The Enabling Education Network

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Abstract

Inclusion is one of the main challenges facing the education systems around the world. The question of how schools can include all children from the communities they serve is a pressing concern for teachers and others working with issues of equity and social justice in contemporary and future societies. Inclusion is not just a philosophy but more importantly, a process towards the practical changes that must be brought about, in order to help all children learn to their full potential, while recognising that all children have different individual learning needs and learning speeds rather than "special needs". The shift towards inclusive thinking and planning benefit all children, all teachers, all parents and all headmasters. THE BIG QUESTION that faces us is: How do we make our classrooms inclusive and reach out to all children? The Enabling Education Network (EENET) makes accessible information across our region on building inclusive classrooms. It helps to understand how education systems can become responsive to diversity. In this article we share information about the EENET ASIA, a regional offshoot of EENET.

What is EENET?

It is the Enabling Education Network. EENET is an information sharing network focusing on communities, schools and universities that value and recognise the abilities of all children and other learners – promoting equal access to quality education for all.

EENET Asia is a network of individuals and organisations with different backgrounds and from different parts of the region with a set of common values. It is facilitated by a team of volunteers with a diversity of perspectives representing inclusive and child-friendly education initiatives in different countries throughout Asia. Our goal is to involve all the countries

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in Asia and possibly in the Pacific in our efforts and activities.

EENET Asia Vision and Mission Statement

Encourage and support the sharing of information, ideas and experiences among all those involved in improving the access to and quality of education in Asia. Promote inclusive and child-friendly education systems and practices to ensure that education for all is really for all — with special focus on education initiatives targeting learners vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion in formal, alternative and indigenous education systems.

EENET Asia: Values

- We believe that inclusive education is about school and community improvement.
- We believe that education is broader than schooling, recognising that learning takes place in formal and non-formal settings — among others in homes, on play grounds and in community learning centres.
- We believe that no school can be inclusive unless it is child-friendly and no school can be child-friendly unless it is inclusive.
- We believe that all children can learn, that all children have the right to quality education and that they should be valued and appreciated for who and what they are. It is important that assessment systems are also child-friendly and inclusive.
- We believe in the right of children to play, be happy and that this is an important and integral part of their learning process.
- We support and believe in the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC], in the Education for All [EFA] goals and the principles of the Salamanca Statement and encourage the implementation of international conventions guaranteeing the rights of girls, learners affected by and/or living with HIV, children with disabilities, children from ethnic, religious, language and social minorities and all other children vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion.
- We encourage a reflective attitude to all information and ideas.
- We recognise the value of indigenous Asian experiences and potential for mutual learning within and beyond Asia.
- We recognise that all cultures, traditions and religions have elements of inclusiveness and that these should be enhanced and built upon.

What do we do?

- We publish two issues of the EENET Asia Newsletter per year in English and in Bahasa Indonesia. Some articles have also been translated into Russian for Central Asia, Karen, Japanese and Vietnamese.

We plan translation of the full newsletter into Urdu and Hindi. We hope that more languages will follow later.

- We collect articles from throughout Asia trying to highlight initiatives and voices that are not heard or widely publicised. Some of these articles are later published in the EENET Asia Newsletter or on our web page. In selecting articles for publication we seek a balance between initiatives in different countries, implemented by various organisations and covering a range of themes.
- We distribute the newsletters to pre- and in-service teacher education and training programmes to encourage a process of reflection among teacher students and teacher educators/trainers.
- We distribute the newsletters to teachers, parents and education officials to provide practical examples and illustrations of how inclusive and child-friendly education can be planned and implemented.
- We encourage readers to create and participate in discussions and conversations on a wide range of issues related to inclusion and child-friendly education.
- We create networks between initiatives and actors on all levels and in different countries who would otherwise have limited opportunity to share and discuss ideas—translating policies into practice and finding ways in which practices can shape policies.

How do we work?

- Teamwork through e-mail communication and occasional face-to-face meetings.
- The editing of articles is the result of a collective process between the members of the editorial team.
- Team up with other initiatives to promote inclusive and child-friendly education.
- Involve resource persons outside the editorial team.

Who do we want to reach?

- Teachers, head-teachers and school administrators
- Parents
- Pupils and other learners
- Teacher students [students in teacher education and training programmes]
- Teacher educators and trainers
- Elected officials and legislators
- Education and planning officials
- School supervisors and inspectors
- Education and child/human rights activists
- United Nation Organisations
- International, national and local non-governmental organisations and community based initiatives
- Media
- Corporate sector
- All others interested in education and child/human rights

About the EENET ASIA Newsletters

As mentioned earlier the editorial team produces a regular newsletter containing articles from around Asia. The EENET ASIA team have produced seven newsletters since June 2005. In this article we intend to acquaint you with the EENET Asia by providing a summary of the contents of each EENET ASIA newsletter.

Contact Information (Email and internet)

You can download EENET Asia Newsletters: http://www.idp-europe. org/eenet and Contact EENET ASIA via email:asia@eenet.org.uk

EENET Asia Newsletter No.1, June 2005

The first issue of EENET-Asia provides rich reading about enabling education from different perspectives, especially from the learners and teachers' perspective. It is not about inclusive education or disability issues alone, but about enabling education in the broadest sense. The issue highlights that enabling education programmes can be very context specific and may range from community based education programmes, school-based teacher training, active learning, inclusive education policies and monitoring impact for the marginalised and excluded.

The editorial to the issue is written by Director, UNESCO PROAP Bangkok. Marc Wetz, who has implemented the child friendly concept in projects in

"EENET Asia is a very timely initiative for South, Southeast and Central Asia. Such a network, and this newsletter which will help to hold it together, can only serve and inspire and support closer collaboration and the exchange of very essential information among those policy makers, programmers, and practitioners alike who are concerned with Inclusive Education."
Sheldon Shaeffer, Director of UNESCO Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Bangkok

remote mountainous ethnic minority areas of Northern Vietnam shares some important factors that have contributed to the success of the CFS concept in ethnic minority context. Payakumbuh (West Sumatra), Indonesia is implementing inclusion by providing services to children with visual impairment and class teachers in regular schools. Dewi Marza, the head of the Regional Resource Centre for Inclusion and Special Needs Education for West Sumatra, discusses the role of the resource centres in a process towards inclusive education. The article from Bangladesh focuses on how cultural and social deprivation continues to be a barrier towards inclusive practice.

In this issue we also cover the school involvement in Hong Kong and multi-grade teaching in Mongolia. A short write up discusses the unique small scale project school in a slum area of Phnom Penh, Cambodia covering large numbers of children that were previously begging on the streets. *Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for creating inclusive, learning friendly environments*, a practical toolkit prepared by UNESCO is written about. The issue covers programmes for teachers in inclusion in Indonesia and Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development in Karachi, Pakistan. The EENET interview with eminent educationists and Managing Director of Sindh Education Foundation focuses on school health education.

EENET Asia Newsletter No.2, April 2006

In this issue we look towards the future for our regions – Building on the first issue of our newsletter launched back in June 2005 as well as on the interactions and recommendations of the International Symposium "Inclusion and the Removal of Barriers to Learning, Participation and Development - Inclusive and Child Friendly Schools Emerging in Asia" held in Bukittinggi and Payakumbuh (West Sumatra), Indonesia, from the 26 to 29 September 2005. The Symposium brought together policy makers, planners and practitioners from more than 30 countries in Asia and beyond. It was hosted by ten partner organisations, representing; governments; UN agencies; universities and; international nongovernmental organisations. A unique feature was, the extensive team planning for the event and the overwhelming response for participation. Issues ranging from "Developing Inclusive and Child Friendly Schools and Societies", "Pre- and In-service Teacher Education and Training", and "Early Childhood Care and Development", to "The Role of International Organisations in the Implementation of Inclusive Education and Child Friendly Education Programmes" were discussed. The symposium recommendations have also been included in this issue. "In some countries, inclusive education is thought of as an approach to

serving children with disabilities within general education settings. Internationally, however, it is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that responds to diversity amongst all learners." A quote from Professor Mel Ainscow, University of Manchester (International Symposium 09/2005) . Organisations and individuals wish to see the people they work with and for; persons with disabilities; girls or the poor are specifically mentioned in recommendations, so they are not forgotten in the future. Reactions from readers on the Symposium Recommendations are welcome and this information (pre- and post Symposium) can be found on www.idp-europe.org/symposium/

The editorial team has tried to create a balance of contributions that reflect educational theories and practices from different parts of the region. This second EENET-Asia provides information from Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan) for the first time, while the regional UNGEI (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative) and (enabling) education in emergency situation also get some special focus. Voices of children on "What makes a good teacher" and some experiences related to the concept of "Child Friendly Schools-CFS".

EENET Asia Newsletter No.3, November 2006

The third issue of the EENET Asia newsletter focuses on child-friendly and inclusive practices throughout the region. Stakeholders from Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam have contributed the articles. Leading up to the World AIDS Day, we have continued with the series of articles on the education sector response to HIV and AIDS. Other topics that are comprehensively covered are: child-friendly education among ethnic minorities, education initiatives for children who are living as refugees and child-labour.

How teachers perceive discipline and other forms of behaviour management depends on how they see their job as a teacher and to what extent they believe that all children can learn. Classroom behaviour and learning outcomes are much influenced by the quality of teaching. The physical environment in the classroom, the level of emotional comfort experienced by students and the quality of communication between teacher and students are important factors that may enable or disable optimal learning.

Teachers are responsible for many different students, including those from poor or disadvantaged families, students who may have to work after school, or those coming from different ethnic, religious or language minority groups or those with a variety of learning difficulties or disabilities. None of these situations or factors has to cause educational

problems, however these children may be at risk of negative and meaningless school experiences if teachers are not responsive to their needs and abilities or able to use effective and individually adjusted instruction and classroom strategies.

To reduce or remove barriers to learning and participation of students requires insight into where these barriers may come from and why and when they arise. It is important for a teacher to be aware of the socio-economic and family background of students to be able to also understand non-academic factors that influence their learning. Many social factors that affect learning cannot be immediately altered, but understanding these factors will enable teachers to see students "failure" or "misbehaviour" in perspective and create learning environments that reduce instead of increase the effects of these factors. Good teachers consider this a personal and professional challenge.

However, teachers need to reflect on the learning environment they have created and whether this environment engages all children actively and meaningfully. It is important for teachers to investigate how teaching styles can affect progress and behaviour of all students.

When seeking explanations for lack of achievement and behaviour problems, teachers need to be prepared to first consider inadequacies in the learning environment and process rather than within the child. What

do they say and do in the classroom to develop understanding among students? How do they introduce new topics? How do they link new knowledge with what children already know?

Timing of teaching-learning interactions is an essential part of classroom management. Many discipline problems can be avoided by managing the classroom environment better and improve the timing of classroom activities. Teachers tend to point out students' deficiencies more than praising them for their efforts and (small) improvements. For many children this is very discouraging, and may result in feelings of inferiority and failure.

Teaching is generally a group activity, while learning is a more individual activity and not all students learn at the same pace or in the same way. Teachers need to consider how many policies and practices lead to labelling of students. Research on teacher-student interaction shows how teachers often behave differently towards individual students based on their perception of a student's ability. Those labelled as "low-achievers" or "slow learners" often get less opportunity than others to participate, and those perceived as "undisciplined" are treated as such, even when behaving well.

Teachers need to reflect on their assumptions and expectations by asking children for feedback on teaching-learning processes and on

what happens in the classroom in general. All teachers should do this as it reveals to them what students identify as quality characteristics in teachers, which almost without exception have to do with a teacher's ability to relate to them as individuals in a positive way, treating them fairly and with respect, making lessons interesting and varied, providing encouragement and telling them to believe in themselves and their abilities.

This means that positive teacher-student relations and classroom climates are important factors in influencing how children experience school. Teachers do not only teach knowledge and skills, they also help students to define who they are. From their daily interactions with teachers, children learn whether they are important or not, bright or slow, liked or disliked. A teacher transmits these messages through his behaviour, gestures and words. From the messages children receive they decide whether to risk participation in class activities or not. Teachers must recognise that such involvement may not always come easy and that this requires a trusting, psychologically comfortable classroom environment.

Motivation to learn and to behave is based on interest. Teaching that satisfies children's curiosity motivates far more effectively than forcing them to perform tasks they consider irrelevant and boring. Therefore the way teachers interact with and teach children is crucial in preventing misbehaviour.

However, despite such efforts of positive interaction, behaviour problems may still occur and teachers must be prepared for this with different techniques ranging from counselling, focusing on understanding, mutually solving a problem to ignoring inappropriate behaviour while reinforcing appropriate behaviour. What is crucial though is that teachers should always make clear that it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the child! The issue is whether teachers can look beyond a student's immediate misbehaviour and see a human being worthy of respect. Passing this test will make teachers more credible, not only as teachers but also, and more importantly, as genuine caring human beings.

Teachers may focus too much on what to do when children misbehave. Discipline techniques are often perceived by teachers as something separate from teaching techniques, only to be employed if and when problems arise. Classroom management though is an integral part of effective teaching which prevents behaviour problems through better planning, organising and managing of classroom activities, better presentation of instructional material and better teacher-student interaction, aiming at maximising students' involvement and cooperation in learning. Disciplinary or behaviour control techniques will in the end be

less effective as they do not promote the development of self-discipline or children's own responsibility for their actions. Students do not automatically become self-disciplined at a certain age or through control or force. Values and social skills have to be taught and modelled by teachers. Learning to become responsible human beings and make responsible choices requires practice, including making mistakes. That is what effective teaching and classroom management is about. And that, not just delivering a curriculum, is the purpose of education!

EENET Asia Newsletter No. 4, June 2007

This issue focuses on equal rights and opportunities in, to and through education. The contributions relate to this topic from different perspectives, both theoretical and practical, from policy makers as well as programme staff and teachers. We have invited a guest editorial about rights-based education from the director of Human Rights Education Associates [HREA], while we hope you will also enjoy reading about the need for more Child Friendly Schools (reflecting and implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child) in Cambodia, education reform to ensure the right to Education for All in Balochistan, and inclusive practices (addressing social exclusion) in Vietnam.

The article on social exclusion and the Animal School Fable may help you to reflect on the different issues and remaining challenges in education throughout Asia in order to provide education for all which is relevant and empowering for different learners. Together we can do it and build more inclusive, tolerant and peaceful communities and schools.

Teacher education is more than technical training and must make future teachers aware of the broader social contexts in which they teach while strengthening their belief that they can make a difference to the learning of all their students. The article on empowering teachers highlights some important approaches.

A number of articles also reflect on important conditions for successful inclusion of learners with different impairments, ranging from accessibility of children with physical disabilities to children with visual impairment.

Afghanistan is represented with a story of success of girls demanding education in community-based initiatives, while you can read about inclusion issues in Japanese schools and about the transformation process of existing schools in Pakistan into inclusive and child-friendly school.

There is also pull-out of a self-assessment tool which can be pulled out. It has been published in UNESCO's ILFE (Inclusive, Learning Friendly Environment) toolkit and will provide you with an idea on what your school is already doing to create an inclusive, learning-friendly environment. We have again collected a great number of

useful publications for your reference.

EENET Asia Newsletter No.5, March 2008

In this issue we invited a guest editor, John Morefield to write about the importance of school leadership when trying to improve the quality and inclusiveness of education. In many countries, Heads of schools are viewed exclusively as managers. The ideas of leadership, self-initiative or creativity are often not part of their job description or what others expect from them. John writes about leadership standards and professional development in Cambodia, but the relevance of what he describes applies to most countries in the region.

"Teacher education in Karen State" describes the multiple challenges of developing an education system for indigenous minority people within and across the Burmese border and the role of teacher education when aiming at quality improvements of student learning outcomes, while developing a curriculum that uses the mother language and reflects the indigenous culture.

Assessment must be more than grading and ranking learners. "Assessment through the eyes of learners", highlights the importance of finding out from students how they experience assessment. It also describes how formative assessment can be an inclusive strategy helping teachers to better respond to different needs in their classrooms.

It must be clear that we need to protect and promote educational rights also in situations of emergency, early reconstruction and chronic conflict— especially of children and youth. In earlier newsletters we have read about the earthquake response in Pakistan and girls' education in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. Part of such "enabling" education must also include teaching and learning about emergency preparedness. This has been described in Chitraporn Vanaspong's story about "School-based Child-led Disaster Risk Reduction" developed in south Thailand.

"Helping people help themselves" illustrates how the philosophy of life long learning linked to the four pillars of learning is being implemented in the Philippines.

We have again tried to get practical examples of inclusive and responsive programme implementation, both from readers across the region and from existing documentation that some of you may not be able to access. The case-study from Sightsavers, (India) is a case in point showing an example of good practice, while "Enabling education for children with hearing impairments" has not yet been covered before in EENET Asia. Many practical tips are provided in this article for teachers and others.

David Spiro from Hellen Keller writes to us about the importance of aligning inclusive education practice with inclusive education advocacy.

For many people the HOW of inclusive education remains a challenge and thus examples of good practice and evidence based research need to be more strategically used for advocacy.

Heamophelia is a health condition which may not be known to many of us, but it can pose a serious barrier to education for students who have this condition, as is the case with similar chronic health conditions such as asthma, where children may be frequently absent from school due to illness. Inclusive education must also respond to these kind of challenges, as is illustrated by Chandra Galih Permana's input from Indonesia. This article has been included in this issue of the journal.

In this 5th regional newsletter we have two issues for you to critically reflect on and consider a response, one from Pakistan about remedial teaching for pre-primary students and one from Nepal about food for education as an incentive to increase girls' enrolment.

Events that took place in our region, such as the regional policy meeting for South Asia and the Education in Emergencies workshop in Nepal, are reported and new events announced, while we have found new publications for you that may be of interest to all of you. We would however also like to encourage readers to share with us up-coming events or new publications regarding "enabling education" for all, with a special focus on those vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion.

EENET Asia Newsletter No.6, October 2008

In this issue, Venita Kaul has been invited to write a guest editorial about early childhood education as a foundation for life. Children's voices are heard throughout this issue from schools in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Tajikistan, while teachers from Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan are writing about their experiences in making schools more inclusive and child friendly. This highlights the progress that has been made throughout the region over the past few years. Reports from programmes on inclusive education in Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Laos, Pakistan and Timor. Leste encourages us to move forward and gives us ideas on how inclusive education can be implemented in countries where there are a few resources.

Three research programmes—on school health in Pakistan, on the relationship between "defactology" and inclusion from Uzbekistan and Central Asia, as well as on barriers to enrolment and regular school attendance in Indonesia are being presented in this issue. We hope this will encourage more of you to do practical research and share it with our readers. An article from India shows us the importance of films in promoting awareness about inclusive education and child friendly education.

The courage of many of our

colleagues working in conflict affected areas is a source of inspiration for us all. The result of their efforts and the efforts of countless other government and non government organisations have resulted in 2.1 million girls being enrolled in Afghan schools today, an increase from 0 just 7 years ago. Events have taken place in Brunie Darussalam, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Tajikistan and Thailand have been reported.

EENET Asia Newsletter No.7, October 2009

In the last few years education planners in government and non government organisations are finally putting inclusive education on the agenda. However, we still struggle with a lack of understanding among key stakeholders about what inclusive education really is! Inclusion is about more than disabilities. Inclusion is about access to quality education for all, regardless of gender, backgrounds, circumstances and abilities. With the EENET Asia Newsletter we are trying to highlight successful practices in countries throughout Asia.

In this issue we cover drug prevention and response education programmes in Afghanistan and we report from an HIV prevention programme in Vietnam. We debate the need to include mother-tongue education and local culture in school curricula, and for the development of Sign language dictionaries using modern technology in Afghanistan.

From Pakistan, we can read about how links are created between health, nutrition and education, while a young man with hearing impairment from Indonesia tells us his life story. We report about an Indonesian project that offers persons with physical impairment freedom of movement by adapting and individualising wheelchairs, about the development of inclusive and child friendly schools and systems in Australia, India and Pakistan, and how gender and peace is portrayed in schoolbooks in Maldives. For the first time we have a contribution about education for sustainable development, where a small organisations in Tajikistan highlights the need to think about environmental protection when we plan, build and renovate schools. Highlighting programmes related to the environment comes timely as our region again has been devastated by natural disasters over the past few weeks. Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia and China have been pounded by typhoons. Hundreds have died and thousands more have lost their homes, schools and livelihoods. Indonesia has again been hit by earthquakes and landslides. In Padang and the villages of the West Sumatra and West Java hundreds have died and thousands live in makeshift shelters. While a Tsunami brought death and fear to Samoa and the islands of the South Pacific. Tens of thousands of children, youth and adults die every year at the hands of young men and

women at war from the dry fields of Helmand in Afghanistan to the streets of Lahore and Mumbai. Developing education systems that help future generations live in peace with each other and in harmony with nature is therefore more important than ever before. Teacher education programmes must be reformed so that we can start educating teachers for tomorrow's schools and stop preparing them for the schools of the past. In efforts to address the needs for innovation and reform, lecturers and student teachers from universities in Afghanistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia and Pakistan have been introduced to the philosophy of inclusive education over the past few months. More of these programmes are needed and more will follow. A young man enrolled in a Bachelor Degree Programme in Special Education at Kabul Education University who vehemently and very vocally opposed the idea of inclusive education when he was introduced to it in December last year is now writing his thesis about inclusive education and has joined the team that adapts 'Embracing Diversity – Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments' so that it can be used in schools in Afghanistan, This transformation of minds must spread to all schools and universities throughout our region.

A REQUEST

We need to cover stories on inclusive practice and are looking for articles for the upcoming   EENET ASIA newsletters. If you are working on inclusive education and think you could write a short article about your experiences, please contact the EENET Asia team — they are waiting to hear from you!

We also look forward to your thoughts and ideas on the experiences reported in the newsletters so that we can continue to learn and gain courage from each other!