

“The collaborative teacher development on CRC”

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Batch 5

Summary of the project

The old saying, “Children are the future of the country” is very popular in China. All stakeholders of children in the country, from governmental officials to the local authorities and from teachers to parents, all emphasizes the importance of children’s education. The Chinese Government signed the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC) in 1990 and ratified it in 1992; since then, a series of reforms aiming to increase children’s participation and their active motivation in elementary school have taken place. Some of these changes have included, reforming the existent curriculum and free elementary education for rural children. However, many teachers, especially teachers from remote areas in China, are not familiar with the CRC and find themselves placed in a rather challenging situation. These teachers cannot protect the children’s rights because they are not aware of them; this is why we considered that the biggest part of the training given to teachers should focus on the development of the CRC’s rights and duties. Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, we selected “*The collaborative Teacher Development on CRC*” as the title of our team’s project. It focuses on the collaboration between headmasters, teachers, parents and students in a selected primary school. We hoped that through this collaboration we would be able to carry out the implementation of the CRC in the targeted school and we expected it to become a model school for other schools in and beyond the Kulun Banner region.

We selected Hongqi Primary School, Kulun Banner, Inner Mongolia, as our project school. The main activities of our project were:

- Structuring and planning of the “Collaborative Teacher Development Project on CRC” for teachers and headmasters
- Sharing ideas and knowledge about the CRC with the headmasters, the school’s secretary of CCP, the teachers and the students.
- Collecting information through questionnaires and interviews in order to identify teachers’ attitudes and awareness of the CRC.
- Designing of workshops and the training of teachers and headmasters on how to implement the CRC.
- Presenting several open classes for teachers on how to encourage the participation and cooperation of pupils
- Holding a seminar on how to implement the CRC in the school and to analyze the project’s activities.

After attending the two phases of the training programme, we have had the opportunity to acquire certain knowledge of the CRC; to change our old conception about children's rights and to know how to implement the CRC in our country. We certainly gained a lot more than what we expected from the training programme.

Impact on the personal and professional levels

The training programme brought considerable changes to our personal and professional lives. Before attending the training programme, due to the fact that we were all born in 1960's and received a traditional education; we thought that children should obey their parents blindly. We sometimes had experienced conflicts and quarrels with our own children, however, after our ideas about children had changed, we began to listen to their opinions and let them make decisions about their own affairs. The relationship with our children is now a friendly one.

The training programme has also influenced our professional work. Tao Li, as an official for UNICEF (China), is advancing the building of friendly-schools in the country. The ideas and knowledge gained from the training programme gave her an invaluable aid to use at her workplace. Likewise, Guangping Li, working as an educator in a university, transfers the ideas and knowledge learned about the CRC in the training programme to pre-service teachers and teachers as a natural part of his work. He has also implemented the teaching methods and the process from the training programme in his own teaching. Finally, Yinghui Li, as a senior high-school teacher who implements the CRC principles in his class, encourages his students to actively solve problems during his teaching; and as a result, the students have become more and more interested in his classes.

Impact on the organizational level

After we implemented our team's project, some changes were noticeable in the stakeholders from the pilot school. The pilot school is working now with the New Curriculum Reform, which promotes the shift from traditional teacher-centered instruction to student-centred instruction (SCI) and concentrates on cultivating the students' personalities and creativities. However, promoting students' participation is the bottleneck of the New Curriculum Reform due to the fact that most of the teachers and parents still have the misconception that students are poor in knowledge; that they cannot understand the content of the class and other activities by themselves and that obeying the teachers and their parents is the best choice. Through the carrying out of our project, teachers, students and parents have become aware of the importance of students' participation. Moreover, the teachers have grasped the way on how to promote students' participation;

encouraging them to solve problems about their education and other matters in a cooperative way.

When we were designing the project, we hoped for the project school to set an example for other schools at the implementation of the CRC. We achieved our goal when other headmasters in Kulun Banner paid a lot of attention to the activities carried out in Hongqi Primary School and visited us in order to learn how to develop their students' participation and creativities.

Impact on the country level

Having the advantage that two of our team members work at the national level, we use every opportunity that we have to transfer our knowledge of the CRC in a way that can affect society. Tao Li, working for UNICEF (China), sought the help from the Chinese Ministry of Education in order to carry out the friendly-school project, now similar projects have been set up throughout ten different provinces in China. The friendly-school project has brought a lot of change to the targeted schools.

Finally, we would like to thank Sida for giving us the opportunity to gain knowledge of the CRC and to be able to exchange it with participants from nine different countries. It was a very enriching experience to participate at the training programme in Lund University and carry out our project. We really appreciate those who helped us.