GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION  
Activity 2: “Critical Analysis” of policies for inclusive education.

Contribution by Italian Development Cooperation  
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ACTIVITY 2: “CRITICAL ANALYSIS” OF POLICIES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.

For this activity we propose to follow the draft scheme presented below:

Examples of the Italian Development Cooperation experience in the field of inclusive education in different countries

INTRODUCTION

The commitment of the Italian Development Cooperation to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities is based on Italy’s proven experience in this sector. Italy is considered one of the most advanced countries in the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, both for its legislative framework and for its national policy initiatives concerning disability issues.

On the basis of its experience, Italy was able to contribute concretely and significantly to the drafting of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006. Italy highlighted some priority areas such as the role of international cooperation, the importance of adopting specific measures for the needs of women and children with disabilities, inclusive education and the key role of family for people with disabilities.

Italy signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol (Act March 3, 2009, n. 18). In compliance with article 32 of the UN
Convention, the Italian Development Cooperation strengthens its role as a key player in the promotion of the rights persons with disabilities.

To fulfill the mandate entrusted by the UN Convention, the Italian Cooperation collected the initiatives funded from 2000 to 2008 and published the results in the “Report of the Italian Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”.

BEST PRACTICES

Based on the experience of the Italian Cooperation, the research on "best practices" intends to collect, describe and disseminate projects and initiatives in order to make material available to a wider public and not only to direct beneficiaries.

We propose some examples of best practices (projects on disability issue) following the draft scheme presented below:

1. Positive features and a new problem-solving approach;

2. Innovation and acquisition of technical knowhow, skills and expertise;

3. Possibility to reproduce the project in different contexts (even on a voluntary basis);

4. Long-term sustainability of the project.

In the following section an overview will be given on Italy's best practices in the field of disability issues. In particular we will present two case studies of projects carried out by the Italian Development Cooperation:

- KOSOVO - Project of Technical Assistance for the National Disability Action Plan in the Republic of Kosovo
- SALVADOR - Support to the promotion and development of inclusive schools in El Salvador
- VIETNAM – Community Based Rehabilitation Programme
KOSOVO

Project title: Project of Technical Assistance for the National Disability Action Plan
Financed by the Italian Development Cooperation - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Implementing agency: General Directorate for Development Cooperation (DGCS)

1. Positive features and a new problem-solving approach

The Kosovo Disability Action Plan (DAP) is the result of a complex participatory approach involving all relevant stakeholders. Representatives of national institutions, at central and local level, Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) and key international organizations active in Kosovo participated actively to the consultation phase in compliance with the principles set out by the CRPD and best international practices (Council of Europe COE).

For the first time, in the framework of a project funded by the Italian Development Cooperation the produced documentation was made available in all accessible formats, including a Braille publication, a DVD in sign language and an audio CD.

The Office of the Prime Minister for Good Governance and Human Rights of Kosovo has been assigned the task to monitor the Plan’s implementation by providing technical assistance, information and recommendations to all relevant Ministries and local administrations and to guarantee the participation of DPOs and other stakeholders.

2. Innovation and acquisition of technical knowhow, skills and expertise

Key objective of the National Disability Action Plan is to serve as a practical tool for the development and implementation of viable sector strategies in order to ensure full participation of persons with disabilities and to mainstream disability in all policy areas of the Government of Kosovo.

The Action Plan acknowledges the basic principle that society has a duty towards all its citizens, it has to ensure that the effects of disability are minimized through actively supporting healthy lifestyles, safer environments, adequate health care, rehabilitation and supportive communities.

All stakeholders participated actively in all areas of the DAP, including the identification of priorities, actions, deadlines, budget constraints, performance indicators and accountability.

The Kosovo Disability Action Plan 2009-2011 aims to translate in practice the content of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, relevant international treaties and recommendations in the field of human rights, non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and full participation of persons with disabilities.

3. Possibility to reproduce the project in different contexts (even on a voluntary basis)

As part of the project a Pilot municipality was identified in order to create a series of activities to be subsequently reproduced in other municipalities. The chosen Pilot Municipality was Gjilan/ Gnjilane, where a Municipal Plan on Disability was set up. The
The principle of “accessibility for all” is considered as fundamental component of the plan to be promoted as reference point for all other Municipalities. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Education Directorate of Gjilan, School directors and teachers an educational development plan was created to serve as model for all the activities done in Gjilan. The activities are the following:

- Create Accessible schools:
  In partnership with the local authority and the Education Directorate of Gjilan, the Italian Development Cooperation built and renovated accessible schools and educational structures: 2 nursery schools, 2 primary schools, 1 high school, 1 secondary school and 1 music school.

- Buy a Minibus to carry children with disabilities
  A minibus was bought, as transport problems are one of the principal limits to school attendance of children with disabilities in Gjilan.

- Provide training on Tutoring and Inclusion for School Directors, teachers and students
  The strategy of the Ministry of Education in Kosovo intends to progressively eliminate parallel classes for students with disabilities and to include them in regular classes. In order to achieve this goal, teachers of parallel classes will be employed as ‘itinerant teachers’ to support regular classes’ teachers to meet the needs of children with disabilities. The training provided to school staff and students is useful to help the process to succeed.

- Awareness-raising campaign on disability for students.

- Adoption of a Model for Multidisciplinary Evaluation of child with disabilities.

- Buy technical tools to help children with disabilities.

- Professional training for a future integration in the job market
  The project grants five scholarships to enable five persons with disability to have a three month training experience on the basis of UNDP programs.

- Free-time inclusion activity - sports and cultural activities

- Improve accessibility of cultural structures, to ensure fruity in leisure time

- Improve accessibility to social and health services for persons with disabilities.

4. Long-term sustainability of the project

The Disability Action Plan 2009-2011 aims to providing a framework that is both flexible and adaptable in order to meet country-specific conditions. The plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for policy makers and DPOs to enable them to design, implement, monitor and evaluate appropriate plans, programs and innovative strategies which will be periodically adjusted and refocused.

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN - INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Political and legislative background

Article nr. 1 of the Kosovo Anti-Discrimination Law 2004/3 establishes that “the purpose of this Law is to prevent and combat discrimination, promote effective equality and put into effect the principle of equal treatment of the citizens of the Republic of Kosovo under the rule of Law”. In the field of education, it aims at introducing a model of accessible
education to all. In line with this objective, the Law on pre-school and mandatory primary and secondary education (Law nr. 02/L-52) clearly asserts the right of all children to participate in the education, social, recreational and professional activities of the community they live in.

It is necessary to highlight another aspect of the current education system in Kosovo: in the document “Strategy and Action Plan on Human Rights of the Republic of Kosovo 2009-2011” published in January 2009 by the Office of Good Governance, it is stated that the existence of two separate education systems, one under the administration and financing of the Government of Kosovo and a parallel Serbian system\(^1\) represents a major challenge for the education system in Kosovo, from the point of view of human rights. As for data, only a collection of administrative data on education which is not subject to statistical preparation\(^2\) is available. Seven special schools are present in different areas of the Republic of Kosovo along with regular schools with attached special classes for pupils with special needs. The special classes should not be confused with “parallel” classes which are simply defined as several sections in the same class. There are also “combined classes” defined as groups of children attending different classes from grade 1 to 9, but no precise number is available. From 2002/2003, secondary schools were organized into lower-level general education for students aged 15-19 and upper-level education for students aged 19-24 (level 1). Few students with disabilities attend full-time school ordinarily, but the precise number is still unknown.

Objectives and activities:
Thanks to the work of the “Education” working group, five main objectives have been identified for promoting real reform in the inclusive education system of Kosovo in accordance with Article 24 of the “UN Convention”. The cooperation strategy was agreed upon when the Thematic Working Group (TWG) was set up. In January 2009, after consultations at municipal level, the areas of action were extended by the TWG from 3 to 5 of the final draft. In accordance to what was established before, the TWG recognized other two relevant objectives and actions, namely objectives 3 and 5 that were added to the plan. Firstly, in all objectives priority was given to preschool education in order to improve early education for children with disabilities. Secondly, municipalities play a key role in planning inclusive projects in their communities, not merely to improve school access, but also to create network of people working at institutional, educational and social level.

Main objectives and improvements regarding education
After the overview on the main activities and objectives in the development of an inclusive education system in Kosovo, let us consider the results achieved so far in the process of school integration of children with special needs that are relevant to define the project as a best practice.


\(^2\) “Kosovo Education Statistics 2007/2008” edited by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Education Management Information System, Pristina, February 2008. “Kosovo Education Statistics”, is an annual publication issued by the unit of EMIS/MEST that presents briefly statistical data at the school, municipal, regional level. “All the data and indicators issued in this publication are comparable with the data and indicators of other countries according to the International Standards for Classification of Education (ISCED-97)24, approved by comprehensive conference of UNESCO.
As stated in the “First Report on the Implementation of the National Disability Action Plan in the Republic of Kosovo 2009-2010”\textsuperscript{3}, significant improvements have been made in the integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools, and the possibilities of children and students with disabilities to attend school have increased. It was estimated that in the school year 2009/2010 the number of children with special educational needs that attended school increased by 30%, from 909 to 1179 children. Adequate facilities, technical skills, capacity building and policy implementation are significant components that contributed to develop a more accessible education system suitable to cater for the needs of children with disabilities. Moreover, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in March 2010 issued a the “Strategic Plan for the organization of inclusive education for children with special educational needs in pre-university education in Kosovo 2010-2015”, which is consistent with the objectives of the education sector included in the NDAP.

**Objective 1: Creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in the education system.**

The ongoing transformation of attached classes and special schools into Resource Centres is a significant result achieved in the commitment to provide quality services. So far 103 children received support from resource centres and five of these centres are now well functioning and adequate for persons with disabilities. Moreover, physical barriers in existing educational facilities were removed in 75% of Kosovo’s schools. Thanks to the partnership of the Italian Development Cooperation and the OGG/OPM architectural barriers were removed in six schools in Gjilan.

To better cater for the needs of children with disabilities living in disadvantaged areas eight itinerant teachers were employed and their number is expected to increase in coming years. 101 students are currently benefiting from the service of itinerant teachers. Finally an effective monitoring activity was set up to check the number of students that can benefit from services and itinerant teachers.

**Objective 2: Implementation of legislation in the field of education for persons with disabilities.**

The process of legislative integration is advancing, a new law for comprehensive education is going to be approved by the Parliament and guidelines for comprehensive education are being reviewed by the MEST. Furthermore, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with disabilities was developed by the MEST and a special project on the application of sign language in the education system will be implemented in 2011.

**Objective 3: Ensuring a comprehensive education system in preschool institutions.**

A major achievement was the development of a handbook and a guide for pre-school education of children. In addition, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with disabilities was piloted in 70 attached classes, 5 resource centres, 10 regular schools and 18

preschool institutions. It was reported that the current number of children with disabilities attending preschool institutions amount to 60 (data are not categorized by gender).

Objective 4: Professional development programs on inclusive education for teachers and people working in the education system.
Training programs for teachers at all levels of education, assistants, volunteers, parents and staff of NGOs for the education of children with disabilities were successfully implemented. The collection of detailed information about provided training courses is an important tool to repeat them in future.

Objective 5: Improving competencies on disability at municipal level.
Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo are fundamental institutional actors in the implementation of the National Action Plan on Disability. The ongoing decentralization process, which is based on the principles of susidiarity, has produced the transfer of several competencies in high-impact areas for the lives of persons with disabilities. The publication and distribution of 85 copies of a guide on comprehensive education is considered a significant result. The duties and responsibilities of a comprehensive education officer to be employed in each municipality were defined. Moreover, a workshop was held for municipal officials on the duties and competences of the municipality in the area of inclusive education.

These improvements, may be represented also with some additional information from other research reports. For example:
The UNICEF 2009 research "Justice Denied" indicates 7 special schools, 67 classes attached, 1,081 children with special needs (511 in special schools, 570 classrooms attached). The reports estimate that only 10% of children with special needs attend school (the total of approx. 10,500 children with special needs in school-age). In terms of financing, in 2007 only 1.2% of the total budget on education (€ 1,320,809 out of € 110,506,686) was allocated to address the needs of special education. In 2008 the budget for special needs education in total education budget is less than 2%, totaling (€ 1,379,120).

The strategic plan of MEST comprehensive education (2010-2015) includes:
-Budget allocation for comprehensive education for 2011-2015
-In 2009, 103 children benefited of direct services from the Resource Center
-In 2009-2010 children with special educational needs attending school have increased by 30%, from 909 in 1179
-8 comprehensive schools are operational in: Gjakova (Mustafa Bakija), Skenderaj (Ahmet Dalia), Pristina (Ismajl Qemajli, Naim Frasheri), Rahovec (Isa Boletini), Peja (Vaso P. Shkodrani), Gjilan (Thimi Mitko, Rexhep Elmazi).

General problems related to comprehensive education are architectural and communication barriers, lack of competences of regular teachers, lack of specialized teachers, lack of schools, resulting in more shifts, lack of transport, low capacity to assess learning needs of students with disabilities, etc.
EL SALVADOR

Project title: Support to the promotion and development of inclusive schools in El Salvador
Financed by the Italian Development Cooperation - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Implementing agency: University of Bologna

Introduction
The project "Support to the promotion and development of inclusive schools in El Salvador", financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, started in October 2009. The implementing agency is the Faculty of Education (University of Bologna) in collaboration with EducAid (non-profit association working in the field of education) and in partnership with MINED (Ministerio de Educación de El Salvador). The first phase of the pilot project aimed to create an experimental education system “Realización de un complejo de tipo experimental” in the Department of Sansonate. The project has proposed a model of inclusive schools to help combat social exclusion and to promote appreciation of diversity and good practices through the empowerment of local education institutions. The school is a meeting place for different cultures and diversities and can be considered a starting point to guarantee the full participation of children at risk of social exclusion to the economic, social, cultural and political life of their community. To reach this goal, the project provided training (workshops, meetings and technical seminars) for government officials and teachers of primary schools to develop a model of inclusive schools in El Salvador in partnership with the local Ministry of Education. An on-line platform for distance education was adopted to guarantee a constant connection between the authorities of Italy and El Salvador. In the strategic plan of the national education policy a national centre was set up to identify and disseminate good practices of inclusion at local level.

General objectives
- To start a project on inclusive education for school and education system in El Salvador
- To contribute to the professional training of teachers on the subjects of general and inclusive education
- To raise the awareness of institutions and public opinion of El Salvador on the importance of school inclusion by emphasizing the social function of the school;
- To promote the access of children with disabilities to basic education services.

Specific objective
- To contribute to a significant and long-lasting increase in educational offer, both in quantitative and qualitative terms for disadvantaged people and, in particular, for children with disabilities

1. Positive features and a new problem-solving approach
- The promotion of a systemic approach of training initiatives involving the main education stakeholders: teachers and representatives of ministries that are responsible for the development and implementation of national education policies;
- Method used: research and action. The method includes moments of training, technical assistance and monitoring activity by the University of Bologna aiming at promoting an active approach to education that takes into account the specific context of each school.
- The definition and testing of a training course on inclusive education for special educational needs teachers, for teachers of regular classes and special schools to facilitate the process of inclusion of children with disabilities from special to ordinary schools.
- Training designed to consider diversity not as a gap to be filled but as a resource in the group-class relationship and at school as an inclusive community.
- Training and action/ research activities have been carried out by bringing together different types of teachers (regular classroom teachers, teachers in special schools, special educational needs teachers) and schools, according to the geographical area, in order to develop cross-cutting skills to teach children with different educational needs and socio-cultural backgrounds.
- The division into groups on a geographical basis enabled professionals working in the same area to meet, exchange their experiences and implement joint initiatives to work in network.
- The development of a distance learning project between the University of Bologna and Mined through the use of a web platform.
- Al fine di formare tutti gli insegnanti anche attraverso l’e-learning, sono stati individuati dei tutors in ogni centro di sviluppo professionale degli insegnanti (centro de desarrollo profesional docente).
- Tutors were identified in each centre of professional training in order to train all teachers through e-learning.

2. Innovation and acquisition of technical knowhow, skills and expertise

- The objectives of the project are consistent with the main principles of Mined, contained in the Social Education Plan 2009-2014 "Vamos a la escuela".
- The use of innovative teaching methods based on active pedagogy and on the promotion of information technology for online training.
- The transfer of children with disabilities from support to regular classes with the help of special educational needs teachers who worked in regular schools to offer their expertise to children with special educational needs.
- Overcoming of gender division in some schools to allow a broader sharing among children.
- Training for the development of skills for the coordination of school’s social dimension.
- Multidisciplinary training of teachers in pilot schools by teachers of the University of Bologna (cultural anthropology, didactics and pedagogy).
- Development of a university curriculum to add the teaching of the pedagogy of inclusion in the initial training of professors.
- Creazione di un Osservatorio Nazionale per la costituzione di una banca dati delle esperienze di inclusione.
- The creation of a National Centre for the setup of a database of inclusion experiences.
3. Possibility to reproduce the project in different contexts (even on a voluntary basis)

- The pilot schools selected all over the country promoted the spreading of inclusive education practices through the implementation of local initiatives and the involvement of communities
- The project took into account the changes at ministerial level occurred during the project implementation and therefore the number and type of pilot schools changed according to the priorities outlined at socio-political level
- The development and strengthening of the regional network: the promotion of inclusive education through the development of partnerships between schools and communities with the participation of local institutions and other actors.
- The importance of the "educational community" where teachers, students and families are strongly interconnected
- The use of distance learning was launched as a tool for the future to generate a multiplier effect for the training of teachers not directly involved in the process

4. Long-term sustainability of the project

- The project is in line with the 2021 presidential plans and Todos Iguales that the government of the El Salvador developed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals identified by the international community during the Global Forum in Dakar in 2000
- The socio-educational proposal of the inclusive school is a key part of the government plan and of the full-time inclusive school on which the Salvadorans are investing national and international resources to bring about a deep socio-cultural innovation
- The development of territorial networks between schools, families, associations, municipalities, religious communities, business and the agricultural sector generates a multiplier effect of the inclusive education approach that goes beyond the school and the timing of the project
- The National Centre for Inclusive Education is and will be an essential tool for the implementation of the policies of the Salvadoran government in the field. The Centre aims to generate knowledge and participation opportunities for the improvement of full-time inclusive education practices to strengthen social relationships at local level. In particular, the Centre fulfils the following tasks: 1) to identify and disseminate experiences of full-time inclusive educational practices; 2) to provide objective information to guide educational policies; 3) to promote participation opportunities to facilitate the active role of different actors on the implementation of educational policies
- The promotion of good practices already implemented at local level in order to avoid exporting models and educational practices that are not in line with the local socio-cultural background
- Social inclusion involves the entire community, promotes attitudes and behaviors to enhance the skills and the abilities of each person by overcoming the concept of assistance, which has often characterized the interventions to support people with disabilities
VIETNAM

Project title: Community Based Rehabilitation Programme
Financed by the Italian Development Cooperation - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Implementing agency: NGO AIFO (Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau)

Summary of the Project

The community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programme, co-financed by the Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) ran from January 2008 to April 2011, a period of 40 months, and covered six provinces in Vietnam – Phu Tho and Hai Phong in the north, Nghe An, Da Nang and Thua Thien Hue in the north central region, and Binh Dinh in the south central region of Vietnam. The individual project locations were selected by the government. Implementing partner agencies were nominated by each provincial government – the Vietnam Red Cross provincial branches in Da Nang, Binh Dinh, Nghe An and Phu Tho provinces, and the provincial offices of the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) in Thua Thien Hue and Hai Phong.

The overall objective of the project was the improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities. The project followed three interlinked trajectories, corresponding to key dimensions of disability (Education, Health, Social Inclusion, Livelihood) and reflected in the specific objectives of the project:

- To promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular school system, through an inclusive education approach. The expected results were three districts of three different provinces covered by inclusive education activities; and Education Department directors/vice-directors, school directors, along with kindergarten and primary school teachers trained in inclusive education.
- To strengthen the capabilities/knowledge of the staff involved in the CBR activities and, as a consequence, to strengthen health services for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities
- To promote social and economic inclusion amongst young disabled persons, through vocational training and credit fund activities.

A mid-term evaluation of the programme in three provinces (Pho Tho, Da Nang and Hue) was conducted in late 2009 – early 2010. This evaluation, which included analysis of questionnaire responses from key stakeholder groups – teachers, CBR supervisors, CBR volunteers and clients, concluded that there were significant variations of approach and coverage, but that all stakeholder groups were generally satisfied with the training courses and activities outcomes. The mid-term evaluation confirmed that the project met, and even exceeded its original activity targets, with significant higher numbers of persons trained in CBR and inclusive education than originally planned.

Inclusive Education Component
The inclusive education component focused on the inclusion of children with different types of impairment in regular schools. During the project, 3,932 teachers received a one week training in inclusive education techniques, and were subsequently mentored by special educators from the local Departments of Education and Training (DOET). Thematic training was also provided for teachers, focusing on inclusive education methods for students with different forms of impairment.

While inclusive education has been in place for some years in Vietnam, evidence suggests that the CBR project has significantly increased the enrolment of children with disabilities in regular kindergartens and primary schools throughout the project coverage areas. For example, in the Cam Le District of Da Nang Province, the enrolment rate of children with disabilities in regular schools before 2008 was said to be 49%; today, the enrolment rate is 70%. Of the kindergarten and primary schools visited, 21 children with disabilities were being educated alongside 1,231 non-disabled children – 1.4% of the combined schools enrolment. In six of the communes visited, a total of 136 out of 401 children with disabilities were attending regular schools. In terms of academic performance, in the Cam Le District of Da Nang Province, with an inclusive enrolment of 81 children, 10 were rated as very good, 25 as good, 28 as poor and 18 as very poor. Allowing for the fact that many of the children have intellectual impairment, this academic performance is reasonably good. Where resource units exist, as in the AIFO-equipped social centre in Thanh Ba District of Phu Tho Province, the children receive extra coaching by specialized educators or project-trained ‘key teachers’, e.g. Braille training.

In summary, the project has created a significant increase in the numbers of children with disabilities in regular classes, with about 70% of all children with disabilities reported to be attending school. While academic results vary, the social benefits of inclusive education, both to the individual children and to the non-disabled students, are invaluable, in terms of improved attitudes being carried forward into adult life. Finally, it has to be underlined that the project has proved to be an important instrument for influencing good education policies in Vietnam, and is being used as the springboard for other operations in Phu Tho, Da Nang and Thua Thien Hue provinces.

1. Positive features and a new problem-solving approach

Multi-dimensional approach to Disability
The project is marked by an emphasis on a multi-level approach to disability that acknowledges the importance of coordinating the medical, social and educational and vocational training aspects together for the optimisation of the skills of children and adults with disabilities inside the community. This multi-level approach proved to be a very important factor for success in the CBR Vietnam experience.

Phrasing disability as a community issue
The project was able to capitalize upon the Vietnamese ethic of communality and mutual support and responsibility and succeeded in phrasing disability awareness and inclusive practices as community issues. From this point of view, a sound analysis of social structures, local beliefs, key stakeholders, education system and curricula and the
identification of resources already available in the community (and in the schools) was critical for the success of the project.

Multi-stakeholders approach

Teachers, parents, CBR workers, education personnel, and school authorities played a key role in the process of including children with disabilities in regular schools. Communication among these stakeholders was fostered throughout the whole project duration and can be identified as an important aspect for the achievement of planned results.

2. Innovation and acquisition of technical knowhow, skills and expertise

Pedagogical Inclusion

Inclusive education is not only about the physical inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms but has to do with the equal access to good quality education and learning opportunities for all. The delivery of a quality and comprehensive training to the teachers was the pillar of the inclusive education project component; during the training, teachers learned effective strategies to promote and support classroom inclusion. A further positive output was the development of quality learning plans for the individual child which produced positive learning outcomes, along with the positive impact on the social inclusion of the children. Also amongst children with intellectual disability, a significant number of teachers reported a degree of academic progress, along with an improvement of the overall wellbeing of the child.

Inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities

As stated above, the project significantly increased the number of children with disabilities enrolled in regular school. A unique result of the project was the enrollment of a high percentage of children with intellectual impairment in schools. In the target area, by 2010, the percentage of children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools-usually in the mild to moderate range of severity reached approximately 20%. While being unable to keep up with the rest of the class academically, these children benefit from the social aspects of education, and the other children learn to treat them as ordinary schoolchildren. While many teachers admit to difficulty in working with intellectually impaired children in regular class (especially those with additional behavioral problems such as hyperactivity), a high level of commitment was in evidence which goes beyond simply following orders and official policy.

The 2009-10 midterm evaluation defined as unique the practice of including children with intellectual impairment in regular classes and stated that “potential exists for Vietnam to become a world leader in this approach, if results-based evidence of effectiveness and impact can be established”.

CBR and Inclusive Education


The project confirmed that the inclusion of an Inclusive Education component within the broader framework of a community based rehabilitation programme can be an effective strategy, which generates a significant positive impact on the whole community.

CBR workers are important actors in promoting inclusive education for several reasons. The training for CBR workers is not limited to the physical rehabilitation aspects, but encompasses the different aspects of a human rights based approach to disability. Their role as active community members, coupled by their awareness on disability issues, is a vital resource in order to i) Identify children who are not enrolled in regular school ii) Approach the families and inform them in the most appropriate and cultural sensitive way about the potential of their child and the benefits of enrolling him/ her in a regular school iii) Explain modalities for enrollment in simple terms to the families and facilitate the enrollment, for instance, by helping the families with the bureaucratic steps for the enrollment or taking the children to school if the parents are not available.

It is significant that between 80 to 90% of school teachers confirmed that they received information about disability issues and about inclusive education from the CBR programme, underlying the important role played by CBR project in creating awareness about disability issues.

Furthermore, the active participation of other community groups, such as the Youth Union, the Women’s Union and the National Front were important positive features and, at the same time, indicators of community interest and involvement.

3. Possibility to reproduce the project in different contexts (even on a voluntary basis)

The impressive progress made in inclusive education could be a model for replication elsewhere; the cost effectiveness of the model developed in the project is certainly a major strength of this strategy.

The methodology employed by the project (participatory planning and implementation at local level) has proved to be effective in addressing the needs of the majority of children and adults with disabilities in the catchment areas, and in producing positive and significant change.

More in general, CBR approaches are suitable for replication and scaling up since they mobilize resources already available in the community, are based on the work and commitment of community volunteers and therefore do not require large budgets.

From this standpoint, efforts to develop and disseminate evidence of the cost-effectiveness and positive impact of inclusive education are crucial to promote this strategy.

4. Long-term sustainability of the project

“AIFO financial support has not been very high, but it has contributed towards a sustainable approach. Even if AIFO goes away, we will go ahead with CBR anyway” (Pham Nhu Nghia, Chairman of Da Nang Provincial Red Cross Chapter). This sentiment was echoed elsewhere in the country, which is encouraging. The use of unpaid volunteers, and the focus on local government implementation contributed towards greater sustainability. The CBR volunteers often use their own funds to meet home visit costs; the fact that they continue to do so is evidence of a strong commitment. Above all, the positive
change in attitudes of people at local level, which was assessed as significant, is expected to result in an ‘onward and upward’ percolation.

Other important results, in terms of sustainability of the project, are the following:
- Increased awareness and collaboration with some donors resulting in local DPO’s and NGO’s receiving more funding to the topic;
- Greater knowledge in the disability community as the result of improved opportunities;
- Greater awareness among local authorities about the importance and value of CBR strategy for coping with disability issue;
- Papers being presented and published at conferences, TV and journals;

Another feature that seems to be relevant in terms of sustainability of the project is the active role of people with disabilities in the project. This feature is in line with AIFO’s commitment to promote a new role for people with disabilities in development: from beneficiaries to agents. In the present project, a significant number of persons with disabilities, and relatives of persons with disabilities, are working as CBR volunteers or supervisors and this represent an important indicator of success of the project enrolling criteria adopted, and at the same time a lesson learned especially towards the sustainability of the activities.

The following are the recommended steps to be taken in order to ensure long term sustainability of the project:
- Continue to strengthen the knowledge of teachers and volunteers on effective methods to include different disability groups in prevention and intervention activities
- Share successful approaches so that further intervention can draw on the lesson learned by the project
- Further efforts to increase community awareness on the importance of including disabled people in all dimensions of community life.