

2. FRAMEWORK AND CONTENT OF THE ITP PROGRAMME

*Emma Alfredsson, Lena Andersson, Agneta W Flinck, Ulf Leo, Bodil Rasmusson,
and Per Wickenberg.*

In this chapter we describe the programme more thoroughly; objectives, content, structure, main areas and perspectives of the programme as it has been implemented.

Objectives

From a development perspective the overall and long-term objective of the new Child Rights, Classroom and School Management programme was: *“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 was that changes which contribute to the realisation of the intention of the Child Rights Convention (CRC) in policy as well as in practice will take place.

The goals for the participants of each and every training programme were 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 appendix IV you may find the result chain for the programme.

Contents

The programme provided tools for participants to connect theory and practice and thus be able to translate knowledge into practical everyday work. The entire training programme was based on a Child Rights approach. The right to education, in education and through education was the guiding principle of the programme. The training programme stimulated the transformation of conventional top-down approaches into participatory rights-based, learner-friendly and gender-sensitive approaches to teaching and learning. The following topics were 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 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.

Structure

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

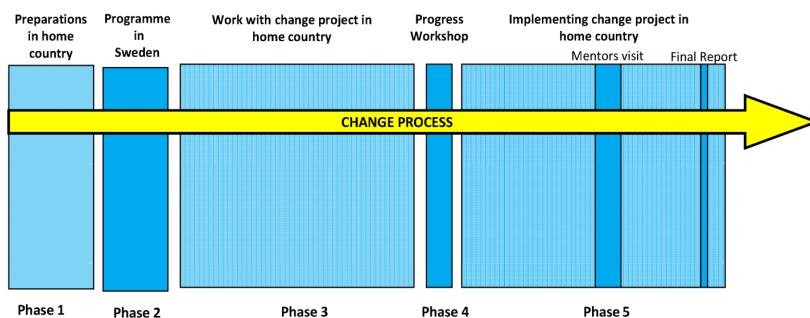


Figure 1: Structure of the Child Rights, Classroom and School Management (1.5 years)

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

Phase 1 – Preparations in the home country was when the participants contacted the other team members and former participants in the programme. The team began to explore the work and implementation of the CRC in their own country. According to assignments given, they also prepared the background information which contributed to the baseline of their change project

Phase 2 – Programme in Sweden lasted for approximately four weeks and consisted of children's 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, was identified, planned and decided on and before the participants left, they submitted a project plan.

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

Phase 4 – Progress workshop in one of the invited countries 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 4 is to give and gain as much as possible from the mentors and the other participants in order to implement the change project.

Phase 5 - Implementing the project in the home country with assistance from the mentor. After phase 4, follow-up visits were 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.

The final report was the end of the programme; however it was not the end of the initiated change processes. Throughout the years almost all change agents have continued their work on children’s rights in their respective countries and networks.

Main Areas and Integrated Approach

From the objectives, goals and content, three main areas were distinguished: CRC, Child Rights in Schools & Teaching/Learning Processes and Leadership/change agents, represented by a triangle in figure 2 below.

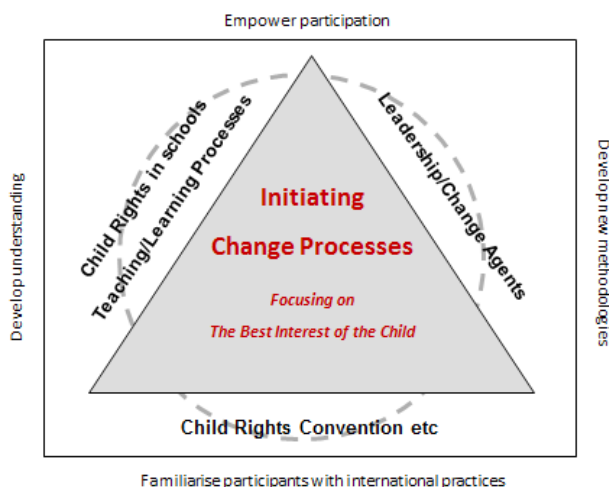


Figure 2. The content of the programme presented in an integrated way framed by the objectives and goals.

The three main areas were more and more integrated the longer the programme ran. The content, structure and methods of the programme have developed from batch to batch over the years. Still, the main content and the objectives were the same and all change agents from batch 1-21 would recognise the programme. The methodologies used during the training in Lund and during the follow-up workshop were adapted to the content; this will be explained in the following sections together with a more detailed account of the three main areas.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Besides basic knowledge about the content, main principles and implementation of the CRC, this part of the programme offered many opportunities for the participants to test and discuss their own understanding and interpretation of CRC in relation to different cultural contexts and above all their own experiences. A variety of methods were used, such as short lectures mixed with workshops and group discussions, role plays and case studies.

Exploration of the content of CRC took its starting point in article 1 and the holistic view upon the child reflected in the CRC. The task for the participants in the first workshop, on this theme, was to make a description of a child in each of the participating countries. The question was: *What is it like to be a schoolchild in your country?* Describe an ordinary day for this child. What happens from the moment he/she wakes up in the morning until he/she goes to bed? What is he/she doing? Which people will he/she meet during the day? Problems and joys...

The aim of this workshop was to continue and deepen the poster presentations (done by country) during the first day, to give an opportunity to the teams to start working together and to introduce the child-centred approach contained in the CRC. Another workshop aimed at discussions on definitions of the *child* was held. The participants were asked to give their definitions without using the concept of age. These discussions were an entry point for further exploration of different views upon children, e.g. vulnerable, weak or competent. It opened up opportunities for reflection on how the CRC could be interpreted and implemented in different cultures, the values included in the CRC and how they are understood by different actors such as teachers, parents and decision-makers.

Further exploration of the content and meaning of the CRC as a whole took its point of departure in the 3 Ps: *Provision* (access to food, healthcare, education, social security); *Protection* (from maltreatment, abuse, neglect, all forms of exploitation) and *Participation* (having the right to act, be involved in decision-making). This is a frequent categorisation of the content of the CRC, especially used by Eugene Verhellen¹. A workshop on the 3 Ps started in the following question:

1 Verhellen, E. (2000) *Convention of the Rights of the Child: background, motivation, strategies, main themes*. Leuven: Garant

What do you think about the relationships between these three concepts? Over the thirteen years we have mainly stuck to the 3 Ps as a simple way of making this UN Convention as clear and pedagogical as possible for all our participants.

We have also had great use of the *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*². Besides the 3 Ps, we always highlighted *the four basic principles* formulated by UNICEF – *article 2* (non-discrimination), *article 3* (the best interest of the child), *article 12* (right to participation) and *article 6* (right to life and development) with our main focus on article 3, 6 and 12. In working with article 3, the groups got an assignment to construct and present a case to show (in role plays) conflicting interests that could be actualised in application of this article into practice. Roger Hart's *Ladder of Participation*³ was used as a tool to deepen the understanding of children's participation and to share experiences between countries. *Rights versus Responsibilities* was another theme worked on through a case study illustrating different perspectives (children, teachers/adults) on a conflict between the school council and the principal/teachers.

Article 6 was given a special focus in a workshop about the meaning of key concepts on child development - risk factors, protective factors, vulnerability and resilience⁴. Presentations from this workshop created the foundation for further discussions and work on concepts like respect and positive discipline.

Work on the CRC continued with some broad outlines and reflections on the traditions of UN and International Conventions, the origin, development, and present status of Human Rights, Education for All (EFA, 1990), Millennium Development Goals and the main ideas and monitoring systems behind, in and under the CRC. Special attention was paid to the responsibility of the State.

All the issues mentioned were closely connected to the objectives and goals of this ITP. The participative dialogue between teachers-facilitators-mentors and the participating change agents was also there from the very first day of the training programme – and even before their arrival in Sweden.

Child Rights in Schools

The Right to a Relevant, Qualitative and Inclusive Education

The second side of the triangle in figure 1 is about taking the child, together with the CRC, to school. With every batch we started by asking the same question; why should we use the CRC as a point of departure in education? Article 28, the right to education, and article 29, the aim of education, were discussed in relation to the current status of education with reference to the millennium development goals. This added up in a common vision: that all children should have the right to a qualitative and relevant edu-

2 Prepared for UNICEF by Rachel Hodgkin and Peter Newell (UNICEF 2002 (Fully revised third edition, September 2007))

3 Hart, Roger A. (1992) *Children's Participation. From Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

4 Montgomery, H.; Burr, R.; Woodhead, M. (2003) *Changing Childhood. Local and Global*.

cation. The concepts were discussed and elaborated in a workshop based on questions such as “what is qualitative education?” and “what is relevant in different contexts?”

The concept of inclusive education was problematized and one of the definitions used was from UNESCO⁵ where inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the *diversity of needs of all* learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education.

Teaching and Learning Processes

The training programme stimulated the transformation of a conventional top-down approach into a participatory rights-based, student-friendly and gender-sensitive approach to teaching and learning. To initiate and support the change processes taking place inside schools and classrooms, the following were some of the issues that this content area focused on. By using strategies from our international “tool box” and participatory methods such as cooperative learning strategies, discussions, performances, role plays and games, we dig into the focus areas and try to implement a universal culture of Child Rights in our different school systems.

Rights-based Approach

The opposite of the conventional top-down approach is a student-centred approach which indicates a paradigm shift in the relationship between the teacher and the student. The teacher must have a didactic competence, good subject knowledge and to be skilled in the “art of teaching”, i.e. to select, adjust and communicate relevant content towards clear learning objectives through a wide repertoire of teaching methods. He or she needs competence in leadership, in how to manage and organise classrooms and gradually transfer responsibility to the students. Further, a teacher needs competence in relationships; to be able to build social relationships and to meet the needs of every individual student. The student should develop to be an active and democratic participant in the learning process, aware of his or her rights, acting as a present citizen.

The mentioned rights-based approach may also enhance teacher capacity, morale and commitment. Negative attitudes may be altered through the practice of conflict resolution, democracy, tolerance and respect in the classroom. Many countries have developed handbooks and definitions of positive discipline, which recommend that disciplinary action be relevant to the misbehaviour, proportional to the offence, focused on correcting the behaviour, not humiliating the student and aimed at rehabilitation, not retribution⁶. By starting to discuss positive discipline in a broader perspective which includes different contexts of values in society, we then entered the classroom. From there on we discussed relevant action plans for promoting respect in schools and classrooms.

5 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/inclusive-education/>

6 Alternatives to Corporal Punishment, Creating Safer School Series. Volume 1. Kampala: Makerere University,

The Classroom as a Micro Social System

Teaching and learning processes appropriate to the student's developmental level, abilities, and learning style promote effective learning. The recognition of a classroom where teaching and learning are part of a complex and largely invisible socio-emotional flow makes it easier to understand how good relations and stable social bonds require good communication between teachers and students, and why gender equality is a must to raise students to their full potential⁷. By sharing ideas and understanding within and between countries we raised the topic and learned from each other.

The Concept of Knowledge

Social constructivism emphasises that learning takes place through interaction with other students, teachers and the world at large. Vygotskij⁸ stresses the importance of social interaction in learning. The students learn together within their socio-cultural context. These developmental theories pay attention not only to what the student has already learnt, but also to the importance of leading the student towards the next developmental stage. The zone of proximal development is a well-known concept by Vygotskij and includes activities like scaffolding and coaching. To fully develop our students, the teacher must use cooperative teaching and learning methods⁹ that include problem-solving strategies and develop critical thinking.

From the Curriculum for the Compulsory Swedish School System¹⁰ we analyse four representations of knowledge: experiences, understanding, skills and facts, and use them as a framework for discussions on productive teaching.

- *Experience* - The student commences class with informal knowledge of a concept or subject. Teaching can start from the informal knowledge level and the student's experiences.
- *Understanding* - The students need to articulate their thoughts and develop cognitive structures. The teacher needs to listen, ask open-ended questions and challenge them by extending their vocabulary.
- *Skills* - Every subject has its own vocabulary. The different signs and symbols require time and practice to become part of a student's language.
- *Facts* - The transition from informal to formal knowledge is an ongoing process of broadening concepts, exploring linguistic structures and fixed expressions.

7 Scheff, T. J. (1990). *Micro sociology: Discourse, emotion and social structure*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

8 Vygotskij, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

9 <http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/cooperative/techniques.html> 2013-10-15

10 Skolverket (2011). *Curriculum for the Compulsory Swedish School System, the Pre-school Class and the Leisure-time Centre, Lgr 11*. Stockholm

The Swedish School System and School Visits in Sweden

One of the objectives of the programme was to familiarise participants with Swedish and other international practices at the school and classroom levels in relation to democratic principles and human rights. Issues concerning school governance and relations between national and local levels were discussed. The Swedish school system was explained through topics such as decentralisation, steering documents, organisation of the school, responsibility of school principals and teachers and the Swedish system of school assessment, e.g. how to assess teaching and learning through systematic evaluations, student grading, and national inspection.

After theoretical discussions, it was time to meet Swedish children, teachers, school principals, other staff and stakeholders in the Swedish schools. The school visits served as a way to understand how theory and practice can go hand in hand, how children's rights are implemented in Swedish schools in various ways. It was through the school visits that we integrated the different parts of the programme, to give the participants an opportunity to experience how theory meets practice in a school and classroom context.

We had three school visits during phase 2 in Sweden. In groups, we visited elementary schools, Flygelskolan, Genarps skola, Klostergårdsskolan, Tunaskolan, Vikingaskolan and Östratornskolan, twice and the whole group visited the upper secondary school, Spyken. The participants prepared the school visits by putting on "CRC-glasses" as a symbol of taking on a special Child Rights-perspective while observing relations and communication in the schools. There was also special focus on important aspects such as participation, inclusive education, democratic values, critical thinking and gender. In the second school visit at the elementary schools, we also added a special focus on leadership issues. After the school visits we followed up the observations to get a better understanding of how and why CRC is implemented as it is in Swedish schools, and what the challenges are or could be in all our countries.

Leadership and Change Agents

The third area of the triangle (fig 1) represents the area of *leadership*, a concept not found in the title of the programme: Child Rights, Classroom and School Management. However, to strengthen and focus on the importance of stimulating a more participatory approach, the concept of leadership was introduced to replace the concept of management. In most literature and research on management and leadership, the concept of management represents a more structured, administrative, and profit-focused approach while the concept of leadership represents a more flexible, innovative, and participatory perspective (Yukl, 2012)¹¹. Other researchers define the meaning of the concept of management in terms of being an authoritative relationship that exists between a manager and subordinates for the purpose of producing and selling goods and/or services. Leadership, on the other hand, is defined as being a multidirectional-influence relationship between a leader and a follower with the mutual purpose of accomplishing

11 Yukl, G. (2012) *Leadership in Organizations*. Upper Saddle River: PEARSON

real change. Considering this, the use of the concept leadership seemed to be more appropriate.

We used leadership in a very broad and general sense as we wanted to include a variety of levels in the area of education from ministries to classrooms, covering all kinds of people ranging from ministers to students. A leader in this sense is anyone acting together with a group of others in order to reach a jointly agreed purpose or goal, independent of age, level, or position. This means that teachers and students are included in this understanding of leadership, as are administrators at the national, regional, or district level. For students, this approach to leadership is one of the aspects of citizenship training, which is a highly prioritised area for students to be able to cope in the future.

Another aspect of leadership we wanted to cover is project leadership or leadership of initiating, implementing and running change processes. All the teams participating in this programme initiated their own change projects/processes in their countries of residence. This was a challenging task, partly because all of the team members were already working full-time and partly because it takes a thorough and specific understanding of leadership to convince authorities and colleagues of one's ideas of a change process and to realise the ideas in a sustainable process. Commitment and dedication are necessary ingredients in project leadership, but will not reach all the way. There will be use for other capacities too, such as analysing target groups and stakeholders, identifying useful partners, creating workable teams, and communication skills.

The main idea behind the third area in focus was to create an *understanding* of the concept leadership and its implementation in the specific context that this programme created. To create this understanding, the theoretical base was the outcomes of research carried out mainly within behavioural sciences. Research from other areas such as economics and social sciences was not used as it has other perspectives and targets macro levels of society. In today's working life, it is not enough to only know some specific "dos and don'ts" about leadership. When there is a full understanding, the actual leadership behaviour will be adjusted and adapted to specific situations, specific contexts, specific team members, and specific personalities. Based on the framework of the programme (mainly the time limit) one main aspect of leadership was selected for the phase in Sweden: *Space of Action*. As it is of vital importance for a leader of today to be pro-active, to be in the front, the leader has to know his/her Space of Action. This is why it was focused on as the main issue of this part. Specifically, the team members of this programme had to add new responsibilities on top of the responsibilities already inherent in their full-time positions. Space of Action was discussed first in terms of how to identify it and then how to expand it.

Identifying the Space of Action is necessary to understand the objective degree of freedom. The discussion of the ways of expanding the Space of Action highlights the importance of fully understanding the concepts and uses of power, group dynamics, as well as empowerment and delegation.

The base of the triangle, the Rights of the Child, was the base of the leadership part of the programme as well. Implementation of the Rights of the Child in the educational context was the leadership part throughout the framework. The second area in

the triangle was also used as a contextual background as an integrated approach was chosen. Other important contexts for the leadership part were the public sectors of the respective ten countries. (Almost all the participants represented the public sector; very few came from the private sector). All the team members contributed with examples, challenges and issues from their own workplaces; examples that all participants could learn from.

As to methodology for the leadership part, it is important to plan for the usage of participatory methods, which in themselves are examples of the areas covered. Besides a few more traditional lectures, always accompanied by discussions and questions, a variety of methods are used. To understand the importance of various opportunities to expand your Space of Action, one has to work in a way that will enable the experience of the feeling of being successful in implementing these opportunities. To understand group dynamics, one must have the experience of group dynamics, the feeling of the processes of the life of a group. Thus, different cases are used, some from literature and some from experiences of lecturers and/or participants, role plays and activities, to start group dynamic processes. All the activities are always followed by debriefing and discussions.

The book *Leadership in Organisations* by G. Yukl (2012) was used as course literature for this part. This book was used within some of the Human Relations programmes at Lund University and highly valued by students. Besides being up-dated with research results, this book was also presented in a very pedagogical way, which was appreciated by the participants. Certain chapters or parts of chapters were selected as background for the different aspects covered. All the chapters could not be covered, but the participants were instructed in how to use this book on an individual basis or in groups at their workplaces. A number of research articles, most of them very new, from various data bases were also used.