically. We are aware that so-called 'disposable' cameras have been used to good effect in visual research (e.g., Karlsson, 2001; Schratz & Steiner-Löffler, 1998). However, we have decided against using a form of technology which can be thrown away, and instead propose to use low-cost digital and re-usable 35 mm cameras as part of a more sustainable approach to the capacity building of teachers in Zambia. This is essentially an ethical and a moral decision to discourage a 'throw-away' mentality and, instead, to support the development of sustainable information technology and photography skills.

Stimulating discussion about classroom organisation

Every photograph contains many hidden facts and stories beyond the immediately obvious. Photographs can therefore be used by research facilitators to stimulate rich debate and sharing of information. The photographs in this article illustrate ways in which classroom spaces have been re-organised to enable learning to be more participatory. They demonstrate group teaching and flexible seating. The type and arrangement of seating in a classroom can be a physical barrier to learning and participation, but teaching and learning could be more child-centred, flexible and inclusive of diverse learning needs, if the seating arrangements were more adaptable.

Advising teachers through a written training manual to be 'flexible about seating' may not be very helpful if the teachers have only ever experienced teaching (and their own student life) in classrooms arranged in rows. How do you create a picture in your mind of something you have never seen? Yet teachers who have very inflexible attitudes to classroom seating pose a major barrier to inclusive learning. Mmbaga (2002), for example, in an in-depth ethnographic study in a Tanzanian primary school, has documented the way teachers organise their classrooms according to ability. This enabled the teachers to concentrate on those learners most likely to succeed, and to overlook those considered to be 'slow learners' and those with visual impairments. Using images to promote discussion about this issue may be a more constructive way to move practice forward than producing written guidance on how to implement inclusive education.

The photographs from Mpika provided education practitioners with a visual example of ways in which classrooms can be arranged differently, even when there are limited material resources, such as desks. The photographs were used in the Tanzanian workshops to show participants how inclusive education is being interpreted in Zambia, in a very similar context to their own. Providing the workshop participants with clear visual examples of classrooms, gave them an opportunity to understand better what 'flexible seating' might mean, and gain a starting point for their own ideas and discussions.

The reactions of some of the Tanzanian participants to these photos, however, showed that they regarded the fact that the children were seated in groups, rather than in rows, as strange and different. They needed additional explanations to help them understand why the classrooms were arranged in this way, and that this was a deliberate strategy for inclusive teaching. The photos alone were not sufficient stimuli to promote discussion about these fundamental issues related to inclusion. A targeted use of captions may have better enabled a discussion to take place about the benefits of child-centred approaches to teaching and learning, as the reasons behind group seating would have been explained.

In this instance the facilitators chose not to supplement the images with their own descriptions of what the photographs were showing – they preferred to allow a free and unbiased discussion. However, an alternative approach would be for the workshop facilitators to offer some simple descriptions of the picture and also bring in additional facts during the

course of the discussion. This would enable the participants to move on to fresh angles of discussion, once they had run out of things to say in response to their initial reactions to the pictures, and at the same time begin the process of sharing ideas from other similar contexts.

For example, the fact that some teachers in Mpika insist that children take it in turns to sit on the floor could be introduced to open up discussions around whether uncomfortable seating is a cause of inequality in the classroom or a reason for dropping out of class. Examples of other seating arrangements which may be more familiar to many teachers could be debated. For example, should children with visual or hearing impairments be made to sit together at the front of the class, and is this the most advantageous and most inclusive seating arrangement? Impressions gained of inclusive practice from the Mpika photographs could then be compared to alternative seating arrangements and their potential impact on inclusion.

Engaging with images

Because the concept of inclusion has been the focus of so much controversy and disagreement internationally, particularly in relation to meeting the educational needs of disabled children, it was important that the Zambian and Tanzanian research participants had the opportunity to reflect on what the concept meant in their context. Image-based reflection was one of the most promising methods used in this study to enable participants to reflect on their understanding and experience, and begin to conceptualise key aspects of inclusive education.

An image-based approach can be helpful in making research more accessible to a wider range of participants whatever their level of formal education or literacy. Images can play an important role in stimulating people to think about and communicate their own experience. Presenting research findings in a relevant and accessible way should be an integral part of the research process and images can play an important part in this.

However, the use of images is not straightforward and images used in the research process can be problematic when considered too literally. Inclusion is concerned with equity, social justice and human rights, capturing and conveying an image of an inclusive classroom, or an inclusive society, is extremely difficult. Such abstract concepts cannot easily be visualised or portrayed through images. The more practical classroom-based methods of promoting inclusion include child-centred teaching and catering to the individual needs of children who have impairments which affect their learning. In some cases these methods can be depicted in images and used to promote reflection about the meaning of inclusive education.

There are some inherent and well-acknowledged difficulties in using images and photographs to show that disabled children are included within a group. Disability and so-called special needs are not always visible, and so it is often the children's assistive devices that provide the clue. Pictures of children using wheelchairs, crutches, white sticks and dark glasses are most commonly used to indicate that disabled children are present – but this does not mean that they are participating or achieving in the educational context. Also, in countries where very few assistive devices exist, it is more difficult to capture such literal imagery. Besides, the vast majority of children experiencing difficulties in school cannot be visually identified as 'different' from their peers because their learning difficulties, or the causes of their learning difficulties, cannot necessarily be seen.

Those images that are already in use to promote inclusion (such as posters created by inclusive education programmes), mostly include drawings or photographs of children using wheelchairs. While this may demonstrate that physically disabled children are welcome in the school, it also conveys the message that inclusive education is just about disability, and that disability is just about physical difficulties (Ralph, 1989).

Representing potential barriers to learning and participation visually is also not an easy task. For example, how can an image portray whether girls have equal access to the educational process and are fairly treated? Harsh physical punishments given by teachers, inflexible curricula, undemocratic practices in classrooms, rigid teaching methodology and the lack of mother tongue teaching are some examples of educational barriers affecting large numbers of children in many countries in the world. Research participants' perspectives need to be discussed and documented in a variety of ways. Although images can play a useful role in presenting these perspectives, we would argue that they are best used in combination with written, and other forms of, documentation.

Conclusion

From the evidence of this small study we have been able to demonstrate the effectiveness of using images to stimulate reflection. Photo elicitation methods of engaging research participants in reflecting on their *existing experiences*, using images of familiar teaching and learning environments, proved to be both immediate and thought-provoking. It was also a way in which people with very different types of knowledge, skills and perspectives could think more deeply about their understanding and experience of inclusive education as we set out to explore through our first research question.

One of the main issues to emerge from the photo elicitation exercise was the relationship between the use of classroom space and inclusive practice. The teachers' reactions of surprise to the organisation of the classroom into groups rather than into rows indicated that their training so far in promoting inclusive practice had not raised the possibility of introducing change in the overall management of the classroom. The use of photo elicitation methods to stimulate a discussion on the use of classroom space and teaching methodology attempted to break

away from the more traditional ways of stimulating such discussions.

We referred earlier to the emerging and unresolved ethical considerations relevant to the use of images in educational research. Many of the ethical issues we have raised in this article, such as child protection, anonymity and sustainable approaches to capacity building, have relevance beyond image-based action research. For instance, we see a clear link between issues of power, control and ownership of research and the research process, and the right of participants to have access to the process, the findings and the products (in this case the images).

From our limited experience in using images to promote reflection, it appears that they can be used as part of action research to bridge the gap between oral and literacy-based cultures. This image-based approach can also help to communicate ideas in contexts where a range of different languages are used, and, potentially, this helps make research accessible to people who have learning difficulties. Our research has led us to conclude that images can be a relevant and accessible form of engagement, particularly in the context of oral cultures.

Views expressed by the contributors to this journal are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies and opinions either of the authorities by whom they are employed or of NASEN.

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Publications

Part II

Publication A

EENET (2007) *Enabling Education*, Issue 11. Manchester: EENET

'Enabling Education' is EENET's annual newsletter. It presents accessible information written by, and about, individuals and organisations with experience of marginalisation from education. These contextualised accounts demonstrate how communities can respond to educational exclusion in a variety of contexts (key principle 4). Each issue aims to include accounts written by individuals, parents, teachers, teacher trainers and policy makers. The style is non-academic, and the language is carefully edited to ensure clarity and ease of translation, without losing the author's voice. It is deliberately conversational, inviting comment and critique.

This issue of the newsletter contains a smaller number of articles than usual written by Southern authors – six in total – but from an interesting range of countries: Burkina Faso, Liberia and Nigeria in sub-Saharan Africa; as well as Afghanistan, Brazil, Burma, England and Indonesia. It also contains a summary of the EENET evaluation; an overview of the strategic plan; and an article about inclusive networking relevant to this thesis. It presents a view of inclusive education from North and South, from an individual and a policy perspective, and it discusses some challenging issues of diversity in education, such as child marriage and delivering teacher education to a minority ethnic group in Burma in the context of intense conflict.

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

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

Enabling Education

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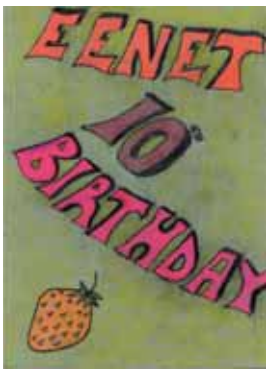

www.eenet.org.uk

Anniversary Issue

EENET's 10th Birthday

EENET
Enabling Education Network

Contents

Editors:
Ingrid Lewis and Susie Miles

EENET news – 10th anniversary

Anniversary events

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

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

New EENET resources for the anniversary year

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

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

The past and the future

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

Cover images:

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

Editorial

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Danladi Mamman

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

Response to the problem

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

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

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

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

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

Moving forward – young people suggest action

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

Educate parents

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

Enforce laws

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

Support returning girls

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

Encourage husbands to support their wives' education

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

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

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

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

Peer support

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

Free education

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

Students from schools involved in GCEN's research

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

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

Change government policy

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

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

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

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

Promoting inclusion through drama and art, Burkina Faso

Noëlie Gansoré

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

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

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

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

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

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

For instance, the play depicted:

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

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

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

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

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

Global Action Week for Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

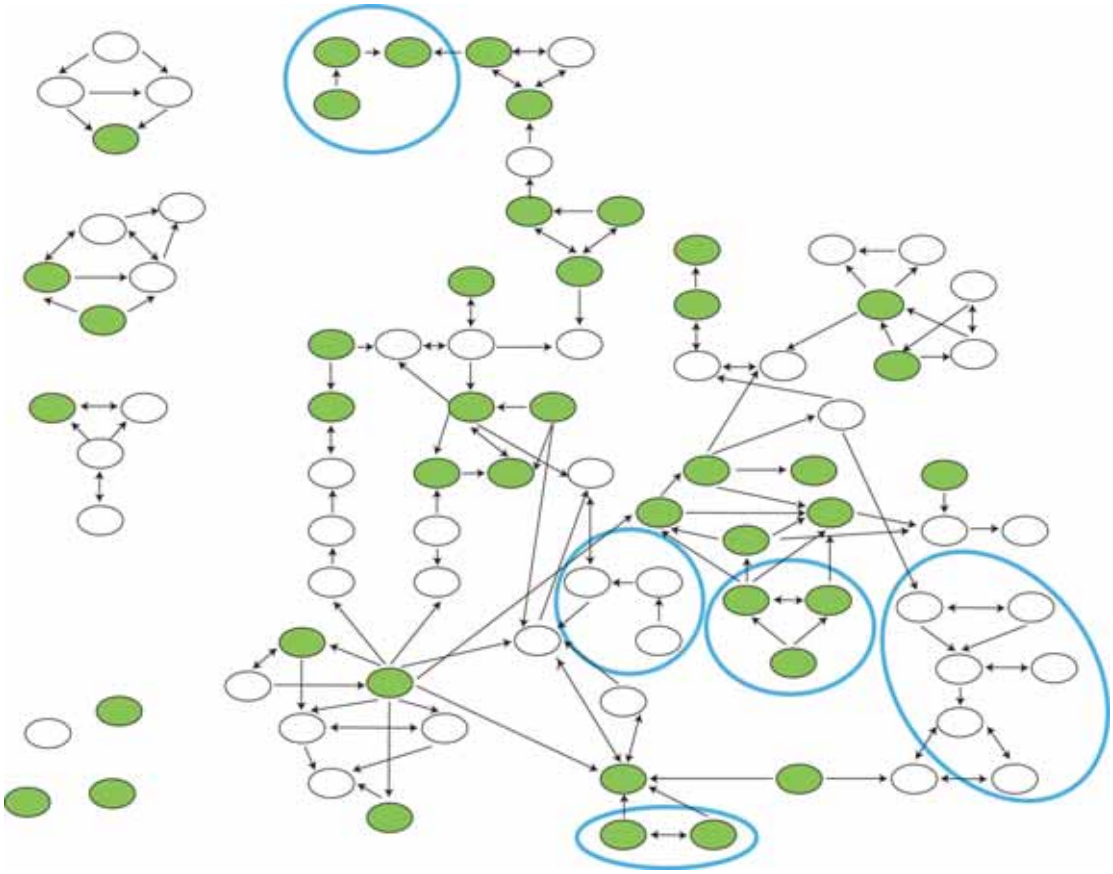
Through this school-based inquiry research project we were able to promote pupil voice activities and help the school take forward its action research.

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

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

Sociogram of Year Group 1 & 2

(distinction between Caucasian and non-Caucasian students)



What is school-based inquiry?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Using students' ideas to make teaching more inclusive, Brazil

Windyz Ferreira and Mel Ainscow

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

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

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

For example, students commented:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inclusive education: from my perspective

Lucia Bellini

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inclusive private education, Thailand

Sorayot Phanayanggoor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Evaluating EENET

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

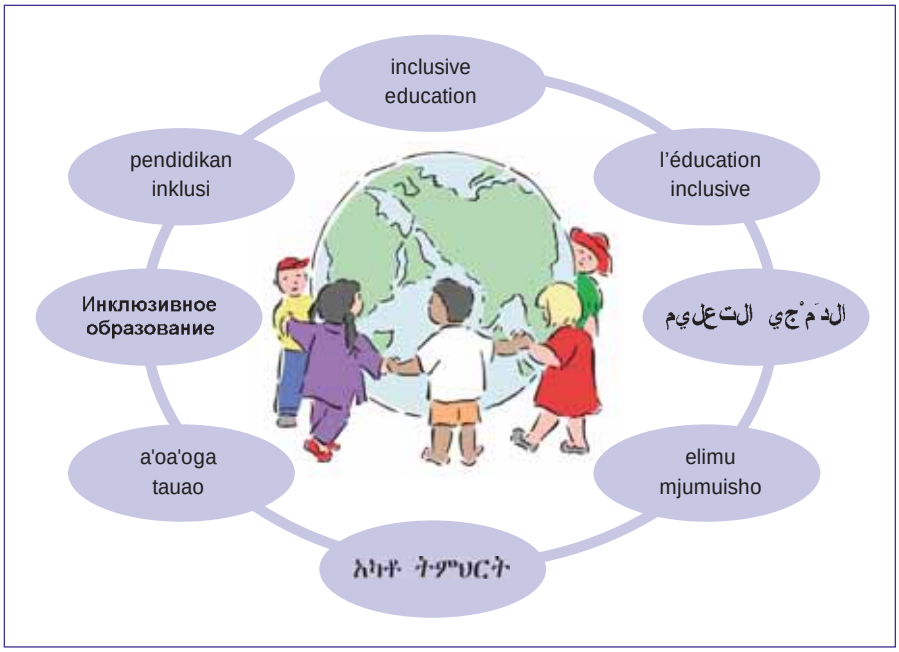
EENET has sought to raise the profile of inclusive education work in the South and to push against the mainstream view of development. It insists on being a network with an open and equal relationship with the South. It facilitates but refuses to direct or dictate. It has worked, instead, to establish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

Evaluation activities

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

Evaluation of EENET users' views focused on

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



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

EENET's strengths

The evaluation showed that EENET has:

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

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

Summary of recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Evaluation findings showed that EENET should provide

More analysis

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

More action research

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

More face-to-face interaction

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

The evaluation highlighted two very valuable things about EENET

The medium is the message

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

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

Core principles

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

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

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

EENET: looking to the future

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

Creation of the plan

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

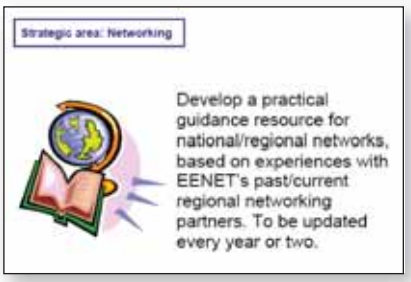
In January 2007 we held a 10th anniversary seminar in London. Participants were asked to comment on a draft of the strategic plan. However, rather than asking them to read a document, we gave them picture cards (some of the 30 cards are shown here).

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

Our plan

Networking

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

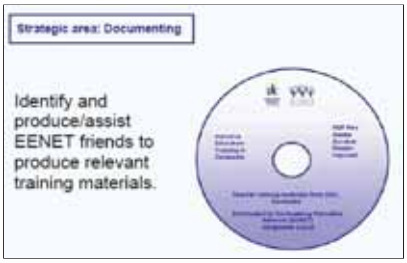


- continue to prioritise the development of our main networking tools – the newsletter and website
- redesign the website in line with feedback from the evaluation
- support regional networks with their planning
- make at least one support visit to a regional network each year
- manage an email discussion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

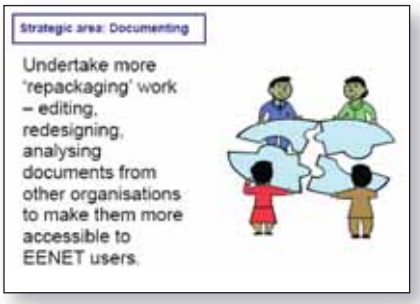
Documenting

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

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



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



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

Influencing

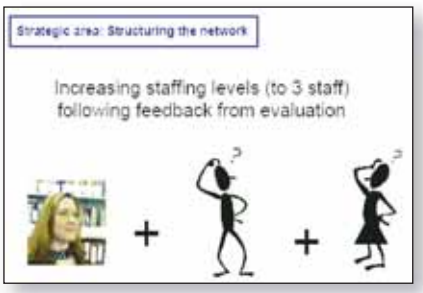
"We will use EENET's grassroots knowledge, skills and experience to add value through influencing national and international policy-makers and donor agencies."

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

Structuring the network

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

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



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

What do you think?

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

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

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Swimming upstream

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

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

Inclusive

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

Development

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

Partnerships and networks

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

General principles of an inclusive network

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

Learning from the South, and South-South sharing

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

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

Evaluating networks

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

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

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

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

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

Leadership
- e.g. Where is leadership located?

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

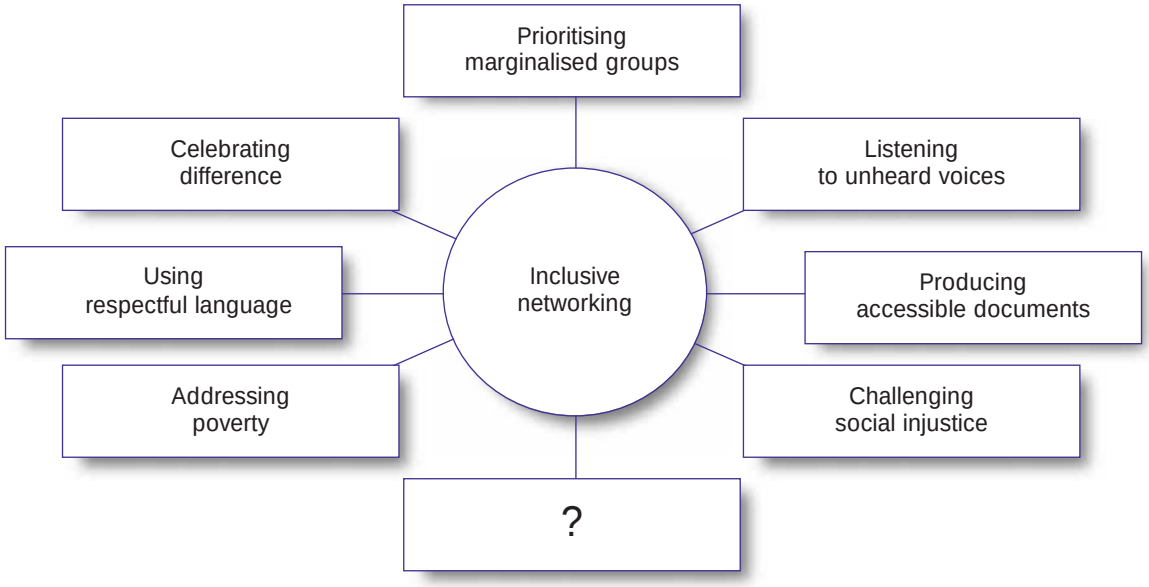
Diversity and dynamism
- e.g. How easy is it for members to contribute their ideas and follow through on them?

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

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

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

Creating conversations: inclusive networking



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

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

Teacher training in conflict situations: Karen State, Burma

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

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

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

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

Education Leader Mutraw District, Karen State

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

KTTC Teacher

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

2nd Year KTTC Student

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

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

Battalion Leader, Karen National Defence Organisation

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

Mobile Teacher Trainers

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

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

Mobile Teacher Trainer Students

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

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

KTWG Co-ordinators

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parents are the first teachers

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

Parents and teachers supporting each other

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

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

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

Fathers learning sign language, Nyadire, Kenya

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

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

International Deaf Children's Society

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

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

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

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Supporting inclusive education in Afghanistan – a father's story

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inclusive school design, Indonesia

Yusep Trimulyana is the head teacher of SLB Pembina NTB, a special school and inclusive education resource centre on the island of Lombok, Indonesia. Yusep's school needed a new library. But instead of asking the government to build it for them, Yusep believed the school could take charge of the design and create a building which is accessible and suits the needs of students and teachers.

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

Yusep Trimulyana – head teacher

What were the reasons for building this new library?

We are trying to build a new library in the local style where we use a berugaq…a kind of traditional gazebo which is very common in Lombok. A berugaq provides a raised and shaded platform on which people like to sit and chat and do lots of things. Many people would prefer to spend their time in the berugaq rather than indoors. So we thought we can combine the modern building with a traditional building. We hope a design like this will help make it easier for children to enjoy to read and learn in the library.

A popular berugaq style gazebo on the school grounds

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

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

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

I used an 'open source' software programme called 'Sketch Up' (see: www.sketchup.com) which is freely available to anyone with Internet access. The software is not very difficult to use. It's very practical. I discussed the design with the teachers and incorporated their ideas about the colour, the size and other things. We have also consulted some of the children about the design. We haven't asked all of the children directly, but we have tried to take account of their needs in the planning of the building. Many of our students have disabilities which make communication difficult. It wasn't possible to involve all of them directly in the planning because of the difficulties of communication, but we have tried to understand what they need.

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

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

The new library under construction

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

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

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

How have you convinced the government to fund this project?

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

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

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

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

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

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

A process of inclusive school design gives members of a school community a feeling of pride and ownership of their school. It can also lead to the creation of school spaces which are appropriate, accessible and pleasant, enhancing learning and participation. This can provide an opportunity to fit a school more effectively with its community, for example by incorporating elements of local culture and art into the buildings and grounds. Easy-to-use software that can be downloaded for free from the Internet, can make this process fun and accessible.

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Making pictorial learning aids, Liberia

Bob Linney and Petra Röhr-Rouendaal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bob and Petra are graphic artists and facilitators with the group Health Images, which provides training for people who want to make and use participatory, people-centred pictorial learning aids for formal and informal learning.
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The first UN convention of the millennium: inclusive education is a right!

Richard Rieser

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

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

It is a historic document - the first UN Convention:

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

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

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

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

Article 24 – Education

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

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

The following section of the article allows for the possibility of segregated education for children with sensory impairments: "Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf and deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development" (Art 24 3c).

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

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

What is significant about Article 24?

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

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

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Regional news

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

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

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

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

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

East Africa

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

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

Asia

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

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

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

Contact:

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

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

EENET Asia draft strategic plan

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

Objectives

1. Enrich current understanding

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

2. Networking

- inspire and support partnerships and information sharing between regional and national education stakeholders
- facilitate networking between different initiatives and programmes to encourage increased collaboration
- moderate online discussions (in English and later other languages) on different topics related to inclusive and child-friendly education. These discussions will also be published in the EENET Asia Newsletters and online
- work with, learn from and support EENET-affiliated networks in other parts of the world.

3. Documenting

- invite stories on inclusive and child-friendly practices from children, parents, teachers and all others involved in education
- invite stories on innovative pre- and in-service teacher education and training programmes
- publish information about inclusive and child-friendly policies from throughout Asia
- facilitate capacity building among children, parents, teachers and others involved in education to help them write about their experiences, e.g. through small workshops and individual guidance and coaching
- ensure that all documentation is accessible and reader-friendly, as most readers will have English as their second or third language
- encourage translations of all EENET and EENET Asia publications into different languages used in the region
- invite contributors to write articles in their own language
- ensure that publications are available in Braille and that online versions are compatible with screen-reader software
- publish stories that invite reflection, and that inspire action and change of practice towards inclusive, child-friendly education
- collaborate with other publications related to inclusive and child-friendly education, child/human rights as well as a right-based approach to education
- identify and collect information about training materials and research done in Asia that could be redesigned, edited and promoted for wider use
- promote useful free publications
- promote video and audio materials.

4. Influencing

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

Join us!

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

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

Your letters/emails

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

Using EENET and ISEC materials in Namibia

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

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

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

Extract from Joseph's inclusive education flyer

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

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

Contact us, contact each other!

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

So, please contact us if:

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

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

Responding to learner diversity in the European Union

Responding to Student Diversity

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

Creating the handbook

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Manchester Inclusion Standard

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Useful publications

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

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

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

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

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

Practising Gender Equality in Education
Sheila Aikman and Elaine Unterhalter, Oxfam, 2007
This book looks at key challenges in achieving gender equality in education and the need to work towards an equitable education system which allows all individuals, irrespective of gender, to develop their potential.
Price: £12.95
Available from:
BEBC
PO Box 1496
Parkstone
Dorset BH12 3YD
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1202 712933
Fax: +44 (0) 1202 712930
Email: oxfam@bebc.co.uk

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

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

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

MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

Publication B

Miles, S. (1999) Creating conversations: The evolution of the Enabling Education Network (EENET). In E. Stone (ed) *Disability and Development in the Majority World*. Leeds: The Disability Press

This is the first formally published account of the rationale for the development of EENET and its underlying values and principles. It sets out EENET's editorial policy and its aim to grow slowly and sustainably. The decision to regionalise, rather than decentralise, is discussed as a deliberate effort to encourage regional groups to take full responsibility for networking and not look to Manchester as the centre.

The publication highlights major networking challenges and dilemmas such as: balancing the increasingly high-tech forms of electronic communication with the needs of people living in predominantly oral traditions (key principle 3); how to encourage South-South conversation; how to avoid Northern domination of the network. The publication stresses the importance of documenting experience in order to fill information gaps and avoiding duplication. The role of EENET in 'making the familiar unfamiliar' is emphasised through its commitment to sharing experiences through story telling (key principle 1). Two short vignettes about individuals in South Africa and Portugal illustrate the kind of information sharing and conversations that have taken place at country level. The danger of transplanting educational practices across cultures is highlighted.

CHAPTER 6

Creating Conversations: The evolution of the Enabling Education Network

Susie Miles

INTRODUCTION

The Enabling Education Network (EENET) was set up to establish an information-sharing network to support and promote the inclusion of marginalised groups in education worldwide. EENET aims to provide a networking opportunity for those involved in educational programmes which enable individuals to participate in, and contribute towards, an inclusive society – where gender, poverty, ethnicity, class, behaviour, HIV and TB status, and disability do not mean exclusion; and where education is not confined to schools.

In this chapter the concept of inclusive education and current international trends towards promoting inclusive education policies are discussed. The rationale for establishing EENET, the key players and the underlying values and principles are then outlined. This is followed by an account of EENET's

activities in its first year of existence and a discussion of the type of network EENET aspires to be. Two examples of the kind of networking which has already taken place are provided; these also illustrate the way in which responsibility for information dissemination can be devolved to key partner organisations. Finally, some of the main challenges facing EENET are discussed.

TRANSITIONS FROM SEGREGATION TOWARDS INCLUSION

In countries of the industrialised North, the dominant approach to children and adults with impairments has been the provision of expensive, segregated and institutionalised provision for separate categories (with categorisation based primarily on impairment). In the last two decades, however, large numbers of children have been integrated into their local schools. Sadly, the successes of integration remain limited in Britain and elsewhere in the North. A large proportion of children continue to be marginalised within and from education systems, or, at best, accepted on a conditional basis ... conditional on the extent to which the child adapts to the school. Meanwhile, a significant minority of disabled children continue to be educated in separate, segregated provision. Attempts to adopt a more inclusive policy have generally been hampered by a long legacy of exclusion, which ties up resources and creates enormous bureaucratic and attitudinal obstacles to the process of inclusion.

The concept of "inclusion", as distinct from "integration", describes a process whereby schools, education structures, systems and methodologies are required (and enabled) to change so that they can cater to the individual needs of *all* children, including all disabled children. By contrast, the focus of "integrated" education is on disabled children who are brought into mainstream schools. In integrated education, adjustments are made to the individual child so that s/he fits into the particular school. By implication and with a degree of inevitability, the regular school stays the same.

The distinction between these two concepts of inclusive and integrated education is absolutely critical. In essence, the distinction is analogous to that between the medical (individual) model of disability and the social model of disability. The focus on "fixing" the individual is replaced by an attempt to change the environment and (in the case of education) to change the context

in which children are expected to learn. The following definition of inclusive education was developed for a seminar held in Agra, India (IDDC 1998).

Inclusive education:

- Acknowledges that all children can learn;
- Acknowledges and respects differences in children: age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV and TB status, etc.;
- Enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children;
- Is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society;
- Is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving (IDDC 1998).

It is important to make clear that promoting inclusive education does not deny the diversity of children's needs and abilities in learning. Certainly, including disabled children in mainstream schools and trying to get away from the distinction between so-called "normal" and "disabled" children (so characteristic of segregated educational provision) is important. But a denial of the differences would be naïve and dangerous. Many, including EENET, are aware of the need to maintain a balance between working towards better education for all children and recognising the very real life challenges which face severely disabled children. Individual differences should be recognised and celebrated as part of the inclusion process. Support and encouragement for self-help groups and the involvement of positive adult role-models, ex-pupils and children themselves in the education process are essential for the promotion of positive identity in disabled children and other marginalised groups. We need to move towards a more holistic view of disability to promote a stronger understanding of inclusion.

In countries of the South, where there has been relatively little investment in segregated educational provision for disabled children, inclusive education programmes tend to be more successful. In fact, wealthier nations have arguably created greater, more insurmountable obstacles to inclusion because of their relatively vast material resources. In the South, by contrast, the rehabilitation and special needs industry is much smaller and less powerful, and human resources can be harnessed to bring about inclusion. Here, implementation of inclusive education may simply involve the positive reinforcement of well-established, community-based and inclusive attitudes and practices.

In some areas, it would never even occur to teachers working in remote rural areas that a child disabled by polio, for example, should be educated anywhere other than the local school. This has been described as "casual integration" by Miles (1989). This form of casual integration is clearly widespread and deserves to be recognised and documented. However, casual integration tends to happen on an *ad hoc* and individual basis, rarely impacting on the system as a whole. Thus, even where casual integration is evident, it remains likely that many children will continue to be excluded unless efforts are made to include them.

In both North and South, inclusive education is a dynamic process which is still evolving. The concept inevitably means different things to different people. Some of those differences will depend on the context and stage of development in a particular setting. Problems also arise in language and translation: in many countries it may be difficult to find appropriate and different words for integration and inclusion, thus making it harder to differentiate clearly between the two concepts. Meanwhile, many practitioners may not be aware of the theoretical analysis and thinking that underpins the two concepts. This is not to say that these concepts have limited use. They can and have proved useful to many individuals (professionals and non-professionals, western and non-western) who are engaged in re-thinking the "educational task". The key to effective re-thinking in line with an inclusive approach is to ask: "How can we prepare schools so that they can become places that deliberately reach out to all children?" (EENET 1997).

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

Most large development organisations employ an adviser or expert on one or more of the many issues which relate to difference (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, age). But only rarely are the commonalities between marginalised groups explored. Sadly, awareness and equal opportunities training in any one issue does not guarantee awareness in relation to all issues. A person may be race-aware and gender-aware, but completely disability-unaware (Stubbs 1995). Inevitably, this has worked against the promotion and acceptance of inclusive education as a strategy for responding to diversity. Despite this barrier, recent years have seen an increasing focus on, and debate about, the potential for inclusive education.

Inclusive education is gaining impetus globally. Sometimes the impetus comes from a rights perspective: "Disabled children and other marginalised groups have a right to be educated alongside their peers". Sometimes it comes from an economic perspective: "We cannot afford or sustain segregated 'special' education, and so inclusion is the only option". Generally a combination of these two approaches prevails.

The United Nations' world conferences on "Education for All – meeting basic learning needs" (Jomtien, Thailand in 1990) and on "Special Needs Education: access and quality" (Salamanca, Spain in 1994) added to this impetus by emphasising that many children are excluded or are not benefiting from current systems, such as disabled children, street children and children from ethnic minorities. Contributors to these conferences highlighted the importance of taking another look at existing systems, structures and methods within schools, with a view to creating a schooling system that benefits and includes all children in the particular community. Moreover, a clear link was made between inclusive education, and initiatives aimed at school improvement and effectiveness, since these initiatives share the same aim of providing a better educational environment for all.

An outcome of the Salamanca conference was the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* (UNESCO 1994). This has been and is currently used to support policy changes in many countries, North and South. Another invaluable UNESCO product is the *Teachers Education Resource Pack* (UNESCO 1993), produced as part of a long-term initiative to help schools develop more inclusive practices. The "Special Needs in the Classroom" project began in 1988 with the aim of producing and disseminating a resource pack of pre-service and in-service teacher training materials. This initiative subsequently developed into a broader analysis of educational transformation and the management of change. The pack, available from UNESCO in fifteen languages, has led to initiatives in over 50 countries.

In the light of this international activity and interest, the establishment of EENET is very timely. EENET is essentially a post-Salamanca initiative which aims to broaden the concept of inclusive education beyond the classroom to include community-based strategies; and to promote the dissemination of useful and relevant information in accessible formats throughout countries which have limited access to basic information and/or financial resources.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN EENET?

The initiative for EENET came from the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC): a group of international non-governmental organisations working to promote disability and rehabilitation issues, primarily in the countries of the South. For information, IDDC was set up in 1994 and does not have an organisational infrastructure.

Save the Children Fund (UK), which acts as IDDC's lead agency on inclusive education, identified the need for a network which would both share experience and help produce low-cost training materials relevant to the needs of the South. It was also felt that there was a need for a more independent body that would look at inclusion in its broadest sense and supply simple, useful and relevant information to the field. UNESCO gave full support to the idea, since it recognised the need for such a network but lacked the capacity to develop one. Several IDDC members pledged minimal funding for the establishment of EENET and, in mid-1997, a part-time co-ordinator was appointed.

The day-to-day administration of EENET is carried out by the part-time co-ordinator with support from staff and students at the Centre for Educational Needs, University of Manchester. So far, students from Ethiopia, Palestine, Brazil, Kenya and Cyprus have taken a great interest in the development of EENET and have given generously of their time in carrying out a variety of tasks, such as designing the database and mailing newsletters. Their comments and suggestions have been very valuable in the process of thinking through how to create an international network which will benefit people in countries of the South as well as the North. The students have also provided names to add to EENET's mailing list, and will continue to publicise EENET and provide valuable feedback when they return to their home countries.

Although membership is open to individuals and organisations in all countries of the world, EENET gives priority to the needs of countries in the South. There are over 600 individuals and organisations in over 100 countries on the mailing list so far, with an enormous range of professional and personal interests, including: parents and parents' organisations, teachers, teacher trainers, academics, community development workers, policy-makers, disabled people's organisations and ex-pupils of special schools.

EENET is possibly unique in the way it makes connections between academics and a wide range of practitioners on the issue of inclusive education. EENET is based in an academic institution, but has strong links

with UNESCO and the major international NGOs working on disability and development issues. Thus, EENET has great potential to reach a large number of relevant individuals and organisations.

RATIONALE FOR EENET

At the grassroots level, practitioners have limited access to relevant information and lack opportunities to network with each other. There is a severe shortage of relevant and appropriate resource materials in local languages. It was primarily in response to these very basic needs for useful information that EENET was established.

Inclusive education programmes in the South are often more successful at being fully inclusive and community-based than those which operate in the North. Even so, seminars and publications are invariably biased towards the North, because when it comes to processing and disseminating information – the crucial resources are mostly held in the North. Yet there is a tremendous need to share the experiences of the South in promoting and practising inclusion ... and to share these experiences with others in both South and North. So, EENET aims to create space for sharing experiences.

The distorted ways in which much information about the South is processed, and the ways in which those in the North set the agenda for what is and is not processed about those in the South, are also cause for concern. International research, literature and conferences tend to be dominated by a Northern perspective with the result that pioneering examples of good practice in the South go unrecognised or unvalued. The flow of information goes from North to South. These imbalances increase the likelihood of the uncritical and sometimes inappropriate export of Northern (western) debates and practices to and by the South. Therefore, EENET aims to create space for people in the South to set their own agendas and present their own experiences, and for more critical reflection of Northern practices.

Finally, EENET also aims to influence the policy and practice of major donor agencies who continue to invest large amounts of money in projects which are modelled on practice in the North, without any awareness of projects which are innovative, inclusive and underway in the South, and with little thought to issues about transferring practice from North to South. EENET is anxious not to reinforce the negative deficit model of developing countries (Stubbs 1994), but instead to recognise and publicise examples of

good practice in inclusive education, often in the absence of material and financial resources.

UNDERLYING VALUES & PRINCIPLES

By creating conversations between members of a participatory information network, EENET aims to be far more than just an information service. It is extremely difficult to process information without bias, and therefore EENET tries to be as explicit as possible about its own underlying values and principles, and its own bias. With this in mind, the underlying values and principles of EENET are set out below.

EENET:

- Believes in the equal rights and dignity of all children;
- Prioritises the needs of countries which have limited access to basic information and/or financial resources;
- Recognises that education is much broader than schooling;
- Acknowledges diversity across cultures and believes that inclusive education should respond to this diversity;
- Seeks to develop partnerships in all parts of the world.

In conducting its work, EENET:

- Adheres to the principles of the Salamanca Statement;
- Believes that access to education is a fundamental human right;
- Recognises the intrinsic value of indigenous forms of education.

EENET is committed to:

- Encouraging the effective participation in IE of key stakeholders, such as disabled people; children of different ages and gender; people from ethnic and other minorities;
- Engaging with the difficulties caused by the global imbalance of power;
- Encouraging a critical and discerning response to all information and materials circulated.

WHAT DOES EENET OFFER?

"Enabling Education", EENET's newsletter, is the major focus in the short-term for the dissemination of stories and articles by practitioners, information about useful publications and video training packages, and the development of international conversations about inclusive education. The first issue of the newsletter was published in December 1997 and a limited number of Braille copies were produced as part of EENET's commitment to disseminate information in a variety of accessible formats. The newsletter was translated into Portuguese at the initiative of a reader. The style of the newsletter is deliberately non-academic and participatory. The newsletter aims to be an accessible vehicle for sharing and disseminating up-to-date information, ideas and experiences of inclusive education.

EENET's website was established within the first few weeks of the appointment of the co-ordinator. It acts as a bibliographic database for key documents produced by EENET (e.g. the newsletter) or by practitioners (e.g. a manual, produced in Lesotho, to accompany a video training pack for teachers; a Child-to-Child training pack on inclusion produced in Palestine). There are also several documents produced by Save the Children (UK) which analyse their experience of moving from integration towards inclusion. References for relevant UNESCO documents are also listed. Already information available on the web site has been used by intermediaries who in turn have established direct contact with grassroots teachers and community development workers. All of this frees up the co-ordinator's time to concentrate on the needs of practitioners who do not have access to the world wide web.

EENET also runs seminars. The first EENET seminar was held in July 1997 in Manchester and was attended by 20 participants from 13 countries and organisations. Discussions at the two-day seminar helped to formulate EENET's values and principles and contributed to the development of the strategic plan. The first meeting of EENET's steering group took place at this seminar. The steering group is deliberately small: seven people who represent the major funding agencies, the University of Manchester and countries of the South. This meeting was short and primarily discussed financial issues relevant to the initial establishment of EENET.

In June 1998, a longer meeting of the steering group took place which reviewed EENET's first year and discussed the nature of the network and how

it should develop. It was felt that connections *between* organisations rather than through EENET should be prioritised, in order to avoid setting up parallel structures. The danger of falling into the trap of building a small UK-dominated NGO network was also discussed (see below).

In March 1998, EENET played a major collaborative role in the preparation for, and the facilitation of, a South-focused international seminar on inclusive education. This was held in Agra, India. The ongoing and ever-increasing need for useful, relevant information was highlighted by the 50 participants – all of whom pledged to publicise and participate in EENET. The seminar reinforced three key lessons (IDDC 1998):

- A recognition that the main barrier to inclusion is the prevalence of negative attitudes and not a lack of resources, as is often assumed.
- There is a need for effective school-based support through the empowerment of all involved.
- Inclusive classrooms are unlikely to work in isolation, they require community support and participation.

A PARTICIPATORY INFORMATION NETWORK

EENET aims to be a participatory information network, rather than a dissemination machine.

EENET's main aim is to disseminate useful and relevant documents and training materials in a variety of formats to practitioners in the field who normally find it difficult to access information. EENET will only produce additional documentation where no other such material exists. In order to do this as cost-effectively as possible and with maximum participation from interested parties, conversations have to take place so that information can be shared as widely, and in as many different formats, as possible. Conversations have been initiated through the newsletter, correspondence and seminars. By providing a platform for practitioners who would not normally share their ideas and experiences with a wider audience, the vision of a participatory information network should become a reality.

National and regional organisations which share similar principles are encouraged to take responsibility for information collection, translation and dissemination. In this way, there should be maximum participation from the beginning, so that EENET can grow slowly and sustainably on a relatively

small budget. The word "decentralisation" was initially used to describe a major aspect of EENET's strategy in relation to the establishment of a participatory network. However, "decentralisation" implies that there is a substantial "centre" from which information and ideas emanate, and which exercises some control over the activities of sub-centres. But EENET cannot afford to exercise too much control if it is to succeed in reaching those individuals and organisations who have previously been "hard to reach", and thus excluded. Central (and Northern) control is *not* what EENET is about.

In the interests of sustainability, the newsletter and other documents will only be translated if there is sufficient interest and commitment by a partner agency to allocate resources for that purpose. Translation issues, after all, should not be seen in isolation. Once documents appear in other languages there will inevitably be correspondence in those languages and perhaps a desire to develop regional versions of the newsletter in the appropriate languages. This would overload EENET's minimal infrastructure in the UK, and would be more efficiently dealt with on a regional basis.

Finally, one of EENET's key roles is to develop ways of documenting experiences which otherwise would not be documented because of difficulties with translation or with written language, and to make them as widely accessible as possible. Sharing these experiences through the website would be just one of the methods of dissemination, as the vast majority of people in the South will continue to use other, more traditional methods of communication. Guidelines for running workshops to explore a wide variety of methods of communication, including writing, will be developed. These will focus on the particular issues of inclusive education with a wide range of stakeholders, including children. It is hoped that the workshops will both build skills in a given community and produce useful documentation of inclusive education experience which can be shared.

SHARING EXPERIENCES

EENET recognises the danger and nonsense of transplanting educational practices across cultures and instead supports the idea of using local practice and thinking as the foundation for development activities (Ainscow 1998). In essence, this is about "making the familiar unfamiliar" by encouraging practitioners to stand back from their own situation, and take a fresh look at their own work in the light of experiences from another part of the world. It is

still too early in EENET's development to be able to quote many examples of this process in action, but the following vignettes illustrate the type of networking which has already taken place.

A Vignette from South Africa

Saajidha, a lecturer at a distance education teacher training college in South Africa, is involved in developing a new course on special needs in education. She is nervous about using the term "Inclusive Education" as she is "weary of feeding the students too much too fast and then losing them". The term "Inclusion" has only recently been discussed as part of the government's National Commission on Special Needs Education. Furthermore, the majority of Saajidha's students speak English as their second language and come from peri-urban and disadvantaged rural communities.

Saajidha is in regular correspondence with EENET to share ideas, enquire about opportunities for further study for herself, and to comment on the range and usefulness of the documents on the website. She says: "Introducing something as new and as significant as this [inclusive education] is challenging". She desperately needs teacher education materials. The video training package recently produced in Lesotho, "Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Education", is an example of the locally produced and appropriate materials which EENET is able to provide at low cost. It is likely that Saajidha will act as a dissemination point in South Africa for that training package.

This is an example of the kind of conversations that have been created so far – conversations which combine sharing experience and ideas, feedback on EENET's information provision, and concrete offers of help to disseminate training materials. As a result of these conversations with Saajidha and others, it is hoped that a partner agency will emerge through which EENET can channel information relevant to southern Africa and South Africa (thereby regionalising EENET).

A Vignette from Portugal

Ana works in the Ministry of Education's Institute of Educational Innovation in Portugal and, through her involvement with UNESCO's "Special Needs in the Classroom" project, networks with large numbers of primary schools in Portugal. She received the first copy of the EENET newsletter, "Enabling

Education", in late December and emailed back immediately offering to arrange for its translation into Portuguese. This very spontaneous translation was promptly arranged and in early February a photocopy of "Promovendo a Educacao" arrived in the EENET office. Dissemination in all Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa is now possible; and dissemination in Brazil has begun through a Brazilian student based at the Centre for Educational Needs in Manchester University.

The development of such pro-active partnerships in key regional and sub-regional centres in the world will enable EENET to share information and create conversations with inclusive education practitioners, policy-makers and researchers in large parts of the South, with minimum financial commitment and administrative responsibility. It is essential to forge partnerships with experienced networking agencies already committed to the principles of inclusion.

CURRENT DIFFICULTIES

EENET is already facing up to several difficult challenges. In this paper, mention has been made of some of the difficulties inherent in implementing a participatory information network – especially how to make the network *truly* participatory, and how to avoid domination by Northern professionals and organisations.

Mention has also been made of issues of translation and regionalisation. These link directly with another key issue: globalisation through technology. EENET was set up amid an information revolution. This brings advantages; but it also carries risks. The information industry is changing rapidly. Access to information has never been as quick or as easy, and it is set to become even faster and more accessible as telephones, fax machines and televisions all become linked to the World Wide Web. In this context, it is not surprising that the decision to establish a website was one of the first decisions made when EENET was set up.

The dilemma for EENET is how to balance these increasingly rapid, high-tech forms of communication which proliferate in the North with the needs of the most excluded and marginalised people in the South, whose communication systems continue to be orally-based. It is likely that a variety of communication methods will be employed in order to reach as many people as possible. Homeless International supports local NGOs in India and South

Africa which provide support to organisations of slum and pavement dwellers (Homeless International 1998). Regular exchange visits take place, while "backyard emails" provide regular news updates. Individuals in both countries also enter into email correspondence, with literacy support provided by their local NGOs. This illustrates the possible ways in which high-tech forms of communication can complement face-to-face exchanges of experience. It points the way forward for EENET to explore all possible methods of disseminating information and creating conversations.

Perhaps the greatest and most exciting challenge is to develop partnerships with children, and emerging organisations of children and young people, on the issue of inclusive education. Discussions about how to empower young people with learning difficulties have begun to take place among parents' organisations in Africa; EENET will maintain close contact with this new development through two steering group members who are centrally involved. In addition, writing workshops (referred to above) will seek to involve children in the analysis and documentation of their own experiences, alongside policy-makers, teacher trainers and other interest groups. It will be essential to develop appropriate methods and materials to ensure that children fully participate in workshops and feel safe to express their opinions. It will be equally essential to guard against tokenistic involvement.

CONCLUSION

EENET's core function is to provide basic information about inclusive education, primarily for practitioners in the South, and to encourage the sharing of ideas, information and experiences by a wide range of practitioners in the field. The majority of individuals and organisations on EENET's mailing list so far are concerned with inclusive education as it relates to disabled children. Increasingly, though, as the understanding of inclusion broadens to include all children, EENET will focus on the need for quality and equity in education as a whole. Maintaining a balance between the specific needs of marginalised groups and the need to challenge structures and systems to become more inclusive is one of the many challenges facing EENET. The other major challenges can be summarised in a series of questions as follows:

- How do we reach the "hard to reach"?

- How do we overcome barriers to communication?
- How do we avoid Northern domination?
- How do we encourage South-South conversations?
- How do we involve children and young people?

EENET will continue to grapple with these issues while building a sustainable and participatory network. EENET welcomes suggestions for further development and offers to share ideas and information that could be of use to colleagues around the world who are working to develop education for all.

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Publication C

Miles, S. (2002) Learning about inclusive education: The role of EENET in promoting international dialogue. In P. Farrell and M. Ainscow (eds) *Making Special Education Inclusive,* London: Fulton

This publication argues that sharing small-scale, community-based examples of helpful and promising practice in inclusive education can help to make the familiar unfamiliar, and encourage the flow of information between Southern contexts. It argues that 'difference' is the greatest resource in sharing information globally and in making inclusive education a reality for all children. EENET's role in promoting critical thinking about inclusive education using a variety of formats (annual newsletter, web site, conferences and publications) is discussed.

Short accounts are provided from Lesotho and Zambia to highlight the kinds of innovation taking place in adverse situations. There are also short quotations from correspondence with readers in India, Zimbabwe and Kenya. These examples demonstrate the potential power of listening to Southern voices and EENET's role in making these voices heard. In promoting South-South networking, the publication stresses the importance of using language carefully and respectfully. It also explains the reasoning behind the name of the Network, which was chosen deliberately to contrast *enabling*, with *disabling* forms of education.

The publication discusses several networking challenges and dilemmas: including the challenge of creating a *participatory, South-focused* information Network, when based in a Northern university; the difficulties caused by the digital divide; and the need to balance the information requirements of people who live in oral cultures with those who live in literacy-based settings.

CHAPTER 5

Learning about inclusive education: the role of EENET in promoting international dialogue

Susie Miles

Introduction

The Jomtien Declaration on Education for All, 1990, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO 1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action, 2000, have played a critical role in highlighting the issue of exclusion from education. The harsh reality is, however, that 113 million children still receive no form of basic education (Savolainen, Kokkola and Alasuutari 2000). Within this group girls and boys who have impairments continue to be disproportionately excluded from any form of education in countries of the South.[1]

The Enabling Education Network (EENET) was set up in 1997 to support and promote the inclusion of marginalised groups in education worldwide through the sharing of easy-to-read information. It is based in the Educational Support and Inclusion Group within the Faculty of Education, University of Manchester. Its activities are guided by an international steering group, which is made up of parents, disabled people, donor and technical agencies and the University of Manchester.

EENET shares and celebrates examples of instructive practice, where educational exclusion is being challenged, often in small-scale community-based projects. This chapter will provide an account of EENET's activities and describe some of the ways in which the barriers to participation in education have been overcome. The examples are taken from countries facing extreme economic hardship, where class sizes are very large and material resources scarce, yet where teachers and parents are committed to a human rights and social justice approach to educational inclusion.

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1 The terms 'North' and 'South' are used in this chapter to denote the economic differences between countries. The South includes countries in Africa, Asia and South America. It also includes countries in political transition, such as in the former Soviet Union.

The Salamanca Statement

Any discussion about inclusive education needs to be set in the context of the United Nations (UN) organisation's strategy of 'Education for All'. Within this strategy the influence of the Salamanca Conference, which addressed the future of special needs education, is particularly important:

> More than 300 participants, representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations, met in Salamanca to further the objective of Education for All by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs.
>
> (Preface to the *Salamanca Statement*, UNESCO 1994: iii)

The Salamanca Statement re-affirms the right to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and renews the pledge made by the world community at the Jomtien Conference on Education for All, held in 1990, to ensure that right for all, regardless of individual differences. It also mentions the 1993 UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities which states that the education of disabled children should be an integral part of the education system. The Framework states that:

> Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
>
> *(Article 2)*

And that:

> Educational policies at all levels . . . should stipulate that children with disabilities should attend their neighbourhood school, that is the school that would be attended if the child did not have a disability.
>
> *(Article 18)*

The Framework makes it clear what is meant by 'all children':

> Schools should accommodate *all children* regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote and nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or religious minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

The Salamanca definition of inclusion was ground-breaking in that it moved beyond a concern with disability, to include all potentially marginalised groups. It goes on to emphasise the wider impact of inclusive education:

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

(Article 2)

Definitions of inclusion

EENET has been instrumental in promoting further discussion of the definition of the terms used in promoting inclusive practices. Greater clarity was encouraged as a result of a formulation that was agreed at a seminar on inclusive education, which took place in Agra, India, co-organised by the International Disability and Development Consortium and EENET (EENET 1998). The Agra definition has since been adopted, almost word-for-word, into the South African White Paper on Education in March 2000.

Inclusive education:

- acknowledges that all children can learn;
- acknowledges and respects differences in children: age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV and TB status, etc.;
- enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children;
- is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society;
- is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving;
- need not be restricted by large class sizes or a shortage of material resources.

(EENET 1998)

Beyond Salamanca to the Dakar Framework

At Salamanca, UNESCO was called upon to ensure that 'special needs forms part of every discussion dealing with Education for All (EFA)'. Yet EFA and inclusive education existed in parallel. It was therefore perhaps not too surprising that the discussions held at the world education forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 did not provide a clear vision of future developments, and the concept of inclusive education for all received little attention. The 'Notes on the Dakar Framework for Action' (1999), however, go into some detail about those learners who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion:

> The key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All . . . must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs . . . (Para. 19)

The Salamanca and Dakar Frameworks provide a toolkit for UNESCO's work in responding to the challenges of education for all (Vayrynen 2000). It follows, therefore, that inclusive education should be the main strategy for addressing marginalization and exclusion.

The role of information in promoting inclusion

EENET is a post-Salamanca initiative which aims to meet the information needs of practitioners who have limited access to basic information and material resources.

The word 'inclusion' was deliberately omitted from EENET's title. Enabling, we hope, is a broader concept, and may have a longer life than the term 'inclusion'. By avoiding inclusion in the title, we also hoped to encourage a more comprehensive vision and understanding of inclusive education, beyond that associated with disability and so-called 'special needs'. At the same time, of course, 'enabling' provides an important contrast to 'disabling'. It also reminds us that disabling educational environments affect all children, not only those who are identified as having impairments.

A dictionary definition of 'enable' is as follows:

> to authorise, *empower*, supply with the means to do.

Whereas to 'disable' is:

> to incapacitate from doing, deprive of *power*.

Enablement and empowerment are therefore closely linked. Education should be empowering to all children, but sadly, too often, it is the opposite. This being the case, EENET is both promoting enabling, rather than disabling, education and enabling inclusive education to develop by providing easy-to-read and relevant information. It starts from the assumption that information is power. Therefore access to information is empowering.

Our experience is that the careful use of language is crucial when communicating with culturally diverse countries. Choosing the most appropriate words to describe people who have impairments, and being sensitive about the way we portray countries with few material resources, are similar and related challenges.

Since information is power, it is essential that words are chosen carefully, and with respect. *Respect for difference and diversity is at the heart of inclusive education.*

EENET's underlying values and principles emerged from many hours of discussion among interested colleagues:

EENET:

- believes in the equal rights and dignity of all children;
- prioritises the needs of countries that have limited access to basic information and resources;
- recognises that education is much broader than schooling;
- acknowledges diversity across cultures and believes that inclusive education should respond to this diversity;
- seeks to develop partnerships in all parts of the world.

In conducting its work EENET:

- adheres to the principles of the Salamanca Statement;
- believes that access to education is a fundamental right;
- recognises the intrinsic value of indigenous forms of education.

EENET is committed to:

- encouraging the effective participation of key stakeholders in inclusive education;
- engaging with the difficulties caused by the global imbalance of power;
- encouraging a critical and discerning response to all information and materials circulated.

EENET's strategies

1. Accessibility and participation

Education practitioners in countries of the South have largely been excluded from international conferences and the international literature. Most of the literature paints a negative picture of education systems struggling to cope with poorly trained teachers, inadequate budgets, large class sizes and more recently the HIV/AIDS crisis. This has been called the 'negative deficit model' of developing countries (Stubbs 1995).

EENET aims to promote a positive image of countries of the South. Innovative programmes in the South have a great deal to teach the economically wealthy

countries of the North, where increasingly services are faced with diminishing resources. Their strength is that they have tremendous experience of overcoming apparently insurmountable resource barriers. Yet the flow of information tends to be from North to South and inappropriate practices continue to be uncritically exported.

If this imbalance in the flow of information is to be corrected, it is essential to make education conferences and publishers more accessible to Southern contributors. In 2000 EENET organised a pre-congress workshop on presentation skills for participants from the South, prior to the International Special Education Congress (ISEC). This served two purposes: it provided a focus for Southern participants, who may have otherwise felt alienated from the unfamiliar environment; and it helped to validate the experience from the South. One of these participants was invited to participate in concluding the conference in front of an audience of over 1,000. It is unlikely that this would have happened without the extra effort made to make the conference accessible.

2. Sharing inspiring stories

Creating conversations across cultures and sharing stories are a key aspect of EENET's participatory network. Reflecting on the experience of other practitioners can help to 'make the familiar unfamiliar'. This has not been an easy task, as many readers use English as a second or third language, and many Southern countries have a strong oral tradition.

The following email message was sent from a refugee camp in Kenya. It illustrates the enormous contribution that practitioners working in very difficult circumstances can make to this global story-telling:

Sudanese, Ethiopian and Somali deaf students are learning together in an integrated classroom. The Somali teacher is about 24 years old and has 22 students ranging from 8 to 38 years old. He introduces the lesson in sign language: 'Good morning! We are here to learn together because we are one.' Occasionally there is inter-clan fighting, yet the learners ignore the clan boundaries and walk to school to learn. In Kakuma refugee camp inclusion is a key factor. It does not really matter how old I am, or what class I am in. What counts is 'let me taste a little of it'. Education is the only worthy weapon of reducing social conflict. It is an economic tool to fight poverty. EENET should be seen as an information-giving tool, as well as a tool for social cohesion.

The following examples may seem exotic, and perhaps too unfamiliar, but the lessons learnt can shed light on the 'familiar'. Parent empowerment in Lesotho has helped fill an enormous gap, where there was a shortage of expertise in inclusive practices. The introduction of democratic practices in classrooms in Zambia, where

rote learning was the norm, has transformed the teaching and learning experience for all children and, incidentally, benefited those with learning difficulties. These stories are inspiring and need to be disseminated and celebrated.

Parent activists in Lesotho

A progressive policy on the integration of disabled children into primary schools was developed in 1987 in Lesotho, based on a report by a North American consultant. This was before all the major international conferences on education and child rights. The national disabled people's organisation used this policy to lobby for access to education for disabled children.

Lesotho is a small country of two million people, surrounded completely by South Africa, and economically dependent upon its giant neighbour. The disabled people's organisations in both countries likened their struggle for equality of opportunity with the anti-apartheid liberation struggle. The focus on rights, rather than charity, was an extremely important influence on the development of an inclusive education system in Lesotho.

A national pilot inclusive education programme began in 1991 and its main strategies were as follows:

- awareness-raising at all levels: administrators, teachers, parents, disabled people's organisations, the community, Ministry of Health personnel, and the setting up of a cross-sectoral committee comprising all the key players;
- the formation of a national parents' association;
- an initial three-week inservice training course in the school holidays for *all* teachers from the ten pilot schools, 77 teachers altogether;
- follow-up training, both centrally and in schools;
- production of curriculum materials for teacher training giving basic information about disabled children;
- minimal use of additional resources in order to promote sustainability.

The training provided teachers with the skills to assess and to teach children with all types of impairment. The teachers reported that they had 'become better teachers' as a result. Class sizes in Lesotho are large, with ratios of up to one teacher to 100 children, but teachers still found ways of implementing inclusive education. They did this using the following strategies:

- peer support – seating disabled children next to pupils who could help them;
- seating – sitting children near the front of the class;
- adapting the curriculum;
- group work;
- encouraging sibling support at home;
- promoting positive attitudes.

The national parents' organisation, which has branches all over the country, decided not to wait for the results of the pilot programme, but to take action themselves to promote the development of more inclusive practices. They visited schools to inform teachers in their areas about their children's right to be included, using the Salamanca Statement and the Convention on the Rights of the Child as their lobbying tools.

The parents were trained to communicate more effectively with teachers and other professionals. They are now confident that their experience of being parents of disabled children is extremely valuable. They did not receive special training to be the parents of disabled children, and they do not think that teachers would benefit from special training. They prefer a problem-based approach to training and together with Ministry staff they are able to advise teachers in the school setting. None of the teachers has 'special' expertise in a particular impairment or an increased salary. All the teachers are responsible for ensuring that disabled children are included. The teachers in the pilot schools, together with the parents, have become a major resource for promoting inclusion throughout Lesotho. The parents also provide advice to the teacher trainers, who run the pre-service courses, give talks to the students and accompany them on home visits.

The example of Lesotho is unusual because the Ministry of Education actively encouraged the formation of a parents' organisation precisely because it believed that teachers cannot, and should not, implement inclusive education without family involvement (Khatleli, Mariga, Phachaka and Stubbs 1995). In most other countries parents have had to fight to have their voices heard and have influenced the development of inclusion through their role as lobbyists, rather than as partners.

Inclusion through democracy and human rights: a community-based approach, Zambia

The quality of education has deteriorated in Zambia, despite the introduction of more child-focused educational policies, and society as a whole is concerned about this trend (Mumba 1996). Teacher training colleges emphasise the importance of the relationship between teachers and pupils, but innovative ideas discussed during training are rarely put into practice. Most experienced teachers, who work in isolation from their fellow teachers, continue to teach in the same way they did when they first qualified decades before. Undemocratic and authoritarian teaching practices prevent innovation and African culture reinforces authoritarian relationships between adults and children.

Teachers in Kabale primary school, in Mpika, 600 kilometres from the capital, have radically changed their style of teaching. This has paved the way incidentally for the inclusion of children with learning difficulties. The school is a resource centre for the Child-to-Child programme. Staff are encouraged by the school

administration to promote children's participation in their own learning and the equal participation of pupils, parents and teachers in education.

The strategies that have been used to democratise classroom practice are as follows (Mumba 2001):

- introducing children to their rights and responsibilities;
- co-operative group learning and problem solving;
- pupils are encouraged to question traditional sources of knowledge;
- evaluation of the learning process by both pupils and teachers;
- pupils are involved in decision making;
- a strong emphasis on gender equality;
- parents participate in their children's learning.

The combination of these approaches has encouraged ownership of the school by the community – an essential part of the inclusive process as inclusive classrooms are unlikely to work in isolation from the community.

The Mpika Inclusive Education Project was started in 1999 to document the use of the Child-to-Child approach by schools and communities to promote inclusive education. One of the challenges at Kabale school is to integrate the children in the newly created unit for children with learning disabilities into the life of the school. One of the strategies is the twinning of disabled and non-disabled children using Child-to-Child principles.

Gradually the barriers between the unit and the rest of the school have been broken down and the 'specialist' staff now work as resource teachers in the school as a whole. The unit has been transformed into a resource centre which is used by all the teachers. The ideas developed at Kabale have been shared with 17 schools in the surrounding district and regular meetings are held between the teachers to share experiences.

EENET's activities

Currently EENET is engaged in a series of activities related to its overall purpose. These are:

1. Web site www.eenet.org.uk

'Inclusive Technology Ltd, which markets educational software for special education, provides EENET with technical support in maintaining a large web site free of charge. The site includes: training packages for teachers, parents and children; bibliographies of documents produced by Save the Children (UK), UNESCO, EENET and other relevant organisations; EENET's newsletter in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French; conference papers and reports; and

miscellaneous articles by individual practitioners. The site is organised into the following key topics: teacher education; policy; Child-to-Child; parents; deafness; action learning; and early childhood. In June 2001 the contents of the site were captured on a CD-ROM and sent to all those on EENET's mailing list free of charge, thus enabling those who cannot afford to use the Internet to access the information on the site.

2. Information dissemination

Almost 1,500 names of individuals and organisations in 124 countries have been entered on the mailing list. EENET provides information to individuals on request. An index of useful publications is disseminated to all those on the mailing list to ensure that people who do not have access to the Internet are able to access hard copies of documents relevant to their work. EENET also acts as a referral service for education, disability and development issues.

3. Newsletter

EENET's free newsletter, entitled 'Enabling Education', is produced every six to eight months and forms the basis for the exchange of information and ideas about inclusive education. The newsletter is simply and modestly produced in two colours and consists of 16 sides of A4. It is deliberately non-academic and conversational in style. It features stories and accounts of good practice in inclusive education, and details of useful publications and training materials. As far as possible all regions of the world are represented. Although the impetus for the establishment of EENET has come from the field of disability and special needs, the newsletter also features articles relating to a wide range of issues of difference, such as gender, poverty, HIV and/or TB status, race and ethnicity.

4. Family action for inclusion

'Family Involvement in Inclusive Education' is the title of a project initiated in January 1999 to collect stories from parents' groups, which have played a key role in the promotion of a more inclusive approach to education. Stories have been collected so far from South Africa, Lesotho, Bangladesh, Nepal, Romania, UK and Australia. They are available from the web site. A publication is in the pipeline which covers the main issues involved in setting up a parents' group based on the experience of collecting these stories.

5. The Deaf dilemma

EENET has collated information about specific issues related to deaf children and inclusion. The motivation for this is Article 21 in the Salamanca Framework for

Action which states that the educational needs of deaf children 'may be more suitably provided [for] in special schools or special classes and units in mainstream schools' due to their particular communication needs. A seminar was held in 1999 to discuss the particular issues affecting countries of the South, where as few as 1 per cent of deaf children are currently being educated in schools for deaf children, and the vast majority simply do not have access to any form of education. Yet the further development of separate forms of education is simply unaffordable, and arguably undesirable, for the majority of countries. EENET has collected articles reflecting alternative community-based provision in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo and Papua New Guinea.

6. Regionalisation

Looking to the future, the main focus for the next few years is to promote the regionalisation of EENET's activities in order to increase the dissemination of information. Preliminary discussions have taken place with regional organisations in Brazil, Hong Kong, China and the Middle East. It is envisaged that each regional agency would take responsibility for a regional mailing list and the collection and publication of stories from their region which can be shared globally. Translation into the major world languages will be a key aspect of the regionalisation process.

7. Action research

'Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education' is the title of a new action-learning project coordinated by EENET, which will be completed in early 2003. Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID), it is a small-scale project which aims to help people who are involved in community initiatives to increase participation in education to:

- analyse their experience of inclusive practice
- document their learning
- share the lessons with other people.

We have found that there are many barriers that prevent people from sharing their experiences, particularly between cultures. This project sets out to develop ways of overcoming these barriers. Some initial questions include:

- How can people with very different types of knowledge, skills and perspectives be helped to think about, document and learn from their own experience to improve access to learning for all?
- What needs to happen to make this process empowering, particularly for practitioners and people from marginalised groups?

- How can the particular experiences of one community speak to a wider audience and at the same time remain authentic?
- How can 'outsiders' and 'insiders' best work together to improve practice?

No doubt many more questions will be developed during the planning process.

EENET believes that everyone, no matter what their level of formal education or literacy, is capable of being helped to think about and communicate their own experience. This is why we use terms such as 'action-learning' and 'reflective practice'. The intention is that this project should give added value to what people are already doing in the course of their work. The project is significant in a number of ways:

- It has a strong focus on the importance of 'learning from the South'.
- Its aim is to empower people and to improve their projects.
- It will attempt to engage with and throw light on certain tensions and challenges, for example:
  - the relevance of learning across cultures;
  - bridging oral and literacy-based cultures;
  - collaboration and power issues between South and North;
  - exploring how participatory processes can be made fully inclusive.

Conclusion

EENET is a participatory information-sharing network. It aims to do far more than just disseminate information. In capturing the authentic voices of practitioners, it aims to affirm the experience of those struggling to promote inclusion, social justice and democracy.

Until I read your newsletter, it had not occurred to me that the deaf children I teach in a small unit could benefit from being included with their peers in the main school. **(Specialist teacher, Zimbabwe)**

EENET gives us an opportunity to know about other countries' solutions to common problems. This stops us from reinventing the wheel, because with information we can achieve a lot by just changing our tyres.
(Coordinator of an information network, India)

Clearly there are many challenges and dilemmas facing EENET as it continues to encourage conversations between practitioners in the field. Balancing the needs of practitioners in predominantly oral cultures with the increasingly rapid and high-tech forms of communication that proliferate in the North is a major concern

(Miles 1999). Linked to this is the dilemma of being based in a Northern university, far from the harsh reality facing those in greatest need of accessible information. The dilemmas we face can be summarised as follows:

- How do we reach the 'hard to reach'?
- How do we overcome barriers to communication?
- How do we avoid Northern domination?
- How do we encourage South-South conversations?
- How do we involve children and young people?

Isolation from information marginalises and further impoverishes excluded groups. The sharing of clear, lively and accessible information and ideas helps to reduce that isolation. Difference is our greatest resource in sharing information globally and promoting more inclusive practices in the education of *all* children.

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Publication D

Miles, S. and McCracken, W. (2009) Educational audiology in developing countries, pp.167-79. In B. MacPherson and R. Brouillette (eds) *Audiology in Developing Countries*. Nova Publishers: New York

This publication argues that schools for deaf children are an under-utilised resource in many Southern countries, yet they are a more appropriate location for the delivery of educational audiology services than hospitals. It argues for the development of appropriate community-based responses to the audiology needs of children and adults in remote rural areas (key principle 4). A short piece of desk research was carried out to identify knowledge of the provision of audiology services in the South. In addition to this, experiences of providing educational audiology in Southern countries were identified through EENET. Contextualised stories and accounts from India, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Swaziland were used to illustrate the main points of the arguments presented.

Ethical issues are raised, such as the introduction of relatively high-tech audiology services into communities which have little access to basic health and education services, and insufficient national budgets to supply sophisticated hearings aids. It suggests that audiologists should work with, rather than against, influential traditional healers who are often more numerous than medical professionals. It also advocates for a close working relationship between parents and professionals, acknowledging the central role parents and other family members play in their deaf children's lives.

By emphasising the importance of developing affordable and appropriate educational audiology services at community level, this publication helps to demystify this specialised discipline for education stakeholders in Southern countries – primarily by providing real-life stories in an accessible format.

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Chapter 9

EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

School-based audiological services can deliver considerable benefits to deaf children and their families, especially in developing countries where audiology clinics may not yet have been established, or where they are only based in capital cities. In this chapter we explore the origins of 'educational audiology' and consider the advantages of locating hearing health care and hearing assessment services in schools for deaf children. In order to understand the challenges faced in setting up and maintaining such services, we identified a range of practitioners in developing countries and asked them a series of questions by email about their practice, their training needs and the challenges they faced. We used a purposive sample of practitioners identified through the Enabling Education Network and audiology graduates from the University of Manchester. We also wrote to audiologists based in the United Kingdom who have advised practitioners in various developing countries on the development of audiology services and who have provided audiological training to some of those practitioners. This chapter reviews the findings from this small survey, presents a set of case examples and considers the implications for the further development of educational and school-based audiology services in the most cost-effective and sustainable way.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks in detail at some of the challenges in providing audiological support to deaf children in developing countries. We begin with a brief history of the development of educational audiology. We then go on to identify some of the advantages of locating audiological services in school settings, while appreciating the fact that most schools do not see themselves as centres of audiological expertise. We use real world examples from Africa, Asia and South America, provided by audiology graduates from the University of Manchester, Deaf Child Worldwide (formerly known as the International Deaf Children's Society)[1]) and the Enabling Education Network[2] (EENET), to explore the potential for developing more widely available community based services for deaf children.

WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGY?

The concept of educational audiology became a commonly used term during the 1970s. It is firmly rooted in Western countries as well as in China and Russia. Although medically-based, clinical audiology services have much to offer, the importance of developing audiology skills in teachers of deaf children is also recognised. Teachers of deaf children are able to provide the following audiological services alongside their teaching commitments:

1. Responsibility for the day-to-day management of personal hearing aids and other audiological equipment;
2. Advice on acoustics in classrooms and the promotion of good listening environments;
3. Audiological advice to children and families, since teachers are more likely to have regular contact with families than medical practitioners;
4. Interpretation of hearing assessments for non-specialist teachers to help ensure the most appropriate teaching approaches are used;
5. Monitoring of developmental progress in the use of aids, allowing appropriate adjustments to be made to equipment.

Over the past 30 years there have been major changes in audiology. This has included the development of post-aural (behind the ear) hearing aids; the introduction of FM radio systems (initially as body-worn aids but now as plug-ins to post aural aids); of classroom amplification; of paediatric cochlear implantation; and in some areas digital rather than analogue amplification. Methods of assessment have moved from using behavioural measures to implementing newborn hearing screening programmes; the use of a battery of objective tests; paediatric hearing aid fitting protocols; and real ear measurements for the verification of hearing aid fittings. Whilst basic audiological training has been part of the specialist

[1] Deaf Child Worldwide is the international development wing of the UK's National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), which is a parents' organisation. It was set up in 2002 with the aim of supporting initiatives with deaf children and their families in developing countries.

[2] The Enabling Education Network supports and promotes the inclusion of marginalised groups of children in education worldwide by providing useful and relevant information. It is based in the University of Manchester.

qualification to teach deaf children, new knowledge and understanding of audiological issues make additional training important to ensure that deaf children and their families benefit from these developments.

In the income-rich, industrialised 'developed' countries, responsibility for the education of deaf children tends to lie with specialist support services or special schools. These schools and services ensure that the children receive appropriate support, usually from a specially trained teacher of deaf children, in a variety of educational settings. In the United Kingdom, educational audiologists have traditionally come to the profession as trained and experienced teachers of deaf children. This is different in the United States, where educational audiologists typically have training in speech and hearing sciences. This 'second tier' approach to training was designed to be suitable to individuals who were already specialists in education, deaf education or communication difficulties. These professionals have an understanding of child development, developing communication skills, educational programmes and basic audiology. This knowledge provides an ideal foundation for a more specialised range of audiological knowledge and skills, typically including: anatomy and physiology of deafness; epidemiology and screening; assessment of hearing status; sensory aids, earmoulds, impression taking, manufacture and adjustment; fitting, verification and ongoing monitoring of amplification; measurement and management of room acoustics; acoustic phonetics and speech intelligibility testing; calibration and care of equipment.

ADVANTAGES OF SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGY

Schools for deaf children offer a real opportunity for the development of educational audiology services in southern countries, both to the deaf children within the school and also to those in both the immediate area and the wider region. Special schools have a potential wealth of experience and resources and so could become a base for a range of audiological services. They have the potential to:

1. Test hearing and dispense hearing aids;
2. Train mainstream teachers, families, community members in deaf awareness and deaf friendly schools, potentially improving the acoustic environment for all learners;
3. Make earmoulds, supply batteries and repair hearing aids;
4. Develop and deliver outreach services;
5. Provide a venue for 'earcamp'[3] and other screening services offered by outside agencies.

Schools offer some very real advantages over hospitals in providing audiology services and educational advice to families. Hospitals are commonly associated with sickness and disease, tend to be situated in major urban centres, and are often prohibitively expensive.

[3] Ear camps typically involve medical audiologists, audiologists and ENT staff who undertake short, focused assessments of audiological and otological needs, although the high rate of discharging ears makes this a difficult task. Advice is provided regarding aural hygiene and some minor surgery is conducted, such as mastoidectomies and myringoplasties. Professional time is donated, with the cost of equipment, travel and disposable items frequently met by charities, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Ear camps provide a service to the community serving all ages.

Although many schools are also based in urban centres, schools can offer an alternative, less threatening setting, within a community. Services for deaf children were developed in a similar way in industrialised countries many years ago. Some of the most famous schools for deaf children were set up by philanthropists, for example Gallaudet University in the United States and Taralye in Australia. Many have gone on to become highly specialised centres that provide specialist training and outreach services as well as educational provision for specialised populations of deaf children.

Many schools for deaf children do not see themselves as providing a wider service and limit the service they provide to a relatively small number of children, rather than offering a more comprehensive service to the community in which they are located (Miles, 1999). If a special school actively seeks to become a local and regional resource, services can be developed to suit local and regional needs. Ideally such services would complement hospital settings to avoid duplication, and maximise the use of these complementary resources. This would also offer the possibility of faster and more efficient referral services for those children requiring urgent medical care and local treatment, as well as advice for less urgent and non-medical treatment.

EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The highly resourced provision of educational audiology is an appropriate extension of a well developed system of health and educational services. In this context assessment, fitting and follow up services are readily available for those who face hearing health care problems. The cost of hearing aid provision and maintenance is either covered by the state or the individual. The place of such specialist resources in 'developing' countries is less clear, especially where primary health care services are poorly developed and education is neither free nor compulsory. Yet there is a need for accessible child and family-centred audiology services—even where hearing aids are not available. Where hearing aids are available, there is an urgent need for such services if deaf children are to have access to optimum ear care and make use of their aids and other amplification.

Community based rehabilitation (CBR) programmes can play a major role, ideally in collaboration with schools for deaf children. Where specialist facilities exist in schools, they can become a major resource for CBR workers, deaf children and their families. Appropriately trained educational audiologists, based in schools for deaf children, could potentially develop a range of services for deaf children, their families, mainstream teachers and the wider community. A clear development plan is needed if such specialist services are to be developed, with itemised input from a range of agencies including national, regional and possibly international sources. Clear roles and responsibilities should be identified including achievable time lines. Developments will need to take into account local culture and beliefs and ensure that local communities understand the purpose, possible outcomes and benefits for the wider community. It is important, however, not to under-estimate the scale of the challenge of providing appropriate and affordable audiological services.

THE CHALLENGE IS ENORMOUS

Statistics on school attendance and non-attendance in developing countries are notoriously difficult to collect. As the latest UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on Education for All states: "Calculating the number of children of primary school age who are not in school is not straightforward" (2007, pp. 27-28). The results—which tend to be widely quoted—thus need to be considered with caution. It is even more difficult to determine the prevalence of deafness in developing countries and of deaf children attending school. UNESCO estimates that only 10% of disabled children are in school and that one third of the 77 million children currently not in school are disabled (UNESCO, 2007). Wirz & Lichtig (1998: 189) cite Helander's estimate (1993) that the global prevalence of moderate and severe hearing loss was between 0.5% and 0.8%. However they point out that this does not account for the higher prevalence of meningitis, measles, mumps and other preventable diseases in some developing countries. Although there is considerable variation in these published estimates, it is clear that the majority of deaf children in developing countries do not have access to education or to audiological services, so the scale of the challenge of providing appropriate services is enormous.

It is not possible to generalise from published estimates since the situation varies enormously between countries. A community-based epidemiological survey of hearing impairment and deafness, conducted in Swaziland in 1986, by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, revealed that almost 50% of profoundly deaf children were being educated in the only school for deaf children in the country, but little was known about the estimated 4,000-6,000 children of school going age who had mild to moderate hearing losses, largely due to neglected otitis media (White, Newell & Gell, 1987). The population of Swaziland was less than one million people at the time. By contrast neighbouring Mozambique, with its population of 20 million, had only two relatively small schools for deaf children, and so it seems likely that the proportion of deaf children being educated was significantly smaller.

Although the challenge of providing services is clearly enormous in most developing countries, schools for deaf children that work in collaboration with CBR programmes could have a much greater impact by reaching more children. Schools for deaf children are rich in knowledge, skills and equipment and have the potential to provide services to the large majority of deaf children who do not have access to medical or educational services.

In this chapter we provide examples of some of the efforts made to overcome considerable financial, logistical and technical barriers to the development of sustainable audiological services. We do this through a series of short case studies from Brazil, India, Jordan, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Vietnam. We recognise that there is a great deal of excellent work taking place in developing countries which has not been documented and so cannot be discussed here. The importance of sharing examples of promising and helpful practice between developing countries cannot be emphasised enough. Practitioners can learn a great deal from short, simply written case studies which illustrate a range of ways of overcoming barriers to the provision of services in developing countries, even across diverse cultural settings (Miles and Ahuja, 2007).

AUDIOLOGY FOR THE DEAF BY THE DEAF IN JORDAN

An audiological service was set up many years ago at the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, Jordan. This was a service not only for the deaf children at the school, but also for the wider community, including Palestinians living in refugee camps. However the hearing facilities were poorly managed and many of the deaf students at the school were suspicious of audiologists, fearing that they would discourage them from using sign language. In 1994, the Christian Blind Mission (CBM) supported the development of audiology services through the appointment of a British audiologist. Her first discovery was that many students' ears were blocked with wax (Litzke, 2004). Although many of the 180 students had hearing aids, only one of them was using the aid effectively. The audiologist worked closely with a Deaf staff member and ex-pupil, who had responsibility for the earmould laboratory. This Deaf assistant became proficient in carrying out pure tone audiometry and began to better understand the importance of well-fitting ear moulds. The involvement of a Deaf person in the process of running an efficient educational audiology service had an extremely positive impact on the attitudes of the deaf students towards hearing aids. Families now realised that hearing aids were not a miracle cure, but that they could help improve communication.

This short account demonstrates that the presence of audiological facilities in a school for deaf children is not in itself sufficient to ensure that services are well developed. It requires a coordinated team effort. It also demonstrates the way audiological expertise from outside can be used to nurture the development of insider expertise. In this example it was on-the-job training, not formal qualifications, that made the difference. Lichtig, Woll, Silvia Cárnio, Akiyama, & Gomes (2004) also found that the employment of deaf staff in a family centred educational audiology service for 3-6 year olds in Brazil improved the quality of service provision and parents' confidence in those services.

DEVELOPING AUDIOLOGY SKILLS IN NAMIBIA

A British audiologist was recruited to work in 1996 at the Eluwa School for the Deaf in Northern Namibia, the second school to be established in the country (Roberts, 2001). Namibia is a very large country with a population of less than 2 million people. At that time there were only two audiologists working in government service, one in health and one in education. Both were based in the capital city, Windhoek, 650 kilometres south of Eluwa. Prior to the appointment of the British audiologist, the audiologist for the Ministry of Education visited the school three to four times a year to provide much needed educational audiology services – but this was clearly not a satisfactory arrangement. An ex-Eluwa student was sent for training in Botswana as an ear mould technician. On her return she was employed by a private company in the capital city, which provided an excellent service to Eluwa School. Over a period of three years, four Namibian teachers who had no specialist qualification in teaching deaf children were trained by the British audiologist to run the school-based service.

A report of a brief visit to Namibia by a Deaf Child Worldwide staff member (Wilson, 2005) reveals that the Ministry of Health and a national NGO provide hearing aids free of charge, but parents have to pay the equivalent of $US10 per ear mould. However, audiology

posts in the two main government hospitals are currently vacant. This further reinforces the importance of the development of audiological expertise in schools for deaf children and other community based centres, such as health clinics. Nurses have been trained by a British-based organisation, Soundseekers (no date), in various countries, including Ghana, Guyana, India, Lesotho, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Swaziland. The nurses identify and treat middle ear disease, and in some countries a mobile service is offered through the use of a specially designed and equipped vehicle, or Hearing Assessment Centre, known as a 'HARK' (EENET, 2002).

MOBILE EAR CARE SERVICES IN NIGERIA

The development of appropriate forms of training for community based educational audiologists is a more complicated challenge. It could be argued that educational audiology training in developed countries is inadequate for the particular challenges of developing such services 'from scratch' in the context of extreme poverty and poorly developed welfare services. The difference between the services available to urban populations and those available to rural areas is also stark, with rural areas being most neglected. Whether families are based in rural or urban areas, audiological services are likely to be unaffordable.

The Mobile Ear Care Service (MECS) in Akwaibo State in rural Nigeria was started by a Nigerian Catholic sister at St Louise's Special School (Ali, 2007). The Sister was trained as a teacher of the deaf in Manchester in 2000 and spent a further year receiving informal training in audiology in London. She is now the headteacher of the school, which caters for 200 deaf children and sixty additional children who have learning difficulties. As the only staff member with training in audiology, she spends three days per week during school time, and five days per week during school holidays, travelling around the local community with the MECS. An ear mould laboratory is run by one of the teachers after school hours and an ex-pupil has been trained to make ear moulds. In-service training sessions are run over a nine month period for those who work with the MECS, but this has not yet been affiliated to a university. The trainees are able to give advice, but cannot provide any equipment. Children with hearing impairment are supported by the MECS in local schools through a cycle of three monthly visits. The service is funded by a combination of school fees and donations from CBM and the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul. The MECS faces some obvious challenges, such as the extreme heat and dust, poor roads and limited equipment. Unfortunately this low-cost provision of audiological services is seen as a threat by some private audiologists, many of whom have been trained in industrialised countries and who have returned to Nigeria to 'sell' their audiology services.

Audiological investment in existing schools for deaf children in developing countries would go some way towards providing more comprehensive and equitable services. Investment should not be interpreted as being purely equipment based. Investment must include training of the staff who need to use the equipment and to cascade skills to others. This would help to promote greater awareness and knowledge about deafness, meet the audiological needs of deaf children within their local communities, and potentially enable greater numbers of deaf children to access educational opportunities. Ideally schools should be encouraged to work collaboratively with local and regional health services to meet the

audiological needs of deaf children. In their article about the use of non-specialists in providing services for children with hearing impairments, Wirz and Lichtig (1998) discuss the challenge of promoting collaborative working arrangements in developing countries between highly trained specialists who can dispense hearing aids and community workers who can mobilise communities and counsel deaf children and their families. We argue in this chapter that schools for deaf children have the potential to play a key role in promoting such collaboration.

COMMUNITY BASED TRAINING IN INDIA

The Irakgada Centre in Karnataka provided a four day training course and a one day field visit to three deaf children in their homes, following an analysis of the training needs of a small NGO, 'Samuha Samarthya' (Wilson, Miles, & Kaplan, 2008). The training included:

1. Anatomy of the ear, causes of deafness and amplification;
2. Communication, language and teaching methods—with role play;
3. Making teaching aids;
4. Working with children and parents;
5. Evaluation of the training.

During the training parents learned to make sense of audiograms and came to understand the value of wearing hearing aids. The CBR trainers felt confident that some participants would be able to become trainers themselves one day, initially working with the CBR team.

This account demonstrates that well-planned and well-delivered basic training is often highly valued by non-specialists. Educational audiologists and teachers of deaf children are well placed to offer such training. Schools for deaf children have the potential to jointly develop training packages that could be delivered across a region or country. Support from NGOs and other civil society organisations in such an enterprise could help to ensure materials were catalogued and used in other settings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COORDINATING SERVICES

Nhloso was seven when his teachers noticed he had difficulty in hearing (Wilson et al., 2008). It is not unusual for deaf children to be identified late in childhood in developing countries. Visiting a hospital for a hearing assessment in South Africa involved a long and expensive journey and an overnight stay for the family. A hearing test was carried out, but no results were received as the person who did the test left their job at the hospital. Nhloso's mother recounted the details of the assessment to school staff who requested support from a special school. A whole year later a new speech therapist was contacted and Nhloso's hospital records were found. Nhloso had a severe to profound hearing loss, possibly associated with meningitis when he was quite young. He was referred to a specialist hospital and eventually, after a number of visits, earmoulds were made and hearing aids fitted, although initially the earmoulds did not fit well, causing a further delay in amplification. The special education

services provided the school with a video with information about deafness, but there was no video player at the school so staff were unable to watch it.

Finally it was agreed that a school for the deaf would offer the best opportunities for Nhloso. A further delay arose when Nhloso's family were unable to find his birth certificate because it had been eaten by termites. This prevented him from being enrolled at school. When a duplicate certificate was obtained, Nhloso was almost nine years old. He started attending a school for the deaf almost two years after the initial suspicion that he might be deaf.

This vivid account provides some insight into the enormous challenges parents face in identifying appropriate audiological support. It also highlights the urgent need to ensure that children are identified as early as possible and that sensitive and efficient support services are made available. Specialist educational services are not always sufficient in themselves in making the most appropriate interventions. Services are more likely to work more efficiently when linked to CBR programmes, although CBR programmes do not always cater to the needs of deaf children (Miles, 1995). The publication, 'Family Friendly' (Wilson et al., 2008) provides innovative examples of CBR programmes which have made a difference to the quality of family support, sign language teaching and audiological services.

TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF DEAFNESS

In many countries misunderstandings about the nature and causes of deafness persist. Clinical experience in Swaziland revealed a range of traditional beliefs and responses to deafness (Miles, 1991). The sudden onset of deafness, for example, was sometimes interpreted as a sign that the person had been given special powers and should be encouraged to train as a traditional healer. Parents sometimes asked the ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist to cut the child's tongue as they thought the lack of speech meant the child was 'tongue-tied'. It was very common to hear of children and adults who had received traditional treatment involving a concoction of herbs poured into the ears, often causing sickness and dizziness, especially where the ear drum and the bones of the middle ear had been destroyed by neglected middle ear disease. Some were instructed to run up to the top of a termite mound and shout into it, in the belief that this would cure the deafness. Parents were left surprised and confused when these treatments were ineffective. Traditional healers command enormous respect in some cultures and are usually more numerous, more easily accessible and better trusted than hospital based services (de Andrade and Ross, 2005). In establishing the Swaziland Speech and Hearing Clinic Services in the mid-1980s (Miles, 1990), nurses, teachers and traditional healers were invited to engage in dialogue on the issue of hearing impairment, its causes and possible treatment. It made no sense to condemn traditional practices, since most of the people using the Speech and Hearing Clinic Services also consulted traditional healers. The only positive and productive way forward in order to develop greater understanding at community level about hearing loss was to work with traditional healers, rather than against them.

In Vietnam some parents were convinced that the process of audiological assessment caused their child to be deaf (Maarse, Phouc, McCracken, & Nga, 2001). Any attempt to explain that children had a hearing loss prior to assessment was quickly dismissed. It was

only through a community-based health care approach, which discussed the causes of deafness in the local context, that this belief could be addressed in a way that was acceptable to the parents. At the time of this review the ENT community in Vietnam did not have a recognised position for an audiologist. Demands on ENT services were high and there was little expertise in paediatric audiology. In such a setting teachers of the deaf were trained to provide audiological management, including assessment and fitting of hearing aids. This training was funded by a non-governmental organization.

HEARING SCREENING: THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

The identification of hearing loss in a child is a major trauma for families. This situation is exacerbated by lack of referral for treatment and a lack of services. The fact that the hearing screen reveals a major difficulty and a need for audiological support which cannot be met is of little relevance to the immediate experience of families dealing with the shock of having a deaf child.

Hearing screening initiatives may be useful in convincing governments that services are needed. However it would be unethical to screen for hearing impairment and deafness if follow up services are not readily available, as McPherson and Olusanya point out in their chapter on screening in the present volume. The type, extent and quality of service available vary considerably across the developing and developed world. Small projects and piecemeal development of services, often established by NGOs and individual professionals, tend to be the only audiology services that exist, yet they offer considerable benefits to individual deaf children and their families. In order to effect lasting change, however, it is important to plan not only for immediate need, but also for medium and long term needs. Planning is most effective when placed within the context of national primary health care and educational services.

Financial constraints can mean that clinical audiology services are unlikely to be developed, or if they do exist, that families cannot afford to use them. Wirz and Lichtig (1998) argue that the cost of specialised services in urban centres can be prohibitive; of 94 children diagnosed as deaf (free of charge) in an audiology clinic in Sao Paulo, Brazil, only one child was able to purchase a hearing aid. In Burma (Myanmar) there is only one audiologist and two schools for deaf children serving a population of 48 million people (Vaughan, 2000). The planning and implementation of a national framework for ear care and audiology services is understandably not on the national health agenda.

Given that many countries lack developed audiological services, educational audiologists have a role to play at a local and regional level in identifying deaf children through screening programmes, where they exist. This type of undertaking has major training and human resource implications. Educational audiologists could play a role in training personnel in screening so that they could then provide a regional service. Any referrals from the hearing screen would require onward referral to audiological services. There would also be the need to recognise that identification of hearing loss is a recursive process rather than a single assessment point. Furthermore such a screen would ideally require pre-school services and early childhood education opportunities to be made available to families.

In a recent study Swanepoel, Louw and Hugo (2007) describe a model of infant hearing screening for developing countries, based on their work in South Africa. Since a significant number of births do not occur in hospitals (Olusanya, Luxon, & Wirz, 2004; Swanepoel, Hugo, & Louw, 2006), this study suggests an integrated approach to immunisation and hearing screening. In the proposed model immunisation programmes act as a "platform" allowing hearing screening to be carried out at the same time. Follow up audiological assessments are also linked to multi-dose immunisation visits, usually occurring at 10 and 14 weeks. This is a pragmatic approach that uses the system in place to add in a further screen without any further appointments or time demands on parents or professionals. For a country like South Africa that has a well-established immunisation programme the potential is clear. In other countries where such programmes are less well established it is more problematic.

CONCLUSION

The provision of hearing aids and other clinical audiology services, without adequate follow-up services, is highly unethical. It is unlikely that hearing aids will be used effectively or maintained, even in schools for deaf children, unless a sustainable and affordable educational audiology service has been established. Ideally this service would be based in a school, rather than in a hospital setting, and would work in close collaboration with health and rehabilitation services. Schools for deaf children are centres of expertise, which are rarely used for the benefit of the wider community. Yet if teachers of deaf children can be provided with basic audiological training, they would be able to provide a more comprehensive service to the children they serve, their families and community members who may have hearing problems. Where deaf school leavers have been trained to repair hearing aids and make ear moulds, they fulfil a dual role: the provision of audiological services and positive role models for deaf young people. Schools for deaf children could develop links with parent groups, associations of deaf people, and work closely with non-governmental organizations, in order to develop outreach audiological services.

It is important that audiology practitioners and families have realistic expectations about the benefit of hearing aids. Families need opportunities to discuss the type and degree of hearing loss in a non-threatening environment. They need time to explore the implications of deafness and the possibilities of amplification and/or access to sign language teaching. The environment in which hearing screening and audiological assessment takes place can be critical to families' further use of services. A medical environment, where there are heavy demands on staff time and on space, constraints in resources, together with a lack of experience and training in the needs of deaf children among hospital-based staff, may result in a very medical model of deafness being stressed. The provision of such audiology services, in isolation from educational and other community based interventions is, in any case, highly questionable. Screening and audiological service provision within educational settings, where staff have training and experience of deaf and hearing impaired children on the other hand, could offer a more child-centred approach.

Hearing screening may initially focus on school entry, or on children already attending school, but could be extended to pre-school screening, if strong links are built with local communities. Community workers and teachers of deaf children could be trained to carry out

hearing screening at a local level under the guidance of the regional school for the deaf. The introduction of hearing screening programmes, ear camps and community based rehabilitation programmes have the potential to help provide wider coverage and easier access to services for families of deaf children. Underpinning all developments in this area is the need for public awareness campaigns that are locally developed and delivered. Parents of deaf children could be actively involved in such campaigns as they have relevant experience and expertise.

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