

## **“Integrating and Implementing CRC Provisions”**

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Batch 6

### **Summary of the project**

The project has been designed to create a child friendly environment in ten schools. The focus of the project in such a broad area is that schools would carry out a self-assessment weighted against certain agreed up on parameters in order to identify aspects they need to improve to make themselves a more suitable place for students.

The major concern was to abolish all sorts of bullying and corporal punishment through the active participation of students. Focusing on giving full support for the creation of student bodies and creating an environment where children could take part in the decision making related to issues that concern them. Parents’ active involvement through PTAs has also been considered to play a pivotal role.

Adoption of active learning and strengthening pre and in service teacher training was taken as a means to bring a lasting effect beyond the project’s life span. Incorporating CRC issues in the training modules of the Teacher Training Institutions and textbooks in the primary schools has been considered the most important means to change the whole education system because of its impact on both the trainers and the future teachers who will soon be assigned in the schools. The overall aim of the project was to make child friendly schools with regards to improving physical, classroom and outside of the classroom situations.

### **Impact on the personal and professional levels**

I gained a lot from the training. I know the Ethiopian Constitution and I also know the training and education policies in the country. Both documents embrace international declarations and conventions. However, I never had an interest on articles related to the CRC even though I had been a teacher who still continues to work in the sector. The training was an eye opener for me. I have begun to read every material I come across if it is related to the CRC. I have started to evaluate plans and the progress reports I receive from those who report to me always with child rights in mind. It helped me a lot to lead my organization and colleagues in a way in which child rights are in the centre of our activities. Had I not been to the training, I would have talked about the issue but I do not think I would have been as eager as I am now.

### **Impact on the organizational level**

The training and the initial implementation of the project primarily impacted the piloted schools and Teacher Training Colleges. All piloted schools gave training for school communities after the TOT. Each of the schools revised its plan. They developed strategic and annual plans in light of the CRC that involved students, teachers and parents. A departure from the traditional way where teachers appointed students was the democratic election of class monitors. Every school established child rights protection and CRC implementation committees consisting of: parents, students and teachers. Separate latrines for girls have been constructed in some schools. The committees and the union of class monitors teach about child rights during the morning Flag Ceremony. Three Teacher Training Colleges in the region were also piloted, since then a fourth one has already started the program. They took experiences from Hawassa TT College and developed their modules.

Another place where the training and initial project leaves its footprints is the Bureau of Education in the South Ethiopian Peoples Regional State Government. The Education Bureau is responsible for all matters pertinent to education and training except University Education. It goes from kindergarten to college education (diploma level). Experts and Department Heads in the Bureau participated during the launching workshop and got an adequate level of awareness. Hence the Bureau developed a sense of ownership towards the project and it has shown its commitment by organizing a team of experts that monitors child right related activities focusing on the piloted schools. In addition to giving support to the piloted schools, experiences are being collected by the team of experts in order to scale up the project. There is a clear commitment and awareness to include child rights during the preparation of primary school textbooks. The Bureau also donated sports equipment to the schools.

### **Impact on the country level**

The training impacted the regional state government. The activities being done at the ten pilot schools have been monitored and reports have been produced. Progress reports of the piloted schools are made part of the regional state government's report to be discussed by the State Cabinet. Since Ethiopia is a Federation, the reports have been presented to the State Council of Peoples' Representatives (Parliament) and they received great attention. This is considered as one of the activities to be done as part of the School Improvement Program under EQIP, which aims to improve the quality of education.

Moreover, 133 Districts (Woredas) and 13 zones (Counties) discussed on the CRC pilot project implementation report during the midterm Education Sector Performance Evaluation workshop of South Ethiopian Peoples' Regional State

Government. Having seen what the pilot schools have been doing so far, districts and counties got interested and took assignments to make assessments to see how this could work in their respective operating areas. The districts and zones are discussing how to enhance child rights protection mechanisms. They already have started reporting on the issue among other performance reports. Inspired by the pilot project, the Regional State Mass Median Agency began broadcasting child rights issues.

The training programme impacted partners such as NGOs operating in the country. The Bureau designed a project and an agreement has been signed with ACTION AID Ethiopia (NGO) to support the piloted schools and to disseminate their experiences to other schools. The agreement includes material and training. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission also showed an interest to support the ten piloted schools and gave a collection of CRC related material. A one-day workshop was conducted and a Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan has been developed to further strengthen the schools.