

VIETNAM

Giving Wings to Children's Dreams, Implementation of CRC in a Primary School

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1 Frame of reference

The Convention on the Rights of the Childs (CRC) of the United Nation has been passed by the UN on 20 November 1989 and become effective as from 2 September 1990. Vietnam is the second country in the world which has ratified and committed to the CRC. The implementation of the CRC has been institutionalised by law. The Law on Child Protection, Care and Education (LCPCE) has been ratified by the National Assembly on 12 August 1991. The Chairman of the State Council issued a decision on announcement on 16 August 1991 and the Government issued a decree on implementation on 14 November 1991.

Since the CRC and the LCPCE were implemented, our Government has taken a lot of Important initiatives to ensure that children can have a full access to a life of comfort, education, protection, healthcare and useful recreation as well. The government has also created a better ground for children to develop to their fullest and also have a brighter future.

However, in practice, not all children have been protected, cared, brought up nor educated as prescribed by the LCPCE. There are certain cases where the rights of children have been frequently violated, somewhere else children are still being abused, infringed upon their body and dignity and they have not been cared well enough to have their full physical strength nor developed intelligence. In addition, many children have not been aware of the CRC so far. They don't know how to use

their rights to protect themselves. Therefore, that is why our team has chosen this project, thank to which we hope, we can help and support more children by providing them more knowledge on the CRC and their rights as well.

Baseline

Chuong Duong Primary School which is located at Cau Kho Ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, has 891 students, comprising 25 classes (36 students/class on average) ranging from grade 1 to grade 5 with students aged from 6 to 12 years old. Most of students (96%) of the school reside in Cau Kho Ward. That is why they go to school on foot. The school has a managing board of two person (a headmaster and an assistant headmaster) and a staff of 45 persons (37 teachers and 8 employees).

Ho Chi Minh City where the school is located is the largest economic center of Vietnam, where District 1 the centre of Ho Chi Minh City. Cau Kho Ward is also known as a place where poor workers reside and earn their living by doing small businesses, producing homemade products, or even trading drugs. Due to low awareness of CRC and while struggling for living many parents have not taken proper interest in caring and educating their children. A number of students have to live with their grandparents or relatives as their parents have died for using drugs or been imprisoned for trading drugs. Many parents haven't got any knowledge of the CRC at all.

Moreover, every year, the school also undergoes some changes in its staff, expecting new teachers to arrive and others to leave. The 5th grade students will move up to secondary school, while 1st grade students will transfer in from preschool, as a result, students' parents are also subject to change accordingly. On one hand, a number of teachers did not pay much attention to applying the tools of CRC into their teaching methods and communication with students, the students, on the other hand, do not have a sufficient understanding on the CRC. Therefore, we are focusing on children' rights for protection and participation in CRC. Now, we are training all teachers and the school staff in this 'Change' project of our school and are meeting with students' parents. We intended to train all the students in school, in the first phase of the project, 63 students of grade 4 together with 2 teachers have been selected.

2. Purpose

We are going to gain knowledge and experiences for further implementation of CRC in our school and its neighbourhoods through this change pilot project on

how to protect and empower children – especially vulnerable children – through active participation by students, teachers, school staff and parents.

Intended Output/Outcome

Students will be aware of the CRC and become more confident, friendly and active in school.

Teachers, school staff and parents will have more knowledge and understanding of CRC and will apply CRC in their daily activities.

The school will build a safe and friendly environment without using punishment and use more positive educational methods.

Indicators

- Active learning and classroom management regarding CRC are seen by observing the students when they are talking to their teachers.
- Students are laughing in the classroom by watching.
- Students are using mail box in the classroom to tell and share their opinion with teachers on different educational issues by receiving their letters
- Students and teachers are talking with each other on the school work in the classroom by observation.
- Students come to school every day by observation.
- Students are sitting in working groups in classroom; by observation.
- Students give questions to teachers and headmaster in classroom and school; by interview.
- Teachers are playing with their students outside the classroom; by observing,
- Teacher and students are making class rules together in the classroom; by seeing.
- Teachers have changed their education methods to encourage students learning; by interview.
- Headmaster and teachers are using check lists to know about the students' situation in the school; by questionnaires.

3 Methodology

3.1. Training for trainers - Training on the CRC for teachers and staff

Time: August 2010;

Material and books we used:

Propagation of "Children's Rights" in Primary Schools (guiding material for teachers) by Radda Barnen; Will "Corporal Punishment on Children" be really necessary? – 'Save the children'; "The Convention on the Rights of the Child" of the National Political Publishing House; Application of "Child Rights" in schools – 'Save the children'.

Methods: Conversations, Presentations, Discussions with teachers

Contents 1:

Introduction of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Who are children?

Difference between the needs and the rights

Background of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child and the development of Child Rights.

Fundamental features reflecting the spirit of the Convention.

Introduction of the group 'Rights to protection'

Why do children need protecting – define circumstances where children need protecting.

Content of the Child Rights to Protection

Organizations, their obligations and responsibilities for the implementation of the Protection Rights

Introduction of group 'Child Rights to Participation'

Why do children need to participate in all matters – define the degrees of participation.

Content of the Child Rights to Participation.

Benefits and responsibilities of children in the implementation of 'Child Rights to Participation'.

Contents 2:

Current status of "Corporal punishment on children" in primary school.

A necessity of eliminating the corporal punishment on children and building a friendly learning environment for children.

Setting out a criterion of "Friendly learning environment"

Measures for creating a Friendly learning environment for children:

Further encouraging the participation of children: using mailboxes named 'What I want to say'; 'My opinions are more important'; building class rules and monitoring their implementation;

Innovation of teaching methods

Innovation of classroom management by applying positive education methods.

Content 3: Training on 'innovation of teaching methods'

Teachers to change their education method to further enhance students' learning.

Purpose:

To enhance the quality of education in school.

To create a friendly learning environment, and encourage students activities.

To promote the initiative and creativity of students.

Methods:

Organising workshops, trainings for teachers on active teaching methods.

Encouraging teachers and students to make teaching aids by themselves from easy-found material with teacher's guidance, and use them frequently.

Desks and chairs should be easily re-arranged in classroom, so students can actively participate in all kinds of learning activities.

Decorating classrooms with products made by students in order to inspire them.

3.2. Training on the CRC for parents

Time: September 2010

Documents and material:

Training materials on the Convention on the Rights of the Child of "Save the children"

Will "Corporal Punishment on Children" be really necessary? of Radda Barnen

Picture cards

Methods: presentations, conversation, discussions with parents

Content:

General Introductions of "the Convention on the Rights of the Child"

General Introduction of the basic spirit of the convention represented in 8 following sections: 4 groups of rights, 3 rules and one process.

Introduction of the provisions in 'Rights to Protection' and 'Rights to Participation' groups

The group of parents to discuss the rights to which their children are entitled presentation.

Feedback of the students' parents on orientation and ways toward the implementation of CRC in the future.

Meeting with Students' parents

Time: December, 2010

Content:

To further discuss with the students' parents on the contents of CRC.

To gather more information from students' parents on "how much the children have been aware of their rights and whether they have exercised them at home".

To further develop the ways of implementation of CRC in the future.

3.3. Training on the CRC for students

Time: August - September 2010 and onwards

Method: Discussions, works in a group, works in 'corners',

Documents and material we were using in the training:

Propagation of "the child rights" in primary school, Rädta Barnen.

Application of the child rights in schools, Save the children

Building a friendly learning environment for children, Save the Children.

Content 1:

Brief introduction on the Convention of the Rights of the Child:

Introduction of group 'Child Rights to Protection':

- Do children need protecting? Why?
- In your opinion, in what circumstances should children be protected?
- The contents of Child Rights to Protection
- Obligations and responsibilities of Individuals and organizations for implementing 'Child Rights to Protection'.

Introduction of group 'Child Rights to Participation':

- Do children need to participate in all matters? Why?
- To which degree do they need to participate?
- Contents of the 'Child Rights to Participation'
- What would you feel (to children) if you could participate in solving an issue in school?

Content 2:

(The following activities to be carried out to build a friendly learning environment)

Setting up a mailbox named "What I want to say" and activating activity 'My opinions are more important'

Purpose:

To encourage and create favorable conditions for children to speak up what they expect and do not expect; to tell their happiness and sadness; their desires for learning; as well as their family issues; or worries that they don't normally like to share with their teachers.

To help the adults (their grandparents, parents, teachers) and friends understand children's thinking so as to find a solution to assist them or help satisfy their needs.

Methods:

Placing a mailbox "What I want to say" in every classroom.

Encouraging children to write letters.

Teachers to check the mailbox weekly.

Discussing with the school headmaster about "the Dos. and the Don'ts." when receiving and processing the children's opinions about their teachers.

Organising and launching "My opinions are more important" activity

Teachers to pass on the students' opinions to persons involved

Recording the opinions (binding).

Students to participate in building rules and monitoring their implementation in class

Purpose:

To help children build a moral standard to be followed, depending on their awareness. By doing so, children will willingly comply.

Methods:

Using a questionnaire (see Appendix) to gather the students' opinions on 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' related to their learning activities, discipline, communication, behaviors, etc.

Through discussion, teachers and students to agree on 'dos' and 'don'ts'.

The class rules finalized by the students to be posted in a prominent place.

Students to actively participate in group activities

Purpose:

To help children work in groups with different friends; strengthen their self-confidence and skills in expressing their opinions in fronts of people.

Methods:

Teachers and students to discuss and set criteria for learning activities in groups
Teachers to divide students into groups and regularly form new groups for learning activities required.

Teachers to observe and be ready to help the less confident and rather passive students.

Teachers and students to organize entertainment functions outside the class

Purpose:

To create a friendly and joyful environment for students;

To help the students bring out their gifted abilities;

To promote entertainment activities for teachers and students to participate, playing together they will better understand each other.

Methods:

Teachers to learn and collect opinions of students about their needs for entertainment and discovering the surrounding world.

Teachers to discuss and agree with students on the forms of activities outside the class.

Teachers to discuss with the school headmaster on the issues arose.

The headmaster to organise and make out plans with the other teachers for implementation.

3.4. Organization the events

Organizing seminars to further improve the teaching quality of the teachers.

Time: course II in school year

Contents:

To give guidance to the students on how to cooperate with the other partners in order to improve their teamwork ability.

To integrate the environment education into teaching program for students in order to build in them a better survival skill, respect, and a positive and more practical attitude toward the environment protection.

Organizing various activities for the students

Educational activities:

Time: November, 2010

Content:

To organize different games based on the contents of subjects the students have learned such as science or mathematic in order to help students use the knowledge they learned in their daily life.

Book Festival:

Time: February, 2011

Content:

Students to read their favorite books and then, in a competition, they will tell the stories which they have read. Making them inspired, this function will encourage the students to read more books, and their love for books, therefore, will grow. Participation in such activities will help students create a reading skill, thank to which they are able to find reading a source of joy and useful entertainment for themselves.

Seminar on topic “My Dreams”

Time: March, 2011

Content:

The Students to discuss the following questions: What are your dreams? What have you done to make your dreams come true? How did the school assist you to make your dreams come true? In your opinion, in the future, what the school should do to help you make your dreams come true?

Entertainments, sports and art performance with students

For students, the school has organized:

Handball and Karatedo classes for the whole school year.

Visits to circus shows in the City Circus Theater in January, 2011.

Entertainment activities in Damsen Water Park in January, 2011.

Shows welcoming Lunar New Year Holidays in February, 2011.

Celebration of the Women’s Day, on 8th March, 2011.

3.5. Support from local authorities

When carrying out the project, we have also received valuable support and assistance from the local authorities. Being mutually interested in the implementation and the accomplishment of the project they have provided the following support:

- Establishing a good order around the school: They have cleared all food and drugs peddlers in the school’s surroundings.

- Coordinating with the school in persuading children to go to school regularly.
- Encouraging, showing interest in good education works of the school: The authorities representatives have always attended the school's activities such as the Opening/Closing of School Year ceremonies, the Teacher's Day celebration;
- Providing a better material supports for the school: They have provided a fund for the school repairs, and renewed desks and chairs in a number of classrooms (it is planned to renew all desks and chairs in the school in a longer term).

4. Results

Students have become more fearless and confident when asking questions, exchanging opinions or discussing an issue with their teachers and friends. The students laughed more in class and in other group activities of the school. They had a more optimistic and joyful life. Especially, students had their own dreams and believed their dreams would come true. This output/outcome has also inspired the teachers in their works and therefore, made the teaching/learning process more effective.

Students have used mailbox joyfully and enthusiastically. They spoke up what they thought and, therefore, a lot their problems could be resolved. Students have become more confident, helpful and more friendly to their friends and other people. Students have become more responsible for helping unfortunate students. Teachers understood their students more and realized that the use of mail box is a necessary tool for achieving a higher educational effect. Parents, when understand their children will adjust their education approach accordingly.

By observing and recording in the "attendance register" daily, we found that the students attended the classes regularly without being late. Most of students going to school were in a good mood. However, there are some students going to school in a bad mood due to their domestic issues particularly, those who do not live with their parents but their grandparents or neighbors, they have to work hard to help their family.

In the early time when group learning was first held in the class, many students were found unfamiliar and reluctant with new ways of sitting and learning, they looked timid in discussing or expressing their own opinions. But after a rather short time, students quickly became integrated and could adapt themselves to various types of learning. They knew their responsibility and the responsibility of each member in the group. Finally, they've become more active, more confident and eager to participate in all learning activities.

Teachers have used different and flexible methods and forms of active teaching such as group discussions, project-based teaching, English corner, individualized teaching approach etc. Teachers could also recognize those positive changes in the students attitudes , in their responsibilities and education effect as well. These have really inspired the teachers and motivated them to innovate teaching methods.

Parents also noticed positive changes in their children attitudes and mood toward their learning activities. However, some students were found quite slow in harmonizing with their friends. They still felt inferior, timid and were doubtful of their own value. To improve this situation, teachers must have an overall view of the class, take a prompt action to help them harmonise with others and to feel confident in communication.

Some students started to raise questions on “the Child’s Rights”, especially the rights to protection and participation to their teachers.

Teachers and students became more friendly and opened during break time. Teachers also realized that it is the time when students are willing to tell / share all their problems, that is the time teachers and their students can relax together. Besides, the other entertainment activities such as celebration of “Mid-autumn full moon festival’ have also been organised by the school. Thank to this activity, we found that the students became more joyful and more confident to participate in collective games.

In the coming time, we will organize more camping’s and picnics in order to provide students with more survival skills.

At the beginning of the new school year, teachers and students are to build the class rules. Doing so, the students will feel more responsible and willingly keep a good discipline in the class. Teachers will not need to reprimand and may avoid unexpected “incidents” in the class. The atmosphere in the class therefore will become more friendly, more open and joyful. The parents, in turns, will feel more secure when their children willingly follow the class rules.

Teachers actively renewed their teaching methods and flexibly used a new teaching techniques . After a period of time, teachers also noticed that when knowing their duties of study well, the students would study more actively and more creatively. New teaching methods also brought the teachers and students closer to each other; the students therefore would become more confident.

By conducting a questionnaire on “My school” after activities of the project for students, we have the following comments:

The behaviors of the teachers have changed positively: they have become more nice, more open and more close students. They knew how to listen to students opinions and share with them. They respected the students' hobbies and personalities. Together with students, they also participated in solving the problems that the students faced in their life. However, some teachers have not done enough to catch up with the others; they still feel shy or reluctant to correct their behaviors accordingly.

The *students* have studied in more friendly and open learning environment. The students looked more excited when their products have been showed in classroom.

The school has become more interested in providing information to the parents and calling for more participations in school activities.

5. Discussion

The *students* found the rights – in the discussions – more or less themselves.

The *parents and teachers* have given help to the students apply their rights.

The *teachers* have welcomed the education about CRC in school.

The relationship between parents and teachers have become more close and friendly.

6. Way Forward

6.1. Pending issues

Unfortunately, there are a number of students not going to school in their highest spirit, as they have to work to support their family for a living. A number of students still feel timid, unconfident in communication due to the domestic issues such as the divorce, separation, or even imprisonment of their parents etc.

Due to restriction on time provided for each class duration (just one hour as per regulation) and size of a classroom, the *teachers* were unable neither to bring out all their creative ideas nor to apply them for innovation of their teaching methods. Particularly, some teachers still do not know how to express their care, sympathy nor interest to students in the best way.

The degree of participation of *students' parents* was regarded to be low, as many of them did not regularly participate in school activities. A majority of students' parents have only received information from the school; they have never given a feedback or suggestion.

6.2. Way forward for the work on CRC in the school

We will continue CRC-training for all students in the school and we will improve the contact with all parents in the school. We will also go on training CRC and methods in education for all teachers. Furthermore we will have continued contacts with local authorities to make the school safe.

7. List of References

Save the Children', training material on "the Convention on the Rights of the Child", the National Political Publishing House, 1999

Rädda Barnen, Propagation of "Child Rights" in primary schools (selection of stories for students of primary school), the Ho Chi Minh City Education and Training Department, 1999

Rädda Barnen,"Corporal Punishment on Children" will this be really necessary? The National Political Publishing House, 2004

Rädda Barnen, propagation of"Child Rights" in schools (teaching material for teachers), the Ho Chi Minh City Education and Training Department, 1999

Save the Children, application of"Child Rights" in schools, the National Political Publishing House, 2004

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Political Publishing House, 1997

Save the Children, building a friendly learning environment for children, Hanoi 2008

Save the Children, Child Rights, the Gioi Publishing House, Hanoi, 2003

The picture cards

Appendix

Questionnaire - My school

Date____ month____ year____

- School is the place for children to study. Will they feel comfortable, safe and will further progress their study if the school welcomes them and is willing to accept them?
- How do you know that your school is good for children? You can show that you are caring for their study, health and safety
- Begin with current condition at your school. Look at the questionnaire and to mark with a tick (✓) into (Yes) if the condition is met, mark with a tick (✓) into (No) if the condition needs to be improved.
- Look at the questionnaire again, plan and schedule time to implement or improve those questions with a tick mark (No).
- Review the questionnaire again after a month. Did your school create any positive changes?
- Review this questionnaire as often as needed and record date as you implemented. By doing this, you will see some improvement on your progress.

1. Do teachers often smile and talk with a friendly voice to the children?

Yes No

2. Do teachers actively listen to the children?

Yes No

3. Do teachers lower themselves down to their eye level when talking with children?

Yes No

4. Do teachers call the children by their names?

Yes No

5. Do teachers help the children resolve their problems and concerns with a positive manner?

Yes No

6. Do teachers treat them fairly, equally and respectfully?

Yes No

7. Do students respect each other?

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| | Yes | No |
| 8. | Do students respect teachers? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 9. | Is school tidy that the children access media (e.g. books, study materials...) and school supplies easily? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 10. | Are Children's works displaced as their eye level? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 11. | Do classrooms and surround areas safe and clean? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 12. | Does daily class schedule include activities for small group? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 13. | Are students spending more time doing activities than sitting and waiting or listening for lecture? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 14. | Can students choose difference activities for the daily class schedule? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 15. | Do teachers interested in what the children do and needs for their study? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 16. | Do teachers spend time in a small group to interact and communicate and with them? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 17. | Do teachers improve their teaching techniques and activities by using proper resources? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 18. | Do students within and without area have the same opportunity as each other? | |
| | Yes | No |
| 19. | Does student have their own locker to keep their personal belonging? | |
| | Yes | No |

