

**A CASE STUDY REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING THE CRC AT CHILD
FRIENDLY SCHOOLS IN KULUN BANNER/COUNTY
IN INNER MONGOLIA**

**BY CHINESE TEAM MEMBERS IN SWEDEN'S
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1. CONTEXT

1.1. Background and history

When the history of human being comes to the 21st century, technology and economy are trying their best to bring about as much fortune as men can imagine. A much more civilized global society underpinned by economic prosperity would be an idealized one. In this idealized international society, human rights would be protected as the first consideration. In this process, due to the imbalance economic, social and cultural reasons, the child right has become one of the most venerable and an important part of human right as well. It also has been suffering from some extent of destruction and attracted more and more peoples' concern internationally as well. When the Convention on the Rights of Child was signed and ratified by most of the countries in the world, this became a hot issue. The policies and measures taken by different countries which demonstrate the different cultural effort, would bring different implementation effect. However, when we rethink this effect, It is better for us to take a long term and steady development perspective and make this different effect go along with some certain laws. That is why international exchange is so important. The 'Child Rights, Classroom and School Management 'Training program supported by Sida in Sweden had given us members of different countries out of some main continents a precious opportunity to meditate on this issue in a process of on going academic learning and discussion and field investigation. All participants highly appraised this high level seminars and recognized the knowledge and information delivered in the seminars was truly adaptable and practical for all countries to take a look at and try them.

Leaving others behind, what is mostly impressed us in the seminar is the rights based approach to education, which is based on international agreed human rights standards and promotes those standards

in society. It ensures that all children receive good quality basic education. Quality education is child centered, prepares children for the challenges they face in life and help every child reach his or her full potential. Quality education is not only concerned about learning, but also about child's health, nutritional status, well being, safety and protection from abuse and violence. It is also concerned about the child's environment and about what happens to children before they enter school and after they leave it. A rights based approach to education has the following aspects:

- a. Free access to education for all children.
- b. Equal and inclusive education.
- c. Effective and relevant learning.
- d. gender sensitive.
- e. safe and healthy learning environment.
- f. Participation.
- g. Main stakeholders (international donors, national government, child, parents and teachers and so on) share responsibility.

The rights based approach do has laid good foundation for experimental schools to reflect on school management and teaching reform in the classroom and has given us both political and technological support for implementing the CRC in education, including class teaching.

1.2. China is one of the largest countries

With a land area of 9.6 million square kilometers and a population of 1300 million, China is also a country of multi nationalities taking Han nationality as a main body. Under its jurisdiction, China has totally 32 provinces or autonomous regions enjoying all type of geographical and climatic varieties in the world. In respect with the basic education, there are 540 000 primary and secondary schools throughout China with 15 million teaching staffs working for them. Among these schools, over 99 percent of schools are run by the state. China implements nine years compulsory education system. The entrance rate for school aged children is over 96 percent. At present, the education sector in China is undertaking a

profound reform. That is basic education curriculum reform as a very important part for implementing the CRC. The requirement of China's national curriculum reform puts forward that teachers must change their traditional way of teaching and carry out student centered way of teaching in the classroom. That is to bring activity based, participated by students teaching into classroom in most cases, to guide them to learn and help them to learn actively in stead of traditional way of fully instructions by the teachers. The national curriculum also requires that the teaching content must be relevant and practical to students' and the needs of society. These ideology copes with a rights based approach and the ideology of quality education. The main target of the reform is to absolutely change from the teacher centered way of teaching to students centered teaching, to promote teaching democracy and encourage student's participation in the classrooms. In respect with this, the teaching content and textbooks also made equivalent changes, which means the target of education emphasizes not only the learning of knowledge, but also their ability to learn and to deal with problems that appeared during their lives. The new curriculum also give emphasizes on students life skill and social practice.

Inner Mongolia autonomous region, located in the north and northeast of China, with a total population of 23 million, is a national minority area taking Mongolians as a main body. It located in the sub frigid zone and sub temperate zone and characterized by animal husbandry on the vast grass land, forestry and farming. Both region's entrance rate for school aged children has reached over 96 percent. Kulun Mongolia autonomous Banner/county in Inner Mongolia is a national minority county that takes Mongolia nationality as main. It was fixed as China UNICEF cooperative project county for enhancing basic education in the year 2000. In the year 2001, Sandaowa township central primary school and Ping'an Township central primary school were fixed as experimental schools for Childly friendly School teacher training with 5 disseminating schools respectively.

1.3. An introduction to UNICEF'S Child Friendly School teacher (CFS) training and School Development Planning (SDP) experiment.

Since 2001, the UNICEF had been making its effort to try to implement the CRC in education sector by

setting up child friendly learning environment within its assistance project to China. They chosen two central primary schools with 10 periphery schools in each project county in Guangxi and Inner Mongolia respectively as experimental sites. Local educational leaders and school heads attended relevant training on the idea of Child Friendly School and school development project (CFS and SDP) hosted by the UNICEF and was willing to work for that experiment. The framework of CFS and SDP consists of mainly the following aspects:

- a. psychologically: take pupil as a center of education
- b. legally: pupil has the right to be respected.
- c. Physiologically: safety and health are the guarantee of effective learning.
- d. Social psychologically: the family, community & schools can all be considered as learning places.
- e. Socially: one should learn life skill besides book knowledge.
- f. School: the establishment of CFS and SDP focus on the process, without an end.

The final target of CFS and SDP is to make our children to be happy, healthy, in good condition, rich in knowledge and suitable to the society. With above idea in mind, guided and assisted by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education of China, the experimental schools had made great effort to try to establish an idealized CFS and SDP within this framework. It is not exaggerate to say that eminent achievement was achieved through 3 years teacher training activity. Some change is taking place in the following respects:

- a. School leaders began to realize what is an excellent school model and began to improve something practical within their schools. For example, some headmasters drilled wells for pupils at school after received CFS and SDP training. Before that, these schools could not provide clean water for their pupils. Some schools even made loans to sank a well. Headmasters also paid attention to children's learning environment and made their schools become a garden like and could provide sanitary water. Although these schools are located in some poor areas, without many computers, equipment or books and so on, they are still trying hard to get them.

- b. All for children, for children's all and for all children' became a popular slogan in experimental schools. As all we know that the focal point of CFS and SDP is to take children as center , schools and teachers shall serve for them. This is also a fundamental change for our experimental schools. Through investigation we know that many teachers are changing from the old idea between teacher and pupil. Some teachers began to make friends with children. They won't play 'God Father' any more.
- c. Teaching method and content began to change. Some teachers gave up their old way of teaching. They began to use the way of group work to guide children to learn actively on their own. Some courses make children to learn some practical life skill. Some children felt respected and could participate in their classroom activities confidently.
- d. Some schools began to pay attention to children's psychological problem and health. They installed a secret letter box on the wall of school and let teachers know some pupil's psychological barrier and help these pupils in time.

1.4. General information about our survey on the CRC in UNICEF's project schools in Inner Mongolia .

After the international seminars at Lund University in Sweden, we continued our effort on the experiment and went to the experimental schools and made a survey according what we had learned in Sweden. The questions in the survey paper are:

1. Participants' nationality and profession
2. Participants' knowledge about the CRC.
3. Participant's knowledge about Chinese referent law on children's protection.
4. Do you think a misbehaved child should receive the corporal punishment?
5. List out some main respect which need schools to make improvement.
6. An idealized child in your heart?

7. An idealized teacher in your heart?
8. Your preferred teaching method which is suited to a child's development?
9. How do you think of a child's psychological health?
10. Should parents often participate in school's activity?
11. How do you satisfied with children's achievement?
12. Participant's local economic background?

The questionnaire was sent out to nearly 300 local community members who are from different professions including teachers, headmasters, parents out of all walks of life and some children. The answers to the questions are also quite different. There is not any one clean cut answer. It is both interesting and surprising for that.

1.5. Some Survey Results

It is clear that local members are positive and interested in this activity, although some of them feel shy to speak in the public. We could get some answers by reading these papers.

- a. About 30 percent people know something about the Convention on the Right of Child, 70 percent people know little about it.
- b. 80 percent people know that China do has some law or regulations on the protection of Child right. 20 percent people know nothing about it.
- c. In respect with the corporal punishment, more than 80percent people say 'no' than say 'yes'. There are still some people saying yes and some people don't know how to say.
- d. As for the school improvement, people's suggestion relates to many ways, like school running condition(45.5%), school environment(12.1%), children's learning environment(8.8%), teacher's teaching method(22%), enhancing teacher's training(14.5%), regulation construction(13.7), sanitary and health condition(8.2%) and open and fairly to both teachers and children (7.6%)and so on..
- e. Most people consider child's psychological health is very important, taking nearly 85 percent. Most

people think that parents should participate in school's activities, taking nearly 74 percent. More than half of participants are not satisfied with children's achievement in Guangxi. Most participants are satisfied with children's achievement in Inner Mongolia. This is a very strange phenomenon

- f. Through their answer, we see that almost all people live in a poor, very poor or relative poor condition. In some village schools, teachers could only get two pieces of chalk from head teachers each week. Not mention abundant material or teaching equipment.

1.6. Some Conclusions and problems out of Experiment and Survey

Although experiment had been carried out for over two years, due to the limited participation by all community members and all school teachers and pupils, the achievement of experiment is also with limitations. First of all, school leaders and teachers further renewed their educational ideology and began to realize that education should face to all children and take children as the center of learning. The relationship between teachers and children became friendly. Secondly, school's sanitary and running condition got improved since school leaders realized the importance of children's security and health. A small part of teachers began to use new teaching methodology rather than use the traditional way of teacher's independent instruction and pupils only listening in rows. Some parents began to realize the importance of participating in school's affair. It is obvious that the experiment still has a long way to go if one wants to fully implement child rights at school level.

2. THE MOTIVATIONS, AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CASE STUDY

Education is a main channel for realizing child's rights fully and child's best interest. This has been recognized internationally. The fundamental task of education is to improve teaching quality and student's achievement. However, the key link for improving teaching quality is in the classroom teaching. According to the present situation of Child Friendly School Experiment, regarding school teacher's teaching behavior in the classrooms, it is quite necessary to adopt rights based approach to education fully in Child Friendly Schools and to support innovations in the classroom by letting school teachers know what the rights based approach to education exactly is. Our focus of case study for this time will be laid mainly on the improvement of teacher's class teaching, which is a core part of education and the hardest part as well. We call it "The Diamond Project".

2.1. The Aims of the Case Study on the Diamond Project

Through this case study project, we are to fully renew experimental school teacher's ideology in education, to establish an effective learning environment for children by introducing participatory way of learning in the classrooms and school management.

2.2. Objectives

— To make every headmaster and teachers in the experimental schools realize the importance of the rights based approach to education. Based on this, we are to organize teachers to study and realize the indivisible relationship between the rights based approach to education and the new national curriculum reform.

— To help teachers to identify what is participatory way of learning and the way of organizing children centered, activity based participatory classes. And teachers within schools could and would like to use these methods in their own classrooms teaching, at least in experimental way. To support in making school teachers being gender sensitive and inclusive in the class.

-- To draw up a new teaching assessment proposal under the new national curriculum framework and to regulate schools class teaching.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIAMOND PROJECT

3.1. The general introduction on the implementation of the case study

Roughly speaking, our case study were carried out mainly at two Child Friendly Schools in Kulun County in Inner Mongolia, China in two phases, which focused on creating participatory and activity based classes for improving teaching quality and helping schools to be closer to a child friendly environment. The first phase, preparation, during which we made some survey on CRC and some reflections on our teacher's teaching behavior connected them with the content learnt in Sweden and draw up a working plan. The second phase, implementation, we fully implemented our case study plan after it was consulted with our mentors and got ratified.

3.2. Methods implemented

- 1) Learning from the rights based approach to education, we came to the experimental schools to have seminars together to re-consider and assess their present teacher's class teaching by way of survey and observations. We introduced the idea and the way of participatory learning to set up new teaching ideology among teachers by the way of participatory training and "learning by doing" participated by teachers, parents and pupils.
- 2) The content of national curriculum reform in basic education was implement in an allround way including teaching content, textbooks and method by holding school based seminars and setting up teacher's self learning and help system by sending out <Teacher's Self Development Manual> to every teachers in every experimental schools which are provided by the UNICEF.
- 3) Some model classes were set up to initiate innovative way of teaching among school classes, and fully set up students centered classroom. The teachers were helped to make pupils to become active learners in the classrooms and to participate in class activities actively by creating class activities. To help teachers to be able to master the method of inclusive class teaching and give help to those

handicapped children. Teachers also began to learn to master the knowledge of gender sensitiveness and give certain help to some girl students in the classroom with their learning. This would never happen before.

- 4) Pay attention to some necessary statistics and data collections for feedback.

3.3. Main Activities Launched

- 1) The school based teacher training seminars were hosted respectively in last November to help teachers to learn to handle participatory classes which was also a necessary entrance for them to make curriculum and textbook reforms under the state curriculum reform framework. After the seminars, over 80 % of the teachers were able to operate student centered and activities based classes.
- 2) Through receiving UNICEF assistance, experimental schools improved their running condition by getting funds, equipment and teaching aids assistance. They are something necessary for meeting the basic needs for teaching and class reform in these schools.
- 3) The CRC Workshop within schools joined by nearly 400 local community leaders, parents, teachers and children and chaired by relevant education and law experts were held in last December. This made most people in the community realize the importance of implementing the CRC for children's best interest and self development through participating training activities. It has been very helpful to establish a strong background for creating a child participating learning environment.
- 4) Workshop on teaching aids usage and opening up for case study school's backbone teachers was held in this May. They would go back to train their colleagues to use the teaching aids assisted by UNICEF.
- 5) Learning from the rights based approach, The experimental schools began to realize the values of the participatory way learning and to adjust the standards of class teaching . Now the new teaching assessment proposal is under way.

3.4. Reference Material

The CRC Manual, Material on the Rights-based Approach to education, The New Curriculum Reform Materials, Material on Child Friendly School. And other relevant teacher training materials.

4. THE ACHIEVEMENTS

Through carrying out Diamond Project, which is a pilot project, we had spread the idea for respecting the CRC. For the first time, those villagers living on desert recognized the systematic network for child's protection internationally. The rights based approach to education provided local people and teachers with some basic way to participate in learning in the classroom fully and in schools management, making all teachers capable to operate activities in class which was absolutely different with their traditional way of doing. The school management gets improved through the implementation of the CRC within communities and schools.

4.1. Child Friendly School and the Rights Based Approach to Education Did Bring up a New Vision for Schools

No matter what themes of the seminars or workshops were, backed by the CRC, teachers and community members began to know the concept of right bearers as children and the best interest of child. Those vague idea in their minds in the past became clear now . The rights of participation and development became distinguished among communities and schools. The CRC workshops prepared a suitable environment for schools and teachers to move further on to improve their class teaching.

4.2. The Participatory Way of Learning Gave Teachers a Handle to Operate Activity Based Classes

Before the project, school teachers paid little attention to students group work, class activities or peer teaching. Neither did they use them. If someone used them, it was only a kind of accident. The traditional way of teaching still prevails. After the project training, most teachers began t to realize the significance of the change of teaching in the classroom. Some teachers began to adopt this method into their own teaching and had brought about much better reaction among students as well as their parents. Over 60% of classes became students centered. The teachers began to change their role in the classroom. The students became active. They like to speak and participate with the guidance of teachers. They

would never sit in rows upright and wait for teachers to call their names and say. For us something unusual happened in the classrooms of today. Through calculations, those classes that used new teaching method, their students' achievement improved eminently than before. Teachers and students relation got changed. They could sit together to discuss questions like old friends. And students got more confidence when they received respect from their teachers and became active in learning.

4.3 The National Curriculum Reform in Basic Education Would Greatly Enhance This Change

The national curriculum reform is now spreading gradually throughout the whole China. When we study it deeply, we could find that the curriculum integrated mostly the idea of participation into its framework. The traditional dominate way of teaching was deleted instead of way of students centered participatory teaching based on activities. The life skill and practical labor class were put into the whole curriculum system. This do helps our effort for class improvement. At present, most teachers are receiving new curriculum training.

4.4 . School Based Training is An Effective Method

We carried out most of our studies by taking schools as training bases. Experts and teachers out of higher learning institutions or urban cities were sent to the very schools and to give some logical work on advanced theories which would be very inspiring to teachers in remote areas. By carrying out this project, a system of self-learning was set up which means teachers could improve themselves on the post.

5. SOME REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE PLAN

5.1. Still a long way to create changes

Although the experiment is successful, owing to the deep rooted ideology in education and the real situation in China and the traditional way of doing, it still has a long way to go to make an overall change in class teaching. Especially for those teachers over 50 years old. Historically speaking, their intellectual ability lagged behind the young generations on the one hand. On the other hand, they learnt slow technically.

5.2. Need of time to create changes

The two schools just begin to adopt new curriculum and textbooks in the new term this year. It needs time to cause systematic changes. However, our case study will continue to explore on this issue.

5.3. Need of new teaching evaluation forms

It is quite necessary to draw up new teaching evaluation proposal which fits the need of participatory learning and teaching.

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