Writing Workshops
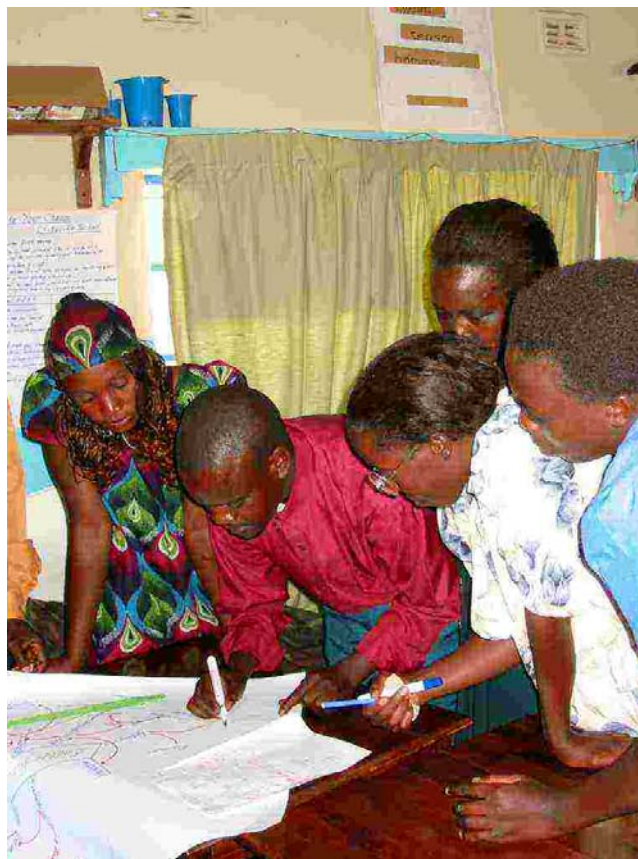
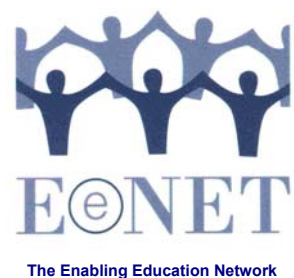## An EENET action-research project

Mpika, Zambia
17–24 July 2002

Report compiled by:
Ingrid Lewis and Susie Miles

EeNET

The Enabling Education Network

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Contents

This is a version created for electronic viewing and emailing. Photographs have been saved in low resolution. If you would like the print quality version, please contact EENET – info@eenet.org.uk

Summary

This report is an account of a series of meetings and activities which took place in Mpika, Zambia, in July 2002. These activities were part of the Department for International Development UK funded action research project entitled, "Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education".

The central focus of EENET's action research project has been to support the development of analytical and writing skills within a school community. The project is referred to as the "Writing Workshops" project. The long-term goal of supporting the development of reflective practitioners is to promote more inclusive practices in education.

The action research team consisted of Professor Mel Ainscow (EENET, University of Manchester), Mr Patrick Kangwa (Zambia), Dr Joseph Kisanji (Tanzania), Miss Ingrid Lewis (EENET), Dr Dinah Richard Mmbaga (Tanzania) and Mr Paul Mumba (Zambia). This was the second meeting of the whole team. The first meeting took place in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in July 2001.

The activities in Mpika were organised by Mr Paul Mumba, Research Facilitator, in close collaboration with Mr Patrick Kangwa, the Mpika Inclusive Education Programme (MIEP) Coordinator. Mr Mumba is a teacher at Kabale Basic School, but also has responsibility for in-service training in seven schools in the area.

The report is divided into the four main activities: school visits; Mpika research team meeting; school-based workshop; and teachers' workshop. This is followed by an analysis of the tools and techniques used in the activities, such as drawing mind maps; brainstorming; 'moving', or interactive classrooms; and informal focus groups.

Two sample stories are included in Appendix 3 which were put together by one of the outside facilitators following the workshops, and have been checked by the teachers in Mpika. These stories demonstrate that it is possible to create a collective story of a school community's experience of tackling exclusion from, and within, education.

The Enabling Education Network – EENET

**EENET is an information-sharing network
which supports the inclusion
of marginalised groups world wide.**

EENET was established in April 1997 in response to the information needs of inclusive education practitioners, particularly in Africa and Asia. EENET promotes easy-to-read and relevant discussion documents and training materials. *Enabling Education*, EENET's newsletter, helps to promote South-South and South-North networking by creating conversations and sharing stories. EENET's office is based at the University of Manchester, in the School of Education, but is independently funded by European non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and has an international steering group.

Here is a summary of the philosophy behind the establishment of EENET:

EENET:
- believes in the equal rights and dignity of all children
- prioritises the needs of countries which have limited access to basic information and 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 right
- recognises the intrinsic value of indigenous forms of education.

EENET is committed to:
- encouraging the effective participation of key stakeholders in education
- engaging with the difficulties caused by the global imbalance of power
- encouraging a critical and discerning response to all information and materials circulated.

Definitions

Inclusive education

The term inclusive education is used in many different ways by many different people, and can therefore be very misleading.

The following definition was developed by EENET in 1998, based on consultation with a wide variety of practitioners in all major regions of the world. We believe that inclusive education involves the development of education systems and methodologies which welcome and include all children. It is important to remember that it is not only about including disabled children in the main education system, or local school.

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.

Definition developed for the IDDC seminar on IE
Agra, India, 1998

Action research

The main aim of action research is to improve practice. It is about collecting information (data) where you work, and it involves three processes: look, think and act.
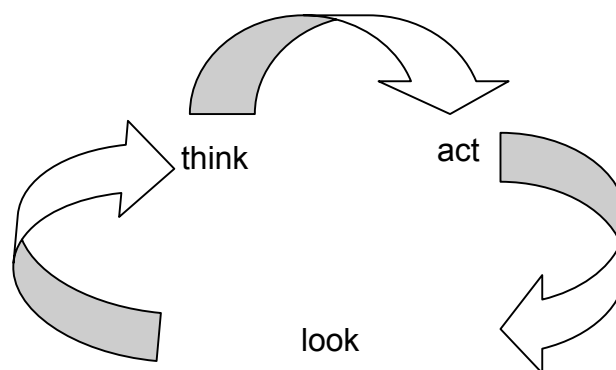
Look   at one particular aspect of your work. Collect some information (observation notes, drawings, taped interviews).

Think   about the information you have collected. Reflect on what you have heard, seen, drawn or written.

Act   on this new information by doing something differently.

Look   at the results. Observe any changes. Collect some more information. Try some new methods of collecting information (count, measure, compare, take photos, etc).

Action research is often called 'insider-research'. It is essential that the insiders (teachers, for example) come to their own conclusions about their research. They need to make their own decisions about how they are going to change their practice. They may decide not to change anything. However 'outsiders' can play a role in supporting 'insider researchers' to think through their work, their research and the changes they may want to introduce.

Background

"Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education" is the title of EENET's two-year action-research project which began in April 2001. Its short title is "Writing Workshops". The main focus is to understand the way the development of analytical and writing skills within a community can promote changes towards more inclusive practices. The project is closely linked to EENET's goals and philosophy. It aims to help people involved in community-based initiatives to promote more inclusive practices in education to:

- learn from their experience of inclusive practice
- document it
- share it with other people.

The project has involved research facilitators in Mpika, Zambia, and in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania working in collaboration with research facilitators in EENET, UK.

One of EENET's core beliefs is that some of the most interesting and pioneering practice on making education accessible for all is happening in countries of the South. But there are many barriers that prevent people in other projects and cultures from learning about these experiences.

What are the key questions?

- 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?

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 project should give added value to what people are already doing in the course of their work. This is why it is called "action research". Sometimes we also use the term "action learning".

The project has a strong focus on the importance of "learning from the South". Rather than trying to extract information from people and projects, its aim is to empower the people and improve the projects. Some of the tensions and challenges include: the relevance of learning across cultures; bridging oral and literacy-based cultures; collaboration and power issues between South and North.

Introduction

The action research project in Mpika is set in the wider context of the Government of Zambia's commitment to education for all children. The Ministry of Education's "Educating Our Future" policy document of 1996 states that "every individual child, regardless of personal circumstances or capacity, has a right of access to, and participation in, the education system." Furthermore, "The Basic School Curriculum Framework", produced in 2000 states that "children with special education needs shall be mainstreamed", and mention is made of the Inclusive Schooling Programme (INSPRO), which was piloted in Kalulushi District, Copperbelt Province. In January 2002 the Government embarked upon free primary school education for all children.

The Writing Workshops project in Mpika began in September 2001 and is led by Paul Mumba, a teacher in Kabale Basic School, school in-service provider and the assistant Zone In-service Provider for seven schools: Kabale; Nyanji; Mukungwa; Malambwa; Chibaye; Sabwa; and Chibansa. In addition Paul has been working with three other schools for the research project: Musakanya; Chitulika; and Mpika.

Paul works closely with Patrick Kangwa who is the Co-ordinator of the Mpika Inclusive Education Programme (MIEP) which grew out of the Twinning for Inclusion initiative, supported by the Child-to-Child Trust in London, and which has been funded by Comic Relief from 1999-2002. MIEP has been working with 17 schools in the Mpika area, including the schools named above, with the exception of Sabwa and Mukungwa. The inclusive education work has grown naturally out of the Child-to-Child activities in Mpika which have been going on for over a decade. Prior to inclusive education the main focus was on health education.[1]

Paul has written extensively about his efforts to democratise his classroom and involve children, both in the learning process and in the evaluation of their own learning. The children have been involved in identifying excluded children in their communities and have taken a lead in adapting classroom activities to make them more inclusive.

This report describes the activities, discussions and processes which took place during the week's visit by members of the action research team, and provides a snapshot of the action research project at a given point in time. The aims of the visit were to:
- research the research process — by listening, observing and documenting through field notes, photography and research diaries
- give feedback on the researcher's work in documenting and negotiating accounts of the research process
- document and analyse the tools and processes used
- discuss the progress of the research with the research committee

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[1] See "Learning Together" for more details of the MIEP work. This is available from The Child-to-Child Trust, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H OAL UK.

- develop a set of draft guidelines for the running of participatory writing workshops
- facilitate conversation between the Zambian and Tanzanian researchers.

Insider-outsider issues

The documenting of this visit raises some of the benefits, and some of the tensions, associated with insider-outsider interaction. When the outsider comes from an income-rich country (such as the UK) for a short time, there is a tendency for expectations to be raised about financial help for that community. There is also, sadly, a tendency to defer to a person from the UK who has a strong academic background, such as a professor, with the result that opportunities for the sharing of experience may be lost. Cultural and language barriers are also very difficult to break down, especially on a short visit.

Similarly when the outsider is a national of that country, but comes from another area or school, there may be an assumption that they have come to judge or inspect, rather than to work together with the insiders for change and development. There may be no cultural or language barriers, but problems can still arise through miscommunication of ideas and intentions.

Nevertheless there are enormous benefits to be gained from the involvement of outsiders in any school community. It can help to "make the familiar unfamiliar" and so encourage critical reflection.

The formula that was used, both in Tanzania in July 2001 and in Mpika in 2002, to make the best use of a short time was as follows:
- spend a day visiting schools involved in the action learning process — in order to familiarise the visitors with the local conditions and to meet the teachers in their own environment and work place
- hold a research committee meeting to get the views of key insiders (see report of workshop on EENET web site entitled, "Action Learning on Inclusion")
- lead a workshop for key stakeholders — in order to use some of the methodologies to encourage practitioner reflection and to capture their voices and stories.

Inclusion is a very complex issue, and it is very difficult to see it on a short visit. School visits can be misleading — especially when they take only an hour or so. Staff are usually on their best behaviour, only showing the visitors what they want them to see, perhaps showing them their star pupils, successful disabled pupils, etc. There are dangers that the visitors leave with false impressions and perhaps jump to the wrong conclusions. However, the benefits of meeting teachers, parents and children on their home ground, before meeting them in a workshop, are enormous. A well-planned school

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visit can provide an outsider with a great deal of valuable information and insights which can be drawn upon later in meetings and workshops.

On this visit a workshop was also held in a community school, which combined the two goals of familiarisation and capturing experience. Unstructured focus groups were held with children, teachers and parents separately as part of the workshop and the information-gathering exercise. Conducting the workshop in the school community enabled a much larger number of key stakeholders to participate than if they had been invited to travel a long distance to attend a workshop in unfamiliar surroundings.

The week's visit has been captured on video and over 200 digital photos were taken. This report has been compiled using the video material, the photos and the extensive field notes taken by the UK facilitators.
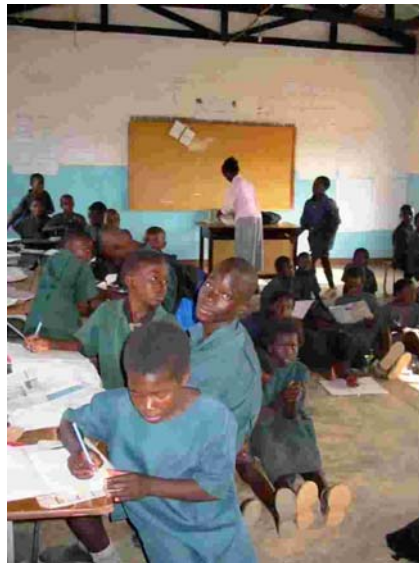
1.   School visits

Visits were made to three schools: Kabale, Mpika and Musakanya Basic Schools in order to familiarise the team members from Tanzania and UK with the local situation. The schools are all implementing some national and district initiatives: PAGE — Programme for the Advancement of Girl-child Education (which includes HIV); ZNBL — Zambia New Breakthrough to Literacy (which involves the Grade 1 pupils using their mother tongue as the language of teaching); Child-to-Child and twinning (inclusive education).

Teachers identified the practical lessons they have learnt:
- twinning[2]
- partnership with parents
- using groups
- identifying the slow learners
- preparing lessons for individual needs and separate groups (this is difficult and takes a lot of time).

They identified the most vulnerable children in their schools as being "special needs" (disabled) children; orphans (who have lost one or both parents); and girls, or any combination of all three.

Kabale Basic School

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[2] Twinning is an approach developed as part of the Child-to-Child programme in Mpika. Disabled children, and those with difficulties in learning, are "twinned" with another child, or sometimes more than one child, in order to ensure that they have the extra support they may need to participate fully in school.

Gender

Girls' education is given a high profile. Every school puts early marriage high up the list of reasons for exclusion from education. They are using the PAGE programme to help the girls through education. This includes discouraging parents from marrying their daughters at a young age in order to get a dowry.

Marriage is a key reason for girls' non-attendance at school. They are marrying as early as Grade 4. In some places parents still do not believe that girls should go to school, though the government is trying to assist in this area. Some of the gender-based initiatives adopted in the Mpika schools include:

- gender across the curriculum — integrated into every subject
- advocacy/sensitisation — community awareness of the importance of having girls in school
- affirmative action — role models of women who have done well in society
- single sex classes — experiment to find out if girls can perform better when not in class with boys
- HIV/AIDS — supposed to be brought into all lessons in a cross-cutting way.

A class at Musakanya Basic School
preparing songs and poetry on girls' rights

Resources

Some teachers clearly believed that lack of money and material resources are still their biggest barrier to including disabled children. The majority of teachers said that progress had been made, though some felt that a lack of resources was holding up further progress.

Other resource issues mentioned were their desire to build a fence to prevent vandalism and theft; the lack of books for a new library; and the need for new pit latrines (since the toilet block has no water).

Disability issues

Previously all disabled children had to go to special schools far away from home, at very high cost. However inclusive learning has led to the inclusion of children with hearing impairments, learning difficulties and physical impairments in all three schools. The teachers said that they do not have the necessary materials for teaching children with visual impairments, so these children still have to travel miles to a special school — if their parents can afford it.

Musakanya school has a special unit for deaf children which was set up ten years ago. However, over the last two years they have begun to include the deaf children in the main classes for practical lessons twice a week. The aim is to include the deaf pupils fully in all activities in the next two years. Most of the deaf pupils are boarders who live a long way away. They have used the Child-to-Child principle of twinning — both in and out of school — to encourage the development of friendships between the deaf and hearing children.

Some teachers at Musakanya expressed the opinion that the deaf children cannot be included in the mainstream because sign language is slow. They are worried about how other children would react to having slow signers/children signing slowly and making strange noises in their class. Many pupils in the school, however, are learning sign language and the teachers all spoke as if sign language and deaf pupils were their responsibility.

Children who have mild impairments are all in mainstream classes in all three schools. The twinning principle had been used to place an academically able child with one who needs help ("fast and slow learners"). Children have played a role in identifying who needs help.

Here are some of the teachers' comments about inclusion:

- "Disabled children are 'fused' in class".
- "They aren't noticed because they feel included".
- "They feel 'free' and perform like non-disabled pupils".
- "He's part of us - [he's] not indulged".

Teachers said that there are problems with parents being over protective and removing disabled children from school (mainly the boarders) for fear of bullying, child getting lost, etc.

The teachers identified their lack of special training as a barrier to progress. One teacher wanted special needs training brought near to the school. She explained that they did not want the theory of special needs from a college, but practical in-school help with dealing with certain impairments and situations. Although there was a specialist teacher, all the teachers felt that they had responsibility towards disabled children.

Inclusion means different things to different people: one teacher described her school as having *"inclusive education plus the unit"*.

Parents

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) holds regular meetings to discuss and help solve problems. In addition, the family 'PAC' is a strategy used in Zambia, as part of the nationwide PAGE initiative to involve parents in their children's learning. A family PAC is when parents come into their child's class to observe the lessons in order to understand the difficulties their children face. They discuss their children's progress with teachers and offer suggestions on how to handle their children. Teachers also share with the parents how their children could be helped at home.

Parents' response to this approach has been positive. The 'PAC' has no materials, but the teachers demonstrate lessons, and have discussions about the lessons and what the parents would like to see happen in the school. The parents are free to criticise and encourage. The aim is to develop the parents' feeling of ownership for the school and for teachers and parents to learn from each other. Family PACs are supposed to happen once a term for each class, but the regularity of these events vary enormously from school to school.

Inclusive approaches in the classroom

The following list is taken from a poster in Paul's classroom in Kabale school. It gives children ideas about the way in which they can help "special" children.

Be a Star!

You can help classmates in:

- Writing neatly
- Writing dates
- Numbering work
- Reading
- Picking them to school
- Covering their own books
- Writing corrections
- Writing titles of work

- Writing or spelling correctly
- Memorise multiplication tables
- Understanding words
- Writing margin lines
- Checking books
- Helping classmates with pens and pencils etc
- Punctuating properly
- Helping M and C to like school.

Which of these have you done today?

At Kabale school children are graded for helping others. A method tried in Kabale is to provide feedback books into which groups of pupils write comments to their teacher every Friday for things they want him to do, or to teach again. One pupil demonstrated the way the helpers' star system worked and said that he learns by helping others.

The school visits were very useful in familiarising the visitors with the local situation. However it is very difficult for visitors to get an accurate impression of how a school actually functions and of the philosophy which guides it. It is especially difficult to get an impression of "inclusive practice". It is quite common in some countries for visitors to be shown the "inclusive" children, who are sometimes literally labelled — a label hanging round their necks, a cross chalked on their desk, the children grouped together in the class — presumably for ease of recognition. All of this effort to show visitors what the school is doing means it can be very difficult to see what inclusion actually means for children on a day to day basis.

2.   Research team meeting

The Mpika research team meeting took place at the Institute of Christian Leadership. See Appendix 2 for a detailed set of notes on what was discussed in this meeting. This is an example of the kind of notes that can be taken in a meeting to be used for analysis later. Here is a summary of the activities which took place during the meeting.

Introduction

Teachers gave an introduction, of about five minutes each, to their work to bring about change in schools and classes. The group spontaneously began asking each other questions and adding to the information given by their colleagues.

Some teachers successfully analysed what they had done in their school, what brought it about, what the impacts were and what they actually did. Others were less confident and seemed to be reciting the rules on what they thought they should do, or what they had been told was the right thing. On the whole there were honest analytical accounts of either personal or school-level, activities that demonstrated the methods they had used, why, and what the outcomes of these methods were.

Presentation

One of the UK facilitators introduced the purpose of the meeting, and gave a definition of inclusive education. There was full group participation in the discussion following the short presentation — no-one was especially quiet. The participants listened, took notes and questioned, and added to the definition, giving it a new dimension.

Small group discussion

Participants then discussed in pairs what they thought of this. Were there elements of the definition that they hadn't thought about before? Were there aspects that they thought were still missing?

Feedback

The feedback was lively and showed that there were some participants who had "missed" some elements of the definition before. Also some additions were suggested. The facilitator then explained the wider background to the writing workshops project and the recording process which will be developed.

Group work

The group work that followed helped participants to think through the questions raised, the feedback given, and to develop a mind map[3]. There was plenty of evidence of analytical thinking which progressed and led to a conclusion. There was active participation, with volunteers to chair and take notes.

Gender

Women teachers were not worried about speaking out and challenging the men. This was a sign of inclusion among the teachers. Inclusion is not just about equality for pupils. It is about social justice in the wider community, and female teachers can be important role models in this process of social change. It would be interesting to find out which came first; gender equity among teachers involved in promoting inclusion, or the inclusion of children in schools, which helped to bring about equity elsewhere.

Reflection on the action learning process

The teachers' meeting raised the following questions:
- To what extent are successful meetings and workshops dependent on having an experienced facilitator?
- How would someone who has not facilitated meetings before cope?
- Is it possible to ensure that the process is participatory?
- How can the guidelines be designed to help inexperienced people feel secure?

The "Guidelines on Writing Workshops" will have to provide sufficient materials for new facilitators. Responding to the needs and abilities of the group is a skill that needs to be learned. Some facilitators tend to lead and provide answers to questions, therefore paying only lip-service to the principle of inclusion, participation and accessibility.

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[3] See Appendix 5 for a definition and examples of mind maps.

3. School-based workshop, Mukungwa Basic School

Mukungwa is a community school in a rural area near Mpika, which is new to the concepts of inclusive education and action research. The main barrier to the education for all children in this area is poverty. This includes the poor state of the school buildings and the difficulties the community faces in paying teachers' salaries. It has only two trained, salaried teachers and three community teachers whom the community pays in either cash or kind. The workshop activity was preceded by a visit to the site where the community members are making bricks to build more classrooms for the school. This helped the facilitators to appreciate the practical challenges they face in providing education for its children.

Making bricks for new classrooms　　*Classroom at Mukungwa Basic School*

Discussion

The discussions took place in Bemba (the local language) and were facilitated by Mr Patrick Kangwa and Mr Paul Mumba. They asked the members of the school community to share with the visitors how the school worked and how it was developing in terms of analysing broad issues of inclusion and exclusion, as it relates to poverty. Early marriage is a big issue in this community. Discussions about disability will be introduced gradually. A group of parents and teachers spoke about some of the problems they face, such as the poor, even dangerous, state of the school buildings, the lack of teachers, the hard manual work involved in making bricks, and the lack of health services locally.

> "In the rainy season we tie ourselves in plastic, or we stand in the corner of one of the classrooms".

> "We go to the toilet with branches and cover ourselves with them".
> *Pupils at Mukungwa*

Workshop

The group was then split into three interest groups: parents, teachers and pupils. See pp29-30 for an analysis of the way community members were organised or divided into these sorts of focus groups. The parents' group session took place first. The group was asked to discuss barriers to education and to learning in their situation. They were reminded that each person had a right to contribute and speak. During the discussion the group expanded, as other parents arrived and joined in.

Parents

Problems/barriers included:

- lack of desks
- poverty — children do not come to school because they are hungry
- disease — malaria, coughing
- low standards in this school compared to other schools (due to children having to work)
- cannot afford to pay teachers.

The group was prompted by the facilitator to think about other issues and solutions, not just money-related problems. The school had obviously overcome many barriers and solved a lot of problems, otherwise it would not still be in existence. So how was that achieved?

Community responses

Parents described how they had made improvised desks, raised money by selling charcoal or vegetables, and reported the health issues to local health workers. They were trying to overcome teacher shortages by building houses for teachers, (making the bricks themselves), and doing their best to pay them, even if only in food or charcoal. Some pupils have to go to work to raise the money to pay the teachers. Other pupils (orphans) have been adopted to help them go to school, but this year some of their guardians failed to pay for them.

Pupils

The facilitator did a warm-up exercise with the children and urged them all to speak and not to be shy about telling us good and bad points about their school and education. They were asked first to tell us what problems they faced in this village. Both boys and girls spoke confidently and raised issues including:

- lack of money
- school roof leaks when it rains and it might collapse
- unsuitable clothes for going to school
- too hungry to go to school
- disease
- no desks
- poor toilet facilities. No privacy
- not enough teachers.

The facilitator prompted the children to think about problems they might encounter with their learning, and in lessons. Responses included:

- We don't understand maths and English.
- The [paid, trained] science teacher doesn't come to work because there is no house provided for him.
- We had no foundation in social studies — we just started from anywhere.

After another warm-up exercise the facilitator asked the children how they had managed to get this far, despite the problems. Answers included:

- We stop schooling to do piece work: sell charcoal or food; go fishing; raise money, then come back.
- In the rainy season we tie ourselves in plastic, or we stand in the corner of one of the classrooms.
- Sometimes if you are hungry you just drink water to feel a bit of strength — you force yourself to go and learn.
- We may go for traditional medicines as there is no health service.
- We bring chairs from home, or make them.
- We go and tell our parents that we have a very big problem with the buildings falling down, so they sometimes come to look.
- We go to the toilet with branches and cover ourselves with them
- When it's cold we use grass to cover big windows.
- We ask teachers to explain the things we don't understand.
- We pester our parents to make more bricks so the teacher will come back.
- Sometimes we start private tuition with community teachers to help us catch up.
- Sometimes when they write in English the teachers will also translate into Bemba.

Teachers

There were only three community teachers and the head teacher in this discussion. Initially the discussions started in English, but to encourage more participation the facilitator reassured the teachers that they could talk in Bemba. The facilitator explained that we wanted to learn from them and share their stories, but there was no question of right and wrong, or of judging them. We ask questions for clarification, not to test them, but because we are ignorant. We want to understand better. The teachers were asked to think about some of the barriers to learning in this school. Initial discussion raised barriers such as:

- lack of games facilities — so children prefer to go to other schools
- infrastructure is poor — especially during the rains
- children do not come regularly because of ill health, lack of food, long distances
- shortage of books and teaching materials
- community teachers lack financial support
- there is less respect from the community for community teachers
- lack of parental involvement
- lack of accommodation for teachers.

Again the facilitator prompted discussion on how they have addressed some of these problems:

- they have bought some balls and jerseys for games time and have become involved in sports events in the surrounding area
- they have got a field
- they talked to their MP and wrote proposals relating to infrastructure development. They also made bricks and crushed stones
- the village head men and chief have helped encourage parents to end absenteeism
- they have talked to parents about arranging early marriages for their children and now the chief punishes those that do it
- the head teacher has talked to the clinic officer to help with medicine provision
- they borrow books from other schools
- PTA general meetings sensitise parents about the importance of teachers and the fact that the school couldn't run without the community teachers.

Community meeting

In the final session, pupils, parents and teachers came back together as one group. A large number of additional adults and children from the community also joined in at this stage.

The facilitator read through the flip charts from each group and encouraged the group to pull out common issues or key points. These were written up on a flip chart in Bemba as a mind map. Initial contributions included:

- unity, harmony
- hard work
- resilience
- need to ensure we complete what we start.

The facilitator encouraged the group to think what experiences they have had, or could have in the future, as a result of unity and working hard, for example. Key words included:

- better future
- houses built for teachers
- development for the area
- feeling pride and admiration from other villages.

The facilitator summed up the morning, stressing that whatever the participants had said (as summarised in the mind map) could be changed if they realise it is wrong. He called for involvement by everyone in taking the school forward and reassured them that they would be coming to the school again to continue the process of thinking through, and capturing, their experiences. The facilitator ended with a comic dance.

Community meeting at Mukungwa Basic School

4.   Teachers' workshop

A teachers' workshop was held, at the Teachers' Resource Centre at Mpika Basic School, for teachers from some of the schools participating in the action research project: Chitulika, Kabale, Mpika, Musakanya, Nyanji and Peads. It was led by Dr Dinah Richard Mmbaga and Dr Joseph Kisanji from Tanzania. The workshop followed the visits by the research team, visitors, and outside research facilitators to the schools, where discussions were held with the teachers.

An outline of activities

Here is a brief outline of the instructions given to the teachers at various stages of the morning workshop.

Individually

- Write an advert for your school to attract new teachers and pupils. Imagine that you have new money from the government. *[Ten minutes writing alone.]*

In school groups

- Read each other's adverts, then discuss.
- Write the key points onto flip charts.
- Brainstorm the barriers that you face in reality.
- Discuss the brainstorm list. Add, remove, expand.
- Brainstorm and discuss strategies for overcoming barriers.
- Draw a mind map which shows how you will use the strategies to overcome the barriers identified.

School group preparing a mind map

'Moving' classroom

Each map was put on the wall. The groups were warned that they would soon have to tell the other groups what their map meant. They were given a few minutes to rehearse what they might say about the map to someone who had not seen it before. The school groups were split so that at least one person from each school was in each new group – see diagram on page 24. A few minutes were allocated to each poster. The activity was compared to the movement of a train which stops at each station. Each member of each school group had the chance to tell the story of their school.

One group in the 'moving' classroom

Teachers writing about the issues depicted on their mind map

Writing

Choose a key heading from your mind map and write about it. Work individually, but discussion is allowed. Possible next steps include pairing up with a writer working on a heading that links to your heading, then get together as a bigger group to edit the whole thing together.
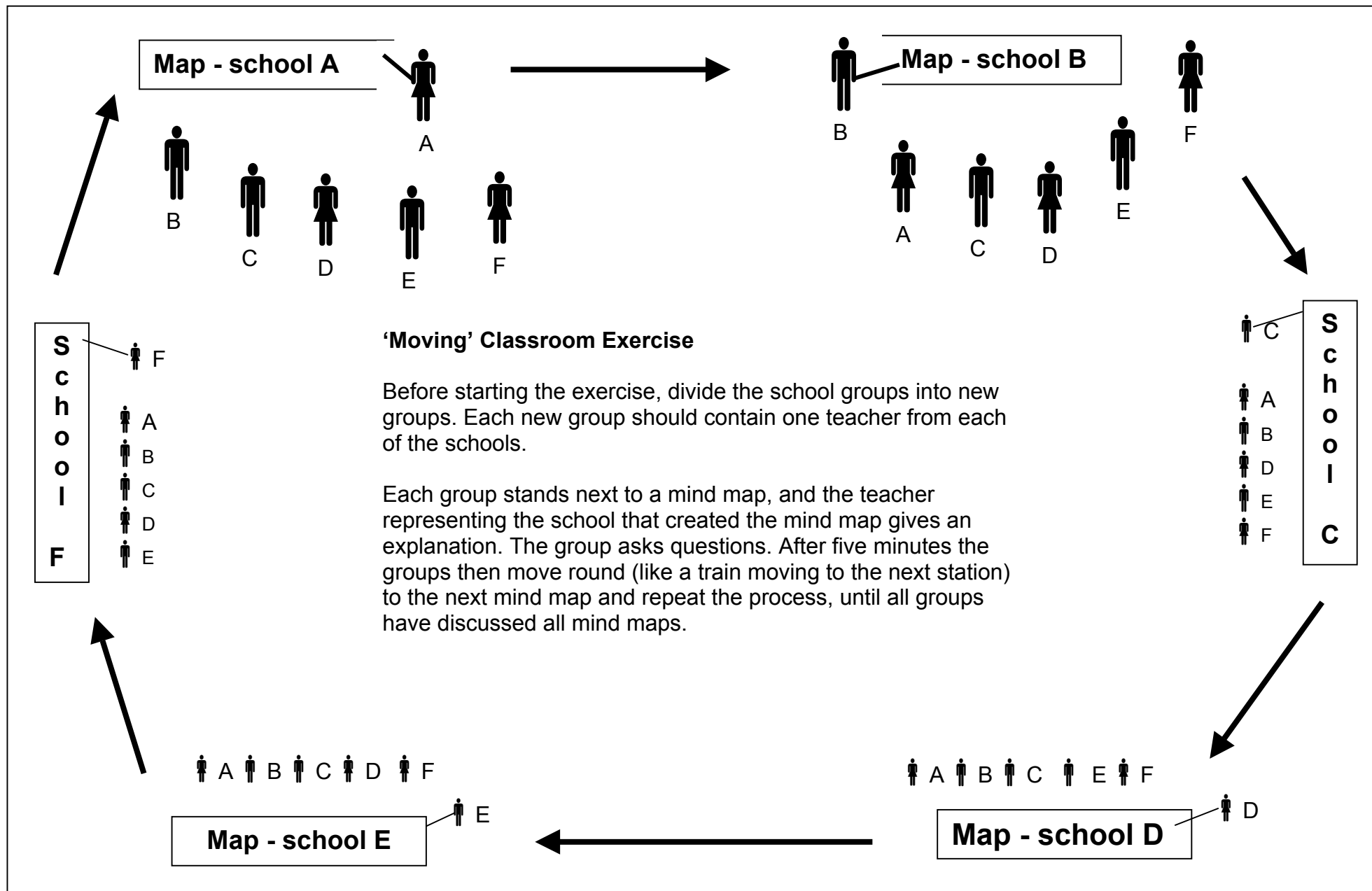
Summing up

The workshop came to an end with a discussion about motivation and purpose for writing. EENET will publish a document containing the stories written in Mpika. The following tips for writing were given:

- Write freely to get the story across — do not think in terms of structured reports and case stories.

- It is a process of telling others what you have done locally.

- It is also a process to help you and your schools, teachers, pupils and parents learn more about your work and the challenges you face.

- It is important to remember to bring in other voices to the story, for example by listening to parents and children.

- Writing is not the only way of recording experience. Children's drawings can be used to tell their story. Acting and singing are other

ways of expressing a group story. The words used can be noted down by those who have literacy skills, if appropriate.

If communities do not learn to tell their own stories, they will always be told by outsiders. Or, no-one will document the story. Then it will not be shared with other communities who could benefit from the shared experience. It may be possible in the future to arrange for communities in Zambia to be twinned with communities in other parts of the world, so that they can correspond with each other about the challenges they face.

Map - school A

Map - school B

B

A

B

C

D

E

F

A

C

D

E

F

School F

F

A

B

C

D

E

School C

C

A

B

D

E

F

'Moving' Classroom Exercise

Before starting the exercise, divide the school groups into new groups. Each new group should contain one teacher from each of the schools.

Each group stands next to a mind map, and the teacher representing the school that created the mind map gives an explanation. The group asks questions. After five minutes the groups then move round (like a train moving to the next station) to the next mind map and repeat the process, until all groups have discussed all mind maps.

A B C D F

A B C E F

E

D

Map - school E

Map - school D

5. Process analysis

A brief analysis of what worked well and what did not work so well can be found in the following table which analyses the tools and processes used. We focus mainly on how the activities happened during the teacher's workshop, but also look at some of the activities used at other times during the week's visit.

Activity	Instructions	How was it done? How did people respond?	Outcomes and suggestions
Design an advert (teachers' workshop)	You have a budget to advertise for new teachers. Working on your own, write an advert which will attract those teachers to your school — as it is today!	Participants had to be reminded to write alone. The tendency was immediately to discuss.	This exercise was supposed to be based on the reality of the school situation and beliefs/values. But it became an advert for an ideal school. Instructions must be clearly defined at the start of the exercise: they are being asked to list the real, not the ideal, things that would attract teachers to their school.
Brainstorm (teachers' workshop)	You've written an ideal advert for your school, but in reality things aren't that good. Brainstorm the barriers you think you face in your schools. Discuss brainstormed list in more depth. Repeat the activity with the following question: "What strategies have been used to overcome barriers?"	The groups wanted to discuss a point before committing to paper. The idea of "top-of-the-head" ideas did not come easily. One group lost some enthusiasm when told several times not to discuss but to brainstorm. There was also confusion again during the "strategies"	It is wrong to assume that everyone is used to brainstorming. Brainstorming needs a clear explanation before the activity commences. For example, brainstorming can be compared to a shopping list. You write it down without discussing with anyone. Then later, you can discuss the details with the shopkeeper: how much milk, what size of bread, etc.

Activity	Instructions	How was it done? How did people respond?	Outcomes and suggestions
		brainstorming and discussion. Did we mean tried-and-tested strategies or ideal ones?	It may be helpful to demonstrate facilitated examples, in order to avoid confusion.
Use of flip chart paper by participants/ groups (teachers' workshop)	Flip charts were used for recording the results of 4 group activities at the teachers' workshop: i) group discussion of the individual adverts ii) brainstorming barriers faced iii) thinking through strategies used to overcome barriers iv) drawing mind maps.	In one activity the flip chart paper was given out when group discussions had already started. This caused the participants to be distracted mid-way through their thinking. Often one member of the group focused on writing up the "best" copy on the flip chart, and so was not taking part in discussions. There was a tendency to write on small paper in draft, which possibly excluded those seated around the table because they could not see this paper.	There was some confusion about the amount of information that had to be fitted on the same flip chart: eg, both barriers and strategies from the brainstorming. Some groups did not leave enough space for both. Be clear about instructions for using materials early on. It may be necessary to allow draft work to take place first. Participants need to be very confident to immediately throw ideas onto a huge sheet of paper. It is natural to want to present a perfect sheet, however. Standing around a table, instead of remaining seated, can help participants to see the flip chart paper better.

Activity	Instructions	How was it done? How did people respond?	Outcomes and suggestions
Group discussion (teachers' workshop; also at research team meeting)		The usual format of a group discussion is that it follows a presentation given by a facilitator. Sometimes there are set questions for the group to address, and sometimes there is also an appointed facilitator within each group.	Role of outsider in such group discussions: it is perhaps useful to have an outsider occasionally to help people to re-think issues that may be assumed, or taken for granted. They can act as a sounding board – someone for them to explain their thinking to, and so help them to think through what they are saying.
Mind map (teachers' workshop; also at research team meeting and school workshop)	At the teachers' workshop a complex example of a mind map was shown and an explanation was given of how to start creating a map: first think of "what is the core feeling or approach of the school?" This goes at the centre. Then think of the key points of the schools' experiences. These form the next level of headings and may be drawn as branches on the map.	The example shown was not left on display, but it still became a blueprint. The participants did not use their imagination as much as they could have done.

Each group required further explanations, including thinking of the mind map in alternative images: for example a tree, with branches and leaves, to get across the notion of spreading out from a centre, or trunk.

Again, standing around the table helped group members to see and contribute to the emerging mind map. | In the end the maps turned out very well. Most had similar ideas, but all took each point to a different level or had some slightly different points. Some groups highlighted the issue that they thought was the most important.

It is essential that clear instructions and examples are given to demonstrate the idea, but not to influence the outcome. |

Activity	Instructions	How was it done? How did people respond?	Outcomes and suggestions
Moving Classroom (teachers' workshop)	Each mind map was put on the wall. The groups were told that they would soon have to tell people from other groups what their mind map meant. They were given a few minutes to rehearse what they might say to someone who hadn't seen the mind map before.	One group left the room and actually seriously rehearsed what they should say, the rest just thought aloud to each other. Before the exercise began, the school groups were divided up into new groups. Each new group contained one teacher from each of the schools. Each group stood next to a mind map, and the teacher representing the school that created the mind map gave an explanation. The group asked questions, though some had to be prompted to do this. After 5 minutes the groups then moved round (like a train moving to the next station) to the next mind map and repeated the process.	Some presenters just read the words on the flip charts. Eventually the stories started to flow. It was a very lively session. It was too noisy because the room was very small. Ideally the posters need to be spread around a wider area, in different rooms, or outside. Facilitators need to be very clear about how the mixing up of groups and moving classroom works, to avoid complete confusion!

Activity	Instructions	How was it done? How did people respond?	Outcomes and suggestions
Individual writing (teachers' workshop)	Choose a key heading from your mind map and write about it in more detail. Write individually, but you can discuss with colleagues if you want.	There was some hard work going on! Everyone was writing with enthusiasm and the sample stories flowed freely. This was an indication that the previous activities had helped the teachers to start writing.	Possible next steps include pairing up with a writer working on a heading that links to your heading. Then develop the links. Finally get together as a bigger group to edit all the writing from individuals and pairs into one story. The result of the short session at the teachers' workshop was a set of partly completed stories, which have since been completed.
Focus groups[4]: Parents (school workshop)	Participants in all focus groups were reassured that they should feel free to speak (in the local language). They were reminded that the facilitators and observers were not there to make judgements or decisions about the future of the school and that there were no right or wrong answers.	The parents' group at Mukungwa had a good balance of men and women, and equal numbers of each spoke up. They discussed enthusiastically, but may have been a bit unsure why we were there to start with. Initially it seemed that they thought we were prospective donors.	The parents decided to continue discussing issues they hadn't finished in another part of the compound after the formal discussion finished. Presumably they were enjoying the discussion and felt it was worthwhile continuing.

[4] A focus group consists of representatives of particular issues and areas of knowledge. The role of the facilitator of a focus group is to listen, observe and record, and not to lead the discussion.

Activity	Instructions	How was it done? How did people respond?	Outcomes and suggestions
Focus groups: Children (school workshop)		The children's group had an equal number of boys and girls, and both spoke up. There was a range of ages, with younger children also voicing their views. However, the children stayed in a mixed group throughout the discussion and it is possible that this may have hindered the range of topics covered.	Although teachers in every school raised the issue of early marriage being a barrier to girls' education, no children (or parents) raised marriage issues. Would these sorts of issues have been raised in single sex groups? Future work needs to consider the gender issue in focus group discussions.
Focus groups: Teachers (school workshop)		The group of community teachers was very small and they did not talk very much. They seemed aware of their lack of status in the school and the community. The head did most of the speaking. It is possible that the discussion was not positive enough. It highlighted the overwhelming difficulties they are facing. This may have discouraged them.	Consider talking to the teachers separately to begin with until they are more confident. However head teachers often feel insecure about letting teachers speak to outsiders in their absence. They often worry about possible negative comments The follow-up process will be crucial in this situation.

Activity	Instructions	How was it done? How did people respond?	Outcomes and suggestions
Photography (all meetings/ workshops)		Each of the activities were thoroughly documented by one of the UK facilitators through taking photos. There were no particular instructions given, except to capture the experience on film.	A selection of the photos have been printed out in A4 size in black and white and have been sent to the research facilitators in Tanzania. They were grouped thematically: active learning in classrooms; the environment; the inclusion of disabled children etc. The photos will be used to stimulate discussion among key stakeholders about their own practice.
Video (all meetings/ workshops)		The instruction given to the video cameraman was simply to capture the experience. The cameraman is also a teacher.	The sound quality is not very good – but the cameraman has successfully captured the workshop buzz!

Appendix 1

Issues to consider when doing Writing Workshops

Participant expectations
People in communities are sometimes suspicious about outsiders. They may think that you are coming to check up on them, or that if they give the "right" answers they will be rewarded in some way. You must make sure that everyone understands that you are there to listen to their experiences and help them share their ideas.

Positive feedback to participants
When brainstorming barriers or problems, it is possible that participants may become de-motivated. It is essential that there is positive input and feedback during such sessions.

Motivation for writing
The motivation for writing may be "to get my story published" rather than "to share my story and help other teachers and myself learn from the experience". There is a need to provide participants with a practical reason to do the research and writing, such as the promise of space in a newsletter. Otherwise the work can seem pointless if they feel that no-one will ever read it. There is a danger that it could become a writing competition. This would affect the way the participants co-operate and share their stories.

Methods
It is important to encourage participants' imagination in developing their own methods for developing stories. They should not be confined to the particular methods demonstrated by the facilitators, such as mind maps. Non-verbal communication methods need to be encouraged for the benefit of children and disabled people. Drawing, play acting, puppets, picture/photo activities can help people who cannot speak or communicate well, but have contributions to make to the story.

Gender issues
Attention needs to be paid to the gender dynamics of groups, both the co-ordinating research teams, and the groups of participants in workshops. Girls and women parents and teachers may need to be given the space to speak without boys and men, and vice versa, in case there are things that are hard to discuss in front of the opposite sex. Male facilitators may be a barrier to including girls/women in the discussions and processes.

Working with children
Consent and confidentiality are important issues when working with children. Children need to give their consent if the things they say will be reported back to their parents and teachers, and later on told to a wider audience as well. Parents and teachers should be told that they must not be angry with anything that the children say.

Appendix 2

Research team meeting

The following field notes were taken by one of the facilitators during the research team meeting. The exact words are recorded on video, but are not always easy to understand. This is a shorter version, which sometimes quotes the exact words that were spoken. The discussion was led by 'Facilitator 1'. See Appendix 4 for an account written by Facilitator 1, based on the discussions which took place in this meeting. The account was sent back to the group so that they could add information and make changes. It needed to be re-negotiated with everyone who had participated. This account or combined story adds an important dimension to the individual accounts. At the time of writing this report, the account had been checked and approved by the teachers.

Introductions

Facilitator 1 (male): My T-shirt [says] "Inclusion now — all means all" [which is] related to education for all. The only thing that changes the world is committed groups of citizens. This has brought us together, especially around our network, EENET, and the newsletters. People who are really trying to improve the quality of education share their knowledge and experience through it. The issue of inclusion embraces the whole world, like health, food, etc.

Finding a form of education for every child is something that the whole world is trying for and no-one has the answer. We are trying to start from this assumption and create connections to try to find the answers. The research group is developing stories of what they have been learning. We are finding people like you to share your stories and get stories from other people as well.

We feel very inspired by what you have already written in your accounts. Normally teachers have to write for authority/accountability — we're not looking for this, we want to learn from/with you. These accounts feel real, you are telling us the real truth, the real things you are learning to take your work forward.

Each of you briefly say what you have been doing that has taken practice forward, eg, meetings, new materials, leadership of certain people, etc. What have you learned about making your school more inclusive.

Teacher A (male): Trying to interpret inclusion, looking at hardships in schools. The issue of enrolment, 60-80 in a class. We have problems reaching individual needs, especially if they have learning difficulties. One experiment I have tried is co-operative learning. I adapted the technique so it answered the needs of the individual child. It's been hard. The traditional attitude of sharing with other children who are slower is that they are stealing

your ideas, that is a problem. Also, when does the person being helped become a helper in return?

But there has been progress, even the best children in the class have found that they can get something back. They learn from teaching their friends, so they are learning twice. Parents have appreciated the ideas as well. The children have become better as they have brought the helping attitude home with them. Some educationists still feel this isn't a good way, but I think it's good. I can't reach all children, but through the group leaders children can be reached. It's a slow process, it needs lots of change and adapting, but I keep trying.

Facilitator 1 (male): His story is very good because it's an individual teacher's story.

Teacher B (female): Paul and Patrick come to the school and they try to find out what teachers are understanding about inclusion. Some teachers thought initially it was just for children with special needs, then they started to realise that it's for "normal" children as well, since they can still have some individual needs. It's not just the disabled who may have some problems, be slow learners, etc. So these meetings helped change attitudes. Three quarters of teachers now do something that considers the individual needs of children, to bring them into the teaching.

Facilitator 1 (male): I noticed that there were visual approaches, such as charts for co-operation in various classes.

Teacher B (female): Yes, people have learned these ideas in the meetings through sharing ideas. Specially trained teachers can be turned to for help if there is a problem.

Facilitator 1 (male): The special educator's role is to keep children in the school, which is different from the old style where their role was to take children away to a separate place.

Teacher C (male): How do you compare the training away from school (in a college), with the above sort in the school?

Teacher B (female): With outside school training you come back and share the ideas. You don't deal with what you learned on your own.

Teacher D (female): Teachers are finding ways of getting children to participate in class.

Teacher E (male): I'll report on this meeting to the other staff so that others can take over if I'm not there. The teachers respond better sometimes to ideas that come from outside and not just from the head.

I learned about inclusion last year in one of the meetings with Paul. Paul talked about the important role each teacher can play in bringing about

change in the school, not looking up to the Minister [for direction]. We came up with problems being faced by the teachers. We each picked a problem, documented them and then carried out research on those problems, then we implemented the change, and then monitored and evaluated.

I studied absenteeism, where children stop coming to school because they live a long way away. They have no parents here and so rent houses nearby. I found they were absent because of money problems. They have to work or have to get food from home or they lose their home because of non-payment of rent, etc. At one meeting the head told me about these boys being married and not coming to school. I have adopted one of the children personally to help her get an education. The school also covers some of the children's fees to keep them in the school. If we bring those pupils closer they can share their problems.

Inclusive learning has helped pupils to speak out if they have problems. With any problem they can come and share with the school administration. Our offices are always open to pupils. We find out what the problems are and don't chase the child away. We have also included the parents — 75 per cent of learning comes from parents, so they can't be left out. We go to visit the homes of those staying far away from school. Inclusive learning has opened the door to being able to visit parents. If the school administration is not involved in the process then this won't be a success.

Facilitator 1 (male): Now you have more information you are now more sensitive to what creates the problems and can come up with new ways of solving them.

Facilitator 2 (female): It's very clear that the parent relationship has changed and this is a key thing.

Teacher F (female): We find out why children behave badly. We visit parents and find that they tell you that children have hearing or vision problems and this gives the teacher a clue how to handle the child in class.

Teacher G (female): By mixing disabled with able children they can do well. Group work has helped them by helping children to be group leaders. You help children in groups and by moving them from one group to another.

Teacher D (female): We are doing a lot in inclusive education. At the start we had the unit for special needs. When inclusive education came we had to move children from the unit back to the classes. All the teachers had to handle the children even without training. We then said we would return those not able to be in mainstream back to the unit.

Initially we never knew that inclusive education covered slow learners, absenteeism, etc. When we realised, each teacher started to do specific things. For example they may concentrate on slow learners. I did work on gender and absenteeism (I teach a girls' class). I wanted to find out reasons for their absenteeism. I found girls at home, gone to the market, water

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fetching, etc. Most common was household chores. After this I asked the children what they could do to help their friends. They said to bring parents into the school to discuss. We did this and the parents accepted that they should give girls time to come to school.

Facilitator 1 (male): Has there been a change?

Teacher D (female): Yes, there has. This is a promising approach.

Teacher C (male): At our school we have seen the fruits of inclusive education. We sensitised the teachers and the pupils first to avoid ill-treatment. Some of the children are regarded as outcasts because of customs and traditions. We then identified children not in school. We spoke with parents and got them to agree and we have "fused" them in the school. We have then monitored children with various disabilities. For example, for those with visual impairment we have been identifying solutions like sitting in front of the class and not sending them to special school. With the learning disabled we impart life skills, not over concentrating on the academic. In-service providers are playing a key role. They share ways of improving teaching practice, so they can learn at the same pace and not leave teachers behind because they don't know about certain things.

Teacher H (female): Inclusive learning is being done. In my class I gave children a project to record in diaries what they are doing to help friends with work, health etc. Giving responsibilities to children with special needs (eg, class monitor, getting books from stock office) makes them feel welcome and part of the school. They also help with home visits and share what they have found.

Teacher B (female): In our meetings documentation is emphasised. We are encouraged to put down everything we do for others to learn from.

Facilitator 2 (female) What are your experiences of the special education training and then coming back to school?

Teacher A (female): When I came back I found the special unit children were mainstreamed. I noticed that it was a good thing. After training I was expecting to work in the unit, but I was given a normal class. But I have special needs children in the class. I find inclusion good because the children can mix with their friends. Before college I never paid attention to children who had bad handwriting, but after college I learned that children have different learning abilities and paces. You have to find out the causes and find out more about the child and know where to start from. Before I went I could only see pupils with big problems, now I see the smaller problems.

Facilitator 1 (male): Those people with special training are having more impact. They are not hiding skills in a unit, but are sharing them around with colleagues.

Facilitator 2 (female) Schools create the differences, the children don't, they want to mix.

Facilitator 1 (male): By the time we finish, we want to put together an explanation of what has gone on in the group of schools. What has happened to help each school to move forward. There are also things going on between the schools.

Quickly we'll reflect on the **use of the term inclusive education**. I want to interrupt your thinking. The term 'inclusive education' was hardly used ten years ago. Suddenly it was everywhere. Now everyone talks about it, and it is changing policy and practice. As it got onto the agenda, it became clear that it's hard to define. If we don't define it, we may not progress. We don't have to agree, but if we are clearer we may be more effective.

Inclusive education is about all children. To only think about it as one group of children limits possibilities to move forward. It's usually limited to special needs children. But it should be all children, because all children can be helped to be included more, even if they are already included. Inclusion is a process — you can always make more progress. You can always be more inclusive. You never reach the end. It means every school is inclusive to an extent and every school can become more inclusive. How can we grow in capacity to reach out to more children? By helping people and schools to grow. Then we take the word apart — what kind of growth are we looking for? We broke it into three dimensions during the meeting with Paul in March:

- **Presence** — being present in the school/classroom — who is, and who is not there. You could stop here, we could improve the presence and make a step towards inclusion, but it's not enough. You could be sitting there doing nothing in class.
- **Participation** — taking part, contributing and feeling valued. This still isn't enough.
- **Achievement** — are they there and participating and achieving things to make their lives better. What are they learning (facts and skills) and learning to be a learner.

If you want to review and develop your school, you need evidence about presence (easy, it involves counting). Then it gets harder. What evidence do you need to understand participation? You have to observe, ask the children, listen, etc. The third level is also hard. You measure achievement in exams, but do the children feel confident about being learners? This needs evidence from the children themselves.

All our experience tells us that some groups of learners are most vulnerable and we have to keep a particular eye on the most vulnerable. Who they are will depend on the community. Here it is girls, absentees because of renting, disabled, etc. In UK, girls are not the most vulnerable, it's boys! Who the vulnerable ones are has to be thought about — don't jump straight to conclusions. We keep an eye on all learners and keep a particular eye on the especially vulnerable.

Discussion about the definition

Teacher E (male): Previously I'd missed out the bit that children need to participate and that we need to get the voices of pupils. For the whole process to work, everyone needs to be involved — teachers, parents, community. At the school level there must be a supportive structure so that teachers feel at home: a good learning atmosphere that will attract pupils and things that can encourage a child to participate actively; the staff/environment should be educationally supportive so that when the child comes into school, he does not just sit down, but the environment contributes to his learning. There is a need for school administrators to be involved. If the problems are not solved, the schools will not move forward.

Facilitator 1 (male): You've added that the process of inclusion is about everyone, and this means including the staff in the school, not just the pupils.

Teacher A (male): The issue of the vulnerable — it's a bit difficult. When you look at vulnerability you find it's difficult to combine [mix] children when the parents say no. For example, when a child is epileptic.

Facilitator 1 (male): You say that what's missing is "what people believe in" This can be positive and helpful, or they can be part of the problem. They may have barriers in the mind based on their limited experience.

Facilitator 3 (male): We are saying that a lot of changes can be seen. But where teachers are teaching at a state and a private school, they perform better in the private school. Teachers' performance in government schools is very low. They need an agent to bring about change — a motivator.

Facilitator 1 (male): Teachers are the key and the move from top-down to more participatory is the only option. Inclusive education means that every teacher is a policy maker when they go into the class. They can say "For the next 50 minutes I make the policy with these children". The way that teachers interpret the policy will be what the children experience. Schools are therefore the hardest institutions to change, as you have to change what's in the hearts and minds of the staff involved. Lots of the experience we've heard about is about doing this with colleagues — bringing people together to make them feel involved. We can learn together by experimenting.

Facilitator 2 (female): We have heard about the participation of parents of vulnerable children. But how do we include the parents of children who are not vulnerable, or having problems? They can act as a resource, but also as providers to these vulnerable groups.

Facilitator 1 (male): We mustn't make assumptions about vulnerability. It may be hidden and we can't assume that we know easily which are the vulnerable. We may also assume that some are vulnerable when they are not. Children often hide their vulnerability. Not all disabled children are vulnerable. Check your assumptions! Provide evidence for your assumptions! We need to find ways of hearing what children believe and feel and experience — it's

essential for inclusion. We need to find ways of breaking the barriers created by status, between children and adults; teachers and children; professionals and workers.

Facilitator 4 (male): Children talk about the same things everywhere. They will express themselves in the same way, whether they have an authoritarian teacher, or not. Allowing children to speak can help teachers. We need to experiment with new ways of breaking the barriers to children speaking.

Facilitator 1 (male): We want **a record of what this group of people has learnt about moving practice forward**. Can we describe it in order to develop an account? We want an account of Mpika that would be meaningful to someone in England, Brazil and Thailand. We can give it to people in the schools in Mpika and see if they agree.

Group work to create accounts

Working in three groups with a note-taker, the participants were asked to answer the following question: "What has helped to move practice forward in this community in relation to inclusion?" They made a list and divided it into sections. The groups were given 25 minutes to discuss and then a mind map was created in the plenary (see Appendix 5).

Appendix 3

Schools' stories[5]

This story was written by Facilitator 1 based on notes taken during a discussion held with a group of teachers at the research team meeting. The story has been sent back to the participants and we are awaiting their feedback before we use it more widely.

'We have seen the fruits of inclusive education'

Developing inclusive practices in schools in Mpika: Some lessons from experience

> This account was written by one of the facilitators, based on the discussion held with a group of teachers in the research team meeting. They each wrote accounts of things they had been doing. They then came together to share and analyse their experiences. In this account they summarise the lessons that have emerged from their work. It is intended to stimulate readers in other communities to reflect on their own approaches.

Our schools serve a sparsely populated area in the north east of Zambia, 650 kilometres from Lusaka. Over the last few years we have tried to make our schools more inclusive. In particular, we have tried to develop strategies for including those pupils who are vulnerable to marginalisation. For us this means:

- girls, some of whom drop out of school because of domestic duties, early marriage and pregnancy
- children who lose their parents through HIV/AIDS
- children with disabilities and
- pupils that live a long way from school. For example, some children have to walk for two hours or more in order to attend school. Others have to rent accommodation in the town because their local schools do not have Grade 10 and 11 classes.

We believe that we have made some progress, although there is still a long way to go. We have many examples of where children who were vulnerable have been helped to take their education forward. In addition, we believe that

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[5] A compilation of stories written by teachers after the teachers' workshop, will be published in April 2003.

our schools are gradually developing practices that will reduce barriers to participation and learning.

In this account we summarise our understanding of the strategies that have helped to move practice forward. Carrying out this analysis has helped us to be clearer as to the next things we need to do in our own schools. We hope it will be useful to our brothers and sisters in other schools too.

Sharing experiences

It seems to us that the most important strategy for moving practice forward arises from the sharing of experiences. In our schools we have tried to encourage such sharing, particularly amongst the teachers. This has been achieved by the creation of teams of teachers that meet on a weekly basis to think through common problems and plan new teaching approaches.

Each school also has a member of staff who is designated as the in-service provider. This person works with other teachers in implementing new approaches in their classrooms. There is also a district in-service provider, a teacher who has responsibility for encouraging school-to-school collaboration across our area.

Whilst teachers have to be at the centre of this process of sharing, we have learnt that others can also contribute. As one colleague says

> "For the whole process to work everyone needs to be involved —
> teachers, parents community"

Consequently, we have explored various ways of collecting the views of parents, members of the local community and, most important of all, our pupils. Through listening to the voices of these other members of our school communities we have identified new possibilities for moving our practices forward.

The approaches we have used to gather information are largely informal, involving discussions and observations. Occasionally, we have also carried out questionnaire surveys. Listening to pupils seems to be a particularly powerful strategy for raising awareness of difficulties and stimulating experimentation with different ways of responding.

Strategies

The forms of sharing we are describing have to be carefully facilitated. In particular, they necessitate the creation of trusting relationships that ensure that those involved can feel comfortable in expressing their views.

We have found that the attitudes and behaviour of senior members of staff are particularly important. They have to develop styles of management that foster a sense of participation. One head teacher explains

> "With any problem they can come and share with school administration — our offices are always open to pupils. We find out what the problems are and don't chase the child away."

In other words, they have to encourage the sorts of relationships that makes everybody feel included, not least the members of the staff. This means that

> "At the school level there must be a supportive structure so that teachers feel at home."

Occasional meetings of head teachers in the district provide a context in which they too can share ideas about how their practices can be developed.

Similarly, teachers have to create more participatory processes within their lessons. Given class sizes of up to 70 or more this is a particular challenge. Some teachers have been using pupil teams within their classes as a means of enabling pupils to voice their views. As a result

> "Inclusive learning has helped pupils to speak out if they have problems."

However, we still have much more work to do in order to develop forms of classroom practice that are genuinely participatory. A teacher explains about one of the challenges, that of getting children to support each other

> "It's been hard, the traditional attitude of sharing with other children who are slower is that they are stealing your ideas, that is a problem. But there has been progress, even the best children in the class have found that they can get something back — they learn from teaching their friends."

Links outside the school have also helped to encourage the sharing of experiences. Some teachers have visited other schools to learn about their ways of working; regular meetings are held of teachers that work with the same grade in different schools; and we have visits from various project leaders connected with the innovations that are being introduced in relation to the education of girls, HIV/AIDS, child-to-child, breakthrough to literacy, and inclusion. One head teacher thinks that

> "The teachers respond better sometimes to ideas that come from outside and not just from the head teacher."

However, we have learnt that such external links are of limited value unless they are fed into the on-going discussions of staff in school. This being the case, our strategy is to require those involved to provide reports at our teacher team meetings. Discussions at these meetings are documented in

order to ensure that key messages are not lost. Teachers explain that such methods ensure that

> "… they share the ways of improving teaching practice, so they can learn at the same pace and not leave teachers behind because they don't know about certain things."

Concluding comments

We are convinced that the approaches we have described are stimulating the development of more inclusive practices in our schools. As we have explained, the key idea is that of sharing experiences in ways that challenge existing thinking and encourage further experimentation.

In preparing the ideas for this account members of the group were asked to suggest what they might mean for future developments in their own schools. Comments that were made included:

- We need to be open to each other with sharing knowledge and ideas.
- Have the child at heart — continue identifying the vulnerable ones, not just inclusion for the sake of doing it.
- We need to continue to be creative in trying to meet needs of all learners and to document what we do to share widely.
- We need to try out more ideas and write.
- We must work hard and be committed.
- Aim at doing new things always.
- Have a positive attitude and be hardworking.
- It's like a tree that is growing — we need to nurture and sustain and ensure it doesn't die.
- Identify problems and continue sharing.
- Keep sharing. Don't stop, go forward.
- Sharing based on experiences — they are the original and raw ideas.
- Each person should get involved — administrators should support the learning process.
- Do more to get the children talking in future, not staying silent. There is more we can hear from them to improve our practice.

This is an account of the development of Mukungwa community school, as retold by Facilitator 1.

'We want to be proud of our school'

Mukungwa school serves a sparsely populated, rural community consisting of four small villages in the north of Zambia. The community is economically very poor. This account of the school and its work focuses on the efforts the school has been making to improve the *presence, participation and achievement* of all children in the district. Producing the account is helping them to think how to move their school forward. It also will be of value to those in other schools who are interested in how to foster school improvement.

Until 1991 there was no school in our district. This meant that our children had to walk long distances to attend classes elsewhere. In fact, most children did not go to any school. So, parents and community leaders decided to build a school. Unfortunately in 1997 the first building collapsed during a heavy rainstorm. In 1998 the Government began providing us with some support, for which we were very grateful.

We now have a main mud-brick building, which contains two separate classrooms and a small staff room. There are also two other separate classrooms constructed with wooden poles. The roofs are all made of long grass and, unfortunately, they leak when it rains. We have made a kiln down by the stream, about ten minutes walk from the school. There we are making bricks so that we can have another classroom and more houses for teachers.

Currently there are about 280 children, up to Grade 7. The Government provides us with two qualified teachers, one of whom is the Head. In addition we have three teachers who are employed by the community. They have each completed twelve years of schooling. Parents contribute money, or food or charcoal, so that these community teachers can be paid.

Addressing barriers to participation and learning

Clearly a lot of progress has been made since the time when we had no school for our children. However, we are still concerned that some children in the district do not attend. We are also worried about the poor progress of some of the children even when they attend. Recently we have been collecting more information about children who do not attend school; children who make poor contributions during lessons; and those who are not making satisfactory progress. This information is helping us to think about ways of further improving our school.

The information we have collected includes the views of teachers, pupils and parents about the types of barriers that make it difficult for some of the

children to participate and learn. The factors that create barriers can be divided into those that are inside the school and those that are within the wider community.

Sometimes there is agreement as to what the barriers are and sometimes there are interesting differences. We feel that listening to the different voices within our school can help us to see new possibilities for moving things forward.

Factors in schools

Shortage of teachers is the main problem in moving the school forward. Sometimes there is nobody to take a class and the children have to go home. Part of the problem is that the school is in an isolated part of the country.

However, a much bigger problem is the lack of suitable housing for teachers. One of the pupils described how it affected her:

> "In science even the teacher has stopped coming. He is just in the village but he refuses to come because there is no house for him."

The community has begun to address this issue, though there is still much work to be done. As one parent described:

> "What we are doing is making bricks to make the school and houses for teachers so that children can learn well — but our biggest target really should be teachers' houses."

The community teachers feel that whilst they get on well with their classes, they do not have the respect of some of the parents:

> "We experience less respect from the community" explained one of the community teachers.

But the headmaster was aware of this issue and said:

> "At PTA meetings we try to sensitise parents about the importance of teachers — if we lose the three community teachers because they're not paid we'll go back to having three classes only not seven — they need to understand how important these teachers are, we can't do without them."

At the same time, other parents are concerned about the limited payment that these teachers are given. One parent said:

> "Parents contribute — we agree to pay the teachers but we fail to pay them — we create the problem."

School buildings and resources also create barriers to progress, as we have already suggested. Some of the children complain about the conditions in which they have to work:

One girl commented:

> "Sometimes we are afraid the school will collapse because it's not very strong."

One of her fellow pupils added:

> ".... and the toilets are not good, they are very bad, if you go there you'd better watch out — you can be seen by others. The floor has no cement and there is no sheet for roof."

The children have tried to think of solutions however and another girl explained that

> "Sometimes we go with branches and cover ourselves with them!"

The classrooms also caused concern to the pupils:

> "Sometimes in the cold season we shiver in class" However "when it is very cold we use some grass to cover big windows."

And the sitting arrangements frequently make it hard to take part in class

> "If you have nothing [to sit on] you make a chair or desk from brick but then this makes us look very dirty in class rooms, which we don't like"

And, of course, teachers too are affected by the working conditions and resources. One teacher explained:

> "We have cases where we have to put up posters on walls but there are no walls!"

One of his colleagues added

> "There is a shortage of books and teaching materials, we are always left out, but we borrow from other schools".

Some of the children also felt that some of the teaching approaches used make it more difficult for them to learn.

> "Even in English — they use it here for teaching and it's difficult to understand, we don't know how to read or we don't understand what we read."

Factors in the community

Poverty is an important factor that can create barriers, resulting in some children not attending school. For example, school fees are a problem to some families and result in some children being kept at home, and children who are orphaned are particularly vulnerable.

Even though orphaned children are supposed to be able to attend without paying, one woman who cares for orphans said

> "I am asked to pay, that's why I took them home."

One teacher further explained the situation:

> "The school knows that they are orphans but we fail to raise enough money to pay teachers so sometimes they do ask the orphans for the fees."

Parents complained that

> "we can't get the money and teachers won't teach without money."

Parents struggle to raise enough money:

> "We do try to grow food in our yards but not enough — we plant cassava millet and sweet potatoes. We burn charcoal to sell or have vegetable gardens to sell at the boma."

> "Parents want their children to use the school, so the pupils go and work for money to contribute to fees. We use the pupils to work."

Some children are hungry and this can stop them coming to school, or mean that they cannot concentrate on their lessons. Children said:

> "When hungry most pupils don't come, though sometimes you just drink water to feel a bit of strength"

> "If you slept hungry you have to force yourself to go and learn."

Similarly, there are health problems that interfere with the children's attendance and progress. Parents explained:

> "Disease is a barrier — we have malaria, coughing, diarrhoea."

> "We have tried to report problems to the health people and they do come or sometimes they send drugs like chloroquine."

The head teacher has tried to talk to the clinic to improve things a bit.

Parents' attitudes and especially their support of the common practice of early marriage often leads to school drop-out, particularly amongst girls. A teacher who mentioned early marriage said

> "It is difficult to address but we talk to parents and the chief is trying help — punishing those that do it. But we try for dialogue."

In other ways parents may sometimes create barriers to their children's education. Teachers had observed that:

> "We have parents where some are educated, others are not — they don't encourage or help — they expect teachers to do their best but they don't take part. We encourage parents to come and witness at 'closing' days but few come."

What have we learnt?

Coming together to talk about what we have done so far has helped us to learn more about what we have achieved as a community. All of this provides us with some optimism as we plan the next steps.

So, what have we learnt? Well, first of all, there is no doubt that hard work has been an essential ingredient to our progress. But, even more important has been the fact that so many members of our community have been willing to work hard. Then, the other important ingredient has been co-operation. What we have learnt is that when we all pull together we can overcome many difficulties, despite our poor economic circumstances.

Of course, working together requires some degree of co-ordination, not least in agreeing what the next tasks should be. Decisions about this have usually been made by the headmen of the four villages, working closely with the committee of the parent teacher association.

As a result of these co-operative working arrangements there is now a real sense of ownership of the school within the local community. This convinces us that the improvements we have made are sustainable. It also gives us strength and resilience, and a sense of unity. This helps us to keep going and is particularly important during times of difficulty.

Looking to the future

As we think about the next steps we see the improvement of the school as part of a plan for the development of our community. The aim must be to improve everybody's learning so that all our lives can be improved.

To achieve this we need to make the school much more attractive to teachers. This is why we are putting so much energy into making bricks that can be used to build houses that will make our teachers comfortable.

Our hope, then, is that eventually Mukungwa school will become widely recognised as a model of good practice.

One parent summed up our thoughts for the future:

> "If we work hard to achieve these things it will make us feel proud of ourselves — whatever we have it will be ours. This will make nearby villages to start admiring and learn our spirit."

Appendix 4
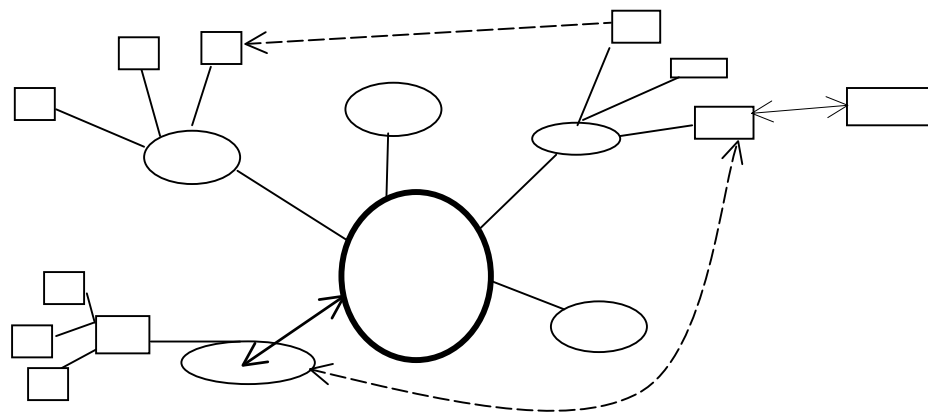
Programme of visit to Mpika, 17–24 July 2002

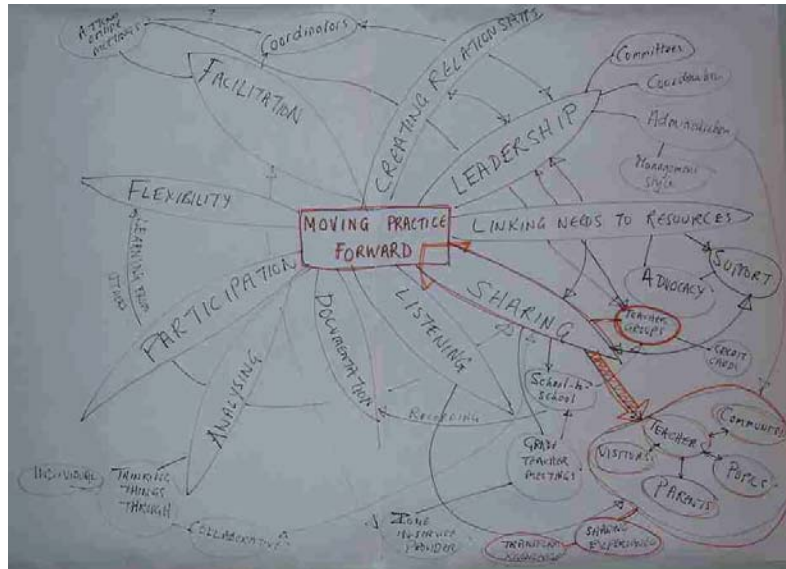|	
Wed 17 July	Arrive in Lusaka Meeting with Mrs Chilangwa, PS Ministry of Education and Mr Geoffrey Chikoye, Inspector of Special Education
Thurs 18 July	Travel to Mpika by road
Fri 19 July	School visits *Mpika, Musakanya, Kabale*
Sat 20 July	Research Team Meeting *Institute of Christian Leadership*
Sun 21 July	Writing, planning
Mon 22 July	Visit and workshop *Mukungwa Basic School*
Tues 23 July	Teachers' workshop *Teachers' Resource Centre in Mpika School*
Wed 24 July	Travel to Lusaka
Thurs 25 July	Return to UK

Appendix 5

Mind maps

Definition

A mind map is a way of organising thoughts, ideas or themes on paper in a pattern, rather than in a list. Usually you start with a central point which leads to lots of other ideas. Some people call these spider diagrams and they may look like this:
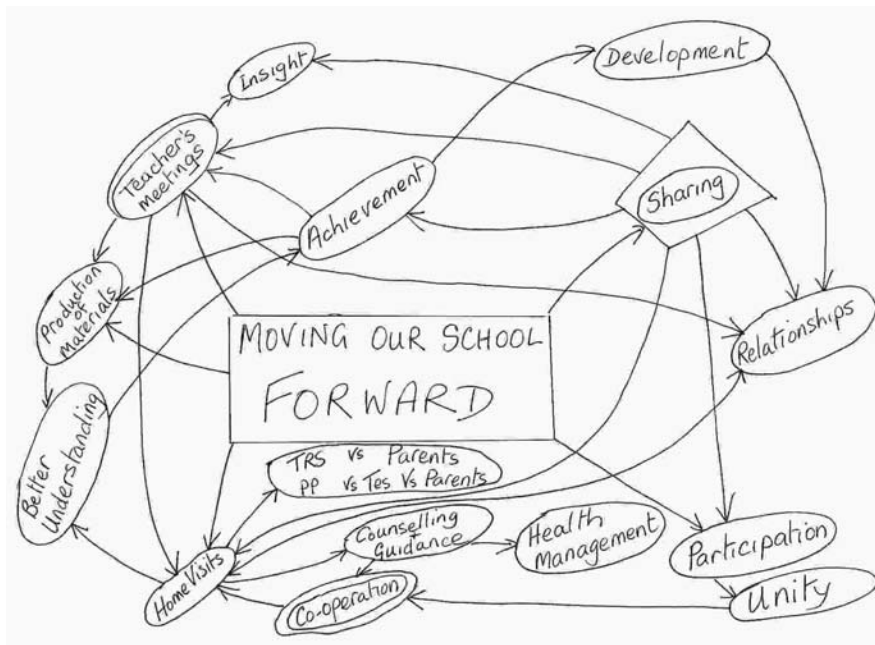
It is easier to see the connections between ideas in a mind map than it is when you make a list. You can also highlight ideas that are more important than others with colour or size, and use arrows to show the links between ideas.
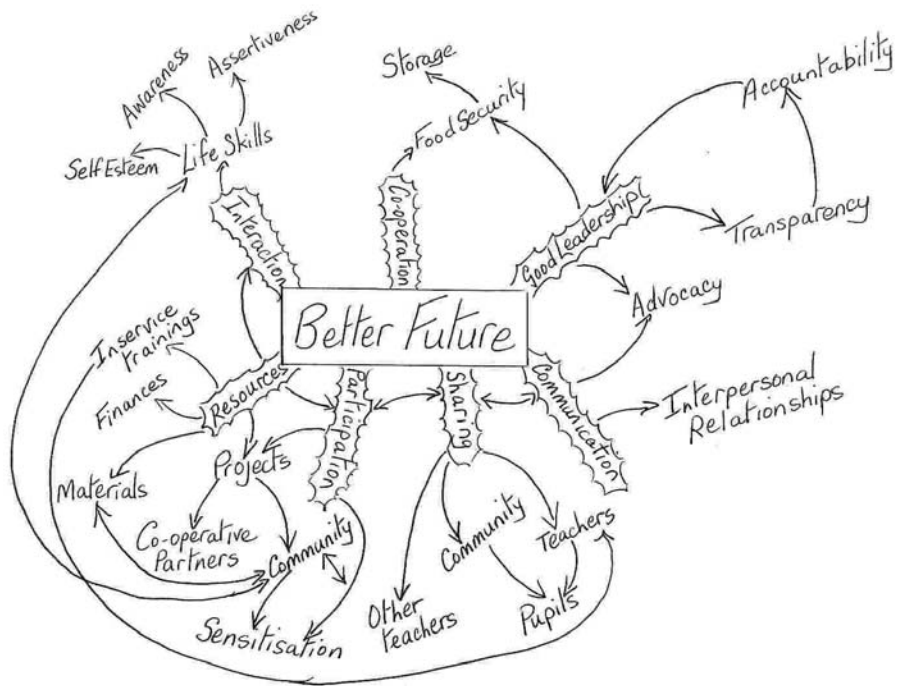
Brainstorming a mind map: usually a brainstorm leads to a list of ideas compiled in a short time. However it is also possible to record the results of a brainstorm as a mind map, and perhaps move into a discussion of some of the ideas. This is sometimes a more useful reminder of a discussion than a set of notes or minutes.

Mind map created during the Research Team meeting

Mind map created during teachers' workshop

Mind map created during teachers' workshop