

“CRC in Relation to the Competence Based Reform from 2001”

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Batch 7

Summary of the project

As ‘change agents’ in the educational system of our country, we managed to face different challenges after having benefited from the “Child Rights, Classroom and School Management” programme sponsored by the Swedish International Development Agency and conducted in cooperation with Lund University. We have been now successfully conducting our project work.

This paper presents a basic and brief summary of our project. In the educational system of our country, there are many obstacles with regards to the situation of students. In fact, they often feel stressed in an environment in which there is no child freedom and no appropriate learning methods. We believe that these obstacles are directly linked to the lack of implementation of the CRC.

We decided to make use of the competence-based teaching and learning process under the new reforms in 2001 in order to protect the children’s freedom and create a healthy learning environment for them. This project was conducted with regards to 6th and 10th grade students, their teachers, principals and also the school community in one of the schools in Kandy.

During the implementation of the project, several activities were organized, such as awareness programmes about the CRC, implementation workshops aiming at an effective learning environment, lessons about the competence-based approach, awareness programmes for the learning of education technology, and preparation of a play called “Our New Subject Teacher”. All these activities benefited children’s mental health. In addition, we prepared nutrition programmes in favour of their physical development. Having achieved our goals, we were empowered to carry out our work at the national level.

Challenges on the personal and professional levels

Looking back at our past, we realize that is quite significant, on September 16th 2007, we were at Sparta Hotel with the staff of Lund University and the other 27 participants from Asia and Africa.

This programme was the first international training for all three of us. Thanks to the friendly relationships developed among the participants our motivation became even stronger. Also, we gained knowledge about children’s rights, and developed our attitude and necessary skills to carry out of the project.

On the professional level, we worked in two colleges and one school not situated close to each other. During work, we faced some economic problems and difficulties related to time management. However, we always tried to conduct our work successfully.

Challenges on the organizational level

Many people argue that students should only gain theoretical knowledge, and not practice. The teachers, parents and other stakeholders think that their level of knowledge should be checked by examinations. Our main objective was to create an environment in which students can learn freely and joyfully in the classroom through the competence-based teaching and learning process introduced in the Sri Lankan educational system. It was very complex for the teachers, principals, and to accept the approach because they felt they were wasting time and not being able to cover the syllabus. However, we managed to introduce this method through some activities. In this context, students were able to obtain knowledge freely and happily. We have covered only a short distance of our long way but we are all satisfied with our achievements.

We always respect the different social, cultural and religious structures in our country. Sri Lankans are very natural and auspicious people. Many of them are Buddhists and their culture is always focused on religion. When it comes globalization, some of them are inclined to think traditionally. They think that students must respect their teachers and parents. There is a big gap between adults and children and some people are afraid that by protecting child rights, the status quo will be changed.

The project work in question is very familiar to our society. It has hardly affected anyone. The process was introduced by the government. It was a natural method. We are convinced that it will not break down the social, cultural and religious structures in our country.

A few decades ago, teaching was considered a noble profession; however this role started to gradually lose its prestige due to the appearance of certain social factors. Finally, we keep trying to secure children's rights in order to have a more prosperous future.