

“Improving Pupils Participation in Classroom Interaction in Selected Schools”

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Batch 1

Summary of the Final Project

The first Ethiopian team has been working in a project, which aimed at improving pupils’ participation mainly in their classroom interactions. Participation of children in school life, student councils, peer education/counselling and involvement of children in school disciplinary proceedings should be promoted as part of the process of learning and exercising rights. This is all closely related to article 29 (1a) of the CRC that states that the education of the child shall be directed to: “The development of the child’s personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.”

A close look into education and training policy clearly reveals that teachers should apply child-centred approaches. However, until now teaching has been mainly teacher-centred. The aim of our project was to create child-friendly classrooms and to enable children to actively participate in the learning process in the three target schools. To this end, training on the CRC, classroom management and child-centred approaches of teaching and learning was given to selected teachers in the target schools. In addition, follow up and support has been given to ensure that teachers exercise the know-how learnt in the training.

Impact of the personal and professional levels

Yeshihareg

The training produced powerful and positive effects on my personal and professional life. It enhanced my knowledge about child rights and I acquired the skills to promote and ensure child rights in the classroom and school environment. Though, I was already a teacher before the training I was not aware of the importance of integrating child rights issues and a right-based approach to education in primary education programs. It made me revisit ideas, concepts and activities that I transferred to trainees and enabled me to integrate child rights in the teacher-training program. In general, the training made my work as a trainer to be more effective.

When I was doing my project in the Ethiopian Tikdem primary school, I looked at the teaching/learning process and the school environment under the light of a child rights perspective. This made me realize the need to have an intervention, which I managed in my current organization. The training was also one of the criteria taken into consideration when I got promoted as a commissioner for the

rights of children and women in the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. The skills, the knowledge and the materials I received in the training programme made it easier for me to commence my work and carry out the responsibilities of my new position.

Getachew

The training goes along with one's profession and it helps to provide an individual with the necessary skills to perform well in his/her occupation. The advanced International training program on child rights, classroom and school management was beneficial to me because I work with primary schools. Specifically, it helped me to train primary school teachers on classroom management and the rights of children in the classroom. Above all, the training helped me to write my master's thesis that focused on classroom management in primary schools.

Tadele

The CRC trainings conducted at LUND and Morogoro have lifelong effects in shaping my thoughts and actions. The valuable knowledge and skills I acquired from these trainings enabled me to open my eyes and to be sensitized towards child rights in general, and a rights-based approach in the education of children in particular.

One of the ultimate aims of the trainings was to multiply the training to others so that they can also collaborate in raising awareness of others and improving child right practices in other countries. To this end, I delivered short training on CRC in the context of education to a group of School Development Agents (SDAs) while I was working in the project. The SDAs have working relations with a significant number of primary schools teachers and students. Likewise, they shared basic elements of the CRC with the teachers and students they are working with.

Impact on the organizational level

The impact of the training has been observed in the project primary schools, and our working organizations. Primary schools namely; Andnet, Chagni 02 and Ethiopia Tikdem were the targets of our project work. The implementation of the project was vividly observed in these schools. To site some: training on child-centre and active learning methodology as well as rights based approach to education was given for teachers and school heads. Important documents on the issues were distributed. Teachers were also empowered to create a motivating environment in the classroom by encouraging students to participate and using the existing resources effectively. Rules and regulations of the schools were shaped in order to protect and respect child rights. The capable teachers, classrooms and furniture are provided for the young children. On the part of teaching methodology, a child-centred methodology is predominantly practiced. The

impact of the training at organizational level has been also observed at the Awassa Teacher Training College, the Woreda Education Office, and World Learning.

At the Ethiopian Human rights Commission, as part of a strategy to promote and protect child rights, the first program of intervention was designed in 2006 with the aim of developing child friendly schools. The program was planned to start in 50 pilot primary schools selected from five regional states and to move up to the national level. After completion of these activities, the implementation of the program started in mid 2007. As part of the program a number of activities were performed including: assessment of the curriculum for primary education and its teaching/learning environment with respect to the integration of child rights and conducting workshops and training for curriculum specialists, education officers, teachers and students. One of the grounds considered when initiating the program was the experience that the commissioner had gained from the CRC training and from the year working in the implementation of the project. Furthermore, participants from the CRC training have taken the responsibility of implementing the program, for example in the southern region. In addition to this, one of the staff members of the commission received the CRC training to help him carry out the program effectively. Since the training was an important factor in the capacity building of people from this country, we will create a network at the national level and the change agents will be actively involved.

Impact on the country level

The training has also an impact on the country level. The knowledge and skills we gained, the project work, the improvement and effectiveness at organizational level all are an input for enhancing primary education particularly for rights based approach to education at the country level. It is difficult to see the individual impact of our project at the country level because the projects realized by participants from the following batches have contributed to its general effects. Networking is functioning well in Ethiopia and this has created the basis for the impact at the country level. One participant from the first batch and one from the second batch are the network's coordinators. After the training programme, both of them have been promoted to central positions, which make it easier to coordinate the network.

Promoting child-centred methodologies has become one of the areas of attention under the government's education program. This shows that our project work in the target schools is going to be sustainable. However, a lot has to be done to raise awareness on child rights, to inculcate deep conviction and to teach skills to teachers and school principals. These are necessary conditions that lead to the respect of child rights and bring active participation of children in the classroom and school life enabling them to realize their fullest potential. Creating a network among change agents to share their experiences and to design and implement

activities will also constitute an area of attention in the future.