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## Child Rights, Classroom and School Management

### Change Projects from the International Training Programme Batch 19 - 2013b

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2015

#### *Document Version:*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

#### *Citation for published version (APA):*

Leo, U., Wångdahl Flinck, A., Rasmusson, B., Andersson, L., Wickenberg, P., & Nilsson, L. (2015). *Child Rights, Classroom and School Management: Change Projects from the International Training Programme Batch 19 - 2013b*. Lund University Commissioned Education.

#### *Total number of authors:*

6

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# Change Projects from the International Training Programme



## **Child Rights, Classroom and School Management**

BATCH 19

2013b

Change Projects from the  
International Training Programme

# Child Rights, Classroom and School Management

Final Reports  
Batch 19  
2013b

ISBN: 978-91-980535-9-3  
Lund University Commissioned Education  
Postal Address: Box 117, 22100 Lund, Sweden, Phone: +46+46-2220707  
Printed by Media-Tryck, Lund University, Sweden 2015

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# PREFACE

We would like to thank all change agents in Batch 19 who have participated in the international training programme on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management and contributed with a final report in this book. They have contributed to the initiation of changes aimed at the realization of the intention of the Child Rights Convention in policy as well as in practice in their respective countries; Cambodia, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Vietnam.

Lund, May 2015

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# I. INTRODUCTION

In 2003 Lund University Commissioned Education was given the task, after public tender, to create and administrate a programme on “Child Rights, Classroom and School Management” following the provisions and principles contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Sida’s development policy on Education and other internationally ratified instruments in the areas of child rights and education. The programme was oriented to target persons holding a position from where they could initiate processes of change in their home countries. During the years 2003-2009 the International Training Programme (ITP) on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management was arranged 11 times with 330 participants completing it. Most of them are still working for child rights in their countries and have formed national and regional networks. In 2010 Lund University Commissioned Education won the contract in a new procurement for arranging the programme twice a year 2010 - 2012 with an option for another two years. The option won approval in 2012, thus the programme continued with new batches starting until 2014. In 2013 the 18th and 19th batch started the redesigned programme and this book is one of the results of batch 19.

## Programme objective and goals

The overall aim of the Sida International Training Programmes is to contribute to capacity development and processes of change in developing countries by offering key persons training. The ITPs are specially designed for persons qualified to participate in reform processes of strategic importance on different levels and who hold a position in the home organisation with the mandate to run processes of change. In the long-term perspective the programmes should contribute to institutional strengthening and capacity development in the participants’ countries.

From a development perspective, the overall, long-term objective of the new Child Rights, Classroom and School Management programme is: “to improve participating countries’ capacity to offer and ensure everyone’s right to relevant and quality education, an education that is safe and secure, inclusive, student-centred, democratic and problem-solving and that creates opportunities for all, regardless of background, to participate in community life as active citizens.”

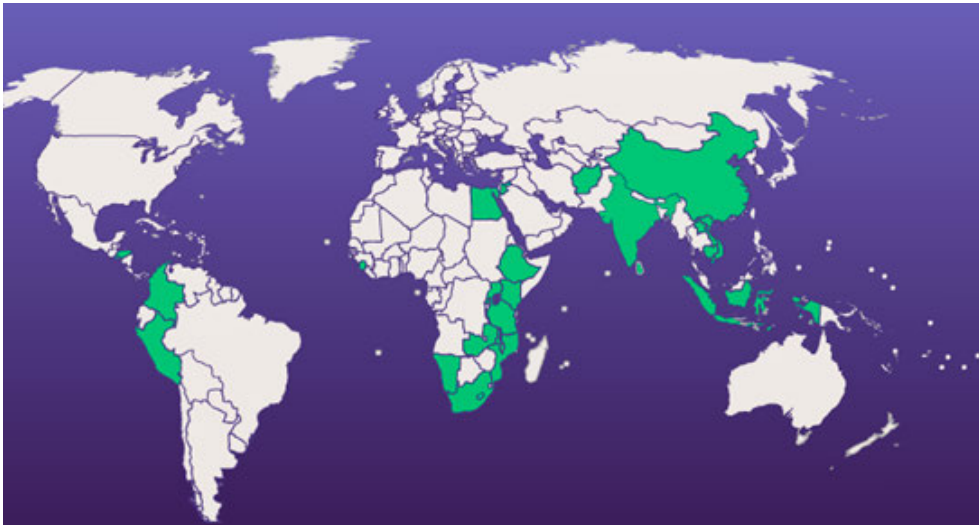
The programme objective to be expected at the end of the contract is that changes which contribute to the realization of the intention of the Child Rights Convention in policy as well as in practice will take place.

The goals for the participants of each and every training programme are to gain:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the CRC.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of the Education for All (EFA) and MDG's targets, relevant international concepts such as child-friendly schools, inclusive education and education for democracy and human rights (EDHR) as well as other relevant international instruments.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of experiences, methods and tools for organizational change in general, and rights-based (participation, inclusive and transparent) and democratic methods and tools for change in particular.
- Knowledge and understanding of Swedish and other international methods for translating children's rights and democratic values into practice in schools and in the classroom.
- Expanded international and national networks to work with the CRC and other relevant international conventions and other instruments.

In order for the training programme to contribute to desired changes participants need to acquire an understanding of the child's situation, background of the Child Rights Convention and children's right in, to and through education. Tools to initiate and/or lead changes that make the participants' respective organisation better able to implement and comply with the CRC and other relevant human rights instruments in the educational field are also required. The program must thus supply both background knowledge and an understanding of the content of the CRC and other relevant international conventions and instruments as tools for capacity development and organizational change. In this way, participants are expected to function as agents of change - change agents in their domestic contexts.

The Child Rights, Classroom and School Management Programme was one of the first ITPs with a clear change focus. One of the key elements in the training programme is to initiate and support change processes in the participants' home organisations and countries. The training programme has so far initiated more than 180 change processes in the participating countries.



**Figure 1:** Countries with change agents and initiated change processes as a result of the Child Rights, Classroom and School Management programme

## Contents

The program provides tools for participants to connect theory and practice and thus be able to translate knowledge into practical everyday work. The entire training programme is based on a child rights approach. The right to education, in education and through education is the guiding principle of the programme. The following topics are included in the programme:

- Policy documents and laws in the subject area related to human rights - CRC, Education for All (EFA) and other internationally-agreed instruments of key importance in this context,
- Key aspects of children's rights to, in and through education and their practical implications
- Democracy in the school and the school's role in society "citizenship", inclusive education and gender equality
- Opportunities to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to promote increased quality and increased access to information and knowledge
- Appropriate forms of leadership as well as organizational structures, forms and behaviour and a leaders' role in the various structures
- Difficult situations such as disciplinary measures, bullying, corporal punishment and sexual abuse and possibilities to make a change
- Importance of problem-solving, critical thinking, participatory approach in the participants' context

- Education for Sustainable Development as a holistic approach where social, economic and ecological issues are integrated.
- Quality assurance as a method for continuous development and sustainability of change.

## Target Group

Participants in the program consist of teams of three people from each country, often from the same region. Moreover, they represent the different levels (local, regional and national) of the education system and can thereby anchor the change process on a broad front and make a greater impact for the projects initiated.

Target groups for the new programme on “Child Rights, Classroom and School Management” are for example:

At the local level: headmasters, inspectors and educational advisers who are working with development of methodology and management at school and classroom level in a number of schools (clusters);

At the regional level: officers and trainers responsible for educational activities at the district or province level;

At the national level: teacher trainers, headmaster trainers, staff at institutes working with educational development and at Ministries of Education.

In addition to the above, the programme allows a member of the team to be part of the professional NGO staff working in the field of Education and Human Rights and based in developing countries. A mandatory prerequisite for all is a university degree or a teacher’s training degree as well as at least five years work experience. Applicants from the following countries are invited to apply:

**Africa:** Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia

**Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

**Latin America:** Bolivia and Colombia

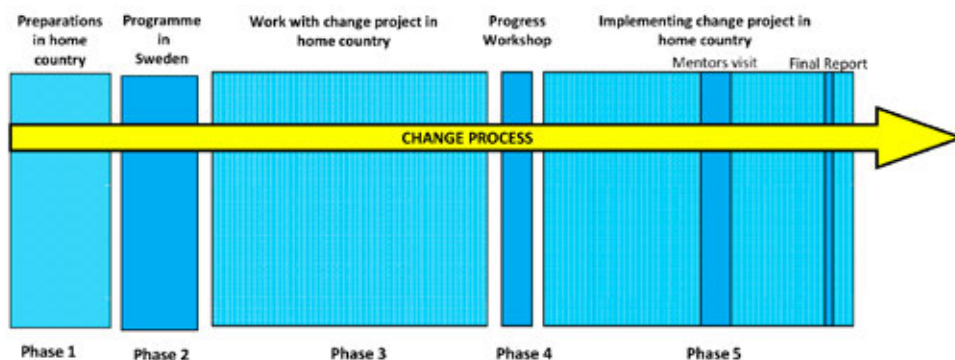
Participants and teams are selected with the thought in mind to optimize the outcome of the course and make the change processes sustainable. Countries are selected to participate on several occasions over the years. This means of participation of different teams from the same country over the years creates the conditions for a critical mass, for network building and for strengthening the change processes, all of which have already begun. Over the years the following countries have been represented and have established networks of Change Agents on different levels:

Country	Batch																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Afghanistan							1												
Bangladesh	1	2																	
Cambodia												1		2	3	4	5		6
China	1	2		3	4					5	6	7		8		9	10	11	12
Colombia				1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12		13
Egypt			1							2		3		4	5		6	7	
El Salvador										1									
Ethiopia	1	2		3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10			11		12	
Honduras		1																	
India			1	2		3		4	5		6		7	8	9	10		11	
Indonesia	1		2	3			4	5	6		7	8	9		10	11	12		13
Jordan		1			2	3		4			5								
Kenya	1			2		3													
Laos					1	2		3											
Malawi			1	2	3		4	5			6		7		8	9		10	11
Mozambique							1		2						3	4		5	
Namibia		1	2			3			4		5			6			7	8	9
Peru	1	2																	
Rwanda	1																		
Sierra Leone												1	2	3					
South Africa			1		2						3		4	5	6		7	8	9
Sri Lanka	1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			10			11			12
Tanzania	1	2	3	4	5		6	7		8	9	10		11	12		13		14
Uganda				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9		10		11	12	
Vietnam		1	2			3	4		5	6		7	8		9		10		11
Zambia	1	2	3		4		5		6	7		8		9		10		11	

**Table 1:** Countries and number of teams per country which have been represented in the different batches over the years

## Programme Structure

The new Child Rights, Classroom and School Management programme runs over a period of 1.5 years and consists of five phases as shown in the figure below:



A change project is the frame of the ITP on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management and a process which continues throughout the entire programme. The change project is made possible through teamwork and thus it is of great importance that the entire team is involved in the process and that the project has a high level of practical relevance for each team member. Each team is assigned a mentor who is responsible for supporting and monitoring their work as well as the networking process. Throughout the various phases of the programme, participants will be given tools for developing and implementing the change project and for making it sustainable. A description of the different phases in the programme for batch 19 will follow.

**Phase 1 – Preparations in the home country** was when the participants contacted the other team members and former participants in the program. The team began to explore the work and implementation of the Child Rights Convention in their own country. According to assignments given, they also prepared the background information which contributed to the baseline of their change project. (July-September, 2013)

**Phase 2 – Programme in Sweden** lasted for approximately four weeks and consisted of child rights studies combined with study visits to relevant Swedish institutions and different schools. Interaction between the participants from the different countries added to the experience and increased the knowledge gained. The change project, which should have a high degree of practical relevance for the participants and their home organisations, is to be identified, planned and decided on and before the participants leave, they submitted a project plan. (September 16 – October 10, 2013)

**Phase 3 - Work carried out in the change project in the home country** with regular assistance from the team's mentor. The teams kept close contact with their mentor, the organisations and the stakeholders, and they also submitted a progress report. (October 2013 - March 2014)

**Phase 4** – Progress workshop in Zambia for 10 days focused on the change project carried out by the country teams. The participants were asked to present their results so far and develop and discuss future plans for applying the programme content in their change project. Visiting former participants' existing projects and organisation were also relevant. The principal idea of phase IV is to give and gain as much as possible from the mentors and the other participants in order to implement the change project. (March 16 - 26, 2014)

**Phase 5** - Implementing the project in the home country with assistance from the mentor. After phase four in Zambia, follow-up visits have been conducted by the respective mentor in the teams' home countries. The mentor together with the team met stakeholders, agreed on the following steps and also evaluated the project for change. After this visit the teams submitted the final change project reports in this book. (March 2014 - March 2015)

The Final Report may be the end of the programme, however it's not the end of the initiated change processes. Throughout the years almost all change agents have continued their work on child rights in their respective countries and networks.

## Book of Final Reports

Final reports from all the participating teams in batch 19 are published in alphabetical order in this book. They represent different approaches to and topics on implementation of CRC with their points of departure in different actual problems in their respective countries. Common to all countries is that they have ratified CRC about 20 years ago. All states have, as a result, formulated laws, policies and programmes aimed at implementation of CRC and strengthening the position of children. However, there is still often a large gap between these good intentions and practice. The change project is trying to bridge this gap.

At the end of the book, the mentors in the ITP on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management from Lund University - Ulf Leo, Agneta W Flinck, Bodil Rasmusson, Lena Andersson, Per Wickenberg - reflect on the focus areas presented and the conclusions drawn by the participants and the country teams in their final reports of the change projects related to CRC.





## 2. CHANGE PROJECT REPORTS

## CAMBODIA

*Cambodia* had its first team in batch 12 (2010) and in total 7 teams and 21 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
<b>National</b>	8	3	Ministry of Education
<b>Region/Province/ District</b>	11	4	Teacher Training
<b>Local</b>	2	0	Schools and pre-schools

**Table 1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

The Child Rights Program has been implemented in the north and in the center of Cambodia. In Stung Treng Province at the Regional Teacher Training Center has the change work focused on *participation* and in Phnom Penh at different departments in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Curriculum develop department, Early Childhood department, Teacher Training department and Primary Education department) has the change work mainly focused *implementation and sensitization of CRC* in general and *participation* in particular.



**Area:** 181,035 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 15, 135, 169 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Phnom Penh

**Independence:** 1953

**Official languages:** Khmer

**Network Country Coordinators:**

Chheang Chhong in Phnom Penh  
(chhon\_chheang@yahoo.com)

Chin Yahan in Phnom Penh  
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# CAMBODIA

Guideline for Increased Participation in Pre-School Curriculum, Piloting  
Battambang Town Pre-School, Battambang Province

*Hou Saomoline, Sok Sokhom, and Lim Bunthoeun*

## 1. Introduction

Human development is part of the National Rectangle Strategy of The Royal Government of Cambodia. In the part of Human Development, the policy makers suggest to start from age zero for targeting. The pre intervention should be focus on the current and future skills needed for developing a country like Cambodia. Current preschool curriculum is not well implemented, this refers to the monitoring results of the implementation process (Early Childhood Development in Cambodia, 2014).

## 2. Frame of Reference

Children are the heart of developmental psychology. The environments in which a child grows up can have a powerful impact on development. Learning is the basic to our understanding of human behavior. It is involved in nearly all aspects of life. As young infants, we learn to hold ourselves upright, to walk and to use our hands. Later on, we learn to run, to play baseball and to use a can opener. Moreover, we learn to read, to write, to memorize information to help us pass an exam. We learn how to get people to give us what we want by asking, bargaining, being nice or pouting. We even learn to be afraid of the dentist or taking exams, and then we learn to overcome these fears. We also learn how to learn. Not all of the behaviors that we learn are acquired in the same ways. Furthermore, the same behavior can be learned in different ways. At this stage, children depend on adults, especially teachers who help them to learn. An important task of the pre-school is to establish and help children acquire the knowledge on which our society is based on. Care and consideration towards children, justice and equality, the rights of children, esp. the right to participation of each individual shall be integrated in to the curriculum and implemented by the teachers in any kind of pre-school.

Teacher's attitude influences the child's understanding and implementing of their rights in society, the teachers serve an important role in the teaching and learning processes. Those who work in pre-school should uphold the fundamental values of children that are integrated in the curriculum and should be clear about meaning and how to perform it.

## **Education laws and policies**

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the first priority for the Minimum Development Goals announce in the agreement of Education for All Committee Forum in Dakar, Senegal 2000. Represent to the goals, the Royal Government of Cambodia have develop the Early Childhood Education Policy for children aged 3 to 5 years old (MoEYS, 2000). The implementation of the policy was less effective and produced fewer results. The only achievement was the increase of the quantity of the children age 5 years old in the current implemented year.

In year 2008, Education Law was developed and mentioned in article 15 "The state shall have a comprehensive and unique Education System, which includes formal education and non-formal education. Informal education is the preparatory study of the education system". Article 16 of the Education Law mentioned that the state should support Early Childcare and Childhood Education from age zero, generally provided at Childcare Centers in communities or at home. Kindergarten Education shall commence prior to Primary Education for preparation to attend primary school. The ministry in charge of education and other relevant ministries and institutions shall determine the meaning of Early childcare and Childhood education (MoEYS, 2010).

The Education Strategy Plan 2014-18 was developed in sub sectors. Early Childhood Education was prior in the first sub-sector. In this term Early Childhood Education sub sector have included outcome indicators into all priority education policies by setting numerical objective each year from 2014 to 2018 and focus on each main ECE services such as Public Pre-school, Community Pre-school, Private Preschool, and Home Based Education Program.

## **Preschool context**

In Cambodia, Public Pre-school is the first intervention for any young children from age 3 to 5 years old in all aspects and in all levels such as majority children, ethnic-minority children, disable children etc. There are two different kind of public pre-schools; the separated pre-school and the pre-classes attached in primary school.

The government establishes the facility and infrastructure and the budget for preschools such as teacher salaries, electricity payment, water payment and small repairing. Other kind of support to pre-school from government is the operation budget support and budget for support learning activities (young children received 9000 riels per year from 3 ages to 5 in all kinds of preschools).

## **Problem statement**

The teachers are trained by the government for two years. Recently we have the remaining teachers; most of them did not well in using the pre-school teaching methods or teaching styles. On the other hand, some of them are primary school teachers, and have used only primary teaching methods. How can they implement preschool curriculum well? Actually most pre-school teachers did not understand our new curriculum without guidelines for interpret activities to their teaching. Moreover, teachers do not understand the Child Right Convention in classroom or in preschool because they still teach in the teacher center style and in problems to understand participation, particularly for the young children in preschool.

## **3. Purpose**

The project aim to develop the teacher knowledge in practicing the new Preschool Curriculum that have integrated the 3Ps (protection, provision and participation) in general and in particularly participation. Our main objective is to encourage children to participate in activities and make decision by their own. Regarding to the Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Right of the Child mentioned in article 12 on page 152 paragraph 6: “A world feed for children, state commit themselves in its declaration to listen to children and ensure that participation is implemented. We must respect their right to express themselves and to participate in all matter affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity”.

Article 31, page 469, concerns the child’s rights to rest, leisure, play, and recreational activities and to participate in cultural and artistic life. At page 470 in the first paragraph mention of principal 7 of the 1959 declaration of the Rights of the Child, state: “the child have full opportunity to play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purpose as education”. The same article raise the right to “engage in play and recreation activities appropriate to the age of the child” that integrate to many element of a preschool curriculum like sport, performing and creative arts, mathematics and technology and so forth.

## **Target group and stakeholders**

Our target groups of the project are the teachers and the school principal in one public preschool, “Battambang Town Preschool” in Battambang province.

The stakeholders are Provincial of Education (PoE) and District of Education (DoE) officers, which are responsible for the Early Childhood Education in Battambang province. These persons from DoE and PoE will also participate in the training and can be seen as both target persons and stakeholders. We expect to have persons from the Curriculum Development Department, Teacher Training Department and Preschool Teacher Training Center involved in developing the guidelines for using the curricu-

lum. We have presented this project to UNICEF to ask for some kind support such as financial support and renovate concept into the Pre-school Curriculum Guideline. Early Childhood Education officer at ministry level will support the developing of the curriculum guideline and monitoring, especially develop the training materials and conduct the training.

## 4. Methodology and activities

The team has identified many activities for implementing the project plan. Respond to the first output of this project, the team will develop a new guideline for preschool teachers so that their activities will integrate the right to participate in learning activities for the child. This guideline will be a part of the revised Preschool Curriculum.

Before we started the process of preparation the guideline for preschool, Ministry of Education Youth and Sport suggested conducting a Consultative Workshop on Preschool Curriculum Revision. The workshop, initiated by the ECED and MoEYS, invited all relevant stakeholders for a three- day – workshop in Phnom Pehn. The Minister of Education opened it and key-note speaker was the Director for UNICEF. Our mentor Lena Andersson was also invited to make a presentation of the Swedish Pre- School System. The purpose of the workshop was to provide case studies of preschool implementation and to discuss preschool curricula from other countries and listen to the suggestions from the stakeholders from 12 provinces. During the Workshop, batch 19 also have the occasion to meet the school principal of the target school of the project and presented the project informally to her and to ask for permission to apply the CRC context to her school for our pilot project. In the discussion, she agreed to apply more CRC context to her school and open her school for our project.

After attending the progress workshop in Zambia, CRC change agents batch 19 has call CRC change agents Cambodia team to attend the meeting two times. Firstly, CRC batch 19 presented the objectives and activities to the big group and also presented the process of implementation activities to the team. It was help on 21st June 2014 at Early Childhood Education Department of Ministry of Education Youth and Sport. Secondly, the second meeting has conducted for CRC team batch 19, the meeting help on 18th - 20th August 2014 at ECED office, MoEYS. During this meeting, the team has developed the training module and training materials to train the target teachers and school principal. The team also designed tools for monitoring activities for consultative in the training.

Before we trained the target group, the team has met the PoE, DoE and School Principal in the target preschool school on 20th July, 2014 at Battambang Pre-school. On the 22nd - 24th September 2014, the CRC team has conducted the training on “How to implement CRC, in particular the 3P’s in the pre-school classroom”. 20 participants participated in the training, from Battambang Krong Preschool, the Principal, 7 Preschool teachers, and School Principal from Chea Sim Preschool, 5 Preschool Teachers, District of Education Battambang Krong, and Provincial of Education Battambang Province. The purpose of the training was to build capacity to the SP, the

teachers, the DoE and the PoE on how to apply CRC, the 3P's, especially the participation of the children during class activities, such as group discussion, group playing, and some more activities in class. We did apply the pre, post-test to the trainees, and discuss the monitoring tools during the training session. The second training on CRC, 3P's and pre-mathematics at preschool level has been conducted at Battambang preschool with 20 participants from Battambang Krong Preschool. The purpose of the training was to strengthen knowledge and capacity of preschool teacher on teaching methods, which included the 3P's, participation in particular, for improving the children's activities in the class.

After the training sessions, the CRC change agents met two times for monitoring activities. First, the monitoring visit held on 19th September, 2015, and it was a joint visit to the PoE and the DoE's Battambang province. The monitoring took one day and the team observed the teaching activities from morning session. In the afternoon, the team has provided feedback to SP and teachers. The second monitoring visit happened on the 5th January, 2015. During January 2015, the CRC team has met to collect all information, do analysis, and wrap up to write the final report.

## 5. Results

After the Consultative Workshop in Phnom Pehn, the participants of the conference have understood the status of the Preschool curriculum implementation in Cambodia and they have agreed that we need to revise the Preschool Curriculum. They did also agree to start preparations for developing the Core Curriculum at National level, and let the schools identify activities based on learning outcome in the core curriculum for practicing learning and teaching activities (Early Childhood Department, 2014). The guest speakers at the Consultative Workshop have presented overviews of Preschool Curriculum in general, and focus on the development skills needed for the child in the 21st centuries and in current situation of the Cambodian context.

ECED invited persons from relevant stakeholder such as Primary Education Department, Curriculum Development Department, Teacher Training Department, and Development partners such as UNICEF, WB, UNESCO, Plan International, Save the Children and **our batch 19 CRC team**. The Ministry of Education Youth and Sport arranged working groups and presented the persons from the above organization to participate to provide input to the curriculum (Early Childhood Department, 2014). It means that our project have risen to the national level!

At the first meeting on June, the CRC team 19 tried to find out and did research to collect any documents related to our project such as teaching guideline of pre-mathematic, pre-writing, sport, creativities and arts. Then the team integrated the CRC into the content guide for teachers to motivate the child participation in all steps in the class. At the second meeting, the team showed the integrated preschool guideline documents, the training documents, and the materials that had been developed during the meetings. Training schedule, pre-test and post-test, PowerPoint slide, copy handout, LCD, flip chart was prepared and ready for the training.

20 participants have received the training on integrating the CRC in the teaching guideline. We can see a changing attitude of the teachers and the school principal. Before the training, around 40% got positive results from the pre-test and after they got 85% from the post-test.

Two classes have received visits from CRC change agent team. We observed that many children in the class were so active and enjoyed teaching and learning activities. The team gave some advice to the teachers, such as the way to manage the children in big class and how to focus on children who are not much involved in class.

On the second monitoring, we follow up recommendation from the first meeting, we observed that teachers has changed and followed the team's advices. The team also discussed with the school principal and gave some suggestion. A clean environment is important as well as more playground materials. The playing materials could motivate the children's participation in all activities.

## 6. Discussion and Reflection

The Consultative Workshop was very important in providing information to all stakeholders, especially on the challenges of using the current curriculum. This information motivated our team to build commitment to revise it. Since we were invited to the committee, our team also had the chance to participate in it. We used this occasion to provide input of our CRC knowledge in the new Curriculum. As a separate task, our CRC team conducted the meeting on preparing the guideline for Preschool teachers, and integrate the Child Right Convention into it, especially focus on the participation for the children in learning activities. Moreover, the CRC team needed to identify baseline indicators of the starting project into the pilot school and in the end of the pilot process; we could easily identify the impact of the project.

After we applied the training to the teachers, the positive way of teaching with full participation from the children has been received and there is now a wish to motivate the children and involve them in all activities in and out classes. Teachers have understood the impact of the CRC and the 3 P's. They suggested changing their daily lesson plan and follow the CRC content that the CRC team has taught them. 80 % of the children in the target school are more active compared to the baseline of children shying, crying, and fearing.

The school principal is paying more attention to the CRC, she motivates the teachers and support them with teaching and learning materials and enforcement to get more participation in and out class. She suggested establishing Parental Education in her school, to apply CRC to children at home and everywhere when children have caregivers close by them.

The School Committee has also understood the CRC message, especially the importance of children participation. They suggested making a School Plan supporting child participation, which followed the instructions of our CRC team. Provincial and National Level of Education have understood the importance of the CRC and learned a lot from the target school and the project for change. The team



has recommended implementing of training modules such as Community Preschool Training module and Parental Education Program Training Module and the Early Childhood Education at National Level has agreed on that.

## 7. Way Forward

In the process of revision the Preschool Curriculum, the committee conducted many meetings and workshops (see appendix 1 and 2). In parallel with this process, our CRC team also conducted meetings in preparation for the guideline for preschool teachers.

Our CRC team set May 2014 for preparation the guideline and training materials. In July 2014, the team trained the preschool teachers and the target groups in the project. During the new school year 2014-2015 the teachers applied the activities to the children; then the team did the monitoring supported to the teachers in teaching process.

A Preschool Resource Center (PRC) will be built in Battambang province. The PRC function is to implement teaching and learning activities into other schools and to support technical assistant to other Community Preschools, Home based Education/ Parental Education Program and other Preschools, which are poor in technical assistance. The PRC will get a operational budget and more capacity to monitor and support their activities (Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, 2014). Our target Preschool is a key school to other ECE program in the province and will held monthly meetings, trainings, and monitoring activities.

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# CHINA

*China* had its first team in batch 1 (2003) and in total 13 teams and 38 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	3	0	
Region/Province/District	30	7	Teacher Training
Local	5	6	

**Table 1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

The Child Rights Programme is focusing on Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region in China. The implementation of CRC in education, learning and teaching has been gradually dominated by participants from *teacher training institutions*, and directed against *participation* by students in schools and student teachers at Inner Mongolia Normal University, Tongliao Vocational College, and Chifeng University.



**Area:** 9,596,960 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 1, 393, 786, 836 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Beijing

**Independence:** 1912/1949

**Official Language:** Mandarin

**Network Country Coordinator:**

Sun Baijun,

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# CHINA

Implementing Participatory Approach to Enhance Students' Participation in English Classes: A Pilot Study in No. 19 and No. 38 Middle Schools in Hohhot City of China

*Wang Xiaohua, Cao Yiming and Su Rina*

## 1. Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” (CRC) on 20 November 1989. After China ratified CRC in 1992, related laws and regulations are ratified to protect interests of child. CRC concerns 3Ps - Provision, Protection, and Participation. As the third pillar of CRC, participation is one of the guiding principles of the Convention, as well as one of its basic challenges (Fauziati et al., 2011:67).

Favorable results have been achieved thanks to all change agents' endeavor in improving teachers' awareness of CRC since the first change agent from Inner Mongolia attending the international training program on CRC in 2005. Nevertheless, all three change agents of this project still find a common problem in English classes of middle schools in Hohhot, which is a lack of students' participation in the class. Most English classes are teacher-centered rather than student-centered, which leads to inefficiency of teachers' teaching and students' learning. Therefore, it is important to conduct present project to train more English teachers with knowledge of CRC and strategies of implementing participatory teaching approach into their classes, and to enhance students' participation in class. In order to achieve these purposes, this present changing project will be conducted at No. 19 and No. 38 Middle Schools in the City of Hohhot in China from October of 2013 to November of 2014 as a pilot study.

## 2. Frame of Reference

Several provisions in the CRC reflect children's right to participation. Article 12 of the CRC states that “children have the right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard—

within the family, the school or the community” (Unicef, 2007). The principle affirms that children have the right to express their views and requires those views be heard and given due weight. It recognizes the potential of children to enrich decision-making processes, to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and actors of change.

Article 13 states that “children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others. The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing or writing” (Unicef, 2007). Participatory teaching approach emphasizes the dominant position of students, requiring students to bring up their own ideas in the interaction with peers and teachers. The approach could effectively stimulate students’ learning initiative, self-awareness and creativity, and could improve teaching effectiveness. In addition, according to the newly revised Chinese National Curriculum for Middle Schools (2012), teachers are encouraged to design activities to participate all students in the class by applying participatory approaches. Teachers are suggested to implement task-based and problem-solving approaches to ensure all students could have equal chances to participate in the class.

However, this objective fails to be implemented fully in most middle schools in Xincheng District of Hohhot City, especially in the target English classes of No. 19 and No. 38 Middle Schools. Both schools are ordinary urban middle schools in the Xincheng District of Hohhot. Most English classes still follow teacher-centered strategies, rather than student-centered or CRC-based approaches. The English teachers have received basic trainings on the new curriculum reform and have been equipped with basic concepts and strategies of participatory teaching and learning. However, most teachers still lack the knowledge and experiences in how to improve efficiency of English language teaching through enhancing students’ participation in class. More importantly, students in these two schools are lack of awareness about CRC and of protecting their rights of participation in classes.

### 3. Purpose

This ongoing project is a pilot project aiming at enhancing junior middle school students’ participations and performances in English classes in No. 19 and No. 38 middle schools in Hohhot. Specifically, the project aims at 1) promoting both teachers’ and students’ awareness of CRC; 2) equipping teachers with approaches and skills of implementing participatory teaching approach; 3) improving students’ participation and performances in class.

The ultimate purpose of the project is to expand the scale and scope of the implementation of participatory approach (PA) to more Chinese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes on different levels and to other subjects. By disseminating the idea of CRC and CRC-based participatory teaching methodology, more students could benefit and could improve their performances in classes. And more importantly, the traditional teacher-centered classes could be transformed to classes that are more student-centered and CRC-friendly.

## 4. Methodology (Activities)

In the past two years, three change agents went to No. 19 and No. 38 Middle Schools frequently to implement the project. The following are the activities carried out from November 2013 to December 2014 in order to fulfill the intended goals of the project.

### Phase 1: Introducing the project

#### *1. Identifying stakeholders and target groups*

The first thing before carrying out the project is to identify the two target schools, the stakeholders and target groups. The basic information of the two target schools could be seen in the table below. The Stakeholders of the project include the principals and deputy principals of both No. 19 and No. 38 Middle Schools, fellow researchers from English Teaching and Research Section of Xincheng District and teacher trainers from School of Foreign Languages of Inner Mongolia Normal University (IMNU). The target groups include six English teachers and around 520 students from eight classes of Grade Seven and Eight from No. 19 Middle School. And two English teachers and around 260 students from four classes of Grade Seven from No. 38 Middle School. In order to introduce the project plan and CRC, as well as to obtain approval from the administrators of the schools and to discuss about the participatory approach with teachers, several coordination meetings were held in both two target schools and IMNU.

No. 19 Middle School	No. 38 Middle School
Urban junior middle	Urban junior and senior middle
65 students/class	54 students/class
More applicants (Popular)	Less applicants (Less popular)
Strong support from the principal	Strong support from the principal

**Figure 1:** General information of the two target middle schools

#### *2. Holding coordination meeting with principals and target teachers at No. 19 Middle School*

Ms. Wang Xiaohua and Ms. Su Rina met with the executive leaders including the principal, vice principal, chief of administration office and four English teachers from No. 19 Middle School on November 8 of 2013. The Principal Mr. Li Shenggui, deputy principal, chief of the administration office, chief of English office and four target English teachers were presented in the meeting. Ms. Wang introduced the purposes and plan of the project. Then, Ms. Su shared basic content of CRC and knowledge of CRC-based participatory teaching and learning approach with the teachers. Finally, all the presented leaders and teachers held a heated discussion on the implementation of the

project, problems in their English classes and ways of applying participatory approach. The target teachers all welcomed new changes that would be taken place in their classes. A tentative working schedule of activities that would be done in the following year was worked out with the teachers.

### *3. Holding coordination meeting with principals and target teachers at No. 38 Middle School*

After the project being carried out in No. 19 Middle School, the principal of No. 38 Middle School was very interested in the project and would like become the second experimental school. Due to the reasons that both No. 38 Middle School and No. 19 Middle School share a lot in common in school size and quality, and considering that having another school involved into the project could expand active influence of the project, the three change agents decided to add No. 38 Middle School as the second target school. Two English teachers from Grade Seven with their four classes are the target groups. Ms. Wang Xiaohua visited the school on December 26 of 2013 and had a coordination meeting with the Principal Yang Ji'en and other administrative staff, who were all supportive to the project. A tentative working schedule was settled with the two teachers.

## **Phase 2: Conducting preliminary research**

### *1. Observing English classes at No. 19 Middle School*

After the coordination meeting, Ms. Wang Xiaohua and Ms. Su Rina went to observe six classes given by the six target English teachers, Zhang Wei, Wang Yan and Jia Bingting from Grade Seven, and Li Qiongze, Wang Tingyun and Li Zhiyuan from Grade Eight on November 14 and November 15 of 2013. All these classes have an average class size of 65 students. Each class lasts 40 minutes. Parts of these classes were videotaped for further reference and research, besides which detailed lecture records were taken down by the two change agents.

### *2. Observing English classes at No. 38 Middle School*

On January 6 of 2014, Ms. Wang Xiaohua went to the school to fulfill her duty of supervising teaching and also to observe the two teachers' classes. She observed Ms. Ren Hongxia and Ms. Liu Jing's classes. The students are from Class One to Class Four of Grade Seven with an average class size of 54 students. Ms. Wang took down notes of the lectures and took some pictures. After the classes, she held a discussion with the two teachers and exchanged ideas about the design of class activities and teaching approaches.

### *3. Conducting interviews with target teachers and some students from No. 19 Middle School*

The observation of classes was followed by interviews with the six teachers and two students from each class. The interviews were conducted by all three change agents on the afternoon of November 15 of 2013. Interview questions given to the teachers centered on their knowledge about CRC by focusing on child's right of participation, participatory teaching approach, and major problems in their classes, expectation to the changes brought by the implementation of this project, etc. (See Appendix 1). Students were randomly picked up from the names lists. Questions given to the students were mainly about their knowledge about CRC especially the right of participation and expression in class, and about effectiveness of present English classes and teacher's teaching approach (See Appendix 1).

### **Phase 3: Training target teachers**

#### *1. Compiling a training portfolio of CRC-related materials and research papers on participatory approach*

Considering the limited time and resources, in order to equip the teachers with basic knowledge about CRC and participatory teaching approach in a short time, change agents provided teachers a list of references and resources related to these two fields and compiled them into a portfolio.

The self-study training materials included a newly-compiled training handbook titled *Child Rights and School Education* written by change agents from Batch 17. Written in Chinese, the handbook is easy to read and ready to use, and is informative in basic concepts and knowledge about CRC and school education and is rich in case studies, which could provide the teachers with a comprehensive glimpse of CRC-based education. Moreover, the teachers were provided with some good books and research papers on participatory teaching approach, both in Chinese and English. By reading these materials, teachers were required to reflect on their own classroom teaching and to work out ways to utilize this approach in class. Last but not the least, some video clips taken by change agents from Sweden were shared with the teachers for reflection and discussion.

#### *2. Holding a workshop on CRC and participatory teaching approach at IMNU*

Even though reading related references could help teachers to familiarize with the topic, it was far more than enough. Therefore, a training workshop was held on November 27 of 2013 at IMNU. All target teachers from both middle schools and all change agents from previous batches at IMNU attended the workshop. Ms. Narisu, the chair of English Department of IMNU, who is also an experienced English teacher trainer and change agent of Batch 14, gave a lecture on CRC and participatory teaching approach. Her presentation was then followed by a heated discussion among all teach-

ers and change agents on problems teachers encountered in the actual classrooms and their reflections on CRC and CRC-based participatory approach. In this workshop, all teachers reached unanimous agreement that it was important to improve students' participation in English classes and to change present approach of lecturing knowledge in the class.

### *3. Observing demonstration class given by Li Zhiyuan at No. 19 Middle School*

It is significant to transfer words on the paper to actual changes in the class. Thus, change agents of the project planned a demonstration class on December 10 of 2013 at No. 19 Middle School open to all teachers. The class was given by Mr. Li Zhiyuan who was one of the target teachers. He designed a lesson on "Accident in daily life" by utilizing lots of activities to attract students to participate in class. About 20 teachers including the principal and Mentor Per Wickenberg crowded in the classroom. All teachers and students enjoyed the class very much.

### *4. Holding a workshop with Mentor Per Wickenberg at No. 19 Middle School*

Right after the demonstration class, a brief workshop was held to discuss and reflect on the lesson. Professor Wickenberg was invited to give comments on the lesson and all the teachers shared their positive reflections on this participatory class. Furthermore, teachers asked questions to professor Per on CRC and Swedish school system. All teachers attending the workshop expressed positive remarks. They were encouraged to further implement the participatory approach and bring positive changes to their classes.

### *5. Target teachers taking training courses at IMNU*

On January 7 of 2015, Professor Wang Caiqin from Henan Normal University was invited by IMNU to give training lectures to middle school backbone teachers in Inner Mongolia. Since Professor Wang is an expert in China on curriculum design and reform, we invited the target teachers from both schools to attend the lectures. In the lecture, Professor Wang introduced the reasons and ways of implementing the participatory approach in English classes and had very good interactions with the target teachers.

### *6. Applying for research fund to support the implementation of the project*

Although the project was ably supported by both No. 19 and No. 38 Middle Schools, the schools could not provide any financial support to the target teachers. Teachers' experimental activities and planned practices might be limited by lack of financial support. For instance, from the interview with teacher, it was known that they felt a shortage of fund to buy more visual aids or other important teaching aids. In order to resolve teachers' concerns, Mr. Cao actively worked on applying for educational fund from the Education Department of Inner Mongolia. A fund of 20 thousand RMB Yuan (equaling to 3000 US Dollars) was successfully granted to the project at the end of December



of 2013. At the beginning of the spring semester, the first batch of teaching aids was handed out to all the target teachers. Careful budget will be further planned in order to spend the fund effectively. Continuous support will be given to the teachers throughout the process of implementation of the project.

#### *7. Establishing a network of the principal, stakeholders, target teachers and change agents from IMNU by creating a WeChat group*

In order to enhance the communication with all the stakeholders, we created a WeChat group. WeChat is the most popular instant message tool in China. People could share messages and any internet links or resources instantly. The tool is very effective in helping us to release and share notices of events, to discuss on classes activities, to share opinions and to share recourses quickly.

### **Phase 4: Monitoring the implementations**

#### *1. Designing observation tools*

In order to better monitor the target teachers' implementation of PA in classes, we designed an class observation sheet (See Appendix 2). The observation sheet was designed based on the careful research on existed observation tools and the good consultation with the target English teachers from the two middle schools and professors from IMNU. In addition to this observation sheet, we designed a checklist for teachers to assess and evaluate students' participation and performance in classes.

#### *2. Observing classes at both target middle schools*

Three change agents went to No. 19 Middle School on Oct. 16 and 23, Nov. 6, 12 and 22 of 2014 to observe all the six target teachers' classes. We went to No. 38 Middle School on Oct. 17 and 24, Nov. 8, 14 and 24. All the target teachers also need to observe each other's classes. While observing all these classes, they all filled out the observation sheets and had discussions with change agents after each class.

#### *3. Observing demonstration class given by Zhang Wei at No. 19 Middle School*

On Nov. 6 of 2014, Ms. Zhang Wei, one of the target teachers was selected by the school to give a demonstration class of PA in a city-level teaching contest. Over 30 contestant teachers from all over the city attended the contest and finally Ms. Zhang won the first prize in the English Group. In the following week, we invited Ms. Zhang to give a demonstration class to all target teachers. All the teachers were excited to see the effective interactions between the teacher and students, and they were inspired by the class.

#### *4. Workshops with target teachers*

At the end of the Fall semester on Dec. 26 of 2014, we organized the last workshop with target teachers. All three change agents, eight target teachers from both schools, and the deputy principal of No. 19 Middle School attended the workshop. In this workshop, Ms. Su Rina summarized and reflected on what have been done in the year and what have been changed in the class. In addition, we interviewed the teachers according to our project plan. Lastly, we discussed on the sustainability of the project. Most teachers showed they were so motivated by the project and they would continue to improve students' participation in class by applying PA in the future. The deputy principal assured that the school would give continuous support to teachers.

### **Phase 5: Assessing outcomes**

#### *1. Conducting interviews with target teachers*

The interviews were conducted in the workshop held on Dec. 26 as mentioned above (See Appendix 3). The questions are mainly about the changes after taking the training and participating in the project. To be specific, the questions are about the major benefits of implementing PA and major difficulties met in classes. The results of this post-test interview will be compared with the results of pre-test interviews to investigate changes in target teachers understanding and knowledge about CRC and PA.

#### *2. Carrying out questionnaire surveys to target students*

The questionnaire is designed by Ms. Su Rina. The major purpose is to test target students feelings and understanding about the changes taken place in their English classes (See Appendix 4). On Dec. 26, Ms. Su Rina went to the two target schools to pass out the questionnaires. We selected one ordinary class from Grade Two from each school. All students filled up the 12-item survey. 131 questionnaires were collected and analyzed.

#### *3. Summarizing results of observation sheets*

During the Fall semester while target teachers were piloting in using the PA in class, all teachers observing the classes were asked to fill out the observation sheets. At the end of December, we collected 19 copies of the sheets and analyzed them, in the hope that the results could be used as another indicator to prove the changes in students' participation and performance.

#### *4. Network meeting with change agents in Hohhot*

Followed our mentor's suggestion, change agents in Hohhot city met in a network meeting at IMNU on Jan. 8 of 2015. We three from Batch 19 gave a presentation on the work we have done. We reported all the activities have been done so far and our

reflections with all the change agents. We also got lots of suggestions from the change agents from other batches. This network meeting played a significant role in helping us summing up the project.

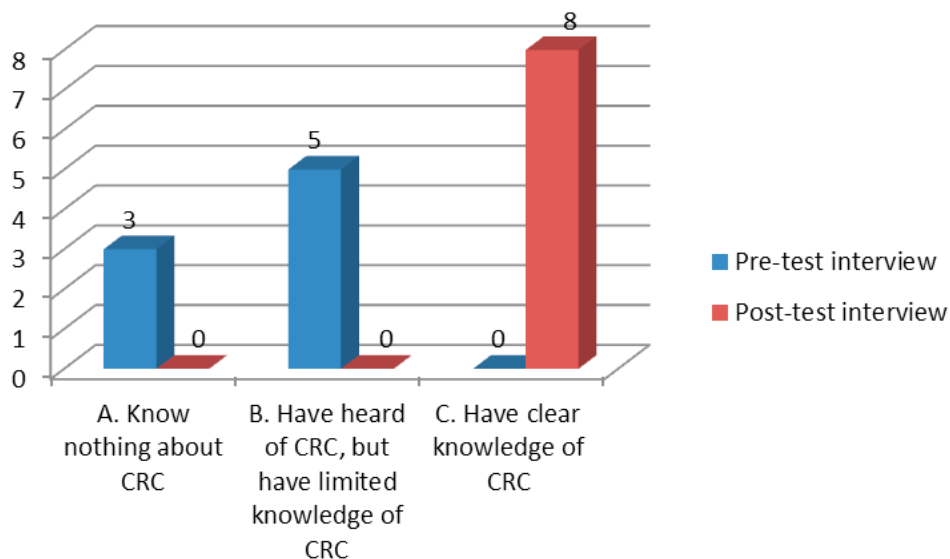
## 5. Results

So far, all the activities have been done and the preliminary purposes of the project have been realized. The following are the four major outcomes achieved.

### **Outcome 1: Stakeholders and target teachers' awareness towards CRC and knowledge about CRC-based participatory teaching and learning approach is raised**

*First*, through such activities as coordination meetings and network meetings, demonstration class and workshop with change agents and professor Per Wickenberg, principals and administration staff obtained direct and clear information about the project and more importantly, acquired basic knowledge about CRC and CRC-based participatory teaching approach. Moreover, after our target teachers attended the city-level teaching contest and won the good prize in the contest, the conception of CRC, the importance and effectiveness of PA was not only be recognized by the superior level, but also was disseminated to a larger extent of ordinary teachers.

*Second*, target English teachers knew basic theory and knowledge about CRC. Activities as listening to lectures about CRC and school education, reading related books and articles about CRC, and exchanging insights with experts in workshops ensured target teachers good opportunities to update information and refresh knowledge about child rights. The changes could be seen clearly in the results of the two interviews as shown in the following charts (See Figure Two). In the pre-test interviews, when the eight target teachers were asked whether they have heard of or knew anything about CRC, only three teachers have heard about CRC and five knew CRC but had very vague knowledge of it. One teacher told us "I heard of CRC before, but I don't know what it is about exactly." However, in the post-test interview, when the teachers were asked the same question, all eight of them expressed that they had a clear understanding of child rights after participating in this project. One teacher said, "I learnt more about the Convention. As a middle school teacher and a mother, I knew how to secure my students' equal rights in making decisions by themselves."



**Figure 2:** A comparison of target teachers' knowledge about CRC in two interviews

*Third*, target teachers knew how to implement participatory teaching approach in their classes. In the second phase of the project, teaching strategies used in present classes were fully observed and major problems were thoroughly examined. Before making any changes to the present class, it was significant to know where to start and what should be changed. Through a careful examination of English classes in these two schools and through interviewing the teachers and students, the problem of low ratio of students' participation caused by teachers' dominant lectures surfaced. In the third phase, through such activities as reading related research books and articles about participatory teaching approach, attending training workshops, implementing in class and exchanging insights with experts in workshops ensured target teachers good chances of improving their skills and experiences in implementing the approach.

By comparing the results of the two interviews conducted on target teachers, the changes could be shown clearly. In the pre-test interview, seven teachers were confident in applying this approach skillfully in the class. Although they believed it was very important to give students chances to express their opinions and practice their English, the pressure of finishing course content in limited class time hindered them from applying PA in class. Most teachers would spend more time in lecturing course content rather than in trying other teaching strategies. Therefore, they did not care about doing research on PA and practicing the strategy in their classes. While in the post-test interview, teachers raised a different voice. All eight of them were excited and confident when they were asked to introduce their participatory activities in class. Some teachers designed group projects for students to research and present on the traditional Chinese festival Mid-Autumn Day. Some teachers assigned group tasks for students to perform role-plays on "What will you do if a UFO arrives". Some teachers designed a vocabulary contest in which all the groups of students competed heatedly to win a

good prize. Consequently, it could be summarized that the target teachers could design and apply PA activities according to their students' levels, teaching environment and teaching objectives.

### Outcome 2: Teachers successfully implement the participatory approach in the experimental English classes

At foremost, in December of 2013, after the preliminary stage of training, teachers started to implement more pair work activities and group activities according to different teaching objectives in classes to enhance students' participation. The demonstration class given by Mr. Li Zhiyuan from No. 19 Middle School was a good example. Mr. Li introduced the topic of lesson by implementing lots of group activities, role plays and even dramas, thanks to which the class was highly student-centered. Students had more chances to express their ideas and feelings and to practice their English. Students were attracted and highly concentrated on the class content in the class. Therefore, it was shown that both teachers and students benefit from the participatory class.

In addition, the results of the post-test questionnaire given to students indicated that teachers' implementation of PA yielded to positive achievement. First, students' overall talk time in class is improved. As Figure Three shows, more than 55% percent of students believe their average talk time in each English class is improved to 20-30 minutes (The normal class is 40-minute long). Students could have more chances to raise their voices and to express their opinions. Second, students' language skills get progressed. When students were asked to choose which skills were improved in the last year, 95 of them believed their speaking skills were improved (See Figure Four). 77 students thought their collaborative skills were improved. 52 students even believed that PA class could be helpful in improving their performances in final exams.

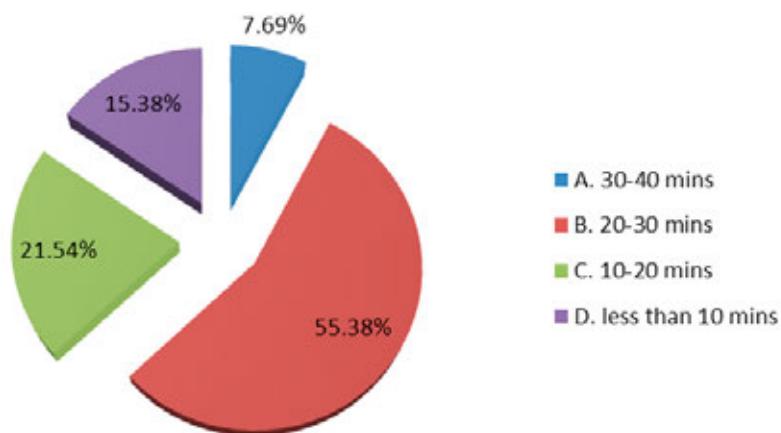
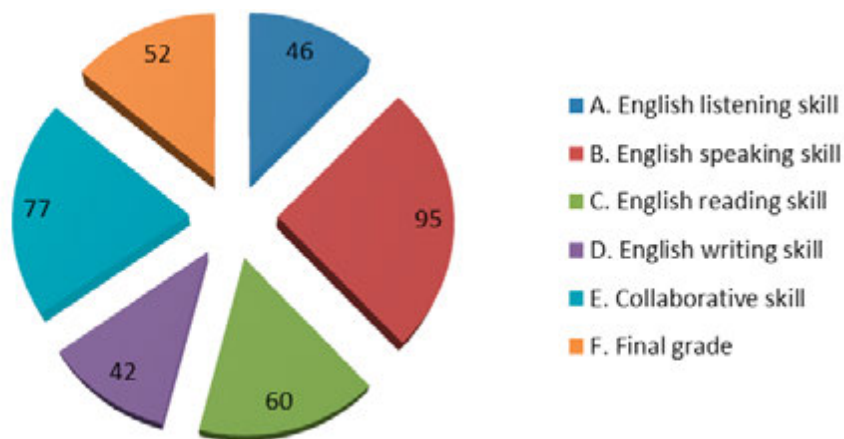


Figure 3: "Students' average talk time in class"

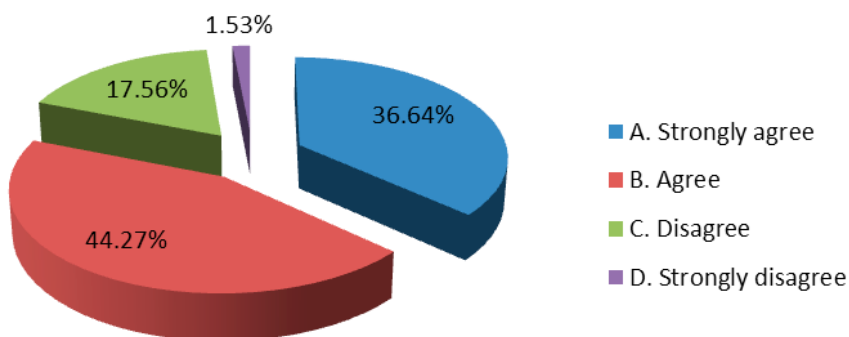


**Figure 4:** “In PA class, which skills are improved?” (multiple-choice question)

### Outcome 3: Students become interested and active in participating in English class activities

*Firstly*, through all the class observations and the analyses of the observation sheets, we happily found that target students could participate actively in pair-work and group work activities designed by teachers. They were active in participating in such activities. They could decide their roles by negotiating with group members. They could present their own opinions and cooperate with peers skillfully to finish group projects.

*Secondly*, according to the results of the questionnaire given to the students, 80% of students became interested in participating in class activities in the past year (See Figure Five). Interests are best teacher. Accordingly, students’ overall performances improve tremendously. One target teacher said in the post-test interview, “The positive effect of PA is especially obvious on the inferior students. Through different pair and group tasks, they started to speak in the class confidently and became active in learning English.”



**Figure 5:** “You become very interested in participating in class activities.”

#### **Outcome 4: The scale of implementation of PA is extended to other subjects**

In addition to realizing all the commitments proposed to be done in the project plan, an unexpected outcome was achieved. Based on thorough investigations and careful discussions with us, the principal of No. 19 Middle School was so motivated and inspired by our project that he decided to launch a large scale of teaching reform within the school with regard to implementing the CRC-based participatory teaching methodology to all the subjects. The school has established a committee to draft the blueprint of the reform plan. Specific plans and actions will be implemented from March the 2015.

## **6. Discussion and Reflection**

Although some significant progress stimulated by the activities has been made, there is still a long way to go to bring fundamental changes to the target classes. The following part is about our reflections mainly on the salient difficulties and challenges we are facing.

### **1. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of participatory approach in target classes and assessing the increase and quality of students' participation in a short period is difficult.**

The implementation of the project lasts only one year. It is difficult to go through the whole process of teacher training, implementing the participatory approach, monitoring teachers' use of the approach and evaluating effectiveness of the approach in such a limited period of time. Any mistakes or failure in one step would affect the practice of following steps. Moreover, it is challenging to assess whether and how well every student participate in a certain class, especially to classes with over 60 students. In addition, there are no existing reliable and suitable tools to evaluate and assess students' participation in class.

### **2. Implementation of participatory teaching approach in Chinese classrooms still faces lots of challenges.**

To begin with, the big class size, limited class time and pressure of unified exams all might hinder teachers to carry out participatory activities all the time. Furthermore, the existing local beliefs about language teaching and learning emphasize more on memorization or understanding and analytical ability. The teachers tend to be respected as the source of knowledge, and much time tend to be spent upon explication of the structure of language and the usage of words through detailed textual study. In addition, traditional teaching methods still play a dominant role in Chinese language classrooms as a result of the backwash effect of exams, teachers' limited exposure to and experience of new methods, and the negative response of students, parents and administrators to new methods.

### **3. Enhancing the sustainability of in-service teachers' training requires long-term and continuous collective efforts.**

Target students will take entrance exams to senior high school one or two years later, both teachers and students might go back to the traditional teacher-centered lectures again while facing the pressure of harsh unified exams. Steps to enhance the prospect of the project's longer-term sustainability require efforts from both the project team and the levels beyond it. Otherwise, the previous efforts might be in vain and the changes could not take place sustainably.

### **4. To expand the scope and scale of project to other subjects needs to go through a rough process.**

Most change agents of this training program in China are either English teachers or having some background relating to language teaching. Language teachers are supposed to be open to new concepts and quick to react against new changes, because of which the project is conducted in English classes. Based on preliminary research, lots of teachers from other subjects or other better middle schools are reluctant to take part in the project. Nevertheless, a single class could hardly change students' situation fundamentally. No matter how difficult it might be, it is important to expand the scale and scope of the project to more subjects and more levels. If the approach is implemented in other subject in the future, it is also urgent to research on how to implement well.

## **7. Way Forward**

Anticipating the challenges and difficulties could help us take further steps to fulfil the ultimate objects of the project. After finishing all these phases of activities in the project, we would like to continue our efforts as change agents.

### **1. Continuing the project and conducting more research**

Having established such solid cooperation with the two target schools, we would like to continue the project. For example, we will continue to monitor the efficiency of target teachers' implementation of the participatory approach, and to evaluate students' progress. We will compare target students' performances and grades with those of the non-controlled classes. We will also collaborate with the reform committee of No. 19 Middle School on implementing PA in other subject.

### **2. Designing specific methods and ready-to-use activities fitting Chinese context to facilitate teachers' implementation of participatory approach**

When interviewing the target teachers, one of their biggest concerns is how to implement the participatory approach in big classes. Therefore, in the following phase, change agents will work together with target teachers and network of change agents,



especially change agents from Batch 20, to design and compile a handbook of ready-to-use participatory activities which is based on the Grade Seven and Grade Eight curriculum and fits Chinese context. And more training workshops could be held to give teachers continuous support.

### **3. Networking as the primary aspiration to help the project develops sustainably**

First, a website could be set up to strengthen communication among target teachers and the network of change agents. Second, we could build the two target schools as the teaching research base for CRC project to enhance interaction with the two schools in the long run. Furthermore, alternative modes of training like distance learning and online workshops could be applied to give teachers follow-up support.

### **4. Efforts needed to be made by the parties beyond the change agents**

Support and collaboration of relevant parties like the Education Department of Inner Mongolia and CRC centre of Inner Mongolia are needed for further development of the project. We will take full advantage of government website or local media to disseminate CRC and the project. We will also continue to apply for more research fund or grant and work with more research institutions to arouse more people's awareness of CRC.

To summarize, the change agents of this project believe that successful innovation depends on realistically grounded knowledge and actions relating to specific social, cultural and educational context. On one hand, CRC concepts and participatory approach need adaptation. On the other hand, local perceptions and practices also need upgrading to meet the new need of this new age. More importantly, this project highlights longer-term sustainability rather than the instant effect. Therefore, working together with Mentor Per and the network of change agents in Hohhot, we will do continuous endeavour throughout the process to achieve the ultimate purposes of the project.

## 8. List of References

Fauziati, Endang et al. (Team Indonesia) (2011). "Improving Students' Protection and Participation through Child Friendly Classroom Management" *from Change Projects from the International Training Programme: Child Rights, Classroom and School Management (Final Reports Batch 15)*, Lund: Lund University Commissioned Education.

Unicef (2007). *The Handbook of Child Rights Implementation*.

# Appendixes

## Appendix 1.

### Pre-test Interview to Target Group

#### *a. Introduction*

1. Which year did you start to teach English at this school?
2. What is your educational background before work as a teacher ?

#### *b. Knowledge about CRC and CRC awareness*

3. Explain anything you know about CRC or child rights.
4. Do you think it is important to give students chances to express ideas in class ? Why and Why not ?

#### *c. Knowledge about participatory approach*

5. Have you ever implemented participatory approach in your class ? Why and why not ?
6. If you are asked to implement this approach in your class, what is your biggest concern ?

#### *d. Problems or challenges in teaching the course*

7. Please list any problems or challenges you meet in teaching this course.
8. Do your students like your teaching?

#### *e. Expectations to the project*

9. What are your expectations towards this project?
10. Are you positive or pessimistic about implementing participatory approach in your class? Why?

### Pre-test Interview to Target students

1. How much time do you have in each English class to express your opinions?
2. How much time do you have in each class to share ideas and discuss with your peers?
3. When you make mistakes, what does your teacher say? Can you give an example?
4. What dominates the class more, your teacher or the students?
5. Do you like your teacher's class? If yes, why? If not, why?

Appendix 2.  
Observation Sheet (Chinese)

“参与式”课堂教学评价模型

评课人姓名：\_\_\_\_\_ 科目：\_\_\_\_\_ 课题名称：\_\_\_\_\_ 时间：\_\_\_\_\_

指标	评 价 要 素			达 到 程 度			
				A	B	C	D
情绪 状态	老师有饱满的精神状态；探讨知识的激情。						
	学生有适度的紧张感；对知识的探求欲望。						
参与 交往 状态	学生与老师、学生与学生之间相互尊重、理解、平等。						
	学生对学习感兴趣，积极主动参与各项活动。						
	学生和学生、学生和老师、学生和教材之间保持多向、丰富、和谐、有效的信息交流。						
	* 有的学生能出色地参与教的活动。						
思维 状态	学生在探究学习的过程中能发现、提出问题。						
	学生和学生、学生和老师、学生和教材之间围绕着学习目标对问题进行有效的分析与讨论。						
	学生通过分析及讨论能较好地解释或解决问题。						
	* 学生能提出具有挑战性与独创性的问题与见解。						
学习 达成 状态	学生在不同程度上都有喜悦和成功的体验。						
	学生掌握了必要的基础知识与技能。						
	学生在各自的基础上都获得了进一步发展的能力。						
	* 学生全身心地投入到学习的过程中，出现了课已完，意未尽的感人场面。						
其他 教学 特色 评价 等级							
评语 (改进建议)	A	B	C	D			

## **Appendix 3.**

### **Post-test Interview to Target Teachers**

#### **a. Background information**

1. Which year did you start to teach English at this school? What is your professional background?
2. When and how did you hear about participatory approach (PA)? When did you start to utilize this approach in your class ? What drives you to implement it ?
3. Have you ever attended any training program on PA? If yes, please list them.

#### **b. Knowledge about CRC and CRC awareness**

4. After participating in this project, what did you learn about CRC or child rights ? Please give specific examples.
5. Do you think it is important to give students chances to express ideas and participate actively in class ? Why and Why not ?
6. How would you describe the roles and relationship of the teacher and students ?

#### **c. Knowledge about participatory approach**

7. Do you have any difficulties in designing PA activities in accordance with your teaching objectives? If yes, please give specific examples.
8. What are the most successful PA activities have you designed in the class in this semester?

#### **d. Reflections on the project**

9. After you implemented PA in you class, what are the biggest benefits or changes brought to your students and your class?
10. After you implemented PA in you class, what are the biggest problems or challenges ?
11. Are you positive or pessimistic about continuing to implement PA in your class? Why?
12. If you would like to continue to work on improving students' participation and performance in class, what kinds of help would you expect to get from your school, the local Education Department and IMNU?

## Appendix 4

### Post-test Questionnaire to Target Students (Chinese)

#### 关于初中英语课堂参与式教学活动的调查问卷

各位同学：

你们好！

非常感谢你接受这份调查，并提供所需的数据，你的意见对我们的研究至关重要。请在相应选项前打√（请注意：如果是单选题，你只能选择一个答案，如果是多选题，你可以选择一个或多个答案）或在横线上填写相应内容。请根据你的实际情况和真实想法回答下列问题。非常感谢！

你的性别： 男  女

你所在年级： 初一  初二  初三

你的英语成绩： 非常好  中上等  中下等  较差

- 
1. 你认为你能主动融入英语课堂教学中去，跟着老师的节奏学习英语。[单选题]  
 A. 非常同意  B. 同意  C. 一般  D. 不同意  E. 非常不同意
  2. 你对英语课堂教学内容非常感兴趣，非常愿意参与到英语教学中去。[单选题]  
 A. 非常同意  B. 同意  C. 一般  D. 不同意  E. 非常不同意
  3. 与过去相比，英语老师在本学期把更多的课堂时间留给与学生进行互动和练习。[单选题]  
 A. 非常同意  B. 同意  C. 一般  D. 不同意  E. 非常不同意
  4. 这学期中，英语老师给你在课堂表现英语能力(如演讲或对话表演等)的平均次数为\_\_\_\_\_。  
[单选题]  
 A. 0次  B. 1-2次  C. 3-4次  D. 5-8次  E. 10次以上
  5. 按每节课40分钟计算，平均每节英语课老师会安排大概\_\_\_\_\_的时间与学生进行互动，让学生有机会参与到课堂中去。[单选题]  
 A. 30-40分钟  B. 20-30分钟  C. 10-20分钟  
 D. 10分钟以下  E. 基本没有互动时间
  6. 你认为通过开展参与式教学，你的哪方面能力能得到提高？[多选题]  
 A. 英语听力能力  B. 英语口语能力  C. 英语阅读能力  
 D. 英语写作能力  E. 合作能力  F. 考试成绩  
 G. 都没有提高  其他\_\_\_\_\_ (请补充)

7. 你认为参与到英语课堂互动对你英语学习的好处在于\_\_\_\_\_ [多选题]
- A. 培养对英语学习的兴趣
  - B. 提高对英语学习的自信心
  - C. 有助于轻松掌握老师的授课内容, 学以致用
  - D. 有助于通过升学考试等各种英语能力测试
  - E. 培养与其他同学的合作精神
  - F. 没多大意义
8. 你认为以下哪种英语教学内容最能增强你参与课堂的积极性, 你最感兴趣。[多选题]
- A. 课本文章分析
  - B. 单词讲解
  - C. 情景对话讲解
  - D. 游戏导入讲解
  - E. 应试技巧讲解
  - F. 其他(请补充) \_\_\_\_\_
9. 你认为以下哪种课堂活动能最有效地带动你参与到课堂中。[多选题]
- A. 小组讨论
  - B. 英语主题演讲
  - C. 情景对话及小品扮演
  - D. 看电影或视频/听英文歌曲
  - E. 英语知识竞赛
  - F. 英语游戏
  - G. 其他(请补充) \_\_\_\_\_
10. 你认为以下哪种情况会导致课堂的参与式教学法实施情况不佳? [多选题]
- A. 课堂以讲授型为主, 老师主导课堂。
  - B. 上课内容枯燥, 学生不感兴趣。
  - C. 课堂活动安排及时间设置不合理, 老师给学生参与表现的机会和时间太少。
  - D. 学生对英语不感兴趣, 无兴趣参与到英语课堂中去。
  - E. 学生基础不够好, 听不懂上课内容, 无法参与到英语课堂中去。
  - F. 参与到课堂互动中对提高自身的英语水平用处不大。
  - G. 其他(请补充) \_\_\_\_\_
11. 通过在英语课堂开展参与式教学, 你对英语学习的兴趣提高了。[单选题]
- A. 非常同意
  - B. 同意
  - C. 一般
  - D. 不同意
  - E. 非常不同意
12. 你希望英语老师在今后的英语课堂中能继续开展参与式教学活动。[单选题]
- A. 非常同意
  - B. 同意
  - C. 一般
  - D. 不同意
  - E. 非常不同意

## COLOMBIA

*Colombia* had its first team in batch 4 (2006) and in total 13 teams and 36 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	6	2	Projects are on more than one level
Region/Province/District	12	4	
Local	18	13	

**Table 1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

Main topics of most of the Colombian projects are linked with participation, conflict resolution and cultural heritage. Several projects are targeting both local schools and teacher training in universities or districts/localities in the capital city Bogotá. Projects with representatives from national level are also disseminated in the country.



**Area:** 1,141,748 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 49, 536, 180 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Bogotá

**Independence:** 20 July 1810

**Official language:** Spanish

**Network Country Coordinators:**

Andrea Jaramillo  
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# COLOMBIA

Children's Rights Turn into Reality

*Judith Guevara Uribe, Sandra Milena Santos Ortiz and Pedro Adolfo Cabrejo Ruiz*

## 1. Introduction

Being part of the scholarship program in child rights classroom and school management, gave us the chance to review our compromise as leaders in the educative process that makes real the agreements already established in the CRC convention.

The present proposal is the result that our team got after discussing which would be the best methodology and approach to achieve the goals of promoting and enhancing children rights in our three different contexts; cooperative Learning approach was found relevant to contribute during the process of creation CRC tool kit compound by Big Books, magazines, workshops and travel notebook, evidencing how the students appropriate in a creative way such an important topic as its children rights.

The target groups were selected taking into account the specific needs of the context in which they are located;

In the "Universidad Distrital" was selected a group of 20 novice teachers who are developing the teacher practice, it let us include the children rights to implement different pedagogical approaches seen in class so, a part of their practice were developed in San Agustin School.

In "San Agustin School" a group of 40 students were selected, the idea is that after being training about the elaboration of big books they come up with ideas and elaborate their own materials to promote children rights with younger students in their own school and with the third school José Asuncion Silva.

Due to the fact that we wanted to do a cross curricular activity, the biggest implementation will be at Jose Asunción Silva School, our purpose is to collect the materials and experiences gotten in the two previous schools and crate a kit with tools (big books, brochures workshops), to implement with all the community from this school the learned about children rights.

The previous proposal demands a participative leadership oriented towards the development of organizational changes in which all the participants of the school com-

munity can guarantee the children a high quality education with the knowledge and practice of the children rights based in harmony, honesty, inclusion and respecting differences, our children will be lead into the world of participation, democracy citizenship and coexistence.

## 2. Frame of Reference

On the District level there is project about civics that includes some projects like; “Educación para la ciudadanía y la convivencia, una apuesta de vida una apuesta de ciudad” () which promotes in the students the respect for human rights, participation and healthy coexistence. Otherwise, a previous participant in SIDAS project, The Batch 17, began to assist this problematic though a proposal based on conflict solving, thus our proposal will be based on:

### 2.1 The project for Change and CR

- Defining keywords; violence, bullying in terms to achieve Respect as asocial skills
- 2Ps and CRC articles: Protection and Participation articles 2, 3, 12, 28.
- District and regional strategies: Ministry of Education strategy Education for the citizenship, betting in life betting in the city, Children Law (2006).
- Child Friendly Schools (UNICEF), UN MDGs: goal 2 – Universal primary education for all (2015).
- Colombia CRC network: projects for change that tackle the issue of violence and teacher development.

### 2.2 Target groups: Public schools in Bogotá (strata, surrounding)

Judith is a principal in Jose Asuncion Silva School (JAS), locality 10, Engativa UPZ Minuto de Dios In the neighbours “Quirigua and Sdauto” in 2014 has 1670 students from 3 to 18 years old in the grades Pre-garden to 11Th grade, belong to the social status 1, 2, 3, in Bogotá there are 6 social strata the poorest scale belong to the number one and the riches to the number six.

Sandra is an English teacher in San Agustin School (SA), locality 18, Rafael Uribe Uribe, in “la picota and San Agustin neighborhoods, with the group of eight graders, between 12 and 14 years old, social status 1,2.

Pedro is material development and English research teacher Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas Bogota Colombia, located in “the Localidad de Santafe” “Macarena’s” neighbourhood 100 young adults between 16 and 25 year old, that are studying to become English teachers. The PEI is called Licenciatura en Educación Básica con énfasis en Inglés.

## 2.3 Cooperative learning:

“We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

*Benjamin Franklin at the signing of the Declaration of Independence.*

As starting point we will make a brief description of the history of Cooperative Learning taking into account its initial steps. Also, there are some of the forerunners who initially established the Cooperative Learning foundations, and after the history, there are some theorists as Calderon, Johnson and Johnson, Holubec, Kagan and Slavin who present their visions about Cooperative Learning; in the same way, we will present some other theorists like Brown, Harmer and Sargent whose visions in relation to cooperative writing are relevant for our intervention.

In the same vein, Cooperative learning, cooperative work or CLL (cooperative language learning) are the names given to the pedagogical approach in which students work in groups. Several authors as Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1999), Kagan (1994) and Slavin (1988), agree that there are minimal principles to enhance Cooperative Learning: Positive interdependence, individual accountability, simultaneous face to face interaction and equal participation. (Kagan, 1994). Students know that when they start working in group this involves talking with someone else, sharing ideas, sharing responsibilities and interacting with each other gaining positive interdependence.

In relation to the previous principle, the term cooperative effort arises; the cooperative effort based on Deutsch (1962) and Johnson and Johnson (1989) appears when there is a positive interdependence among the results of the students' objectives. The students feel that they can reach their objectives just if the other students of their group reach theirs too. (Johnson and Johnson, 1999. p. 19).

Finally, the Simultaneous face to face interaction and equal participation are related to the idea that all the members must be able to participate, to express their willingness to discuss ideas, and to accept ideas from others to work efficiently in groups. This schema represents the four principles related to cooperative learning based on Kagan's principles but adding group evaluation (Kagan, 1994).

## 2.4 Cooperative Learning Basic Aspects

In this section, there is a description of the Cooperative learning basic aspects which are based on the findings of David and Roger Johnson; these aspects are explained by Ramón Ferreiro Gravié. Moreover, we present the assumptions that may arise when Cooperative learning is implemented in the classroom setting taking based on the studies conducted by Obando and Hidalgo.

What is new is the recent theoretical conceptualization related to the educational process and the cooperative learning basic aspects: (Johnson and Johnson 1999). The first aspect is objective: The students are placed in groups (usually heterogeneous

groups), and they are taught to learn the assigned material or materials, and assure that all the members of the group do the same.

The second one is participation: Students should feel the need to participate in the teaching-learning process; also students should realize that they need to communicate what they understand and what they learn from their education. To learn, it is necessary to face the learning object it means; the more moments of interaction and help among students more meaningful leaning among students will be.

## 2.5 Big Books, Travel Notebook and Booklets theory

The Big Books and their use represent a spectacular option to work with students, and of course, the creation of big books and travel notebooks provides them with cooperative learning skills. However, there is scanty theoretical information about the pedagogical foundations in relation to the use and application of big books.

Nevertheless, there is a research on-line conducted by Mary Larkham a nursery teacher which made a research called: "Using Big Books on an Interactive Whiteboard". In relation to our research, she says about Big Books: "Using a "big book" with nursery-aged pupils enables a whole class group to interact and participate during a story session. It also provides the starting point for discussion and conversation because the illustrations are available for all to view". (p. 1).

Some of the characteristics about the Big Books are that these include size, colors, design, content and vocabulary. First, they have the height of a child of three (3) years old average. Second, in terms of its structure, children have the opportunity to observe the characters and follow the story from their sits facilitating several activities in accordance with the English syllabus. Third, they allow teachers to work not only with nursery, but also with elementary, and even high school students. And fourth, these big books are published by some editorials and they have been used with success in schools.

To this respect in relation to our intervention, the idea of creating Big Books to narrow the children rights with students, has been a very good strategy because they start creating their groups to collaborate themselves to create their Big Book. Besides, it is a great opportunity to observe their reactions, ideas, how they deal with decisions, what will be the best choices to design, create and present the big book. Finally, the creation of Big Books provides to the students a sense of appropriateness towards children rights.

## 3. Purpose

To attempt the reduction of violence (bullying) in the classroom and school context; This study is focused on the awareness of child Rights through the implementation of workshops, elaboration of big books, brochures and booklets, increasing in our context social skills and respect.

## 4. Methodology (Activities)

The methodology employed for this implementation is based in Cooperative Learning through the handling and application of workshops, the creation of Big Books and booklets. As starting point we applied surveys as an instrument to establish how much the community knew or understand about Children Rights. As next step in the process, students were motivated to use their own ideas and previous experiences to contextualize the children rights in the process of, writing, designing and creating step by step the materials above mentioned.

The next step was the conformation of cooperative groups. The main propose in this stage is to promote self-criteria in students to create the groups, gathering by their own, autonomously without the rush that the imposed work creates, they could work together, comfortably and trustily in order to fulfill the goals proposed.

Then, working in cooperative groups reached the third step that was the creation and the writing of Big Books; in this stage the cooperation of the group members was reflected in the creation of innovative and imaginative stories designed with the interest of transmitting the importance of children's rights.

The next chart detailing the activities performed in all contexts

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Survey	Surveys about Child Rights were applied to Parents and Teachers.  Findings: Parents and Teacher do not have clear enough about CRC	August 2013
Submitting the Proposal to INCITAR Program "Iniciativas de transformacion de realidades" of Distric Educational Secretary	Designing and submitting CRC proposal to get funds for : Publishing CRC Worksheets. Supplying camera, tape recorder and printing machine for the project. Providing souvenirs like pins, bracelets, caps, and promo t-shirts for the CRC change project. And bags and travel notebooks.	August 2013- March 2014
Informative meeting to Teachers	Meeting with Pre- school, and elementary school teachers from Jose Asuncion Silva School providing information about the participation of the School in the project for change and CRC	November 2013
Institution Educational Forum	Development of Institution Educational Forum " Participemos por la dinamización de la gestión y el mejoramiento de la calidad institucional "  Compound by: Institutional Horizont Pedagogic and Coexistence Component. Generating guidelines to adjust PEI and Coexistence handbook	November 15th 2013

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Informative meeting to Parents	Two meetings with Parents, during each school shift, giving information about the participation of the school in the project for change and CRC	January 31st 2014
Workshop on foundations and strategies based on Big Book theory. Creation of the Facebook Web Page “Children Rights Change Agents Colombia” Elaboration of the first tool for our kit of rights.	One workshop on Big Books theory with students from District University. One workshop on Developing Big Books with UD Students. Five sessions on designing the Big Book model based on CRC. This web page was created with the intention of list all the activities done by our agents in our context. Creation of the first Big Book, this material will be used to the training in the three contexts.	October 2013 November 2013 November 2013 December 2013
Workshops on Human Rights and CRC with students of 802 group from San Agustin School	One workshop on understanding human Rights One workshop on Introducing CRC One workshop on Big books theory, strategy and development.	January- February 2014
Socializing CRC Big Book model with San Agustin School Students	Students from District University showed the model they built and shared their experiences on designing the CRC Big Book model with Students of 802 groups from San Agustin School.	February 2014
CRC Worksheet	Producing, illustrating, designing and diagramming a worksheet with the agreements of the Child Rights Convention for Pre- school and elementary school students.	January, February and March 2014
Basic Magazine Design	Designing basic magazine monthly structure “Derecho a los Derechos... de los niños y las niñas” with Specific tips to apply and make reflections on the worksheets contents.	March 2014
Travel Notebook	Designing and implementing travel notebooks which are going to visit students’ houses, with topics to reflect with the whole family and give feedback.	From March 2014 on

## 5. Results

The work was developed and the results obtained were the planned initially in the three institutions;

The Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas was the starting context in our proposal, with the initiative of Teaching Children Rights to the novice teachers, which make sense taking into account that future teachers are the one in charge of spread Children’s Right culture in the contexts where they will interact.

As result the students enjoy the classes developing Children Rights thematic through the creation of dynamic games and strategies that had been piled in big books, we already have made three (one each semester), Children Rights is linked to the subjects Material Development and English Speaking, now the material is available to all the students, they use it in their pedagogical practices as result, all the community not only knows what a children right is but, is interacting and living the children rights.

One of our outputs was to share the work done in the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas with the Colegio San Agustin, our second impact context.

The work at San Agustin School was divided into two phases; the first one consisted in Learning about Child Righths: Students from 802 grade were trained in Child Rights Convention, through the implementation of four workshops dealing with CRC generalities and the three Ps. (Provision, Protection, and Participation); then a workshop done on Big Books strategy was implemented to motivate students to develop Big Books based on CRC and the three Ps. And the second phase was about taking rights actions; then students wrote tales and stories based on Child rights themes and their own experiences and designed the pages of the three big books.

In our third Impact context, Colegio Jose Asunción Silva the results were outstanding, the issue of children's rights is mainstreamed in school, ensuring at the educational service, the project achieved the sensitization of teachers and parents on the issue of child rights, besides a Booklet was made with workshops and some traveling notebooks for working at home the topic with parents and students.

Another important Goal achieved in Jose Asunción Silva School was the Adequacy of space norms, teaching strategies and coexistence to experience the rights, and it is reflected in terms of respect, love and understanding among all the community.

Summarizing, In the three contexts all the outcomes were reached , thus, It is essential to be patient and tolerant with the obstacles that can be found along the process, economical founds has been reached with the purpose of accomplish the proposal in terms of elaboration of souvenirs and brochures for all the participants in the process.

Team work has been enriching and rewarding. We have been able to develop a sense of ownership of the project; this is evident in our commitment in planning and implementing the proposed methodology and activities. In Distrital University the work has been recognized and rewarded; now we are implementing a proposal for doing of children rights an official project in the last semester student's practices. Everybody is involved and actively participating. We are still learning how to work as a team, and we do not forget that our primary goal is to work together for improving our children's lives.

## 6. Discussion and Reflection

The work allows the motivation and generation of new expectations about the importance of ensuring the Children Rights and highlights the need of the implementation of new strategies to overcome the frequent violation of the rights of the children, something we observed was happening in the home and scholar environments.

The creation of Big Books by the students became a space for free expression which allowed them to externalize situations of abuse and violation of rights mainly physical violence, sexual abuse and neglect.

After the implementation of the workshops about the Child Rights Convention, Big Books strategy designing and tales and stories creation; we could observe how students had gained self-confidence and empowerment to face difficult situations they had experienced in their lives and were able to raise their voices. However the participants got awareness not only about their Rights but also the responsibilities they have each other to promote and to take actions which favor Child Rights and students' dignity and coexistence.

It is also important to highlight that Students showed interest and commitment in changing their own context and personal reality through the improvement of their personal relationships and the classroom treatment and communication.

We have gotten all what we have planned so far; we have been able to involve creatively all our three context from the Universidad Distrital to San Agustín and Jose Asunción Silva School, including actively the community. As personal learning we have grown in personal and professional field.

We have sensitizing ourselves about the importance of work as whole; it has been a challenge due to the difference in personality batch 19 has.

## 7. Way Forward

In the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas our goal is to continue perfecting techniques and activities in the elaboration of creative materials, intended to gather the interest of future teachers on the topic of Children Rights, the main purpose of it is to ensure that what is learned in college be replicated by students in their classes, reaching creatively children attention.

On the other hand in Jose Asunción Silva we intend to implement the material produced, Booklets and travel books with students and parents also expect socialize, expand and improve both, the material available, and the strategies developed to share information with other schools that belong to the UPZ (zonal planning unit)

At San Agustín school context; we are determined to promote the three Big Books among the School community in the morning and the afternoon shifts; through the implementation of workshops that are going to be developed and led by the students from 802 grade to motivate them to learn about Child Rights Convention, and the launching of the Child Rights Big Books Covers Designing Contest as an institutional activity.

At the same way our students are going to visit Jose Asunción Silva School with the purpose of showing the books based on Child Rights stories they designed to sensitize Students from secondary School there, towards Child Rights Culture through the implementation of Big Books Strategy designing and tales and short stories creation in their own context.



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# INDONESIA

*Indonesia* had its first team in batch 1 (2003) and in total 14 teams and 39 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	2	0	
Region/Province/ District	26	8	UNICEF, Teacher training and local schools
Local	11	7	

**Table 1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

The Child Rights Program is focusing on Central Java, one of the regions most populated islands in Indonesia. The implementation of CRC in education, learning and teaching has been gradually dominated by participants from *teacher training institutions* (Universitas PGRI, Semarang and Muhammadiyah University, Surakarta) and directed against development of child-friendly teaching models and child friendly schools in cooperation with local schools.



**Area:** 1,904,569 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 252, 812, 245 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Jakarta

**Independence:** 17 August 1945

**Official language:** Indonesian

**Network Country Coordinators:**

Senowarsito in Semarang  
(seno\_ikip@yahoo.com)

Siti Zuhriyah in Surakarta  
(szuhriyah@gmail.com)

# INDONESIA

## Empowering Student Organization (OSIS) for Child-Friendly School Management

*Muhammad Thoyibi, Dewi Candraningrum and Muhammad Amir Zubaidi*

### 1. Introduction

This report describes the project that has been implemented by Batch 19 of the training programme. The project was done to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by United Nations in November 1989 and ratified in Indonesia a year later in 1990. The implementation of this Convention is urgent and is still very relevant, especially for developing countries such as Indonesia because students are not actually participating in decision-making processes within the framework of school management.

The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger (Article 1). The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18. There are four foundational principles that represent the spirit of the convention. The four principles are as follows: (1) a child should be free from discrimination; (2) government policies should be based on the best interests of the child; (3) a child should survive and develop to his/her full potential; and (4) a child's views and perspectives are important and need to be heard. Non-discrimination (Article 2) means that the Convention applies to all children, disregarding their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It does not matter where the children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis. Best interests of the child (Article 3) means the primary concern in making decisions is the best interests of children. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers. Article 12 specifically concerning

children's participation. Article 12 states that (1) State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (UNICEF 2007: 149). (2) For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law (ibid).

## 2. Frame of Reference

Indonesia ratified the CRC through Presidential Decision No. 36/1990, and enacted the Child Protection Law through the passage of *Republic of Indonesia Law Number 23 Year 2002 on Child Protection* (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 23 tahun 2002 tentang Perlindungan Anak). Both the ratifications of the Convention and the passage of the Child Protection Law show that the Indonesian government is committed to implement the Convention of the Child Rights. Actually, Indonesian government has taken many efforts to realize 3Ps (Provision, Protection, and Participation) of child rights.

The access to the primary needs such as food, shelter, health, and education all is to realize the child right of provision. For *provision*, the government of Indonesia implements some programs, such as: (1) Additional Food Program for School Children (*Program Makanan Tambahan Anak Sekolah*), (2) Milk Drinking Movement (*Gerakan Minum Susu*), (3) School Doctor (*Dokter Sekolah*), (4) Nine Year Compulsory Education (Wajib Belajar 9 Tahun), (5) Financial Assistance for School Operation (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*), and (6) Financial Assistance for Poor Students (*Bantuan Siswa Miskin*). The efforts of avoiding children from maltreatment, ignorance, and all forms of exploitation are for the *protection* needs, and the encouragement to the children to take part in decision making is to fulfill the right of participation.

With regard to *participation*, Indonesia promotes programs related to the right of child freedom of conscience expression. In education context, the government implements programs intended to encourage the students to be active in the classroom or at school. Through the 1984 curriculum, the teachers were urged to implement an active learning known as CBSA (*Cara Belajar Siswa Aktif*), and with curriculum 1996 the teachers and teacher candidates should implement an active, innovative, creative, and joyful learning often referred to as PAIKEM (*Pembelajaran Aktif, Inovatif, Kreatif dan Menyenangkan*). Participation involves children in decision when there is relevant knowledge, personal stake and trustworthy (Hoy & Miskel, 2013: 349).

There is also new Curriculum 2013 that is still in the way of implementation. This new curriculum will be promoting more on children's core competences. Much in-service training is conducted to facilitate the teachers to implement that program. The teacher training colleges are also invited by the municipality to coach the teachers in the local area such as in MGMP (Teachers Group by Subject) which are held every week.

The trainings and coaching are usually focused on how the content standard, process standard, operation standard, and evaluation standard are all arranged in lesson plans and in implementation in the learning process.

*Sragen*, the regency where the project takes place, has ratified Unit Pelayanan Terpadu Penanggulangan Kemiskinan Pemerintah Kabupaten Sragen (UPTPKPK) for Education and Economy with Regency Regulation Year 2013. It means that the regency shall pay for the operational for poor students. And each school shall provide 20 percent of their students' scholarship for the poor. And students being accepted by state-owned university in Java but unable to pay the tuition fee will be supported by the government fully until he or she finish their studies.

Previous projects from batch 16, 17, and 18 were focused in Surakarta where the government has enacted Peraturan Walikota No 3-B Th 2013 Walikota Surakarta about the development of *Child-Friendly City* (Pedoman Umum Pengembangan Partisipasi Anak dalam Pembangunan di Kota Surakarta) in the level of including children's participation in city's development.

With regard to participation of girls in Indonesia, many of the girls perform far behind their male contemporary since most of poor girls are working in factories as drop-outs. Working in factories is valued greatly and girls are not having choice over their lives; this in turn, decreases girls' participation in school (Bessell, 2009:536). One important indicator in measuring children's participation is girls' participation in leadership. Girls participation in school from elementary to secondary level since 2006 to 2010 was 12,76% lower than for boys (Candraningrum, 2010: 43).

Participative leadership involves the use of various decision procedures that allow students to participate in the school leadership. Yukl has provided a continuum how this works by including consultation, joint decision making, power sharing, decentralization, empowerment, and democratic management (2013: 115). National policies exist in promoting gender equality in education, but there are inadequate programs to directly address inequalities in education by increasing access and participation of disadvantaged children, including poor and marginalized girls. Inadequate gender awareness and expertise persist despite gender mainstreaming mandate—this is in part a result of a deeper-rooted problem of inadequate contextualization of gender concepts in a way that makes sense within existing Indonesian socio-cultural and religious beliefs and traditions (UNICEF FACTSHEET, 2013).

The project has been implemented at Sragen Muhammadiyah High School, and focused on students' participation in school management decision-making and empowering principal to involve students in participating. The dissemination of CRC to Muhammadiyah board has been done by the team of batch 19 and so far the resistance is not found. The project has focused on "empowering student organization (OSIS, red in Indonesian Language) for child-friendly school management OSIS (Internal Student Organization of School) which is established in both Junior and Senior Secondary Schools. It is expected that through this organization, students can develop their potentials in leadership or their specific interests in sport as well as arts. In Indonesia, in many cases, OSIS has been a decoration to the school whose structure is more important than

it's function. It serves as the extension of the school management, especially the vice principal on the students' affairs. The management is more top-down than bottom-up, as a result, OSIS has very little or even next to nothing like participation in the school management.

### 3. Purpose

The main purpose of this project is to contribute to the development of child-friendly schools through empowering the student organization to participate in child-friendly school management.

The specific objectives of the project are as follows.

- a. To assist OSIS and the school management to identify and exercise their roles in contributing to the development in child-friendly school.
- b. To strengthen the role of OSIS in school management, formal and informal, particularly its participation in decision-making processes.
- c. To connect the CRC initiatives to the endeavor of child-friendly regency.

#### **What is to be Different?**

The current project is meant to change the existing CRC related norms into the desired ones, as follows:

1. Sragen Regency, Principal and Teachers are aware of the child's right, specifically to students' participation in relation to child-friendly school.
2. Students are aware of their roles in contributing to the development of child-friendly school.
3. Students are aware of their leadership to contribute into school management.
4. Students Organization (OSIS) has a gender balanced structure.
5. Principal and teacher's awareness to connect students' leadership and participation to child-friendly regency.
6. Sragen's Regency's awareness in facilitating students' participation in building child-friendly regency.
7. Students' awareness in communicating their rights and needs to Sragen Regency to endeavor child-friendly regency.

## What is to be changed?

To create the desired norms, the following educational components should be changed:

1. The ways government, stakeholders, parents, principal, teachers interact with the children both inside and outside classrooms.
2. The method of communication process within the child-friendly school management.
3. The students council (OSIS) environment for child-friendly school management that promotes child rights, gender-balance leadership, children's leadership, and in voicing children's participation.
4. The students' council should be designed by students themselves and being part of original voice in endeavoring child-friendly school as well as regency.

Sragen Muhammadiyah Senior High School, the location where CRC project have been conducted, is the second biggest Muhammadiyah Senior High School out of 24 in Sragen, it is SMA Muhammadiyah (SMAM) 2 Sragen. SMAM 2 Sragen located at kecamatan Gemolong, 25 km from the center of regency having 9 classes, 3 classes for grade X, XI Natural Science, 2 classes Social Science, 1 class for Grade XII natural science, 2 classes for social sciences. The school is accredited with A meaning meeting 8 national standards of education. One of its important indicators is the existence of OSIS and the active involvement and participation to school management.

## 4. Target Groups, Authorities and Stakeholders

There are three group categories addressed in the project, namely *the authorities, the stakeholders, and the target groups*. The authorities include Dinas Pendidikan (the Education Office) and Pimpinan Muhammadiyah Daerah (the Regional Board of Muhammadiyah) Sragen. The main reason of involving the authorities is that the project requires acceptance and permission both from the Education Office, representing the government, and the regional board of Muhammadiyah as the owner of the school. The stake-holders include the parents, the local government, and the community leaders. The importance of involving these groups is that this project needs support from them. The least support will be the absence of opposition. This group (stake-holders) may not have to be involved in the discussion but they need to be notified.

Muhammadiyah was established in Jogjakarta in 1912 by Ahmad Dahlan and has a predominantly urban, middle-class base. His concerns with high poverty of the people of the Netherlands East Indies—the majority of whom belonged to Islam—led him to found an organization active in the fields of education and health. Muhammadiyah views its activities in propagating Islam, empowering the Islamic community (*ummah*) and improving the social conditions of Muslims. Dahlan opted for a combination of Western and Islamic reformist ideas. Today, Muhammadiyah has established

as an Indonesian Islamic social organization well known for providing education and health services. The number of Muhammadiyah schools has rapidly increased until today. Besides schools, Muhammadiyah began establishing higher education institutions since 1958. By 2005, Muhammadiyah has established 36 universities, 74 high schools institutions, 52 academies, 4 polytechnics. The number of Muhammadiyah educational institutions is far beyond other private ones.

Two Muhammadiyah sister wings organizations have played an important progressive role at the civil and social cultural level. Aisyiyah and NasyiatulAisyiyah have played significant role in transforming the meaning of womanhood since the fall of Sukarno's presidency in 1965. Through their activities they have enabled women to extend the role from the domestic sphere into the public sphere. In practice, many women in Muhammadiyah organizations have been self-empowered to transform and negotiate the Islamic ideology they profess and the values they receive outside of Islamic teaching.

*The main target group is the students.* To reach the students, however, this project has worked with the principle, the teachers, and the administrative staff. The main reason of this project is to work in partnership with the principle, teachers, and administrative staffs and the children to realize child-friendly school.

## 5. Methodology

This project was implemented step-by-step through a series of dialogues (Focus Group Discussions, FGD) and workshops. What follows are the activities done in order to reach the objectives from November 2013 until January 2015. The activities are categorized into two general sections, which are two outcomes, as follows.

### E.1. Outcome 1:

The authorities, the stakeholders, and the students of SMAM 2 Gemolong Sragen are aware of Children's Rights and students' participation in decision making process. Within the scheme Batch 19 would like to achieve the following output: students' organization (OSIS) is aware of the rights, both in extra and intra curricular activities which are achieved through the following activities: FGD with the principal, teachers, and administrative staffs as well as workshops on participation with the students.

#### *ACTIVITIES*

FGD on CRC with the principal, teachers, administrative staffs and OSIS

##### *a. Sharing and Coordinating with the Change Agents*

Preliminary activity was done to identify the communication strategy to disseminate the content of CRC principles and Child Friendly School. Before applying the project, the first thing to do was planning the strategy to disseminate what Batch 19 learnt in



Sweden. 3 change agents (M Thoyibi, Dewi Candraningrum, and Amir Zubaidi) conducted weekly meeting at UMS (Muhammadiyah University) from mid of November till end of November 2013.

First FGD was done by having a meeting and workshop with the authorities, which are Dinas Pendidikan (the Education Office) and PDM-Pimpinan Muhammadiyah Daerah (the Regional Board of Muhammadiyah) Sragen, and the principals on Wednesday 13 November 2013. They then came to agreement to share the responsibility within the Batch 19 Project. The coordination was facilitated by agent M Thoyibi and Amir Zubaidi.

Muhammadiyah and Aisiyiah has collaborated with KAPAS (NGO dealing with children having problems with the law) supporting advocacy for cases of sexual violence and harassments. Building perspective and children's participation is becoming the highest challenges. The commission needs the following: policy to be implemented in the scope of city and regency; networking with the government, coordination and communication as well as forum for CRC, more research on CRC, building commitment, technical assistance, integration of CRC into the curriculum, school rules shall involve children's participation, building synergy between children and family.



Change Agents were having FGD with OSIS.

Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.

### *b. FGD and Dissemination of CRC Principles and Child Friendly School*

The dissemination was conducted to the Board of Muhammadiyah in Sragen, principals, teachers and staffs of SMAM 2 Gemolong, as well as parents associated in the parents' council. This action was conducted on Wednesday 20 November 2013.

After the project started, several attempts were done by the school to promote child-friendly school. *The first* is through joyful, active, authentic, and realistic teaching methods. Using those methods not only can the learners learn in a happy environment but also learn the subject easily. *The second* is how to treat the learners, namely welcoming the learners every morning at the gate so that the learners feel comfortable, stop corporal punishment, and give the learners reward to high achievement learners. *The third* is through involving the learners to suggest many school activities, to encourage students to make decision, to recruit teachers, etc. *The fourth* is involving the parents in many activities.

The challenges are, however, implementing the joyful, active, collaborative teaching methods, changing parents and teachers' perspective on how to educate the learners, making the parents aware of the importance of supporting the learners in school activities. Based on the problems, there are several ways needed, namely eliminating the corporal punishment, but reward and consequences, making them aware that they have to know the consequences if they break the rules, discussing intensively with the parents using many techniques, such as how to discipline the learners, conducting workshop on child friendly school to change the teachers and parents' mindset, and involving the learners in making decision.



Change Agents & OSIS conducted workshop on participation.  
Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.

*c. FGD with Muhammadiyah Board, Principals (SMAN 1 Gemolong, SMA SBBS, SMAM 4 Sumberlawang, SMAM 8 Kalijambe) together with the teachers and Staffs of SMAM 2 Gemolong.*

The FGD was conducted on Wednesday 27 November, 2013 and facilitated by Principal of SMAM 2 Gemolong Sragen. All Sragen PDM (local Muhammadiyah committees) (Joko Margiantomo, Suwardi, Marsono, Chumaidi), principal, vice principals, teachers and staffs were present. The major aim was to discuss the Child Right Convention and the project plan Batch 19. Seeing that CRC was important for all schools, we decided to share our project with the other schools in the neighborhood, particularly those under the coordination of Muhammadiyah. We had no difficulty in involving the school principals since one of our team members, Amir, was a school supervisor in which the schools were under his authority.

In general, the result of the activity was favorable. The principals and the administration staffs understood and accepted the child rights and UN Principal on it. The questions, responses, resistances were among others on the concept of children's participation. It is something new to them and they are afraid that students' rights and participation will exceed children's capacity in decision making. Clarification, discussion and retouring are being done during the FGD and at the least common principles of child right were then understood very well by the respective groups.

*d. FGD with the Parents' Council of SMAM 2 Gemolong*

This activity was conducted in the beginning of the project to socialize child rights and the pilot project on Saturday 30 November 2013 being facilitated by change agent Amir Zubaidi. The parents welcome this project mainly because it can promote their children's participation in leadership. They suggested agent Amir Zubaidi and the Principal (EdyMuhammadi) to materialize the program, and they would monitor the result of the project.



OSIS' workshop on proposal of events under the frame of participation.  
Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.

## E.2. Outcome 2:

Students are aware of 3Ps and active in voicing their participation. Students are able to exercise their participation for the improvement of communication with the school management.

### ACTIVITY

#### *a. FGD with the Students' council of SMAM 2 Gemolong, SMAM 4 Sumberlawang, SMAM 8 Kalijambe.*

To disseminate the project to the target groups, that is the student council, FGD was being facilitated by SMAM 2 Gemolong and agent Dewi Candraningrum on the Tuesday 3 December 2013 after final examination. Student's councils from the three schools were introduced to child's rights, concept of students' participation and leadership. The result was quite surprising since they really wanted to exercise their rights in relation to school management. Most surprisingly was that gender-balance leadership and structure are already established in the OSIS's organizational structure.



OSIS' workshop on understanding CRC and 3Ps. Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.

#### *b. Workshop on participation with the students being conducted on Tuesday 10*

December 2013. This Workshop encouraged students to exercise a democratic and critical atmosphere by considering gender and leadership as the core action. Students Organization (OSIS) is expected to have the capacity to carry out a project as well as having gender-fair organizational structure. Workshop on management with the students was also conducted.

*c. Students Organization* OSIS had exercised the capacity to manage the project via writing proposal to be given to the Principal via this project. This workshop was conducted weekly in February that is every Friday: 7, 14, 21, 28 February 2014. Bi-weekly were supervised by the whole team of change agents. Students met and expressed their views not only in form of proposals but also in form of artistic expression such as sketching, theatre, and music performance. Students organized events based on their initiatives. Previously they were being dictated by the teachers, but after the workshop they planned the initiative and proposed the initiatives to the schools.



OSIS' ideas and voices to be delivered to school management. Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.

*d. Seminar and FGD initiating to bridge Child-Friendly Regency of Sragen and Muhammadiyah Senior High School of Sragen* at Hotel Lor In Surakarta facilitated by Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta and all change agent on Thursday 16 January 2014. This FGD was conducted with the support from Lund University through

participation of the mentor as key-note speaker, UMS, UNICEF, Bappeda Surakarta and Education Office of Sragen (Sunari, the Head Department of Higher Education) and Sragen Senior High Schools Principals (EdyMuhammadi-SMAM 2 Gemolong, Soewardi-SMAM 4 Sumberlawang, Agus Luqman-SMAM 8 Kalijambe). The leader for building Child Friendly School is BAPPEDA (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah-Board of Planning and Development) Sragen. The Government needs the following to realize child-friendly cities: 1. Meet the needs for a definite law to realize Child-Friendly Regency; 2. Improve the quality of teachers/teaching staffs among others by fit-proper test, improved recruitment process, certification process and evaluation. 3. Improve the coordination among existing institutions. 4. Improve parenting.



OSIS' workshop on defining participation. Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.

*e. Socialization of CRC based on UN Convention* and Act No. 23, 2002 to PDM (local Muhammadiyah Committees), Education Office of Sragen, Principals of Junior and Senior High Schools of Gemolong on January 17, 2014. Most of the participants accepted the major principles of CRC. They were also aware that corporal punishment was against the law. However, some of them still used the old perspective in understanding the principle of “to the best interest of the child” and some of them were still alien to the idea of positive discipline.

*f. Change Agents & Bodil Rasmusson visiting OSIS' office*, was held on January 17, 2014. Having short conversation on the meeting room and students' works, structure, and other materials.



Bodil & Change Agents are visiting OSIS' Offices. Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.

## 6. Results

### 1. Student Organization (OSIS)'s Participation for Child-Friendly School Management

Since the inception of the project, OSIS, principal, teachers, administrative staffs and parents are aware of children's provision, protection and participation under the UN convention of child rights. Batch 19 specifically focuses on empowering OSIS's rights to strengthen the capacity of school-management. The team has incepted two major strategies in year 2014, that is bridging OSIS's voices to the principal and teachers, meaning collaborating students' ideas to the betterment of school management. First half of the year, OSIS was involving in writing letters, opinions, and meeting with principal and teachers. These activities will be applied within OSIS framework for the next appointed structure. Results are amazing that principal and teachers are responding positively toward their ideas. Most of OSIS' ideas concern the betterment of school library and teachers' performance.



OSIS is writing letters to the Principal and School Management. Source: Batch 19 Change Agents.



It was a rare case for OSIS to voice their ideas regarding school management. What came across their mind was that the school was under the responsibility of teachers and principal. Since the intervention of Batch 19, OSIS is fully aware that they have rights to insert their voices and ideas to make the school better. Batch 19 and OSIS conducted several workshops from May to August 2014 after progress-report in Zambia. These workshops were conducted in two ways, with the intervention of Batch 19 and on their own. Batch 19 cooperated with students to exercise their voices by writing letters to the principal regarding school management. These letters were then sent to the principal. This is the first time for the principal to get letters from OSIS regarding school-management. Principal and teachers are then aware of OSIS's participation and understand fully the meaning of 'participation.'

## **2. “Students Evaluating Teachers” to empower Students’ Participation to Strengthen Child-Friendly School Management**

By the second half of the year 2014, Batch 19 implemented and cooperated with the students to design a participation-tool that can influence the performance and capacities of the teachers which are believed incorporating best-practices into school management. The participation-tool was agreed in the form of “Students Evaluating Teachers”. Batch 19 and students were sitting together and had several workshops to formulate students’ evaluation to teachers’ capacity and performance. This activity was considered taboo before the inception of the project. But since the introduction and workshop on CRC, teachers are aware of students’ right to participate. The following table was the form being filled by students to evaluate teachers’ capacity and performance in teaching-learning process.

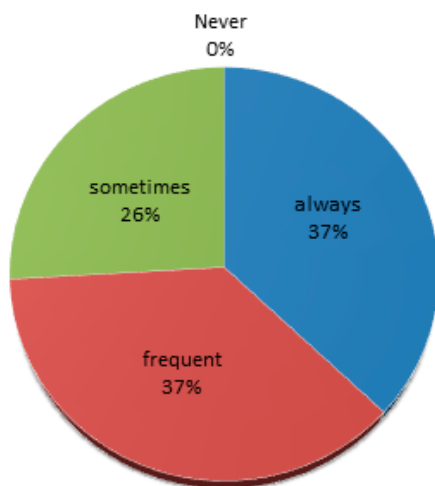
**Table1:** Model of Teacher’s Evaluative Form (Initiated and formulated by OSIS)

TEACHERS’ EVALUATION FORM					
Assalamu ‘alaikumwrwb. To raise the quality of teaching and learning process, please kindly fill out the following evaluation form. We are grateful for your cooperation. You can fill out your name or be anonym (optional).					
OSIS ofSMA Muhammadiyah 2 Gemolong, Sragen, Central Java, Indonesia					
Nameof student/Anonim		:			
Sex		: A. Boy		B. Girl	
Grade		: A. X		B. XI C. XII	
Name of teacher being evaluated		:			
NameofSubject		:			
Period ofEvaluation		:			
NO	PerformanceIndicators	Answers			
1	Before teaching, teacher is introducing and explaining aim of teaching-learning to students?	A always	B frequent	C some times	D never
2	In explaining teaching-materials, does the teacher read the teaching material from the books?	A	B	C	D
3	Can the teacher’s explanation be understood easily?	A	B	C	D
4	In explaining teaching-materials, does the teacher give examples for clarification?	A	B	C	D
5	Is the teacher able to answer the students’ questions?	A	B	C	D
6	In the learning process, does the teacher employ a variety of teaching methods? (lecturing, question-answer, demonstration, group-work, project).	A	B	C	D
7	Does teacher refer to the previous subject before starting the class?	A	B	C	D
8	In teaching-learning, does teacher pay attention to specific need of specific students?	A	B	C	D
9	When entering the classroom, does the teacher greet the students?	A	B	C	D
10	Does the teacher give feedback to students?	A	B	C	D
11	Does the teacher pay attention to the class-management?	A	B	C	D
12	Does teacher support you with other teaching materials? (Books, Moduls, etc).	A	B	C	D
13	Does the teacher employs technical support in teaching? (map, pictures, other means of learning).	A	B	C	D
14	Does the teacher praise the students that answer the questions correctly?	A	B	C	D
15	Does the teacher help and guide the students that have difficulty in finding the right answer?	A	B	C	D
16	Does the teacher motivate, advise, and inspire the students?	A	B	C	D
17	Does the teacher give the concluding remarks at the end of the class?	A	B	C	D
18	Are the test items in both the mid test and final test in accordance with the material taught in class?	A	B	C	D
19	Does teacher return the students’ work after assessment?	A	B	C	D
20	Does teacher give remedy to those who did not do well enough in the examination?	A	B	C	D

This format was formulated by OSIS in several workshops. It evaluated not only teachers' capacity and performance but also teachers' willingness to hear students' opinions. This formulation was then proposed to the Principal and teachers as vital part in school-management, and to OSIS' surprise they accepted these ideas and were willing to conduct evaluation every end of each semester. In December 2014 OSIS and students in SMAM MuhGemolong 2 practice this model to strengthen their voicing toward the attainment of child-friendly school.

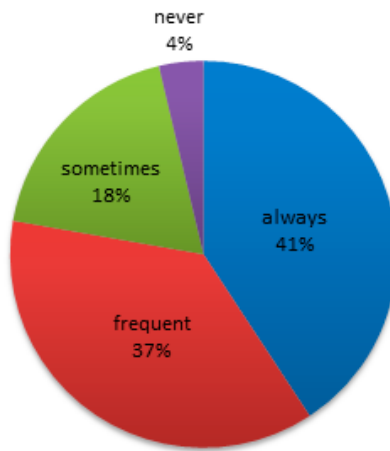
Among 27 teachers in this school, evaluation from the students was successfully conducted at the end of the semester. Teachers and principals are aware of the consequence of letting them voicing their ideas. That child-friendly school management shall take children's ideas and voices is vital force.

### 1. Aim of Teaching-Learning



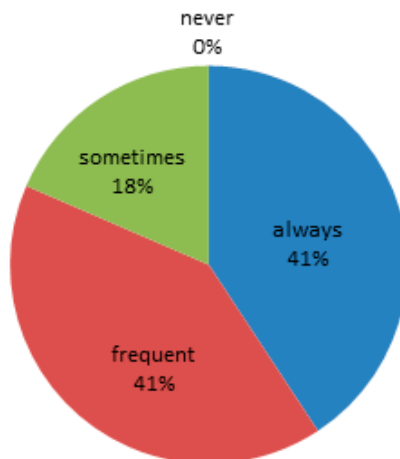
School-management sat together and found that regarding the aim of teaching-learning, teachers evaluation form found that the enhancement of opening the class by introducing aims of teaching-learning is important for students.

## 2. Teaching Materials



The previous pie shows that 4% of teachers did not explore and employ certain teaching materials. This led to further evaluation that book-purchase will be planned to support teachers who have no teaching-materials. This has good impact that teachers are then decide to buy their own to support their own capacity. This breakthrough was never discussed in the school and considered as taboo. By regarding children's voices, teachers now know how to stimulate classes and their capacities.

## 3. Teaching-Method Variation



Item 3 evaluated the way teachers used variation in teaching-method. 41% students in SMAM2 Gemolong positively responded to teachers' performance. And 18% teachers were not quite practicing various methods. Teachers are reflecting to those evaluation and responded positively to children's evaluation

The previous findings are the discussion of three capacity and performances of teachers by students. Of 20 questions being formulated in the model of evaluation-form, school-management is now involving students. This is an achievement to be introduced to other schools in Sragen to support the realization of Child-Friendly Regency. SMAM2 Gemolong has realized the concept of child-friendly school by conducting end-semester evaluation form for teachers by students and OSIS will encourage this as a form of sustainable model in the future.

## 7. Discussion and Reflection

The previous activities had been successfully incepted in year 2014. FGDs are then being conducted in January 2015 to discuss the result of OSIS's ideas in voicing their opinions via letters and teachers' evaluation form. From this meeting between OSIS and school-management, it is becoming a good moment for the teachers to have a reflective input from students. Such evaluation from students was never being conducted in this school, even across high-schools in Sragen Regency. During the FGDs, it was apparent that a few teachers showed resistance against the students' evaluation. Their response to the evaluation implied that they should be evaluated by the superintendent and not by the students. They questioned the relationship between child-friendly school and the evaluation to teachers. They stated that child-friendly school should deal with the school children instead of the teachers. However, the majority of the teachers supported the evaluation. They recognized that the evaluation signified a self-reflection by which they could see their performance not as they claimed to be but as the students perceived.

This project, the process, how we implemented as equal partner and how we discussed CRC meant a lot to us as team and meant a lot to children as major target of this project. Children are now aware of their rights. A moment of reflection showed that children are happier more active, more critical and brave than previously. It is now easier for them to voice their participation to school management. It means a lot for children to get knowledge of their rights. When we came to school, OSIS was just a decorative students' organization that teachers always designed their activities. Yet, at present, students are actively engaged from the beginning of setting ideas, agendas, and implementations. Teachers who previously regarded that it was taboo for students to evaluate them, at present they realized that students have rights to voice their critical ideas. The flow of communication that was previously top-down, from school management to students, are now changing into equal partnership and equal communication—where students via OSIS are now practicing ideas to insert into school management. This made the realization of child-friendly school under the umbrella of child-friendly regency come into realization. Something that is so meaningful to us all. Teachers and school management started to learn how to cooperate with those young people. Students are not afraid anymore that their voices might affect their grades in schools. This project, however, is still in its critical phase. Sustainable cooperation between OSIS and school management shall be maintained for long term application—hence advocating present

OSIS structure to transfer this paradigm and evaluation of teacher to the next OSIS structure. School management shall has commitment as well to sustain this equal and new tradition of students participation.

SMAM 2 Gemolong is becoming the first model of school to incept CRC in Sragen Regency. Some schools in the neighborhood have expressed their interest in the child-friendly school ideas and intended to adopt the CRC values in their school management.

## 8. Way Forward

The project constitutes the cooperation between Teacher Training Faculty of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta and SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Gemolong. This cooperation is an equal partnership and collaboration that provide and empower OSIS to voicing their ideas in the realization of child-friendly school under the frame of Child-Friendly Regency of Sragen that was enacted previously. This model will be introduced to the new structure of OSIS in July 2015 as well as in the future. Principal, teachers, parents, will involve OSIS and students as integral part of school-management.

In order that all stakeholders can take its benefits, the first step to do is discussing the result of the project to the teachers as well as spreading the model to other schools in Sragen. At the school level, the teachers and the school management can gain a lot of positive things. The result can be used to empower students' voices in the school. For the school management, new learning-insight existed to involve students as vital part in management. The results of the project show that students are involving actively in decision-making.

The project does not end on this final report. The results of the program show that indeed change take time. The OSIS's participation model implementation is going on for the years to come in the succession of OSIS' structure. Strengthening OSIS internal capacity building is important, specifically in voicing ideas to realizing child-friendly school-management.

Research on parents' opinion regarding CRC is still on progress under Muhammadiyah team. This will be part of way forward in incorporating ideas from parents, students and school. Muhammadiyah team sees this as crucial strategy in mainstreaming CRC to the community.

The way OSIS comprehended their roles, rights, as well as participation had also changed dramatically. Previous myth that OSIS is only the apparatus of school's management had changed as well. They are now evaluating teachers as part of practicing to voice their participation in the decision making process. Further commitment from change-agents, principals, government, parents, and stakeholders are still needed to achieve child-friendly school as well as child-friendly regency.

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## MALAWI

*Malawi* had its first team in batch 3 (2005) and in total 13 teams and 35 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	12	0	
Region/Province/District	13	8	
Local	10	5	

**Table 1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

The main topics of the Malawian projects have been on different forms of student participation, e.g. involving students in decision making, and on reducing drop-out rate due to pregnancy and child labour. The target main target areas have been Lilongwe, Zomba and Mchinji.



**Area:** 118,484 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 15,805,239 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Lilongwe

**Independence:** 6 July 1964

**Official Language:** Chichewa

**National Country Coordinator:**

Anderson Ntandika, chair  
(akbntandika@yahoo.com]

George Kondowe, secretary  
(kondowegeorge@gmail.com)



# MALAWI

Child Participation in Decision Making In Schools of Njewa Education Zone,  
Lilongwe

*Anderson Ntandika, Susan Rockey and George Kondowe*

## 1. Introduction

There have been efforts by the Government of Malawi and other stakeholders to promote and protect the rights of children in Malawi. However, the full attainment of such rights remains a challenge. Children in Malawi continue to experience various forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. The violations include physical, psychological as well as sexual abuses and harassment. These violations occur in both home and school settings. The Government of Malawi and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have made efforts to come up with interventions that aim at promoting respect for the rights of children. However, violations of children's rights in different contexts still exist. The legal framework governing children's affairs in Malawi responds to this situation. The legal framework is very relevant in the implementation of interventions that aim at providing support, care and protection as well as cultivating a culture of giving children the space to give their views in matters affecting their affairs.

Among others, the Malawi's legal framework on children's rights is primarily composed of the Constitution as the supreme law and various pieces of legislation such as the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act, 2010; the Disability Act, 2013; the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2006; the National Registration Act, 2009; Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act, 2011; Gender Equality Act, 2013 and other relevant international and regional human rights instruments which Malawi ratified. One of such instruments is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)<sup>1</sup> as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)<sup>2</sup>.

In particular, the enactment of Child Care, Protection and Justice Act, 2010 is a milestone for Malawi because it consolidates various child friendly pieces of legislation into one law. The legislation entrenches the basic general principles for the promotion

1 CRC: ratified on 2 January, 1991

2 The ACRWC: ratified on 16 September, 1999

and protection of the rights of children such as the right to life, survival and development, best interest of the child, the right to express views and have them taken into account as well as non-discrimination. Therefore, the enactment of this law presents the opportunity to consolidate efforts in the promotion and protection of the rights of children in Malawi. At school level, other policies and initiatives such as 50-50 selection policy between boys and girls, re-admission policy for school drop outs, child friendly school initiative as well as free primary education policy also make significant contributions to a strong legal framework for the promotion and protection of children's right to education. In recent years, Malawi passed a law that makes primary education compulsory<sup>3</sup>. A totality of all these laws, policies, international and regional human rights instruments provide enabling environment for the enjoyment of the rights of children in the context of schools.

## 2. Frame of Reference

Despite the well-structured legal framework in Malawi, the prevailing situation in schools continues to be characterized by a number of challenges that affect the effective realisation of children's rights. The implication is that the rights of children remain far from being effectively realized. Some of the challenges are lack of effective enforcement of laws that promote children's rights as well as lack of government's total commitment to popularise existing national laws and policies as well as international and regional human rights instruments that are designed to promote the rights of children in Malawi. Participation is one of the four general principles in the CRC that offers children the opportunity to give their views on matters that affect them.

However, in the Malawian context, participation of children in matters that affect them is not fully implemented in schools. The children's right to participation is viewed with uneasiness by teachers, parents, communities and opinion leaders. As a result, children's participation in decision making in schools is almost negligible. This also stems from the fact that teachers and a greater percentage of adults fail to appreciate that children have the potential to situate problems and that they can contribute meaningfully in matters that affect them. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that in instances where children find space and express their views, their input is hardly given due weight. Coupled with teachers' challenges such as heavy work load, large classes and minimal understanding as well as appreciation of the rights of children in school setting, there is little consideration on how best such rights can be promoted.

In its concluding observations for Malawi on the country's second state party periodic report to the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) in 2009, the Committee noted that traditional and societal attitudes appear to limit children in freely expressing their views in schools, communities and within the family. The Committee recommended that Malawi should continue to strengthen

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<sup>3</sup> The Education Act was enacted into law in 2013. Section 13 of the Act provides free and compulsory primary education to children under the age of 18 years.

its efforts in promoting respect for the views of the children in all matters that concern them in the family, school, other children's institutions and the community.

It is a fact that respect for the rights of children to be heard within education is fundamental to the realization of the right to education. However, the situation in Malawi is different in the sense that there is continuing authoritarianism as well as disrespect for the rights of the children. This creates an environment which is not conducive to children's participation in decision making because teachers and other school authorities fail to provide space for children to express their views. For example, in Malawian primary and secondary schools, the trend has been that students' representatives in class have been limited to assisting teachers on issues of sanitation around the school environment and that students should follow school norms such as reporting for classes on time apart from recording noise makers in class. Parents, guardians and the communities from where the children come have had little influence on how such children can be involved in decision making in schools.

However, it is a fact that apart from cultivating sound teacher-pupil ratio to promote and protect children's right to education, there is need to ensure that students also participate in decision making on issues that affect them and their education and that parents as well as the communities ought to get involved in students' school work<sup>4</sup>. This is in line with the General Comment no 1 of the UN Committee on the CRC on the aims of education. The general comment advances that education must be provided in a way that respects the inherent dignity of the child and enables him or her to express his or her views freely in accordance with article 12 (1) of the CRC. The general comment also posits that children ought to participate in school life.

It is against this background that Malawi Batch 19 change agents implemented a project on child participation in decision making in 10 schools of Njewa Education Zone in Lilongwe. The project aimed at promoting increased students' active participation in decision making in schools on matters that affect them. The project took advantage of the already existing structures (students' representatives) in schools to make them more organized in order for them to participate in decision making. It was envisaged that this process would ultimately strengthen students' level of participation<sup>5</sup> in matters that affect them in schools and reduce various forms of violations on students. Ultimately, the project was expected to help create a conducive learning environment for students.

The project drew lessons from that of the Malawi Batch 16 change agents which also focused on child participation in decision making in schools. The project for the Malawi Batch 16 change agents, which was implemented at Njewa and Chitipi Primary Schools as well as Njewa Community Day Secondary School in Lilongwe district, focused much on school learners as a target group. The project framework did not adequately target parents and the communities to play their part in ensuring that schools cultivate a culture of students' participation in decision making on matters that affect them (students).

<sup>4</sup> Malawi Government Free Primary Education Implementation Guidelines

<sup>5</sup> Participation, herein, is where children take part in and influence processes, decisions and activities that affect them in order to achieve greater respect, promotion and protection of their rights.

In order for the project to be sustainable, the Malawi Batch 19 change agents focused on students' participation with the aim of changing teachers' and the communities' negative attitude and perception towards involvement of children in decision making in schools. As earlier pointed out, the Malawi Batch 16 change agents targeted three schools in Njewa Education Zone in Lilongwe. On the other hand, the Malawi Batch 19 change agents scaled up the project to 9 Primary Schools and 1 Community Day Secondary School in the zone. In view of this development, the change agents focused on Article 3, Article 12 and Article 13<sup>6</sup> of the CRC. The project further focused on Articles 14 and 15 as well as Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC. Article 14 gives children the opportunity to think for themselves on issues that are in their best interest. Articles 28 and 29 entitle children to relevant and qualitative education and oblige State parties to recognize children's right to relevant and qualitative education.

### 3. Purpose

The main purpose of the project was to promote increased participation of children in decision making in schools of Njewa Education Zone in Lilongwe. The specific objectives of the project included:

- 3.1 To bring a positive change on teachers' and the communities' attitude and perception towards involving children in decision making in schools.
- 3.2 To ensure that children, teachers and the communities appreciate the values of Childrens' participation in decision making in schools.
- 3.3 To facilitate the establishment of Students' Councils that would provide children a platform and voice to participate in decision making in schools.

### 4. Methodology and Results

This section covers the activities which the change agents implemented in pursuit of the project objectives and the results that were recorded. The actual reporting period is from October 2013 to January 2015. The activities 4.1 to 4.8 were undertaken in the third phase of the project while activities 4.9 to 6.0 were undertaken in the fifth phase of the project.

#### 4.1 Introducing the Project to the Ministry Of Education, Science and Technology

The project was first formally introduced to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. This was premised on the fact that the project targets public schools and

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6 Gives guidelines that all actions should be in the best interest of the child, entitles children to play an active role on all issues and decisions affecting their lives and gives the child the freedom to express their views freely on issues respectively

that this would require the support and cooperation of the line ministry during project implementation. Therefore, the change agents held a meeting with Dr. Joseph Chimombo, the ministry's Director of Basic Education. The ministry welcomed the project because of its objectives which focused on the promotion and protection of children's rights in school context using the provisions of the CRC.

The result was that Dr. Chimombo gave permission that through the office of the District Education Manager for Lilongwe Rural West Education District, the change agents could access the Zonal Improvement Grant as well as the District Improvement Grant in order to implement some of the activities as the project was at a zonal level. Dr. Chimombo also made a commitment that through his office, the ministry would periodically be monitoring progress of the project in the targeted schools and provide necessary support. Mr. Chimombo provided support to the change agents throughout the project implementation period.

#### **4.2 Meeting with the Education Division Manager for Central West Education Division**

The project was also introduced to the Central West Education Division office. The change agents had a meeting with the Education Division Manager, Mr. Joseph Nkhata. The meeting was important because Njewa Education Zone, the target area for the project, falls under Central West Education Division. At divisional level, the project was welcomed as well. Mr. Nkhata indicated that the project would help students begin to be involved in decision making at an early stage, thereby shaping them to become responsible citizens. Mr. Nkhata called for the need to sustain the project and later expand to other schools in order to consolidate efforts towards promoting and protecting the rights of children in school context. The result was that Mr. Nkhata pledged to cooperate with the change agents during the implementation of the project, which he did throughout the period.

#### **4.3 Meeting with the District Commissioner for Lilongwe District**

The project was also introduced to the office of the District Commissioner for Lilongwe district, Mr. Felix Mkandawire. This was premised on the fact that due to the current decentralization set up at district level in Malawi, offices of District Education Managers work closely with District Councils as a whole and District Commissioners in particular. Mr. Mkandawire welcomed the choice of the project, child participation in decision making in schools, and stated that the initiative would start shaping children to know and claim their rights when they are still in school. He stated that his office was in support of the project as it would be implemented in Lilongwe. The outcome of this was that throughout the project implementation period, the office of the District Commissioner provided relevant logistical support to facilitate the implementation of the project.

#### **4.4 Sensitization Meeting With Head Teachers on the Project**

The change agents conducted a sensitization meeting with head teachers from all the 10 targeted schools in the project. The primary aim of the meeting was to introduce the project to the head teachers since it targeted their respective schools. The meeting also clarified the role of the head teachers and how they would work with the change agents in order for the project objectives to be achieved. The project was introduced as an initiative to create child friendly schools in line with the Malawi Government policy that all schools should be child friendly as part of the implementation of the Malawi Free Primary School Education Guidelines. The head teachers welcomed the initiative and pledged to support the change agents in all the processes. The meeting took place at Njewa Teachers Development Centre in Lilongwe. As a result of the meeting, the head teachers started working towards creating conducive environment for students' participation on issues that affect them by conducting briefing sessions with teachers in their respective schools.

#### **4.5 Training of School Management Committees, Mother Groups and Parents-Teachers Associations**

School Management Committees (SMCs), Mother Groups (MGs) and Parents-Teachers Associations (PTAs) are important integral community structures that significantly contribute to running of public schools as part of community participation. SMCs work consist of members from the communities around the schools and their role is to contribute in the running of the schools at a school and community policy level while MGs, whose members are also drawn from the communities around the schools, provide psychosocial support to students and also work to prevent and respond to various forms of violations to such students. PTAs constitute parents who come from communities that are being serviced by a particular school and the teachers from such schools. The role of PTAs is for teachers and parents to share experiences and discuss issues that affect students as well as how best to deal with challenges at a school level for the benefit for students.

In view of this, the change agents organized 3 training sessions for SMCs, MGs and PTAs drawn from all the 10 schools which the project targeted. The aim of the trainings was to build the capacity of members of such structures on issues of children's participation in school governance in general and in decision making in particular on issues that affect them (children) in schools. This was in recognition of the fact that such community structures are central in running public schools. The participants were taken through the basic principles of the CRC and the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi (the Constitution) on children's rights and how such provisions can be applied in school context. Participants were also trained on how to work cordially with teachers in order to ensure that the rights of children in schools are promoted and protected. The result was that the training contributed towards changing the attitude and perception of members of SMCs, MGs as well as PTAs on giving children space to express their views. The structures started working towards ensuring that children participate in decision making on issues that affect them in schools.

## **4.6 Training of Head Teachers and Teachers**

All head teachers and their deputies as well as heads of sections from the 10 schools were involved in the training sessions. The training sessions also targeted teachers who were identified to take up the role of working together with the Students Councils as patrons. The trainings covered the fundamental principles of the CRC and how such principles can be used to promote and protect children's rights in schools. The participants were also taken through the relevant provisions in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as well as children's rights as provided in the Constitution. The participants were also trained on their role in ensuring that children in schools participate in decision making, especially on issues that affect them. The result was that school managers (head teachers, deputies and heads of sections) as well as the majority of ordinary teachers started cultivating a culture of harmony with students by allowing them to participate in decision making on matters that affect them. The training took place at Njewa Teachers Development Centre in Lilongwe.

As a result, the change agents, working hand in hand with teachers and other school authorities, facilitated the establishment of Students' Councils in all the targeted 10 schools in Njewa Education Zone in Lilongwe. Students' Councils are now in place and they act as channels for students to voice their views. In this way, students have a platform to address issues of their concern with the support of school management. Therefore, by and large, the Students' Councils are a bridge on how children can participate in school governance on issues that concern them. It is further expected that with time, the Students' Councils will take much lead in problem situating on issues that affect them in schools and provide their input on how to address such issues.

## **4.7 Training of Students' Councils and the Patrons**

Following the establishment of Students' Councils in the schools, training sessions were organized for students who are members of the Students' Councils in all the 10 schools. The training sessions aimed at empowering students to be knowledgeable on their rights as provided in the Constitution, the CRC, other relevant international as well as regional human rights instruments and how such rights can be realized in school context. The scope of the training also included their roles and responsibilities as members of the Students' Councils in order for them to work towards participating in school governance on issues that affect all students while at the same time observing acceptable discipline in schools.

During the training, selected teachers who were identified as patrons were also trained on their roles in the operations of the Students' Councils. The training also clarified to the patrons what would be perceived as interference in the affairs of the Students' Councils, which could result in diluting the existence of such structures in schools. The training was held at Njewa Teachers Development Centre in Lilongwe. The result of the training was that the patrons started to closely work with the Students' Councils and there is now enhanced cooperation between the two sides which is greatly contributing to students' participation in decision making.

## 4.8 Building Critical Mass through a Radio Programme

As part of building critical mass through the popularization of the project, the change agents organized a radio programme. The main objective of the radio programme was to affirm to the public and various stakeholders on the possibility of realization of children's rights to participate in decision making in schools when such children, teachers and other key stakeholders are fully empowered. The expectation was that the radio programme would help popularize the project to teachers, learners and other stakeholders whom the change agents have had no direct contact with.

The 30 minutes radio programme was broadcast on Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS). ZBS is the leading private radio station in Malawi which commands huge listenership across the country. The following featured in the radio programme: Students' Councils from two schools in the impact area: two Students' Councils were drawn from two schools that have been working with Malawi Batch 16 change agents. Others included a patron of one Students' Council, a Chairperson of one SMC, the Primary Education Advisor for Njewa Education Zone, the Director of Basic Education in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Director of Children's Rights from the Malawi Human Rights Commission.

Specifically, the radio programme aimed at achieving the following:

- Raising public awareness on the success stories Students' Councils from Njewa Education Zone schools have achieved through students' participation in decision making in schools.
- Sharing some strategies to all schools in Njewa Education Zone and beyond on how meaningful realization of children's rights in schools can be achieved through students' participation.
- Sensitising key and strategic players as well as students and teachers at large on issues of children's rights in schools and how they relate to education.
- Mobilising support and commitment from various key players on the need for respect of children's rights in schools.

The primary result of the radio programme was that it brought awareness to the students, teachers and community structures in the targeted schools on the significance of allowing students to voice out their views on issues that affect them in schools. The radio programme complemented the awareness and training meetings which the change agents had conducted with the stated target groups. This strengthened advocacy efforts for students' participation and the change agents noted continued support of the school authorities to have the students express their views on issues affecting them in the targeted schools.



## 4.9 Training of Patrons of Students' Councils

Following the previous trainings for the patrons, another training session was organized for them. The aim of the training was to build on the previous trainings with regard to how patrons can deepen their interface with the Students' Councils for the latter to effectively take part in decision making in schools on issues that affect them. The training exposed to the patrons the fundamental principles of the CRC, other international and regional human rights standards governing children's rights, the Malawi's legal framework protecting the rights of children and how the question of human rights can be mainstreamed in school setting, drawing from the provisions of the CRC on the right to education. The training provided an opportunity for the patrons to have a broader view of human rights architecture with regard to children in Malawi. It also provided the patrons with the right perspective on how they can work to advocate for the rights of children in school setting particularly on the element of students' participation in decision making in schools. The training also emphasized on how the patrons can provide objective guidance to Students' Councils without directly or indirectly exerting undue interfering on them. The result has been that the patrons have continued to work with the Students' Councils for the benefit of the latter. This has generally created a health dialogue between students and teachers on the participation of the former on issues that affect them in schools.

## 5. Review Meetings with Target Groups

### 5.1 A Review Meeting With Head Teachers

This review meeting was aimed at taking stock of the progress regarding the involvement of children in decision making in schools from the time the project was introduced in schools. The review meeting was also aimed at evaluating how Students' Councils have been operating in the schools, efforts taken by the head teachers and their teaching staff to ensure that children are involved on issues that concern them as a way of concretizing their commitment to respect children's right to participation and the general challenges faced by the head teachers and teachers in that regard. The review meeting was also one way of fashioning solutions to the challenges and concerns in order to inform the way forward. It was noted during the review meeting that the head teachers had tried their best to create a favourable environment for children to be involved on issues that affect them. It was, however, noted that despite that teaching staff in various schools had embraced the concept of involving students in decision making on matters that affect them, other teachers were yet to fully embrace the concept because of their perceived fear that children would usurp their authority. This challenge was, however, expected by the change agents and the way forward was to design ongoing tailor made sessions for teachers for them to appreciate the significance of the concept and work towards embracing it.

Another way forward was for head teachers to use their space of action to motivate the teachers to work closely with students on the realization of their (students) rights particularly the element of participation. These mechanisms proved to be working as more teachers are now able to appreciate the importance of involving students in decision making on issues that affect them in schools. During the review meeting, head teachers also reported that since the introduction of Students' Councils in the schools, there are certain things that have improved such as taking care of school property as students are now able to own that responsibility, taking care of the surroundings of the schools as students are now able to take charge of that responsibility without the involvement of school administration as well as reduction of various forms of indiscipline. The result of the review meeting, after change agents started implementing some interventions to overcome the barriers from some teachers, has been that more teachers who had not fully embraced the concept are now at the stage where they are able to support it because of the positive developments that it has brought as stated above. However, the change agents continue to engage the head teachers, patrons and the teachers considering that change is a gradual process.

## **5.2 Review Meetings with Student Councils**

The review meetings was crucial as it provided an avenue to share experiences and best practices on how the Students' Councils have been operating in all the targeted schools from the time they were established. The meetings also provided an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the Students' Councils and how best to work with head teachers and the teaching staff to consolidate such successes. It was noted during the meetings that while most patrons have been supportive to the Students' Councils from the beginning of the project, a few others have along the way lost the desired commitment. This was attributed to the fact that some patrons had not fully understood the concept of children's participation in decision making and this required the change agents to continuously mentor such patrons for them to effectively provide proper guidance to Students' Councils. The change agents continued to use formal and informal interface meetings to reach out to the patrons who most needed ongoing mentoring. The result was that with time, such patrons started to work to the expectations of the change agents and the students themselves. So far, progress has been recorded on how the patrons ought to play their role in providing guidance to the Students' Councils as regards how students can be involved on issues that affect them in schools. The change agents, however, continue to be in direct engagement with the Students' Councils to enhance their capacity.



Members of Students' Councils during the review meeting with change agents

### 5.3 Review Meeting With Patrons of Students' Councils

The meeting primarily aimed at getting feedback from the patrons on their evaluation of how they had started to work with the Students' Councils, what had changed as a result of the Students' Councils, challenges faced so far and how best to move forward for them (patrons) to effectively support the students. The meeting also provided an avenue for the patrons to seek guidance from the change agents on issues which they needed to understand better. Issues that came out during the meeting included that of lack of supportive spirit of other teachers to the work of Students' Councils because such teachers initially thought the patrons receive monetary gains for their role. It was noted that lack of such support was another reason that was demotivating the patrons to work with enthusiasm with Students' Councils. It was also highlighted that some students with behavioural problems challenge the authority of Students' Councils and that this derails the latter's work.

Despite the challenges, it came out that the patrons had so far made commendable contributions as regards strengthening the capacity of Students' Councils as platforms for students to provide their views on issues that affect them.

Following the challenges, there were follow up interface discussions with head teachers and heads of teaching sections on how they can work closely with the entire teaching staff so that the same provides the required support to the patrons. The meeting also provided an avenue for the change agents to clarify to the teaching staff that patrons merely provide guidance to the Students' Councils and that there are no monetary gains attached. Following the review meeting and the subsequent meeting as an intervention to address the challenges, the result is that more teachers are now supportive to the patrons as they work collaboratively to involve students when decisions are being made on issues that concern them. Further, on the issue of other students undermining the authority of the Students' Councils, the head teachers and the patrons have been doing their best to further enlighten the students on the role of the Students' Councils and

their significance to the enjoyment of their rights in schools. The other result is that the problematic students have now realised that Students' Councils have the general full backing of the head teachers and the teaching staff. This has restored the authority of the Students' Councils.

#### **5.4 Review Meetings with School Management Committees, Mother Groups and Parents-Teachers Associations**

This meeting was organized to reflect on the extent to which School Management Committees (SMCs), Mother Groups (MGs) and Parents-Teachers Associations (PTA) had played their role to ensure that students in all the targeted schools participate in decision making on issues that affect them. These meetings were premised on the principle that such community structures have got considerable influence in the running of public schools in Malawi as they are recognized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology as important structures through which the communities can participate in the running of public primary and secondary schools.

It was generally noted that these structures had been playing their background role by advocating for the rights of children in school through the meetings which such structures hold with head teachers and the teaching staff. However, it came out that such structures need ongoing interface meetings with the change agents for them to be fully conversant with issues of children's rights, particularly the right to participate in decision making in school, and how best they can competently advance the agenda of children's rights in their various fora with head teachers and the teaching staff. The change agents have taken up the role of having continuous interface discussions with these community structures so that they effectively contribute to the realization of children's rights in schools with a focus on the right to have a voice on matters that affect them. The result of the review meeting and subsequent interventions to enhance the capacity of these community structures has led to improved engagement between such structures and head teachers as well as the entire teaching staff on children's rights in schools.

### **6. Bringing the Project Closer to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology**

The change agents continued to bring the project closer to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology by engaging the Principal Secretary (PS) for Basic and Secondary Education in the ministry. This is the highest ranking technocrat in the ministry who reports to the minister and the deputy minister. The PS has been positive with the concept of involving students in decision making in schools because it is one way of shaping the future leaders of Malawi. The PS also noted that the Students' Councils would go a long way in promoting dialogue between students and teachers on a number of issues affecting the former, thereby reducing cases of indiscipline. The

PS requested the change agents to actively involve her office in order for the ministry to provide the required support to the project. The result of the meeting was that it opened dialogue at a much higher level between the change agents and the ministry on the possibility of having the concept adopted by the same ministry for replication to all primary and secondary schools in Malawi as a matter of policy. The change agents are working towards this direction.

## 7. Linkage with a Member of Parliament and a Counsellor of The Project's Impact Area

The project was also brought to the attention of the Member of Parliament and the ward counsellor for the impact area. Members of Parliament are crucial as they influence legal and policy reforms in parliament. On the other hand, Counsellors have influence at a local government local. The Member of Parliament and the Counsellor welcomed the project. The result of this linkage has been that the two stated public officers have been providing support in the activities of the change agents by, among other things, availing themselves during the meetings to demonstrate to teachers and the communities that it is a good cause to fight for the rights of children by providing them space to participate in decision making on issues that affect them in school.

## 8. Linkage with Batch 16, Batch 20 and Batch 21

From the beginning, the change agents of this project in Batch 19 have been promoting stronger linkage with Batches 16, 20 and 21 in order to build a strong coalition that would bring a much more positive impact in the targeted schools. While Batch 16 focused on the same theme as Batch 19 which is promoting students' participation in decision making in schools and the former targeted 2 primary schools and 1 Community Day Secondary School in Njewa Education Zone, Batch 20's focus is on CRC based school leadership so that head teachers provide conducive environment for students to participate in decision making on issues that affect them and that they are protected from various forms of violations in school setting. Batch 20 also targets all the schools in Njewa Education Zone: 11 primary schools and 2 Community Day Secondary Schools. On the other hand, Batch 21's focus is on clarifying the roles of Students Councils' and prefectial bodies (traditional students' representatives) in 2 schools in Njewa Education Zone. This presents the picture that all the 4 projects from Batch 16, 19, 20 and 21 are in principle focusing on children in the same schools. In view of this, the change agents in Batch 19 worked closely with change agents from other batches to share notes and best practices considering that our focus were the same schools. The result has been that this form of coalition has exerted a bigger positive impact to the schools as all the batches (Batches 16, 19, 20 and 21) are speaking with one voice on the issue of children's rights with regard to students' participation in decision

making on matters that affect them in schools. This type of collaboration among the batches is expected to continue.

## 9. Eight Key Results

Following the implementation of the activities as discussed in this report, the following are the 8 key results recorded.

9.1 Students in all the 10 targeted schools formed Students' Councils that act as platforms to participate in decision making and school governance in general on matters that affect them.

9.2 There is a level of knowledge in the students on their rights to participate in decision making in schools. In the same vein, students are, to acceptable level, knowledgeable about their responsibilities as they exercise their right to participate in decision making on matters that affect them.

9.3 Students are now able to demand accountability from teachers on issues that affect them. For instance, students are able to demand explanations from teachers in times when class time tables are not followed. This has reduced the tendency by some teachers to fail to teach without justifiable reasons. This is also working to the advantage of head teachers who previously needed to have close monitoring on teachers to check if such teachers comply with the class timetables in terms of teaching.

9.4 Class rules are now made with the involvement of students and this has enhanced their (students) compliance with such rules.

9.5 Students are now able to take responsibility for certain issues in schools. For instance, students are now able to handle issues of sanitation at their schools without the involvement of school authorities (head teachers and teachers). Students take care of their school surroundings among themselves without being guided by school authorities which was not the case in the past.

9.6 Teachers, SMCs, MGs and PTAs embraced the concept of involving students in decision making. As such, there has been commendable support on the part of such community structures to ensure that students have a voice on issues that affect them. As such, there is increased engagement between community structures and the teachers on the advancement of children's rights in schools with regard to their (children's) participation on issues that affect them.

9.7 There is now increased awareness of children's rights among the teachers and the community structures (SMCs, MGs, PTAs). This has made these target groups to support the initiative of giving students space to participate in decision making on issues

that affect them in schools. Further, there has been increased awareness of students on their rights as they apply in school context.

9.8 The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology welcomed the project and this provided a basis for continued advocacy so that the concept is adopted at the ministry level and replicated to all primary and secondary schools as a matter of policy.

## 10. Discussion and Reflection

In all the 10 schools, the project started on a good note as it was welcomed by various players ranging from officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to community structures (SMCs, MGs and PTAs) in the impact area. The teachers in all the schools demonstrated commitment to work with the change agents in ensuring that children's rights are promoted and protected in schools. Taking cognizance that change is a gradual process, it is crucial for the change agents to continue harnessing the capacity of the Students' Councils, head teachers and the teaching staff as well as SMCs, MGs and PTAs so that they work towards promoting students' rights in schools. In particular, Students' Councils in the targeted schools need constant interface among themselves in order to share experiences and learn best practices on their participation in decision making in their respective schools. The change agents have a role to facilitate such interface meetings.

Further, much as more teachers have embraced the concept of giving students space to give their views on issues that concern them, there is still need for ongoing purposeful interface and tailor made discussions with teachers who seem to be slow in embracing the initiative. Further, there is still need for ongoing advocacy to head teachers and the community structures so that the initiative gets mainstreamed in the school context and fully becomes part of the school system. It, therefore, remains the role of the change agents to continue to work closely with key players in order to consolidate efforts aimed at promoting learners' participation in decision making in schools. Above all, the change agents, in coalition with change agents of Batch 16, 20 and 21 that are also working in the same impact area at Njewa Education Zone as well as the Malawi Network of Change Agents, will continue to scale up their engagement efforts with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology so that the concept of Students' Councils as platforms for students' participation in decision making in schools can be adopted by the ministry and replicated to all primary and secondary schools in Malawi as a matter of Government policy.

## 11. Way Forward

11.1 Strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in order to continuously assess the implementation of Students' Councils' action plans in schools and document success stories which can be shared with other schools and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. This also involves conducting ongoing review meetings in each academic calendar with key target groups and other stakeholders in order to situate challenges that can potentially derail the initiative and find ways of addressing such challenges.

11.2 To continue designing activities for Students' Councils that can deepen their understanding of children's rights. This includes Zonal Children's Parliament on learners' participation in decision making for schools in Njewa Education Zone. This cannot only broaden the scope of students' understanding of their right to give views on issues that affect them but also shape their appreciation of human rights issues, thereby inculcating in them such values as tolerance, respect for other people's rights that will remain with them when they become adult citizens of Malawi.

11.3 As a medium term goal, to cascade the initiative to other three zones in the Lilongwe Rural Education District.

11.4 As a medium to long term goal, to actively engage the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to adopt the concept of Students' Councils as an important school structure through which students can provide their views and participate in various decision making processes on matters that concern them. This requires ongoing advocacy.



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# NAMIBIA

*Namibia* had its first team in batch 2 (2004) and has in total had 11 teams and 32 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 21) the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	3	0	
Region/Province/District	13	0	
Local	16	11	Primary and Secondary schools

**Table1.** Change Agents’ professional position and the team’s Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

Geographically the main parts of the teams are from the North provinces. One team is from Karas province and one team is from the Center. The projects have mainly focused implementation and sensitization of all three Ps, provision, protection and participation.



**Area:** 824,292 km<sup>2</sup>  
**Population:** 2, 319, 085 (est. 2014)  
**Capital:** Windhoek  
**Independence:** 21 March 1990  
**Official language:** English  
**Network Country Coordinators:**  
 Rod April in Windhoek  
 (rod.april@moe.gov.na),  
 Marthinus Hamutenya in Rundo,  
 North East regions  
 (kudumo16@hotmail.com)  
 Paulus Ilyambo in Eenhana, North  
 West regions  
 (paulusiiyambo@yahoo.com)

# NAMIBIA

## Reducing the Dropout Rate at Omhanda Combined School in Ohangwena Region

*Penehafo Ndeshipanda Haidula, Monika Tuliikeni Hangula and Simon Jakob*

### 1. Introduction

Team Namibia, comprising of two HOD's and Inspector of Education were nominated to attend the training on Child Rights, Classroom and School management in Sweden. During the training we came up with a project proposal on reducing dropout rate of learners in Ohangwena Education Directorate at Omhanda Combined School which is a continuous of an already piloted project at Eputuko Combined School in Ohangwena Region by batch 17.

### 2. Frame of Reference

The government of Namibia ratified the Child Right Convention in 1990, after it was passed by the UN in 1989. Article 28.1 of the CRC states that, "State parties recognizes the right of the child to education with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall in particular (1) (a)" make primary education compulsory and available free to all" (1) (e) State Parties "take measures to encourage regular attendance at school and the reduction of dropout rates".

The government of the Republic of Namibia passed the Education Act (Act 16/2001) that emphasizes the regular attendance of the children in schools and obliges parents to make sure that their children attend school regularly. The state further came up with a social grant that is given to orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) as well as the children whose parents are pensioners. This grant is used to pay for the school fees and uniforms. The Ministry of Education came up with the pregnancy policy that encourages learners who became pregnant to attend school until close to delivery and also return to school after delivery as long as there's proof that the baby is being taken care of. The Ministry also came up with a school feeding programme whereby learners

in primary schools benefit. This is to encourage learner's attendance and performance. Compulsory free primary education was also introduced.

Despite all efforts made by the Republic of Namibia, dropout is still high particular in Ohangwena Region. Most of the school dropout is caused by teenage pregnancies, high failure rate and lack of interest. Since batch 17 Change Agents already have started with the pilot project on reducing dropout, we, batch 19 Change Agents decided to continue with the same project initiated by batch 17 to ensure sustainability. Omhanda Combined School is a rural school that accommodates boys and girls (383). Parents are subsistence farmers. The school has electricity, water and internet. There are 17 teachers in which 15 teachers comes from others parts of the country.

Dropout statistics for Omhanda school year 2013

- Term 3, 26/39 (67%) failed grade 10
- 4 learners fell pregnant



### 3. Purpose

The main idea of the project is to create awareness among target groups (parents, teachers and learners on CRC and high school dropout rate). By the end of the project we expect the target groups and stakeholders to have a thoroughly understanding of the CRC and the consequences of learner's dropout themselves, the region and country at large. We will mainly focus on the most three causes of dropout to the majority of our learners according to statistics from Ohangwena Education Directorate. i.e.

- Failing
- Pregnancy
- Unknown (Unspecified)

## **Expected Outcome**

As Change Agents we expect parents, teachers, learners themselves and all other stakeholders should understand the CRC and try to reduce the dropping out of learners from school, due to pregnancy, high failure rates and all other causes which are sometimes unknown. Parents should be conscious about the education of their children.

### **Target group and stakeholders.**

The target groups of this project are all the parents, 17 teachers and 383 learners of Omhanda Combined School in Ohangwena Education Directorate. Meanwhile the stakeholders are Inspector of Education, Principal of Omhanda Combined school, the community of Omhanda Combined School, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Civil Society, Church leaders, Ministry of Safety and Security, Headmen and Planning and development section.

## **4. Activities / Methodologies**

### **Consultation**

After the team came back from Sweden, they have consulted batch 17 members for informing them that the team that is batch 19 will continue to their piloting project at Eputuko Combined School, but batch 19 project will be conducted at Omhanda Combined School.

Thereafter the team met the Education Directorate Management (Deputy Director (as the director was out of the region) and briefed them about the training they underwent in Sweden and sought the permission to go to Omhanda Combined School to carry out the project. The management was very supportive and permission was granted.

Thereafter the team went further to inform the Inspector of Education were Omhanda Combined School is resorting and collect the dropout data, due to pregnancy, failing and other. The team went to the (school) Omhanda Combined School to introduce themselves to the School Management and inform them on the proposed project on the whereby the School Management were excited about the project. On the 26 February 2014, the team started with the sensitization meeting for the target groups (parents, teachers and learners)

Due to the level of target groups understanding on CRC, the team members divided themselves so that each could address the certain group as per their understanding.



The sensitization meetings mostly touched on the Child Rights in Namibia. The presenters asked the target groups to reflect on the child rights in Namibia by brainstorming their understanding. Then the team introduced the CRC (especially that it is related to the CR and also reflect on the link between the CRC and the dropout rate.

After the presentation, the team gave the target groups an opportunity to ask questions and give their concerns.

The groups cited as follows:

- The teachers felt that the abolishing of corporal punishment in Namibia led to high indiscipline among the learners.
- Teachers also felt that the Child Rights is contradicting with religion perspectives, because they interpreted some of the verses from the Bible (on Christianity perspective, (Quote) “Spare the rod and spoil the child).
- They also felt that teachers are disempowered, that makes it very difficult to control learners. - They felt that learners misunderstood their rights and forget their responsibilities.
- Learners responded that:
- Poverty and livelihood in the community is the major challenge. Despite school feeding programme and free universal primary education in place, pupils still drop school when their basic bodily needs are not satisfied.
- Indiscipline: teachers bullying learners, learners bullying one another and teenage pregnancy stigma.
- Failing: learners tired of failing lose interest as the current curriculum seems to be more challenging and demanding to slow learners.
- Low understanding of the importance and benefits of education.
- Insubordination: pupils are hardly complying toward their parent, guardians and teachers.

For the team to get the information on why the learners are dropping out of the school, questionnaires were designed, translated into vernacular language for parents to understand and distributed to the target groups parents and teachers.

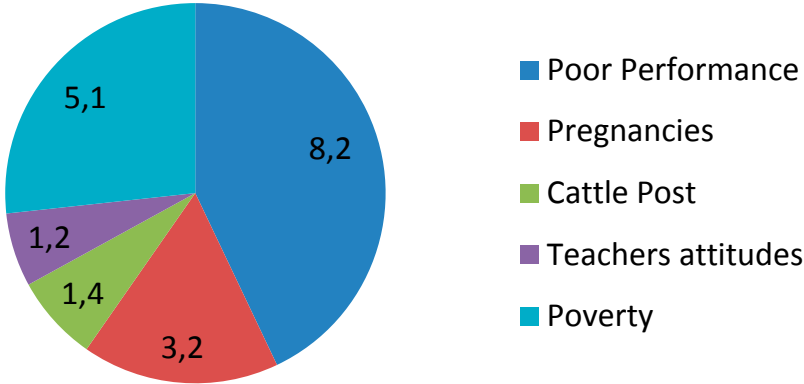
Learners were selected randomly to answer the questionnaire and thereafter the team members analyzed the response and found out that the causes of dropping out, compiled them and gave the questionnaire outcome to the target groups. Thereafter all the parties discuss and solicit the possible solution and implemented the processes (see results).

The sensitization meeting will be continuing throughout until almost 95% of the parents, teachers and learners understand Provision, Participation and Protection in education.

### Causes of dropout by respondents

All respondents have suggested the following as the main causes of dropout at Omhanda Combined School.

## Causes of drop-out



## 5. Results

After conducting the interview by means of questionnaire most of the targeted groups cited the following:

In addition both parents and learners have discovered that poor relationship between teachers and their learners will lead to dropout of learners. Furthermore parents added that peer pressure and alcohol abuse will contribute to the dropout of learners as well. Apart from that teachers have cited that relocation of parents and tired of failing as the other cause of dropout. Learners also speak out that they dropout because of unsafe school ground which might have of bullying and fights. They (learners) revealed that most of them lose interest on school work.

- After all the activities are completed, it was agreed that the LRC (Learners Representative council) should be strengthened.
- The school-board members should also be well informed on CRC and work for the benefit of the learners.
- The community committees to be introduced and work closely with the Principal and Headmen.
- The LRC should be well trained on how to support the teaching and learning at school in collaboration with the teachers.

### *Learners*

- Peer support on both morally and academically.
- Encouraging learners to do their best on their school work.
- To have more Life Skills teachers

### *Teachers*

- The school to enforce the code conducts of corporal punishment.
- Strong bonds between parents and school (good relationship teachers-parents)
- The school to follow-up on dropouts.

### *Parents*

- Regular visit by outside officials
- Motivate their children to love school and do their best in their school work.
- Strict actions to teachers who use corporal punishment as a mean of disciplining.



## **Motivational strategies**

The interviewer revealed some of the motivation factors that will keep learners on school till finished their school.

### *At school*

- Teachers and parents must talk regular to learners motivating them.
- Use positive reinforcements such as rewarding good performance of learners.
- Learners should be provided with their needs.

### *At home*

- Telling learners the truth about today's life.
- Awarding fixed attendance of learners.
- Motivate learners to have supportive friends and good friends.
- Encouraging learners to be open to their teachers and parents.
- Make sure that learners are living in a safe environment.

## **Support needed by learners from different stakeholders**

During interview the three groups indicated that they need support from other stakeholders such as Principal, Headmen, Church leader and regional education directorate in order to bring down dropout on mediate effects. They outlined the following support from other stakeholders.

- Learners need equal treatments from all directions.
- They demand good communication with both teachers and parents.
- They need to be taught Life Skills as the power to all issues that troubling learners.
- School need to abolish corporal punishment.
- The Life Skills teacher to counsel learners.
- Expected parents to provide their children basic needs.

## **The visit of our mentor Lena Anderson**

Lena Anderson, the mentor to the Change Agents came to Namibia as from 2nd – 7th February 2015 to assist the Change Agents for them to help the school to improve on the teaching and learning and reduce the failure of the learners that lead to dropping out of learners.

Visited the two schools that are involved in the project, Eputuko Combined School and Omhanda Combined School. She met with the learners and educators and addressed them on Rights of Children and observed participation in classroom

and outside. She also addressed 43 Cluster Centre Principals (CCP) from Ohangwena Education Directorate in Ohangwena Region on Child Rights, classroom and school management and lastly she also managed to gather eleven (11) Change Agents from different batches to discuss issues pertaining to Child Right programme.



## Discussion and Reflection

The project sensitization meetings were well attended and the targeted groups were well aware of the child's rights. The emphasis was only about the connection on Child Rights Convention (CRC) and dropout rate of learners. Teachers were very impressed, they were ready to implement the CRC in the school and they wanted to work together with the parents, community members and learners. Learners knew their rights and also would like to be heard and also to participate in decision making at school and in the community, however it was observed that they fully understand their rights but not their responsibilities.

Upon our arrival back from Sweden, our Director and Deputy Director were pre-occupied by meetings that delayed our activities. As change agents, we were too loaded that we hardly get time to attend to the project. Poor network communication in the region was also one of the challenges when the team was planning and arranging to meet.

## 6. Way forward

The team will go with strengthening the monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the project success. We will also try to expand the project to the surrounding schools and visiting other change agents in different projects around the country. The following long-term resolution strategies can be used by parents, teachers and stakeholders to compact school dropout:

- Educators should make school safe and nurturing environment for learners for them to curb dropout.
- Parents must ensure that they have a tight communication with the school to have access to the information, education policies to enable them to control learners.
- Parents should often encourage school dropouts to return to school.
- Parents and learners must seriously take the national policy that seek to return pregnant and delivered learners to school.
- All stakeholders must prioritize and take all-appropriate measures to prevent unwanted teenage pregnancy as it prevent access to basic education and affecting access to employment and livelihood.
- Introduce and actively promote child rights and their responsibilities through curriculum.
- Sexual education must be strengthened, as it remains a key compact strategy to teenage pregnancy and encouraging behavioral change.
- Educators must encourage and monitor provision, protection and participation to ensure equal access and quality education.
- Learners need to refrain from negative social issues such as alcohol abuse and sexual relationships that interfere with their education and realize how to make responsible choices.
- Other learners must stop stigmatizing pregnant teenagers, bullying and all forms of disrespect.
- Seek for sponsors to help with basic need of the learners: shoes, groceries and school uniforms.

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## SOUTH AFRICA

*South Africa* has its first team in batch 3 (2005) and in total 10 teams and 30 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.'



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	2	0	
Region/Province/District	16	0	
Local	11	10	

**Table1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

The Child Rights program has taken place in 3 of the 9 provinces in South Africa: Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, but first and foremost in Free State, where the teams have been composed by officials from Values in Education and principals. The implementation of CRC has focused on problems with drugs, sexual abuse, corporal punishment, infusion of CRC in school policies, orphans, child headed households and creation of child-friendly teaching and learning environment.



**Area:** 1, 219, 090 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 54, 002, 000 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Pretoria (admin), Cape Town (leg), Bloemfontein (judicial)

**Independence:** 31 May 1910

**Official languages:** Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu.

**National Country Coordinator:** Rapuleng Matsaneng in Bloemfontein (matsaneng@edu.fs.gov.za, or matsanengi@gmail.com)

# SOUTH AFRICA

Learners' Rights in the Context of CRC, With the Focus on Participation

*Denga Fhatuwani Leonard, Msibi Vangile Lina and Vinger Selekane*

The team is based in the three Districts of the Free State Province, namely Motheo, Thabo Mofutsanyana and Fezile Dabi. Our project has focused on two Schools, one in Motheo (R.T Mokgopa Secondary School) and the other in Thabo Mofutsanyana (Tabola Primary School).



## 1. Introduction

When the United Nations was formed after World War II, the idea was to enable nations to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, and ensure that basic human rights are protected and promoted.

Although South Africa and many other countries of the world have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the prescripts of the convention are always violated.

The interest in the project was aroused due to the fact that many incidents of violations of children's rights are reported in the newspapers, radio and television. The

incidents of violations range from corporal punishment, non-involvement of learners in committees such as the School Governing Body (SGB), and the right of learners to education is violated through lack of commitment by some educators to giving quality education to learners due to absenteeism, lack of preparation and non-compliance to the laws that govern education in South Africa.

## 2. Frame of reference

### **The Education system in South Africa**

All South Africans have the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education. According to the Bill of Rights of the country's Constitution, the state has an obligation, through reasonable measures, to progressively make this education available and accessible.

School life spans 13 years or grades, from grade 0, otherwise known as grade R or "reception year", through to grade 12 or "matric" – the year of matriculation. General Education and Training runs from grade 0 to grade 9.

Under the South African Schools Act of 1996, education is compulsory for all South Africans from the age of seven (grade 1) to age 15, or the completion of grade 9. General Education and Training also includes Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), which is available to adults who want to finish their basic education.

Further Education and Training takes place from grades 10 to 12, and also includes career-oriented education and training offered in other Further Education and Training institutions – technical colleges, community colleges and private colleges. Diplomas and certificates are qualifications recognised at this level.

### **The Convention on the Rights of the Child**

According to Article 12: "Parties shall assure that the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child."

Article 13: "The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice."

It must be noted though, that the exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as provided by law and are necessary. 190 countries including South Africa have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989) 54 Articles with the exception of USA, Somalia and South Sudan.

South Africa is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which compels it to pass laws and take social, educational and administrative measures to pro-

protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury, abuse and Neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

### **South African pieces of legislation:**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in Chapter 2, on the Bill of Rights outlines in Article 16, the freedom of expression and says:

”Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media; freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; freedom of artistic creativity; and academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

According to the South African Schools Act: NO. 84 OF 1996,” An RCL (Representative Council of Learners) must be established at every public school which enrolls learners in Grade 8 and higher.” And further:

“A governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school.”

Although the right to participation is contained in the South African Schools Act, this right is violated by educators who do not see the need in learners taking part in decision making. This is as a result of factors such as cultural values and norms impeding change in our society.

## **3. Purpose**

1. The purpose of the project is to create a positive teaching and learning environment characterized by strong learner participation. This will be realized through initiating role modelling classes in the two pilot schools.

a. It will involve learner leadership structures in the two schools mentioned above in order to assist in the attainment of the desired teaching and learning environment: The learner leadership structures that will be involved are the following: Representative Council of Learners (RCL), Class Captains, Soul Buddies, CULUMBA leadership and Radically Different Species (RADS).

2. To raise awareness about CRC to all stakeholders with special reference to the 3Ps.

a. This will be done through developing links with different sections within the Education Department such as Values In Education, (the section deals with human rights promotion, racial integration and social cohesion) Inclusive Education, (which is a section within the department of education which will be helpful in the project for referral of learners with barriers to learning) and the South African Human Rights Commission, the commission will be useful in making the target groups understand and have knowledge of human rights issues) as well as Save the Children (the NGO which deals with human rights issues with a special focus on children).

## 4. Project Sites

### R.T Mokgopa Secondary School

The School is situated at Thaba Nchu, in Bultfontein no.3, in the Motheo District of the Free State Province. When the school started with the project it had 43 Educators, 05 non-teaching staff and 1150 learners. It had 09 School Governing Body (SGB) members and 17 volunteer staff members. The area where the school is situated is characterized by high unemployment rate and poverty.

Before the project, all classes were overcrowded and were difficult to control. It was difficult to monitor the activities of all learners and eliminate unwanted behavior. Acts of bullying and intimidation would go unnoticed by educators. Learners were able to be unruly with cell phones. It was also a challenge to have a one on one interaction between teachers and learners.



R.T Mokgopa Secondary School

### Tabola Primary School

The school is situated at Dithotaneng village in Witsieshoek (Qwaqwa), in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District of the Free State Province of the Republic of South Africa. When the project started, the school had 28 Educators and 912 learners. There were 11 School Governing Body (SGB) members and 6 non-teaching staff members. The area where the school is situated is characterized by high rate of unemployment and poverty.

Although the projects are situated far away from each other, but the change agents have followed the project plan as was outlined in parallel process, and Denga always served as a link between the project sites, namely R.T Mokgopa Secondary School and Tabola Primary School.

Before the project, the school faced challenges such as absenteeism, non-stake holder participation and lack or minimal support of learners by educators.





Tabola Primary School

## Activities

### *R.T Mokgopa High School*

The school principal Selekane Vinger held a meeting with the District Director Mrs Hazel Motsoeneng on 16 October 2013 to give feedback about the visit to Sweden and training on “Child Rights, Classroom and School Management”, and highlighted the project plan and sought approval.

The school Management Team of R.T Mokgopa was met on 18 October 2013 and the educators were met on 20 October.

Mr J. Matsaneng, Chief Education Specialist for Values in Education was met on 20 October 2015 together with Inclusive Education Mr Tantie. The idea behind these meetings was to present the project plan and seek support from the people in higher authority.

Another meeting was held with the School Management Team and the Educators to give report and seek approval of the project and contribution.

Selekane met with the learners leadership structures such as the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) and Culumba Leadership for an advocacy on Children’s rights and contribution.

A series of meetings were held with the grades 8-12 learners and discussions were conducted on how to improve teaching and learning at school with the participation of learners.

On 28 February 2014 Denga and Selekane met with the educators and the learners to have an idea on how the school is embracing CRC. Denga addressed the learners on child rights in the context of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child, the South African Bill Of Rights as well as the South African Schools Act. It was discovered during question time that the rights of children were still being violated, particularly through the administration of corporal punishment by educators.



On the same day Denga addressed the educators on the Alternatives to corporal Punishment. During the interaction with educators, it was clear that a lot of educators were still of the opinion that corporal punishment was still the only way to maintain discipline in the school.



A separate meeting of the School Governing Body (SGB) and the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) was held on 01 March 2014. The meeting was addressed by Denga in the presence of Sele Kane. It was established in the meeting that the RCL was comprised of only five learners in the school that enrolls more than 1200 learners. It was also established that the relationship between the RCL and SGB was non-existent, and this would hamper the principle of participation by learners in matters that affect their affairs in the school. For effective participation in decision making, the South African Schools Act requires that a school that enrolls learners from 900 and higher must have an RCL of 15 learners.

On 02 March 2014 Denga and Selekane met with Parents, learners and educators. The idea behind the meeting was to put emphasis on the role that all stakeholders have to play in advancing quality learning and teaching in the school. Denga addressed the meeting on Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) with the emphasis on participation.

After the progress report that was held in Zambia in March 2014, the five model classes were established. Learners were trained in leadership. This was done in collaboration with the University of the Free State. Representative Council of Learners (RCL) was constituted for the 2015 academic year. Child Rights Committee was formed and there was immediate election of ambassadors of Child Rights. There was a review of the School Code of conduct and Classroom rules were formulated with strong learner involvement.

The School's vision and Mission together with the motto were to be displayed at the gate. Learners came up with a suggestion that as a pilot School R.T Mokgopa learners must wear T shirts displaying CRC insignia.

On 29 January 2015 the project was launched at the school in the presence of the mentor Bodil and the two change agents, Denga and Selekane. The people who were invited for the launch were Departmental officials, parents, educators and Principals as well as learner leaders from the neighbouring schools. The launch was done under the theme, R.T Mokgopa Child Rights Convention School.



Mentor Bodil with learners at the launch of R.T Mokgopa Child Rights School on 29 January 2015.

## 5. Results

### R.T Mokgopa High School

#### *Model classes*

Model classes were established in all the five grades, (one for each grade), grades 8A, 9A, 10A, 11A and 12A. These classes were designed with the desire to create a more friendly learning and teaching environment. The classes are well resourced with teaching aids, and the teacher pupil ratio has been kept to a required 1:35.

Theme Posters were hanged on the walls of the 5 classes identified for the project. Learners were divided into groups based on their learning ability, i.e. gifted, average and slow. All the groups were made to comprise of all the different learning abilities.

### *Leadership structures*

Leadership structures such as the RCL and Culumba were trained on leadership with the focus on Article 37 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child. Learner leadership was involved in donating 100 pairs of shoes to the needy learners. This was done as part of participation by the learner Leadership to create a conducive environment for learning.

The project was given to learners to role model and learners were encouraged to promote articles 24 to 28 of the Convention, modelling R.T Mokgopa as CRC School. In line with the project, the school amended the code of conduct for learners to ensure that discipline is initiated by learners themselves.

Culumba leadership was able to raise R 3000.00 with which they bought pairs of shoes for the neighboring primary learners. The gesture by the leadership was to extend the culture of caring and participation.

It was evident during the launch that the structures have embraced the project. This was illustrated in the performance of the learners demonstrating the contents of the project positively and member of the School Governing Body's remark about the project as well as the President of the Representative Council of Learners.

### *Noticeable Changes*

- As a result of the project, learners' discipline in the five model classes has drastically changed.
- Due to lower number of learners, there is time for remedial and corrective measures as well as personal intervention with learners.
- Furniture can be arranged to suit different teaching methods.
- Learners are now able to influence each other positively, and are able to develop communication and leadership skills.
- Educators are excited to work in the model classes, and are always looking forward to be in the class.

### *Connecting results: not linked to the purpose*

- Parents of R.T Mokgopa are helping in dealing with combating drug trafficking into the school.
- The South African Police Services after being introduced to the project had a session with learners on –Learner Pregnancy, drug and substance abuse and gangsterism.
- The sense of participation has spilled over to all who are associated with the school, through the programme of Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign.

## Tabola Primary School



### *Activities*

Vangile met with the District Director Mrs B. Tshabalala to report back on the visit to Sweden and the introduction of the project for approval on 27 November 2013. During the meeting, full feedback of the programme was presented and the District Director was very happy and advised to make use of different departments within the district as to support the project.

On 29 November 2013 Vangile met with the School Management Team to give report back, and also presented the project plan.

The meeting was held between Vangile and staff on 2 December 2013. The staff suggested a speedy training of staff and learners to kick start the project.

Vangile held a meeting with the SGB on 3 December 2013. The SGB was fascinated by the project and agreed on purchasing teaching aids for the model classes.

On 4 December 2013 Vangile met the parents of learners in the school. The parents were briefed on CRC. Some of the parents were hearing Child Rights for the first time. They showed great interest in the project.

A meeting was held by Vangile with the School Management Team to give feedback on the visit to Sweden. The School Management team was very impressed and pledged to support the project. The inputs about the model classes were that all educators should be part of the project. They further suggested that all educators including themselves should be trained. Concerning resources they recommended teaching aids for their subjects since they were using thematic classrooms, there will be no disturbance in terms of removal of teaching aids. They asked principal to take their plea to the SGB to buy teaching aids for all educators.

On 14 January 2014, Vangile conducted workshop on CRC. Educators were divided into groups and participated fully in the workshop. At the end of the workshop each group came up with its CRC school model.

On 17 January 2014 Vangile met Ms Deliwe Leeuw (one of the change agents in South Africa) from the values in education section, and Mr Moshodi from YRAC (Youth Recreation Arts & Culture) section informing them about the project plan and further asked for their involvement and support in workshops and training. They agreed to support. Deliwe and Mr Moshodi helped in leadership training of learners and conducted workshop on alternatives to corporal punishment and Quality Learning and teaching Campaign (QLTC)

On 20 January 2014, Leaders from grade 4- 6 were elected by other learners. During nominations, reasons were given why a person was nominated. Children's committee was also elected and its executive.

Meeting with the South African Human Rights Commission was also arranged, but the appointment did not materialize due to shortage of staff in the Human Rights Commission.

On 19 of February 2014 Vangile met with Save the Children to inform them about the project plan and asked for their support in workshops and trainings. They agreed to support the project. On 21 February they conducted workshop on safer SA for women and children, bullying, Children Rights and Gender Based Violence. Training of soul buddies was also conducted by Save the Children.

All leaders were trained on 7 February 2014 by Ms Deliwe Leeuw and Mrs Molingwana who are the change agents, on qualities and skills of a good leader. The CRC contents were also shared with the learners. The Soul Buddies and Class Captains were very impressed and fully participated in the training. The trainers were very happy to see that learners were showing interest on the matters of leadership.

Denga and Vangile made a last round monitoring of model classes and interaction with the learners, educators and SGB on 27 February 2014. This was done to check the progress made since the start of the project, and how everybody feels about the project. On 27 January 2015, Tabola Primary school was launched as CRC school in the presence of mentor Bodil. The launch was honoured by the presence of officials from the Department of Education and members of the media.

## *Results*

After the QLTC workshop all stakeholders that were involved came back to support the project. South African Police Services came to school for drugs and alcohol awareness. The local health department supported the school by providing the school learners with eye glasses to learners with eye problems.

Model classes have been established in all grades 1, 2,3,4,5 and 6 (one for each grade).

Tabola CRC Primary school was launched on 27 January 2015. The launch was attended by members of the community, Principals from the neighboring schools, Departmental officials from the Thabo-Mofutsanyana District and Educators from Tabola Primary schools. During the launch demonstration was made to show learner participation not only in decision making, but also in running some of the school activities such as event programme.

It was evident during the launch that the project had sparked interest in participation even from the parents sector who demonstrated their participation in teaching learners cultural dances and singing. The project in the school has been infused with other programmes such as the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) which talks about education being a societal issue, hence the CRC project was seen as a vehicle to achieve the aspirations of QLTC.

## *Noticeable Changes*

During the launch educators confessed how the project made them change their approach to teaching and learning. Learners have developed the interest of being at school at all times and parents and other stakeholders are now actively involved.

Poverty and unemployment is gradually being addressed as a result of participation by parents, particularly in vegetable garden. Some of the vegetables are used to supplement food given to learners at school, whereas the unemployed parents who are involved in the garden project are able to take some vegetables for their home consumption. Children who are needy also benefit from the garden project.

## *Fezile Dabi District*

As a change agent based in the Fezile Dabi District, Denga took advantage of the project and wanted the District to also benefit regardless of the fact that Fezile Dabi was not part of the project plan.

On 18 October 2013 Denga set up a meeting with the Fezile Dabi District Director for 21 October 2013. A meeting between the District Director and Denga was held on 21 October 2014 to give feedback on the visit to Sweden and to outline the Project plan for Team South Africa. The District Director Mr V.H Chuta pledged support for the project and also requested that the Fezile Dabi District be a beneficiary to the project. A series of workshops were conducted with Educators and Representative Council of Learners. The workshops were intended at outlining the rights of learners in the context of CRC in line with the South African constitution.

Workshops for Values in Education co-ordinators were held on 03 February 2014 for Metsimaholo Municipality, 04 February 2014 for Mafube municipality, 05 February 2014 for Moqhaka Municipality and 06 February 2014 for Ngwathe Municipality. The workshops were conducted by Denga with the help of Patrick Thokwayo who is also as South African change agent.

RCL meetings were held on 11,12,13,18,19 and 20 February 2014 in the Fezile Dabi District to cascade information on CRC.

## 6. Discussion and Reflection

- The project had challenges because it had the same plan for both Secondary and Primary School but at same time valuable experiences have been gained on how to implement CRC at different levels in the school system.
- Corporal punishment is no longer used in any of the two project schools to discipline children.
- The project has changed the mindset of educators, learners and parents in both schools.
- Parents are beginning to get involved in the education of their children.
- Educators are engaging learners in their lessons more than before.
- The principals in the neighboring schools are beginning to emulate the activities in the two model schools.
- Proper composition of the RCL was made for R.T Mokgopa High school.
- A lot of excitement is beginning to reflect on all the stakeholders for CRC.

## 7. Way Forward

### **R.T Mokgopa High School**

- Involve other change agents in the project so that the project becomes a model for other schools to follow.
- Invite the Provincial department of education to see for themselves the impact the project would have made once it is in full swing.
- Involve the surrounding schools in the project so as to expand the impact of the project.
- More teacher involvement will be sought.
- More parental support.
- The school will work with the University of the Free State Law Clinic to address the rights of children.
- Other change agents in the District will be involved to continue with the project.
- The section, Values in Education in the Department of Education will be involved for networking with other change agents.



- Expansion of model classrooms by five every year is envisaged.
- More material support.
- Support from the SGB will be sought.

## Tabola Primary School

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- Invite the Provincial department of education to see for themselves the impact the project would have made once it is in full swing.
- Involve the surrounding schools in the project so as to expand the impact of the project.
- More teacher involvement will be sought.
- More parental support will be sought.

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## SRI LANKA

*Sri Lanka* had its first team in batch 1 (2003) and has in total had 11 teams and 30 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	12	2	
Region/Province/District	7	1	
Local	11	8	

**Table 1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

Geographically there has been a focus on Colombo area and Kandy (up country) area. The two projects on national level are carried out at National Institute of Education, one in the Master of Education program and the other as to the curriculum in Civics. The remaining projects have focused on creating a learner friendly environment for the children in general and participation in particular.



**Area:** 65,610 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 21,416,445 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte (leg.)/Colombo

**Independence:** February 4, 1948

**Official Languages:** Sinhala, Tamil (English)

**Network Coordinator:**

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# SRI LANKA

Enhancing a Child- friendly Learning Teaching Process Computer Assisted and Activity Based Approach.

*P.G.Saman Piyasiri, H. Udeni Kanthi Anoma and W.M.W.S.Pushpika Gunarathne*

## 1. Introduction

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean with high Bio diversity and full of natural beauty. It is a multi cultural country which can proudly claim to aim at CRC in teaching and learning process.

The government of Sri Lanka ratified the Child Right Convention on the 12th of July, 1991. Since then it has taken measures to enhance the child rights in the country. The National Child Right Protection Authority (NCPA) was established in 1998 and it aims to ensure the psychosocial well being of the children who become victims of all forms of Child abuse and children those who are in need of care and protection. Furthermore, the NCPA has also introduced a special telephone connection 1929 for the children known as “Child Line” to give information on child abuse and harassment in order to provide protection and treatment for those who become victims of such abuses. The legal system regarding women and children was also amended in order to enhance the rights of the children and women in the country.

Sri Lankan education system has derived from the British Colonial System. Yet with the ratification of CRC some prominent changes occurred in the field of education in order to reach the global standard

For example, the main concepts of CRC known as 3P's: Provision (access to food, health care, education, social security), Protection ( from maltreatment, abuse, neglect & all forms of exploitation) and Participation (having the right to act and to be involved in decision making) are highly applied in the education system of Sri Lanka to enhance the rights of the child.

In Sri Lanka, education is compulsory for the children from age five to sixteen. The free education for all from kindergarten to the completion of the basic degree, free text books, free uniforms and free meals for some selected schools are provided by the government to uplift the equality of education and to encourage the students' attendance

of the students in the school carrier. A scholarship system has also introduced for the students in Grade 5 and for the under graduates those who gain low income. In order to obtain these scholarships the students have to pass the national level examinations conducted by the Department of Examination.

The NIE (National Institute of Education) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education has also introduced a fruitful teaching learning approach with the aim of establishing a more child centered teaching learning environment that ensures the maximum participation of the learners.

The primary education which lasts for 5-6 years plays a major role in the education system of the country. It plays an essential role in the life of an individual because most of the mental processes occur during this age. The small children are always active and they should have chances for that. Therefore the syllabus introduced for the primary students is fascinated with lots of activities. The educationists have introduced number of activities for each and every lesson to give the concepts in an attractive manner, for the little minds.

Sri Lankan students learn Mathematics, English, Language Sinhala and Tamil, religion, environmental studies and aesthetic subjects in their primary grades. Normally all these subjects are taught by the class teachers. From Grade 3 onwards, specially trained teachers are assigned to teach English Language. Teacher Training programmes, consultative workshops and seminars are conducted regularly for the teachers who teach for the primary classes in order to educate and guide them to build up a good rapport with the students.

In order to create a more child friendly education system, the Ministry of Education recently introduced an official web site called 'e- thaksalawa' to promote the computer assisted learning process in the classroom. The lessons in "e-thaksalawa" which is known as the 'National e-learning Portal for the general education' are available in three languages; Sinhala, Tamil and English and the lessons for primary classes are completed and the lessons for the secondary classes are being completed.



Image 1. The first page of e- thaksalawa

Furthermore, the government has also launched a project called ‘Thousand schools project’. Through this, fully equipped IT laboratories, known as “Mahindodaya Technical Laboratories” are provided to thousand schools in the island to promote child centered education through e-learning. These laboratories consist of all the modern facilities including internet connections.

Almost all the teachers in Sri Lanka are given a special training regarding the use of computers effectively in their teaching learning process. For example, the Ministry of Education has launched a number of computer training programmes such as CAL (Computer Assisted Learning) and ICDL (International Computer Driving Licence) to improve the computer literacy level of the teachers.

The government of Sri Lanka places great emphasis on the implementation of modern technology in the education system, in order to ensure that the students in the whole country have an equal access to e-learning.



**Image 2.** Some photographs of Mahindodaya Technical Laboratories

## 2. Frame of Reference

Though the child centered education is being introduced through various means implementation of it is not achieved up to the level of the expectations of the system. Most of the teachers in the island still compel to carry out their teaching process in a traditional manner that is to follow the conventional top down approach due to many reasons. Such as lack of resources (in some schools), lack of motivation, less adaptation and willingness etc.

In their teaching, normally the teachers prepare the visual aid and use the other methods in the classroom. But in Sri Lanka most of the classes are overcrowded. There are 40 or more than 40 students in a class. Therefore normally the space of the classroom is not sufficient for the number of students in it. It creates lots of problems for the teachers while carrying out the assigned tasks. So it makes a distrust whether the students gain the relevant concepts correctly which the teacher plans to give them. Moreover, Sri Lankan education system is an examination- oriented one. Teachers are bounded by their duty to complete a prescribed syllabus within a given period of time.

So there is a great pressure on the shoulders of the teachers as well. However, under such circumstances, there is no chance to build up a good relationship among the teachers and the students.

In order to minimize the above mentioned drawbacks and to motivate the teachers as well as the students, we as the Change Agents planned to introduce the project ‘Enhancing child friendly teaching learning process through computer assisted activity based approach’ using the lessons provided by the Ministry of education in “e\_thak-salawa” along with some other activities prepared by us.

The proposed project is based on the concepts of participation and the provision in the 3p’s. The article 17, Access to appropriate information (part a and part d), the article 28 the right to education (part 1 c and d) and part 3) and the article 29, the aim of education(part 192) in the child right convention were taken into consideration while planning the project.

However, this project will not only provide interesting learning experiences and opportunities, but also it will provide chances for students to share their knowledge with the other members. This will also enable the students to practice the lessons individually in their homes if they wish to do so.

### 3. Purpose

The purposes of this project are

1. To motivate the teachers and the students to use both computer assisted lessons and activities effectively in their teaching learning process.
2. To convert the age old teacher centered method to a more child friendly and a child centered one that enables maximum participation of the students.

### 4. Methodology

The goal of the project is to enhance a child friendly teaching learning process through computer assisted and activity based approach. To achieve this goal following activities were carried out from the 3rd week of October 2013 to the end of February 2015.

#### 4.1. Meeting with Authority and Stake holders

The authority in this project is the Directors, the Principals, Vice principals and the Sectional Heads of the two selected schools. The Class teachers, English teachers, the IT teachers, the students and their parents are the stake holders.

At first, there was a discussion with the Principals of the selected schools and got the permission to carry out the project in their schools. Then it was needed to get the approval from the Provincial Director of Education. Before getting the approval we met

the provincial Director and discussed the proposed project plan along with the things we learnt in Sweden.

The next was to obtain the required resources. We met the Director of the IT Branch at the Ministry of Education and made him aware of the objectives of our project that is to use computer assisted learning materials in e-thaksalawa for a child friendly teaching learning process and obtained the copy of that software. We also met the Directors of Information and Communication Technology in the two Zones, the Principals, English teachers and the IT teachers.

We found the necessity of a committee for the fruitful functioning of the programme. Therefore a committee consisting of the Principal, the IT teachers, Class teacher, English teacher and three members of the team was established in both schools.

#### 4.2. Obtaining the teacher's attitudes

Teachers play an important role in the classroom. Therefore before implementing the project it was needed to identify the attitudes of the teachers regarding student centered learning process through computer assisted lessons. A prepared questionnaire was given to the teachers of the primary section of the two schools to find out their attitudes regarding the above matter. (Appendix)

#### 4.3. Fulfilling the basic requirements

The team identified the requirements of the IT laboratory and discussed the methods to fulfill them, with the members of the committee. The team came across, that out of the computers available at the IT laboratories some are not working properly. As the first thing, we took steps to repair them and we were able to repair almost all of the computers.

After that, the new software was installed to the computers and a new web page was created. This new web page helps students to have an easy access to their lessons without using the internet.



Image 3. The New Web Page

#### 4.4. Awareness programmes and consultative workshops

The main objective of these was to make the teachers aware of student centered learning process through computer assisted lessons. As a requirement to achieve the above task, a demonstration regarding how to use the national e learning portal e thaksalawa along with the activities was held at both schools.

Teachers are key persons in the implementation of the above introduced project. So they should at least have the basic concepts of CRC principles. So they can practice it during their classroom activities to promote more child friendly learning environment in their classrooms. More over it was emphasized that a wide knowledge of CRC helps the teachers to practice the Rights of the child in the classroom while they are engaging in the above type of activities.

Another awareness programme was held for the parents of the selected groups of students.



**Image 4 & 5.** Awareness program for the teachers. **Image 6.** Awareness program for the parents

#### 4.5. Launching the programme

After conducting the awareness programmes and the consultative workshops, the three Change Agents discussed with the IT teacher and the English teachers, regarding the alternations to be made in their time tables to get the help of the IT teacher for the English lessons. In order to create a child friendly atmosphere, the IT lab was rearranged in a nice and attractive manner.





**Image7.** Newly arranged IT lab

Secondly three of us got together and prepared a schedule to visit the pilot schools. Each member was assigned some fixed dates enabling each one to visit the pilot schools once a week. During those visits sometimes we did model lessons or assisted the teachers to carry out the lessons effectively.



**Image 8.** Student centered approach and active participation of the students

While implementing the project we encountered a major problem due to lack of computers. That is to find an effective way to provide equal opportunities for each student to use the computer. There we had three options. Namely, to increase the number of computers, let students to bring their own laptops to school and thirdly to divide the class into groups and assign different activities along with computer lessons.

The first and the second options were really challenging because as Change Agents we have no power or authority to increase the number of computers and on the other hand, parents too objected to let their kids to bring their own laptops. So the third option seemed more effective and practicable.

So we divided the class into two groups. One group was assigned to do computer lessons, the other group was again divided into sub groups and they were given some prepared activities. They could select those activities according to their wish. The activities

given were planned according to the levels and the needs of the students. The activities were designed by the English teachers under the guidance of the Change Agents in order to cover all the four skills; namely Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and Vocabulary. Warming up activities, Language games, Simulations, Role plays and songs etc were also included in the lessons in order to make them more interesting and enjoyable.



**Image 9.** Children are learning very happy

## 5. Results

As a whole it is a pleasure to mention that we have succeeded in achieving the two main purposes of the project.

Through the interviews and the questionnaires provided to the teachers, we found out that the majority of the teachers have a positive attitude towards the newly introduced concept, that is to use both computer assisted lessons and activities in their teaching learning process.

Moreover, it was evident that the data collected through the interviews and the questionnaires have become a reality, because we observed that the teachers and the students work enthusiastically throughout the period in the real classroom setting.

As change agents, our vision was to transfer the existing top down approach into a more child centered, rights based approach that ensures maximum participation by observing the lessons, and we found out that this new method has provided ample opportunities for the performances of the students by empowering CRC principles. The observations also proved that it has enhanced the relationship among students by

providing opportunities for the students to learn together and from each other in an enjoyable manner.

Furthermore it was interesting to notice that the students were waiting eagerly until they get the next opportunity to come to the IT laboratory for their English lessons. Teachers also cheerfully talked that they were able to achieve their targets easily and effectively through this new method.

At the same time, we encountered some unexpected outcomes as well. The first one is the need of the improvement of the governmental materials as we had to face problems due to the scarcity of some activities provided by the ministry.

However, we are happy because we were able to raise interest and motivation not only from the learners' side, but also from the teachers' side as well as the parents' side too.



**Image 4.** Students engaging in the lessons cheerfully.

## 6. Discussion and Reflections

The reasons compelled us to select the pilot school are as follows.

1. Mahamaya College is a well reputed Girls' College, situated in the heart of the Kandy town and any high official can easily observe it. (Being a pilot project, we wanted the higher officials to visit it). Majority of the students have their own computers/ laptops. Thus they can practice the lessons at home as well. They have

the exposure to English Language and often encounter with foreigners. Therefore, we thought that it would be a motivation for the other schools as well.

2. St/ Andrew's College, Gampola is also a famous school but it is a mixed school in a sub-urban area. So it seems to be much secluded. Normally the students are not equally developed when comparing to Mahamaya Girls' College. Most of them don't have their own computers or laptops. So using computers for their lessons seems a totally new experience to them. Moreover, being a mixed school, we felt that we can provide equal opportunities for both male and female students.

The students of St/Andrew's College do not belong to well reputed families and they have a less exposure to English. For them it's not so common to encounter foreigners. So we wanted to provide that experience along with the modern technology.

Though we are satisfied with what we have done so far, we had to face some challenges while implementing the programme.

Firstly, while using the provided software we found out that there are some drawbacks in some of the lessons. Teachers also suggested including more facts, as the given content is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the levels of the students. For example, while the students from Mahamaya College found the lessons too easy the students from St/ Andrews College found them too difficult.

Secondly, as change agents, we have no power or authority to make our own decisions. For example, it was very difficult to summon up the parents. Most of them are government officials and they refuse to come on weekdays. So we had to wait until the Principal conducts a parent meeting. Lack of computers and funds were some other major problems.

Thirdly, though we are from the same district, the distance among us caused problems. So we found it difficult to find time to meet, to plan our activities and to work together. As all of us were busy with our own jobs. So monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the project was also became a problem for us.

In spite of all these challenges, the learners of both pilot schools showed a keen interest towards this new method of learning. Though the students of St/Andrew's College do not get opportunities to encounter foreigners they warmly welcomed our mentor, Madam Agneta. For them it seemed a great thing to meet and to talk to her. In both schools, almost all the teachers showed a positive attitude towards the new method and they were willing to support the students.



**Image 10.** Mentor's visit

## 7. The Way Forward

The project has already been implemented in the pilot schools, and the observations show that generally the project outcomes have achieved. Yet we hope not to stop our work here. The next steps will be as follows.

According to the plan, we hope to continue the project with the new grade 4 students of the pilot schools, and also wish to promote the effectiveness of the project through regular visits. We have planned to prepare activities which cater to the different levels of the students, because while implementing the project we understood that there are two levels of students in the same class. Furthermore, we hope to provide opportunities for the students to prepare their own activities, by encouraging students to create their own "activity bank". They can write or type their own stories poems, activities etc for others to read or to do. By conducting workshops or model lessons, we hope to guide both the teachers and the students.

Not only that but also we will take actions to expand the project to the other schools in the province.

While discussing the progress of the project with the teachers, we also hope to take remedial measures to overcome the drawbacks.

We have planned to collect the ideas of the students through informal interviews, and thus hope to make the necessary adjustments in order to fulfil their requirements. In conclusion, we, the change agents of the 19th Batch would like to thank the SIDA and all the mentors and the LUCE staff of the Lund University for their immense support. At the same time we appreciate the motivation and the continuous support provided by our mentor in order to make our project a success.

## 8. List of References

Children Charter

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# List of Appendix

The questionnaire given for the teachers.

## Questionnaire

### A questionnaire for The Teachers

Please tick (√) the cage if you agree with statements and if disagree put the (×) mark

1. How long have you been a teacher?  
0-5 years       6- 10 years       11-20 years   
More than 20 years
2. The way you teach
  - i. Always I use the lecture method
  - ii. Students are grouped and guide them to innovate
  - iii. Build up the lesson trough questions
  - iv. I use Different methods
3. The resources used for teaching
  - i. Only the text book
  - ii. Resources available in the classroom
  - iii. Prepare teaching aids and use
  - iv. Other resources .Specify.....
4. Do you like to use different methods for teaching and learning process
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
5. Have you noticed the interest of the student for your teaching methods
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
6. Do you like to teach using modern technology(computer based ,e -learning)
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
7. If you use e-learning will it affect to make the lesson interesting.
  - i. Yes I think so
  - ii. No idea
  - iii. Have to check
8. Have you got any training on information technology?
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
9. If you have knowledge on IT, as a teaching resource do you like to use computers for the teaching and learning process?
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
10. If you are provided the above facilities, how would you use them?
  - i. In the classroom
  - ii. In a separate place

# TANZANIA

*Tanzania* had its first team in batch 1 (2003) and has in total had 13 teams and 39 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	17	1	
Region/Province/District	8	1	
Local	14	11	

**Table 1.** Change Agents’ professional position and the team’s Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

Geographically the recruitment has mainly been from Coastal Region, however as time goes by people have been transferred to various places in the country. The first projects were emphasizing protection (corporal punishment) and the right to education. Later on creating a learner friendly environment and participation were areas more covered.



**Area:** 945,203 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 50,757,459 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Dar es Salaam/  
Dodoma (leg.)

**Independence:** 26 April 1964

**Official languages:** Swahili, English

**Network Country Coordinator:**

Elia Kibga  
(kigbaelia@yahoo.com.uk)



# TANZANIA

Promoting the Right of Child Participation in Schools to Enhance Quality Education

*Juliana Laurent Chacha, Nicholas Moshi and Benedict M. Missani*

## 1. Introduction

Child Rights discussions are the world agenda. In 1991 Tanzania ratified the International Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which outlines the basic fundamental rights enshrined in the United Nations (UN) CRC. These are the rights all children are supposed to enjoy without exception. Unfortunately, despite the ratification of the convention, the legal protection for children in Tanzania remained scattered throughout various unenforceable statutes and outdated laws. In November 2009, the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania passed the Law of the Child Act, No:21. This was a significant step towards protecting children's rights to survival, development, protection, participation and non discrimination. The law addresses many issues that Tanzanian children encounter in their day to day and aims to protect them against discrimination, violence and neglect.

This report presents the findings from the study which was conducted in three primary schools chosen as a case study. The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam City, in three schools from each municipality, these are: Ndugumbi Primary school in Kinondoni Municipality; Temeke in Temeke and Jitihada from Ilala.

## 2. Frame of Reference

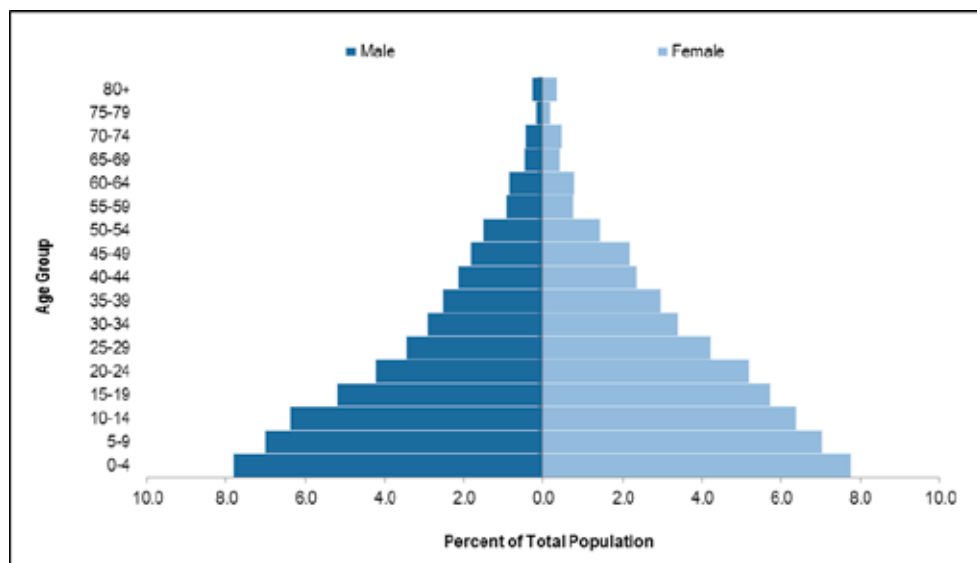
The frame of reference of the project is built on the existing literatures and government support towards promoting Human Rights and rights of the children in particular. Ratification of the Conventions of Rights of the Child in 1991 and recognitions of the efforts of other human rights practitioners prompted us to pursue the project.

The right to education is fundamental to all children not here in Tanzania but all over the world. Tanzania being a UN member state ratified different conventions amongst

which is the Rights to education. The right to education in Tanzania is provided and protected by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania under Article 11(1) which directs the State and all its agencies to ensure that all citizens young and old get education. In sub section 2 it states that, every person has the right to access education and every citizen shall be free to pursue education. Moreover the Education Training Policy 2014 has directed basic education which covers pre primary, primary and lower secondary school education free and compulsory. Despite the ratifications of right to education and. provision of free education in pre-primary up to lower secondary, this has not been practical because private sector has been charging big fee and likewise in public schools there is a lot of contributions like: Contributions for construction of classrooms, teacher houses, meals, purchasing or repairs of desks and many more, such kind of contributions is huge and is equal to paying school fees.

The Tanzania Population and Housing Census conducted in 2012 indicated that, the current Tanzania population is 44,928,923. Young population aged below 15 years consist 43.9 percent of the whole population. The age group between 7-13 which is primary school age is 8,584,317 which is 29.1 percent of the population. Youth aged between 15- 24 mostly are students in secondary school, tertiary education and those few who are out of school. All these groups are very important in national development in terms of upbringing them with special attention by observing rights of child and give them opportunity to grow with human dignity.

Tanzania Population Pyramid (Five-Years Age Group)



Source: National Bureau of Statistic, 2013.

Basing on difference literatures and data like 2012 Population and Housing Census, constitution of Tanzania, Education and Training Policy and ratified conventions, change agent batch 19 has realised that issues related to Rights of the Child especially Right to education has not been addressed properly. The setback learned from the existing literatures motivated the group to conduct study and implement the project focusing on implementation of the convention on the rights of the child through Promoting Child Participation in Classroom and School management.

### 3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the implementation of CRC, national laws, policies and guidelines to ensure pupils participation in schools to enhance quality education is observed.

#### Specific Objectives

- To build capacity to pupils, teachers and school committee members on the rights of child in order to enable them change behaviour and provide more space for pupils to participate in decision making;
- To strengthen teaching and learning environment with focus of learner centred approach; and
- To advocate issues which address the violence against children in schools, family and community level.

Given the fact that, Tanzania is one of the UN member states it is obliged to implement its Policies and Strategies in compliance to the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child, this influence the report to zeroed on Participation of pupils in classroom and school management in enhancing quality education. Discussions were made to pupils, teachers and school committees to see how pupils were given opportunity to participate in teaching and learning process and decision making as their fundamental right through the process from planning to evaluation of the learning outcomes.

### 4. Methodologies

In order to get the information on how selected schools adhere to Conventions on Rights of the Children (CRC) with focus of Protection, Provision and Participation (3Ps), different methods were applied to inquire information which has helped in writing the report.

The report went through different stages as discussed here under:

#### **4.1 Preparation stage**

The process passed through different stages which includes desk review before attending face to face training in Lund University in 2013. Each country team was assigned a task of reviewing different literatures and develop an idea on the area could work on as far as the rights of children are concerned.

#### **4.2 Face to face training**

This was a second phase in the training process whereby group of batch 19 met at Lund University in September and October 2013. The group comprised 30 participants from different 10 countries and had opportunity of learning from each other under supervision of the team of lecturers in the same University.

The CRC study program gave an opportunity to members in batch 19 to share experiences about issues related to child rights from their home countries, human rights and any valuable information that could enrich the training. Later on all member country groups were asked to develop action plan on how they would implement the program in their countries.

#### **4.3 Meeting with Officials**

On our arrival from Sweden each change agent made de briefing to their sector / administrators in their respective institution, Presentations were made on what was learnt from face to face session, Project plan on CRC and strategies to implement it in the country. After presentations and discussions the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training granted permission to conduct study and thereafter training schedule for selected schools was prepared accordingly to suite with the learning environment.

#### **4.4 School Visit**

The team made school visits to familiarize with Pupils, Teachers and School Committee members and agree upon the modality of conducting training, explaining the purpose of training and share the project plan.

Furthermore, the team intended to explore the information from pupils, teachers and school committees on their understanding about the rights of the child and see what the schools have done so far to implement the UN CRC and other international treaties.

Different techniques were applied during the visit in order to obtain the information which could answer the problem, these includes: interviews, group discussions and observations as discussed in the subsequent sections.

#### *4.4.1 Interview*

Kvale (1983) defines the qualitative research interview as process to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena”. Collecting these data can be done in several ways, one of which being through face-to-face interviews which is commonly done by many people.

Besides Face-to-Face (FtF) interviews, interviewing by telephone, computer mediated communication (CMC) where messages are electronically transferred from a sender to one or more recipient(s), both in synchronous (in real time) and in asynchronous (independent from time and place) setting. Examples of tools used for CMC are e-mail and chat boxes (as MSN messenger), which can also be used for interviews.

The team organised interview with pupils, school pupil leaders, teachers and school committee. The aim of conducting interviews was to get the real picture of issues under discussion and compare the information received from others. This approach was very productive as pupils could give the real picture on how they are involved in teaching and learning and decision making process.

This project realised that pupils had a lot of information to contribute to teachers and school management, but there was no room to enable them to speak, practice or share a little bit of information they had properly.

After discussion and interviews conducted and later on training, pupils managed to speak out their inner stories and problems they had within and out of school. The team advised them on how they could channel their problems to the school administrators and other actor dealing with Rights of Child.

#### *4.4.2 Focus Group Discussion:*

A focus group discussion (FGD) is situation where by a researcher gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. Kruger, R.A (1988). The group of participants is guided by a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves.

Different groups were formed and conduct discussions about right of children to participate in school. The group was formed in different levels; there was a group of pupils' representatives which included class monitors and school pupils' leaders elected from each class, the second group was teachers and the third group was school committee members. The team organised discussion and interview to assess the level of understanding about child rights, classroom and school management.

During discussion with pupils, teachers and school committee it was learnt that, all groups interviewed had general knowledge on the Right of Children. This was very good step to start sharing what we had learnt from Lund University. Explanations were made about CRC and the purpose of the visit, more focus was made on pupils' participation in classroom and school management.



Despite of the knowledge teachers had on the Rights of Children, it was learnt that some of them were not ready to change their behaviour and attitudes because they had a feared to lose power over pupils. For example one teacher said *“If we don’t cane/ punish them they won’t behave well”* to him canning or punishment was a means to correct modelling bad behaviour. When was asked, have you discussed with pupils to get their opinions about why they misbehave, or what they would rather want from teachers to do for them? The comment was *“pupils they need not to be given that opportunity, teachers must decide what they can do over the pupils”* from the discussions a team noted that there was big violation of Child Rights as far as participation and involvement of children in the classroom and making decision of the school. The team realised that canning and use of abusive language was common in all three schools visited.

#### *4.4.3 Observation:*

Is acquisition of information from the primary source. Bandura,A (1971) outlined four stages involved in observation learning, these includes:

##### *4.4.3.1 Attention:*

The theory state that observer cannot learn unless pay attention to what is happening around them, this process is much influenced by characteristics of observer, his or her expectations and level of emotion. This process was applied in all three visited school.

Some time we spend time sitting and chatting with pupils even teachers discussing different things, since this was done informally we were able to see what was happening in schools and classes.

#### *4.4.3.2 Retention / Memory:*

Is the situation where by observer must not only recognise behaviour but also remember it at some time later. It depends on ability to code and easily remember the information. This was done in different ways such as note down some key points, use of camera for capturing some information etc. The information gathered was shared and used to prepare training manual and use observed behaviours as a case studies during training.

#### *4.4.3.3 Initiation:*

Is the intellectual ability to rehearse the model's actions, possess the necessary responses. During the visit and observation process we were able to retrieve events happened in different school visited.

#### *4.4.3.4 Motivation:*

Is giving pep / activeness talks which gives encouragement in any learning process. In our observation we were able to use different stories and share life experiences regarding rights of children and how school as an agent of change could promote those rights. As they were talking we noticed that, they were not happy with our comments prohibiting them not punishing pupils, they said "spare a rod spoil a child" some time they even referred to some religious scriptures from the holly books saying parents have the right to corrects their kids behaviour by punishing them without harm. Such comments were controversial especially when teaching the CRC and promoting Right of Pupils to participate in class and school management.

### **4.5 Preparation of the Training Manuals on CRC**

School visits contributed a lot of information which was useful to prepare a training manual. The training manual was titled "*A training Manual on the Rights of Child -A Right to Participate in Teaching and Learning in class and school Management to enhance quality education*" the manual sandwiched knowledge learnt from Sweden on different Conventions on the Right of Children, situation of Right of the Children in schools and how the Right to participate could be promoted in schools in order to enhance the quality of education.

The other contents of the manual covered the roles and responsibilities of pupils to teachers, parents and community; roles of teachers to pupils and committee members. The other important area which was included in the manual is code of conduct and ethics for teachers as custodian of the rights of child but as a professionals and care taker. Copies of the manual were provided to pupils, teachers and school committee members for reading.

## 4.6 Training on the Rights of the Child.

The training was mainly focusing on building capacity of teachers, pupils and school committees in three schools which were selected by the Municipal authorities based on the experience of violation of child rights especially the rights to participation.

### 4.6.1 Training of Pupils

Training of Pupils in all three schools was done after class session because it was difficult to get pupils in Saturdays unlike teachers and school committee's member who proposed Saturdays for their trainings.

Training was conducted to pupils' representative from classes, the group constituted pupils council. / school baraza. During the training pupils showed that they had general knowledge on some their rights. They also showed that some time some pupils tried to demand for their rights but it was not possible because they had no unity so was easy to be defeated by teachers. The change agents met with pupils from standard three to seven and most of them were prefects and monitors whom we thought have greater understanding on CRC and also their capable to advocate CRC to other pupils. Pupils in this schools acknowledged having conducive learning environment despite of few challenged existed which is common to many schools in Tanzania.

The session was facilitated according to the prepared manual, different concepts were clarified and enquire their knowhow on how does those rights can be applied in their day to day classroom teaching and school management. After going through various examples and role plays finally we sat together and reflect about the training. During the evaluation and reflection pupils has to tell us what they learnt compare to what was happening in school.

Pupils told us that lack of child rights knowledge among teachers infringed their rights to participate fully in the classroom and in school management processes. It was envisaged that there was no cordial relationships between pupils and teachers. Teachers were chasing and hunting pupils in order to punish them and pupils were escaping from the classes fearing to be punished by teachers when they fail their subjects. The situation was hostile. "Some teachers they would like to use pupils for their economic gain and when you refuse they punish us" Student from Jitihada Primary school.

Pupil shared with the team a shocking story of violation of children's rights at schools and at home which they had not told their teachers. When we shared the stories with teachers they were all shocked, they promised to make a follow to see what happening at their homes and in school environment. It was further noted that, there were issues of rape, bullying and brutal social discrimination in the community. Information given assisted the team to propose the steps could be taken by pupils, teachers and school committee.

The training empowered the pupils to speak everything that they thought violating child rights and hence be free psychologically. Few days after training, the team collaborated with the Head teacher of Jitihada primary school and managed to intervene in a case of rape which was reported by the pupil. The joint effort assisted to arrest a



culprit, the case is at the magistrate level the team is making following up in order to see the justice is done.

In reference to this case , the authorities suggested to roll out the training to other schools so that can empower pupils / children to speak out and reduce violence against them and enable pupils participate fully in the teaching and learning process and in school management processes for decision system.



Training of pupils conducted at Ndugumbi Primary School in Kinondoni Municipality

#### *4.6.2 Training of Teachers*

Facilitation to teachers was conducted to all three visited schools in Temeke, Jitihada and Ndugumbi. The training used various methods that were deemed appropriate to deliver the message. The focus of training was child participation in classroom and school environment to enhance quality education.

Among other techniques were plenary discussion and focused group discussions. These techniques were designed to encouraging teachers to involve pupils in whole process of teaching and learning and issues related to school management and decision making.

During discussions teachers highlighted different challenges which drawback provision of quality education which includes: lack of funds which limit service provision; large number of pupils compared to the number of teachers available and poor response in teachers demands like low salaries, un paid leave just to mention few.

In discussions, teachers emphasized on the importance of teaching material as the necessary component stipulated in the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), the program explicitly explain the need for schools be supplied with teach-

ing and learning material and set specific target for improving its availability. Training explored various techniques used by teachers to promote participation of children in teaching and learning process and decision making in school plans.



Facilitation of CRC to Ndugumbi Primary School Teachers

During facilitation teachers made it clear that they do not deliver proper teaching and create venues for pupils participation in teaching and learning process because of big number of pupil in classes, few text books and lack of inadequate teaching and learning materials for pupils with special needs, as result pupils missed the right of participation and enjoy learning such circumstances has also affect and demoralised teachers.



A picture showing pupils crowded in a class with deferent needs

#### *4.6.3 Training of the School Committee Members*

A total of 28 school committee members were trained from of Jitihada, Temeke and Ndugumbi primary schools. Both plenary discussion and group discussions were used to allow them reflect their roles and responsibilities to see are in line with best interest of the child.

During the discussion it was noted that most of their plans and implementation process of different activities at school did not consider involvement of the pupils. They acknowledge that, there has been a very huge gap in involvement of pupils in decision making for the matters of the school and themselves. There was no time to consult children on the matters of their concerns before making the decision and therefore the decision sometime was made out of arm chair speculation.

This was violation of child rights according to the convention that we have ratified and agreed to implement. The participants agreed that they need education on the rights of the child and promised to provide more space for pupils to participate during school committee meetings. It was envisaged that participation of pupils in decision making process helps to prepare them to become leaders of tomorrow. On the other hand if pupils are not involved in decision making at school and at home is a missed opportunity of creating leaders who will be serving in different areas and different positions in future.

During our discussion one member of the committee from Temeke said *“When we are executing our responsibilities we tend to forget that we have our children who are supposed to put on our shoes and we do not bother prepare them to take responsibilities hence some of them ends up in corruption when are entrusted as leaders”*

Another school committee member from Temeke primary replied saying that *“after all the decision we are making here are concerning their matters, so it would be nice for pupils to be here to make contribution”*

Leaders had time to discuss about attributes of a good leader and obstacles to obtaining good leaders. They were able to reflect the whole period of their leadership and see what was done better during that period and measure the performance. Finally they agreed that it's important to involve pupils during the process of implementing the school projects for as capacity building strategy. They gave us an example that some time pupils raised a concern about the performance of pupils which was very much affected by the commercial activities that were going around school environment. *“The pupils complained that most of the school time table was interfered by the so called school projects and sometimes classroom sessions were postponed by teachers because they wanted to attend their commercial activities”*. Member of school committee complained. Unfortunately no one paid attention to what was said by pupils. That was among the violation of their rights to be listed. While presenting what was discussed in the groups the committee members come out with action points which shown that they will start involving children in their decision making of school matters.

## 5. Discussion and Reflections

### 5.1 Discussion and Reflection with Teachers

During reflection with teachers it was discovered that there was a gap existed between teachers and pupils and between pupils and school committee. All of them accepted the fact that they had very little knowledge on the rights of children. Some of them went far saying that they thought the rights of child are the western styles which are now brought to Africa to spoil children, make them rude and unruly. So the training helped to address those gaps and come up with sustainable solutions.

It was also observed that some teachers thought it was the right of the children to be punished when they arrive late to school or when they fail exams and when they misbehaved. Before the training the word child right was misconceived by teachers and even some of the school committee members who are the parents of pupils. This misconception of the concepts made us to define the concept and tell them why child rights emerged, where it emerged and how is practiced. We also observed that teachers were using old methods' of teaching since they had never been oriented to the child rights / friendly methods and learner centred approach.

At the end of the training teachers acknowledged that the training has helped them to improve their relationship with pupils and give them more time of doing other

things instead of spending much time to chase pupils who misbehave. Also it has reduced fatigue of going around the class to monitor every pupil activities because pupils themselves in their respective groups were able to divide selves' roles and responsibilities which initially were done by the teachers.

It was also commented by teachers that child rights education has redeemed their relationship with pupils and families and therefore has opened a new avenue for involving them in decision making which was not practiced before the training. *'this training has improved the way we act or we look at our children, because we used to look them as offenders and recipients instead of active participants and real participants in our development endeavours at school as well as at home'* a head Teachers of Ndugumbi Primary school said.

Another teacher Jitihada commented *"Our schools have been suffering from the problem of inadequate teaching and learning materials but using this new approach of teaching pupils in groups and in round tables will alleviate the problem because they are now able to share few resources / books in the groups and allow everybody to use it through discussion"*.

## 5.2 Discussion and Reflection with Pupils

(Unicef 2007) emphasizes that "children do not lose their human rights by virtue of passing through the gate" and highlights the importance of school respecting children's participation rights. Thus efforts to promote children rights must be enforced not only in the curriculum but also in the education process, in the pedagogical methods and the environment in which education takes place. Thus the education must be provided in a way that respects the inherent dignity of the child.

Throughout the training and discussion it was revealed that pupils have a lot of information which are useful to teachers and school committee, however they were not given enough space to share what they have. For example on discussion, pupils' revealed that only during selection of class monitor were given freedom to nominate and elect them, but on election of the school prefects and head prefect the process is led by teachers. Pupils criticized that behaviour because sometimes teachers select pupils who do not represent their interest.

After school visit and training there was some new development noticed such as preparations of posters displaying different messages which aims to enforce school rules like: observe school rules; don't litter waste materials; wash your hand after using toilets; don't cross on the garden, preserve school environment etc. These messages was designed and painted by teachers and pupils. Since this process involves pupils they were very keen to those rules and regulations because they were part and parcel of the decision to have them.



Posters designed and painted by pupils and teacher to enforced school rule

### 5.3 Discussion and Reflection with School Committee

Community engagement in schools development has greater influence in promoting quality education. Active community participation can lead to responsive government, accountable and competent teachers, effective use of school funds and improvement of service in school to attaining better learning environment. However in many cases school Committee member who act as link between parents and school fail to participate fully in school plans due to lack of knowledge on how to engage in school programmes.

The school visit and training has revealed that, school committee member need capacity building on their roles and responsibilities to enable them attain skills of managing school and other education policies.

Despite of existence of school committee members it was learnt that, they had poor attendance of statutory school committee meetings which have greater impacts in decision making. However, poor support from parents / community members to respond on issues related to their children development in school has increased hardship in implementing their responsibilities.

## 5.4 Reflection from change agents

- During discussion we learnt that there was a need for conducting more studies and training on child rights in schools.
- Pupils should be given more avenues to share their concerns and build their capacity and prepare them as future leaders.
- Issues of children rights should be incorporated in the teachers training curriculum.
- Support needed to head teachers to implement child friendly curriculum.

## 6. Conclusion

The finding from study and evaluation of project implementation revealed that, there was increase of awareness on the Rights of Child to pupils, teachers and school committee member. It was acknowledged that in some point they violated these rights unknowingly because they lacked the knowledge on CRC and hence the project opened their mind and agree that, each group has role and responsibility to each other to make school CRC compliance.

It was further noted that, pupils had a lot of potential in school development if are given opportunity. Having realised that, teacher and school committee members agree to involve them in all school undertakings and observe their right.

## 7. Way Forward

Implementation of the project enlightened the team understanding of the schools as institution and agent of change on the Rights of Child. Through knowledge sharing, the team were happy to learn that teachers and school committee members accepted to had little understanding of Right of Child, having realised that they received training positively and promised to change their behaviours and attitudes on pupils. They also pledged to encourage participation of pupils in all teaching and learning process and school decision order to enhance the quality of education.

During summing up of the training there was reflections and agreed key areas which project members, pupils, teachers and school committee members commended to continues in order to make the knowledge gained practical and sustainable. The following was agreed:

- To expand the training to other surrounding schools in order to promote education on the Rights of Child;
- The team to conduct meeting with education Administrators at District and Ward level to share the knowledge in order to give support to schools and monitor how Rights of Child are observed;
- To continue network with other change agents, actors of Human Rights and Right of Child to ensure that CRC is observed in schools and at community level; and
- Advocate CRC issues at any point in time or given opportunity.

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## Appendix

Content of the training manual on promoting the right of child participation in schools to enhance quality Education.

### Chapter One

- Introduction: Short description of the manual on what is designed for,
- Objective of the Manual
- Definition of terms (Who is Child), Rights of Child; Violence Against Children; Types of Child abuse; Meaning of education; School ; Education ; Provision, Participation and Protection(CRC)

### Chapter Two

- Important of adhere to Child Right (Social and economic effects)
- Effects of Violence Against Child Rights (Social and economic effects)



## **Chapter Four**

Roles of different actors in schools

- School committee ;
- School management;
- Teachers
- Non teaching staff
- Pupils

## **Chapter Five**

Promoting Child Participation in school

- Techniques for promoting pupils participation , advantages and disadvantages;
- Important of promoting Pupils participation in teaching and learning process and decision making in school;
- Roles of school actors to Child Rights.
- Way forward: What is to be done to promote Right of Children?

## VIETNAM

*Vietnam* had its first team in batch 2 (2004) and total 13 teams and 38 change agents in batches 1-21 (March 2015) in the program.



Level	Change Agents	Change Projects	Comments
National	3	0	
Region/Province/District	17	0	
Local	18	13	

**Table 1.** Change Agents' professional position and the team's Change Projects on three socio-administrative levels: National level, Region/Province/District level, and Local level. Change Agents = those who have fulfilled the program and received their final Diploma.

The Child Rights Program is focusing the two big cities Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. The implementation of CRC in education, learning and teaching has been dominated by participants – or change agents – from *local schools (principals and teachers) and teacher trainers at the district level*. The change projects are often directed against *participation* in decision-making processes by students in primary and secondary schools.



**Area:** 331,210 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 93,421,835 (est. 2014)

**Capital:** Hanoi

**Independence:** 2 September 1945 (Reunification of North and South Vietnam) 2 July 1976

**Official language:** Vietnamese

**Network Coordinators:**

Trang Thi Kim Huynh  
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# VIETNAM

Support the Students with Special Needs to Enjoy the Activities in School

*Le Thi Ngoc Diep, Le Thi Thanh Thuy and Luu Phuong Thanh Binh.*

## 1. Introduction

Viet Nam was the first country in Asia – and the second in the world – to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Since Viet Nam's ratification of the CRC, children in Viet Nam are also better educated, with around 95 per cent of eligible children enrolled in primary education.

Viet Nam is now on its way to becoming a middle-income country. At the same time, Viet Nam faces many challenges in ensuring the rights of every girl and boy. It is a fact that while most children in Viet Nam are much better off today than children 20 years ago, there are still far too many children who are not.

Guided by the CRC, UNICEF has been actively advocating with the government to ensure that children's rights are at the center of its development agenda. Viet Nam has paid greater attention to the participation of children and adolescents on issues that affect their daily lives. They also noted that in 2009, despite challenges posed by the global financial crisis, spending on social welfare received the necessary attention in Viet Nam – including spending on child protection, care and education.

In Viet Nam, there are now 15 very active Change agents in the CRC in Ho Chi Minh City, 13 in Ha Noi and 3 in Buon Ma Thuot.

Although Viet Nam ratified the convention many years ago, the knowledge on the CRC among the public in general, and among teachers and children in particular, is still limited. Therefore, understanding and respect for child rights is problematic. Some people have not been interested in children with special needs (SWSN). The knowledge and experience initiated by the training program encouraged course participants, in their respective positions, to initiate a dialogue and discussion with relevant stakeholders. This was effectively utilized as an effort to increase their understanding of child rights and create opportunities for children to exercise their rights related to such issues, which would be of priority in the time ahead.

## 2. Frame of Reference

Ho Chi Minh City is in the south of Viet Nam and highlights the culture, economy and education of the country. It is currently divided into 24 districts; with a population of over 8 million. It also has close to 500 primary schools. CRC has been implemented in all of the primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

Besides the common schools, Viet Nam has special schools for students with special needs. In Ho Chi Minh City, there are special schools; such as, Nguyen Dinh Chieu school (for blind students); Tuong Lai school (for hearing impaired students), Hi Vong school (for children with autism), and Hoa Binh school (for students with disabilities). Students with special needs can attend the appropriate school, but, parents (of these children) do not want to send them to these special schools. They hope and believe their children could take part in the activities in schools with the normal students. These parents think that if their children go to common schools, they will develop in a better way than in a special school.

In recent years, Viet Nam has some common schools which accommodate and allow students with special needs. Although this is a benefit for those children with special needs, it can create a problem for principals and teachers; therefore, having them spend valuable time to solve many of these issues. For instance, some of the students with special needs are hyperactive. They want to do what they like, do not sit still and don't like to make friends. Sometimes they often hit their friends as well. This causes problems and parents of the normal students ask the principals to move the hyperactive students to other schools.

As principals, we always have to think in the best interests of our students. It is our responsibility to protect them and we believe that we will help our students improve more and more. On the other hand, every child has the right to study and play. We have to help them obtain these rights. So, in our two schools, the students with special needs are included in common classes and there they are educated and well cared for.

*Nguyen Binh Khiem* and *To Vinh Dien* are primary schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

Nguyen Binh Khiem primary has 37 classes, 1691 students, 54 teachers and staff (68 officers of which 37 are assistant teachers). This primary school belongs to the Department of Education and Training in District 1. The breakdown of the parents are as follows: 50 % work in public offices, 22 % businessmen, and 28 % labour. The students study a full day and have lunch in school.

To Vinh Dien primary has 46 classes, 2080 pupils, and 53 teachers and staff (27 officers). This primary school belongs to the Department of Education and Training in Tan Phu district. The breakdown of the parents are as follows: 26% work in public offices, 25 % businessmen, and 49% labour.

This change project was applied in 16 classes with 600 students, 25 teachers and 30 parents in To Vinh Dien primary school, and in 4 classes with 200 students, 15 teachers and 20 parents in Nguyen Binh Khiem primary school. We are collecting 20 classes from grade 1 to grade 5 and also establishing a volunteers group which includes teachers, staff, parents, and delegates from the local government.

### 3. Purpose

Both schools are committed to the purpose of this project, which focuses on the rights for the protection and participation for *students with special needs*. We hope parents and students change their recognition of the SWSN. Teachers, parents and students need to help and support the SWSN to be able to take part in activities in school, therefore creating and building a safe and friendly learning environment. Besides school; family and society cooperates to organize activities in sharing the positive methods in education of SWSN.

### 4. Methodology and activities

#### 4.1. Phase III

##### *4.1.1. Present CRC and the change project to school managers, teachers, staff and local government.*

On November 15th 2013, we had a meeting with the school managers, teachers, staff and local government. We presented CRC and our change project. The participants discussed about a time to organize the activities in both schools (Nguyen Binh Khiem and To Vinh Dien).

##### *4.1.2. Organize workshop*

On November 24th 2013, in Nguyen Binh Khiem primary school, we organized a workshop with 70 participants, including 40 teachers and 30 parents from To Vinh Dien and Nguyen Binh Khiem School.

There were three activities in the workshop:

First, the participants played a game called *“make friends”* and split up into seven groups. They chose their group name and introduced their members.

Second, the groups discussed and presented what they understood about CRC.

*“What do you want?”* was the name of the last activity. The participants role-played and talked about what they would want if they were a child, a teacher or a parent.

##### *4.1.3. Training for students*

Team Vietnam and 10 teachers spent two days for the training course in two schools. On December 6th 2013, we organized the training course for students in To Vinh Dien school. After that, we went to Nguyen Binh Khiem on December 12th 2013.

800 students participated in the training course. We worked on the contents of CRC with four rights groups: Rights to Survival, Rights to Protection, Rights to Development, and Rights to Participation.

Through the training course, students know what the CRC and became educated on the CRC. They have learned about provision, protection and participation. In that time, the students changed a few their recognition of the students with special needs. They were happy with the new knowledge about the CRC and shared ideas with their friends naturally and with innocence.

#### 4.1.4. "Funny day" Festival

On December 23rd 2013, parents supported the teachers as they organized a "Funny day" Festival for students in Nguyen Binh Khiem and To Vinh Dien school.

On that day, students enjoyed with interesting activities. They played the games such as *fishing; ring to neck duck; bingo; cross words; drawing; dancing*, (we will attach the pictures when we present the report in Zambia). After that, SWSN went to the Zoo and had a happy time there.

#### 4.1.5. Meeting and sharing

After the above activities, we organized a meeting for teachers, students and parents, in which they received SWSN's feelings.

The meeting was held at each class in both schools. There were 16 classes in To Vinh Dien school and 4 classes in Nguyen Binh Khiem school.

The first session of the meeting focused on developing participants' understanding on the concept of a child friendly school. A school which provides children with an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling. A child friendly school recognizes, encourages, and supports children's growing capacities as learners by providing a school culture, teaching behavior and curriculum content that are focused on learning and the learner.

In the second session of the meeting, with the game "Who am I?" - The students introduce themselves. Students with special needs expressed their feelings about their life, friends, dreams and learning. They strongly talked about what they want to do and how they wanted people to see themselves as normal students. They did not want special favours (without fear or favour).

The participants were happy and surprised at the thought and the desires of SWSN. They promised that they will take interest in SWSN's aspirations, support them and help them enjoy the activities in school. That was a matter of great interest in the meeting.

In the last session, the students played the roles that they composed with the main topic "*We are in a family.*" SWSN was more confident to enjoy the activities. That was a happy time for all of participants.

#### 4.1.6. Make "The happy mail boxes"

Teachers showed the students how to make "The happy mail boxes" to express their feelings to one another in class. Each child has their own mailbox. Every week, stu-

dents send a letter to someone who they want to exchange ideas or comments with. The students comment on the illustration activities in order to know about provision, protection and participation.

## 4.2. Phase V

Thanks to participating in the training course at Lund and the good experiences from change agents in order to facilitate the implementation of programs on child rights in our country, we continued our project with the activities in Outcome 3 after arriving back from Zambia.

### *4.2.1. Build a safe and friendly learning environment in the classroom and at school.*

We are aware of the importance of taking care of children with special needs: “A mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.” (Implementation handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 23 Rights of children with disabilities, page 321)

With the aim of helping students interested in learning and that like to go to school, the administrators and teachers have taken many measures to develop a friendly school environment for them.

We organized the game “Friend circle”, attracting the attention of many students in both schools. The students made small groups (from 2 to 5 students) and played the game following the topic. They helped, shared and worked together when they performed the skits: As a father, students expressed specific interesting gestures, caressing children. As a mother, they guided children to do homework every day at home. As a teacher, they encouraged students to participate in fun activities. If their friends were in trouble, as a friend, students were concerned and helped with sincere affection.

Through the play, students practiced their self-service skills. They did simple things: neatly arranged school supplies, cleaned tables and chairs, swept, etc.

### *4.2.2. Organize the periods with the relevant activities and design the special lesson plans for developing good life skills of the SWSN.*

In the last year, we organized 4 training workshops on innovative teaching methods and classroom management in a positive direction for the teachers. Presenters are experts in educational psychology, both domestically and foreign.

After the training workshops, day by day and step by step, teachers applied positive methods to teach and take care of the students with special needs. They encouraged students to learn through different activities in the classroom.

Sometimes, teachers took students to the zoo, the museums or somewhere to organize the lesson. There are many lessons to be held outside the classroom. That was

interesting for children. They participated in a lively session, were extremely focused and quickly gained new knowledge.

#### *4.2.3. Visit 20 classes: meet, talk, and listen to the teachers and students.*

During project implementation, team Viet Nam has advantages because 2 of us are principals of two schools which are currently working on this change project. We observed the learning environment in classrooms in both schools. At the same time, we had a short conversation with teachers and students in the classrooms.

Students with special needs are confident when they were talking about learning, hope and their classmates. They introduced themselves and sang many funny songs with their friends. We felt the pleasure and saw the sparkle in their eyes.

Nguyen Binh Khiem primary school has counsellors who are volunteer parents. With the topic “We talk together”, the counsellors talked to the SWSN about what they wanted to say. Through the conversation, the counsellors helped the students to express their thoughts and make appropriate suggestions to help them feel more confident in the choices and decisions they wanted to do.

## 5. Results

As decided, our objectives were to implement the elements of child rights in the selected school in order to empower all the children, especially SWSN to participate in all learning activities irrespective of their socio-economic and cultural variance. Our project was implemented in both schools during 3 semesters (school year 2013-2014 and the first semester of school year 2014-2015). The results of the initiatives based on the indicators are given below (see also the questionnaire in Appendix 1, 2 and 3 below):

Teachers, parents and students taking part in the CRC workshop expressed their interest and understood more about the CRC. After the training courses and workshops, the participants were excited as their CRC knowledge improved significantly. 92% of participants understood the importance of CRC and 8% of the remaining participants needed more time to understand clearly about the rights of the child groups.

Students in Nguyen Binh Khiem school (37/37 classes) know basics of the CRC.

Most of the parents and students have changed their awareness of the SWSN. They know what the SWSN wants to do and they also know what they must do for SWSN.

Through the activities in school, teachers and students have a closer relationship, which makes the learning environment more effective and friendly. The teaching has improved because students are more active during their learning process.

The students feel more confident, active and responsible for their own education. They are developing important communication skills.

The students with special needs are more confident to enjoy their classmates. They have learnt how to listen and respect one another. They have made progress in communication and behavior. A very important thing is that the SWSN understands their rights and duties, so they are very happy to share their feelings with one another.



## 6. Discussion and Reflection

In the project implementation process, we are always interested in comments of the participants on how to adjust the content of training courses and organize relevant activities. After the activities in a period, our team summed up and talked about what we learned from the experience.

There is need for our team to continue working together with the schools in monitoring the operation of the students where the schools can own the project.

We expect that every initiative and corresponding result are on the right track and hope our change project will be successful.

We will continue to disseminate and provide skills related to the implementation of the CRC as well as building, developing and promoting the capacity of those who work with the children.

## 7. Way forward

With the results obtained from this change project we will:

- Continue to organize the relevant activities to encourage students to like to go to school.
- Create favorable conditions for students with special needs to integrate into the community.
- Continue to organize the workshops about the rights of the child groups for all of teachers, students and parents in Nguyen Binh Khiem and To Vinh Dien schools (at least once in every new school year).
- Continue to organize the workshops about the relevant teaching methods regarding SWSN for teachers and parents in both schools.
- Share the results of this change project with other schools for students with special needs so they have many opportunities to learn and play with their friends.

## 8. List of References

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*Talking Child Rights Seriously* (Reflection on five years of an International Training Programme), Per Wickenberg, Agneta W Flinck, Ulf Leo, Bodil Rasmusson, Richard Stenelo and Bereket Yebio (eds.).

*Child Rights, Classroom and School Management*, Change Projects from International Training Programme, Batch 15.

*Childhood, Changing childhoods* – Local and Global, edited by Heather Montgomery, Rachel Burr, Martin Woodhead.

# Appendix 1: Questionnaire for the students

1. Do you like to go to school? Why?

Yes No

.....

2. Do you understand the contents of CRC?

Yes No Not clear

3. Are you aware of your rights?

Yes No

4. Do you think that children must be respected? Why?

Yes No

.....

5. If you have a difficult problem, who will you talk to?

Mother Father Teacher Friend No one

Other .....

6. Do you like the activities in school? Why?

Yes No

.....

7. What are your favorite activities at school?

.....

8. Are the students allowed to take part in the workshop at school?

Yes No

9. Are the teachers interested in your ideas?

Yes No

10. What do you want to be?

.....

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire for parents

1. Do you understand the contents of CRC?

Yes No Not clear

2. In your opinion, which right of CRC is the most important? Why?

Provision Protection Participation All of them

.....

3. Do you usually talk to your child about his/her rights and duties?

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

4. If your child has a difficult problem, who will he/she talk to?

Parents Teacher Friend No one I do not know.

5. Do you encourage your child to make his/her own decisions?

Yes No Sometimes

6. Do you encourage your child to join the activities in school?

Yes No Sometimes

7. Do you think changes of family living conditions will affect the child's learning?

Yes No

8. Do you participate with your child in the activities at school?

Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

9. What do you do if your child does not like going to school?

.....

10. What can you say about the activities which you have attended in this workshop?

.....

## Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the teachers

1. Do you understand the contents of CRC?

Yes No Not clear

2. Do you think that children must be respected? Why?

Yes No

.....

3. Do you help the students to solve their problems anytime?

Yes No Sometimes Seldom

4. Are the students talking to you about their friends or family?

Yes No

5. Do you often contact with parents to help the students get better?

Yes No Sometimes Seldom

6. Were you satisfied with the results of students in your class? Why?

Yes No

.....

7. What do you do when the students complain of their friends?

.....

8. What do you do when the students talk to you about their difficulties in their families?

.....

9. What do you do to encourage students with special needs to like going to school?

.....

10. What did you learn from the training course about CRC?

.....



# 3. SUMMING UP

In this chapter we, the Lund University mentors<sup>7</sup>, are reflecting on some of the focus areas and conclusions drawn by the participants and the country teams in their final reports.

The word project is problematic since these change projects are supposed to run without a defined endpoint, and without special funding. Many of the projects have started change processes which will most probably continue and branch out, which is what happened in the previous 18 batches including more than 170 country teams, starting in 2003-2004. In this chapter, we are summarising, categorising, and comparing based on the text in the final reports.

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7 Ulf Leo, Lena Andersson, Agneta W Flinck, Bodil Rasmusson and Per Wickenberg

## Purpose/aim and target groups of the change projects

In the matrix below (table 1) we have summarized the *purposes/aims* and *target groups* of the 10 change projects in batch 19 to get an overview.

Target groups	Teachers	Students	School council	Principals	Teacher Trainees	Parents
<b>Purpose/aim</b>						
Cambodia; To develop teacher knowledge in pre-school practicing the new Preschool Curriculum based on the 3Ps, in particularly participation	x	x		x		
China; Student participation in schools	x	x			x	
Colombia; Reduce violence and bullying in the classrooms and schools	x	x		x	x	
Indonesia; Child friendly schools through empowering student org at School level	x	x	x	x		
Malawi; Participation in decision making in schools	x	x	x	x		x
Namibia; Understanding of CRC, focus reduce drop out	x	x				x
South Africa; Positive teaching and learning environment by student participation in schools	x	x				
Sri Lanka; Computer assisted lessons, from teacher centered to learner centered	x	x				x
Tanzania; Assess implementation of CRC, local capacity building, learner centred approach, anti-violence in schools	x	x				x
Vietnam; Right to protection and participation for students with special needs, in two schools	x	x				

**Table 1.** Purpose and target groups of the Change projects.



As could be seen from the table, some change projects are broader and cover more than one area or topic and many target groups. To motivate and improve participation are the most focused areas. The main target groups are teachers and students followed by parents. Increased participation is a common denominator for most projects in batch 19. What also could be seen in the projects of batch 19 is that some projects are based on already started change projects.

## Provision, protection and participation mainly at local level

In this section the well-known Convention summary - the 3 Ps which stand for *Participation, Provision and Protection* – is used as a point of departure and foundation on which to organize the material from the participating countries. These three categories of Ps are usually associated with Eugene Verhellen<sup>8</sup>. A screening of the projects with the CRC-3Ps perspective reveals that all projects in batch 19 use one, two or three Ps, more or less distinctive in the text.

Most projects have a main focus on participation, and some projects add aspects of protection like reducing drop-out, bullying, and children being mistreated because they have special needs. Students and teachers are the main target groups in all the projects and the participatory aspects focus improvement of teaching and learning in the classrooms, as well as more formal ways of participation, through different kinds of student councils.

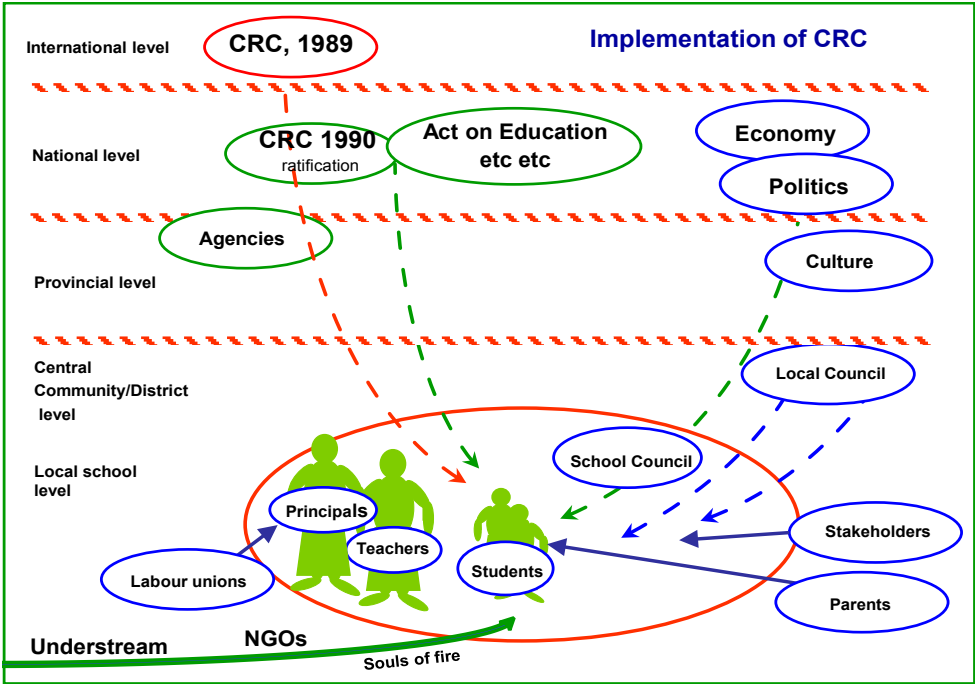
## Levels of participants and the change projects

Three administrative levels of education in society are used as one of the recruiting principles for the three participants forming the country teams in this programme: the local school and community level; the *provincial/regional level*; and the *national/state level* in society.<sup>9</sup>

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8 Verhellen, E. (2000) Convention of the Rights of the Child: background, motivation, strategies, main themes. Bruxelles: Garant.

9 These words or concepts could be very different from country to country. The organisational principles of a state or a country - experienced, realised and learned so far - is very contextual. The same goes for Provincial and District levels in different countries.



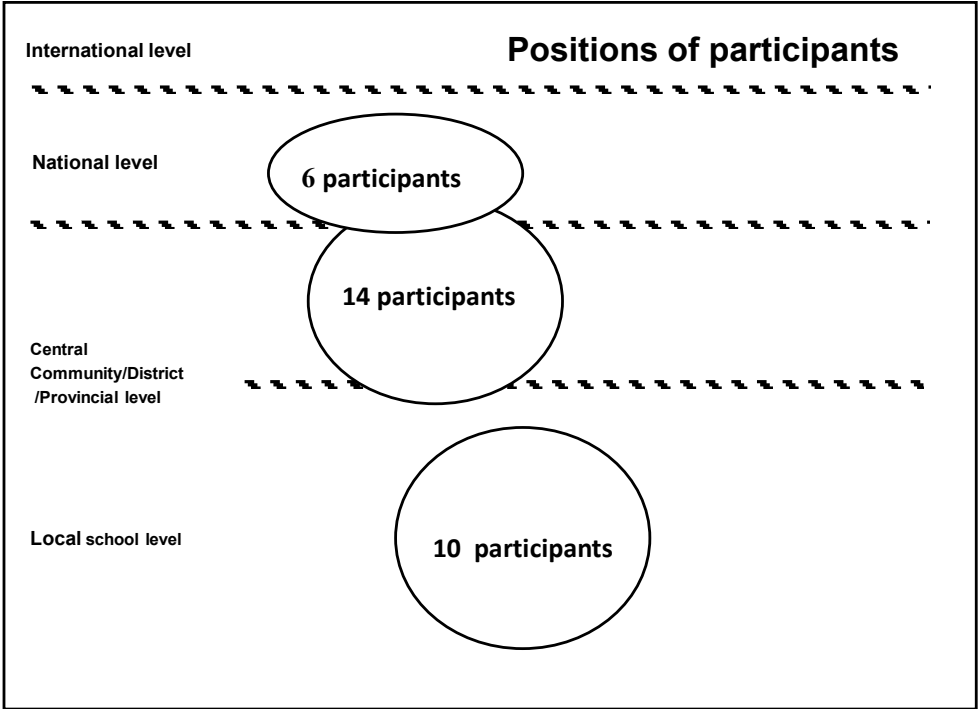
**Figure 1.** Implementation of CRC at three levels: National/State; Provincial/Regional, and Local School level (elaborated according to Wickenberg, 2004).

The figure above helps to understand the complex processes of implementation of CRC in the education sector at different societal-administrative levels and contexts in the different countries. When starting to implement some ideas and policy documents at the local level of society, you soon find that there already are existing social and professional norms, dedicated people and committed organizations (e.g. NGO:s) working with the issue at stake (forming the local undercurrent). One question is; what is happening, and what has happened on each level regarding CRC in the education sector when the change projects in this ITP have completed the first year of the change project and continue onwards. Change of norms (legal, professional and social norms) can be viewed as a *key feature of capacity building* as well as the empowerment of excluded groups who are an important steering mechanism towards values, behaviors, attitudes and action patterns in society.

**Positions of the Participants in the three socio-administrative levels**

The aim is to recruit teams with participants from all three socio-administrative levels, as shown above in figure 2. Ideally there should be approximately 10 participants at each level. The graph shows the distribution of the participants in batch 19, and this time there is a quite even distribution. University staff is normally categorized in the

“middle-level”, but they could also be considered working at a national level depending on the context in the country.



**Figure 2:** The Participants in batch 19 were recruited, as shown in this figure, from the three socio-administrative levels: National/State; Provincial/Regional, and Local School level.

### The change projects and the three socio-administrative levels

Most change projects in batch 19 are located at school level, but some change projects are on two levels, targeting schools *and* teacher training. According to our experience from former batches, we have seen that several pilot projects start at the local level in one or a few schools in order to test the ideas with the intention to spread their experience to other schools when the pilot transitions to full scale. The position of the projects in batch 19 depends on the location of the participants. It is often easier, sometimes necessary, to start at a place where one of the change agents, in this case the headmaster/principal a teacher, or a teacher trainer have easy access to start a change process.

## Way forward

This last section will sum up the way the teams have planned for the future and for sustainability of their change project. Future planned actions are organized in categories, presented and discussed below.

### **Continue with support to the project**

If you start a project you also create a lot of expectations. Some projects have stressed this issue and pointed at a special responsibility to continue the support to schools and to students and teachers.

### **Continue with training**

Most of the final reports explain the need for more workshops; follow up seminars and campaigns in the target area. Since the change projects have now just been initiated most teams have not yet implemented everything that they initially planned to do. Capacity building is also the most effective way to gain understanding and change attitudes. As indicated in Table 1, the training in most cases focuses on the teachers and students.

### **Develop material**

In order to obtain sustainable change projects, different materials are essential. You have to leave something behind. Over time, training and workshops can be forgotten; however the materials will still be there. Access to material for use in the future is also important for the teachers. In batch 19 guidelines, handbooks, and booklets have been produced.

### **Expand, scale up, and introduce new target groups and new stakeholders**

There are several examples of plans to scale up the change projects. Initially one or more schools/institutions have scaled up but plans clearly indicate that more schools/institutions will be included in the future. Some projects want to expand to *welcoming* schools or organisations, perhaps there is a greater will to change in these organisations. The team members of batch 19 cannot be solely responsible forever. Other committed persons must step in and take over. This delegation, as well as capacity building, is a very essential component of sustainability. The manner in which to do it is exemplified below.

## Create resources

Several teams experience a lack of resources as one of the major challenges. Since there is no money in the programme, everything must be acquired using contacts and the imagination of the team members. Final reports reveal, however, that very much can be done with very little. Sometimes money is not the key to success. Commitment, making use of a network, and hard work are essential ingredients.

## Connect to the national network

In all of the countries in batch 19 there are already representatives who have previously participated in this programme. And in all of the countries, these former participants have created a formal or informal network. For the purpose of sustainability and the possibility to scale up, the national networks are vital partners. Most of the teams have already started or plan to continue working in the national network.

## Monitoring and evaluation

To make sure that the change project is developing in the right direction and that it will be sustained, monitoring is of utmost importance. Final reports do not often mention monitoring and evaluation as the way forward, but it is mentioned in the action plans and time plans. Evaluation for use in development, and not principally for control, is a must for sustainability.

## Concluding remarks

This is *the eight book* published in the Child Rights, Classroom and School Management programme. When comparing analysis and comments between the different batches from batch 12 and forward to batch 19, we find similar patterns regarding recruitment of participants from different levels as well as orientation of the projects. Most projects in all batches are found on the local school level. It has become increasingly frequent that different projects link into each other and this is also a result of the recruitment to the programme, new participants have professional connections to former participants and the participants in the network in the countries have professional relations between a lot of batches.

The content and orientation of the projects have many similarities. Participation is the most frequent aspect of the CRC – and participation is used as a means to also include issues of protection and provision in their projects for change. Participation represents a new view upon the child and how to work to create better conditions in schools. Participation is so far, in many cases, only introduced in the curricula but still not implemented in broader scale, and the understanding of what participation means in practice differs.

Many teams are building on what previous teams have started which add values and increased possibilities for sustainability of the results. This progression could also make it easier to overcome different challenges.

There are clearly several passionate and committed team members in batch 19 as in the other batches, who are *real change agents* and are ready to work and support their own change project for a long time to come and also to support change projects from other teams. That alone fulfills the overall goal of the programme.

# 4. CONTACT DETAILS

For more information about the ITP on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management, please check the website

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*Child Rights, Classroom and School Management, Batch 19, 2013b*

Lund University has offered the Sida-financed International Training Programme on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management since 2003. The programme targets those in a position from which they can initiate processes of change in the education sector in their countries. During the programme all participating teams initiate a change project in their respective countries aiming at the realization of the intention of the Child Rights Convention in policy as well as in practice. This book contains the final reports from Batch 19 with change agents from Cambodia, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Vietnam.

*ISBN: 978-91-980535-9-3*



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