The Education Network Papers
10 Inspirational Papers for Education and Development Work in South

What are these Papers and how can you use them?

The Education Network Papers consist of short texts which present significant elements in the planning and monitoring of education programmes in the South; they also offer a possible explanation of what good education programme quality is.

The Papers were prepared by members of the Education Network 'Learning and Development' theme group in a concerted process, where the individual members chose the subject and contents based on their own knowledge and experience from work in their respective organisations. In addition, the Papers were inspired by conferences and professional workshops within the network. The Papers should not, however, be considered scientific research or a list of conclusive results, but merely experience-based papers about what works when working with education development in the South. In addition to recommendations for practical work, most of the Papers also include discussions of the dilemmas and challenges associated with the various subjects.

The Papers are aimed at NGOs in the North and South that work with education programmes or projects in which education is an essential component. The Papers can be used as checklists or guidelines for work with the subjects in question if this is perceived as relevant. The Papers could also serve as the basis for a dialogue and shared understanding between parties (e.g. a South NGO and a North NGO) in relation to one or more subjects upon which they are to cooperate. Finally, they may be useful when upgrading processes or for internal debate in individual organisations. In other words, the intention of the Papers is to function as a flexible tool that *may* be used as is, but which may also be adapted and adjusted to suit the needs and/or unique composition of the individual organisation, instance of cooperation, or project.

The Papers are available in Danish, English, Spanish, Portuguese and French, and may be downloaded from www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk. If you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the Papers, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would also like to hear about your experience of using the Papers in practice.

What is The Education Network?

The objective of The Education Network is to strengthen the expert capacity of NGOs in relation to education work in the South - to accumulate and communicate specialist know-how and make coordination possible and to contribute to political development assistance debates about education and development. The Network emerged in 2000 when several NGOs joined forces in The Education Network with a view to strengthening Danish NGO assistance in terms of education. Since 2004, the Network has been engaged in network activities based on Danida funding; today, the Network has more than 30 member organisations. The activities of The Education Network include after-work meetings, workshops, conferences, studies and publications dealing with educational themes. We use debate events to encourage focus on Danish education assistance, and the Network also has a number of theme groups which constitute a forum for inter-organisational

sparring and experience sharing. The theme groups convene approx. once every month and are open to all members of the Network, volunteers and employees alike.

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Definition

Supervision is a method/ tool for developing teachers' professional work. It is carried out through observation of teaching followed by feedback/shared reflection.

The aim of supervision is to strengthen the quality and efficiency of teaching in formal as well as informal education and the method can be used for both trained and untrained teachers.

Models for supervision

Teaching in developing countries often does not live up to the quality and efficiency expected by parents, students, teachers, and authorities. Supervision is particularly focused on the individual teacher and his/her professional, pedagogical and personal competences. These three competences are not static but can be developed and strengthened. There are various supervision models:

1. Professional pedagogic control

Supervision in its simplest form is a means of control. This form is often used by authorities and donor organisations with a view to checking whether the school and the teachers fulfil the objectives which have been described, e.g. in the curriculum. In other words: Control of whether the teacher does his/her work in a satisfactory way. This approach often makes use of standardised checklists where the supervisor marks how the teacher managed a number of different tasks. In this model, supervision is characterised by negative criticism stressing what needs to be corrected – and how. Any change in the teacher's methods will only to a small degree, if at all, be the result of the teacher's own reflections.

2. Professional pedagogic development

Supervision can be focused on developing the teacher's pedagogic competences. The supervisor observes and offers comments and advice to the teacher and might indicate how the teacher should work in the future. This might even be based on agreements and plans of action. It can be supplemented with professional pedagogic imitation where the teacher identifies good and practical teaching approaches through observing the way other teachers teach and then tries them in practice. It is important in any evaluation that the person who is being evaluated receives written or oral feedback in the form of information, advice or indications for improvement. Such feedback might be offered in a situation which does not allow the teacher the possibility of asking questions or debating the content of the feedback. However, it can also be done in a way that actively involves the teacher in both the description and the evaluation of the observations and also in the formulation of the recommended behavioural changes and actions necessary. This approach to supervision can be important for the teacher's use of teaching methods but rarely remedies weaknesses in the teacher's professional knowledge and capacity. In this case, supplementary education or courses are recommended.

3. Supervision for reflection and self-development

This form of supervision aims at getting the teacher to consider and analyse his/her teaching through questions and dialogue. It is important that the supervisor and teacher endeavour to use a common language and that they use the same words and concepts to describe the teaching observed. The teacher must learn to consider his/her own teaching critically and to not be afraid of putting words to his/her own errors and mistakes. The expected result is that the teacher will find a better way of doing things, maybe assisted by the supervisor. The supervisor should not tell the teacher what "good teaching" is, nor should the supervisor manipulate the teacher towards a particular way of teaching. In other words, this method of supervision should lead the teacher to reflection so that he/she does not act only by routine (or worse: That the teacher gives the impression that he/she is working simply to receive his/her salary) but truly feels responsible for what happens in the classroom. The supervision dialogue should result in the teacher becoming able to justify his/her teaching, i.e. its "what", its "how", and its "why" so that the students do not need to ask: "Why are we doing this?" This "good" supervision, which aims at stimulating the teacher to reflect on his/her own way of teaching, will strengthen the teacher's self-confidence through its non-controlling manner. ("The supervisor listens to me – and believes that I can do it!"). This "domination-free dialogue" - rather than the supervisor's frequent comments - is based on the supervisor's questions: What worked well in your teaching? – Why? – What did not work well? – Why? – Could you have done it differently?

4. Supervision in groups

Supervision can be carried out in a group of teachers or for all the teachers at a school. A teacher may be a member of teaching teams or may be responsible for all the teaching offered at a school. Supervision can be carried out in a group of teachers for a long period of time where the supervisor supports the achievement of shared reflection and learning. The participating teachers can be trained to supervise each other, which is often an advantage as the teachers will be on equal terms. A teacher attending the classes of other teachers might identify good and practical teaching approaches and try to implement them in his or her own teaching. Watching someone else's teaching can often be an eye-opener that contributes to self-evaluation, discussion and maybe imitation.

Questions for reflection

What is good practice? Supervision may contribute to supporting and developing the teacher's competences, both in terms of teaching methods and in relation to teaching content. However, in our opinion, the aim is also to support the teacher in becoming a 'reflective teacher'. If education is to play a transformative role and not only be a reproduction of existing ways of doing things, this type of teacher is a necessary condition (though not a guarantee). The precondition for this kind of supervision is a thorough education/training of the supervisors in offering supervision which is not judgemental but rather stimulates the teacher to reflect on his/her own way of working and in the long run enables the teacher to use this reflection in his/her daily work (as described above in model 3: Supervision for reflection and self development - and model 4: Supervision in groups).

Northern NGOs often have their own visions: Teaching should aim to stimulate the students' independence, their ability to think critically and to participate in democratic dialogues etc. Particularly model 3 above is also aimed at making the teacher independent and self-reflecting as well as able to take independent initiatives to adapt their teaching to the needs of their students. In cultures where loyalty towards tradition and authorities prevails, such a method will affect some of the teacher's fundamental values, which is a long and complicated process.

Another challenge is the teacher's experience of responsibility and pressure from general guidelines for teaching, which can limit the development of quality in the teaching. The guidelines and the material framework may be so "strict" that changes are needed at another level. In that case, it will be relevant for Northern NGOs to cooperate with their southern partners in trying to influence general educational policy.

Theoretical background

- The basis of the type of supervision described in model 3 is a conception of teaching inspired by, among others, John Dewey, Paolo Freire, and David Kolb.
- The principle of introducing reflection in supervision as described in model 3 is based on authors like Donald Schøn, Peter Jarvis and Jack Mezirow.

Further Reading

- Wahlgren, Høyrup, Pedersen & Rattleff (red): *Refleksion og læring,* Samfundslitteratur 2002.
- Schøn, Donald: *Den reflekterende praktiker*, KLIM, 1983.
- Illeris, Knud: *Læring,* Roskilde Universitetsforlag 2006.
- Jarvis, Peter: *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Human Learning*, Routledge 2006.
- Mezirow, Jack: *Learning as Transformation*, Jossey-Bass 2000.

Toolkit from the Danish NGO Education Network
The toolkit is a number of documents presenting essential elements in designing and monitoring educational programmes in developing countries. The toolkits are based on the experience of the member organisations and outline their views on quality standards in educational programmes. They can be used as check lists or guidelines and as a basis for further internal work in organisations. They can also be used in the cooperation with partners in developing countries to clarify concepts and develop quality and also to prepare new employees and volunteers. They are also relevant in the beginning phase of new programmes. The member organisations of the network are over 30 Danish NGOs, all working with education in developing countries. For further information, see www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk (only in Danish).

What do we mean by "quality"?

Who wouldn't like to achieve quality? We all would, of course. But "quality" is not a characteristic or property we can see or measure or weigh. It is difficult to quantify, and at the same time everybody seems to have an opinion about it. Furthermore, "quality teaching" is really difficult to define. Not very many have tried, according to Eva Johannessen, the Norwegian researcher, who has gone through a multitude of reports from many corners of the world during her extensive desk studies. Some try to find a universal, objective definition; others want to find out how quality is connected to what takes place in the classroom. Anyhow, anybody's definition of "quality in teaching" will always be connected with that person's theory as to what "good teaching" is.

Teaching and learning – as such

Teaching is what the teacher does, without, however, any guarantee that the pupils learn anything in the process. Much teaching doesn't result in learning, and lots of learning happens without any teaching - outside the framework of formal schooling. Primarily, this paper takes its starting point in formal education. Good teaching is hardly likely to be achieved by means of smart tricks or whatever one happens to be interested in at any one moment. In order to talk meaningfully about "quality of teaching", teaching must be understood as an activity with a purpose, i.e. the reason for the activity lies in a specific aim or objective. At the same time, "something" must be taught, a learning content that the pupils must make themselves more knowledgeable about or become more skilled at. Learning is linked to the pupil's actions, and results in a new behaviour or a new competence which was not present before the learning sequence. What the pupil has learnt may be summed up in three categories:

- The material, i.e. knowledge, insight, understanding.
- The formal, i.e. skills, use of methods, ways of learning.
- The ethical, i.e. attitudes towards the learning content, fellow human beings, and life.

Therefore one first characteristic of teaching is the teacher's ability to formulate "The What, The How, and The Why" of the teaching sequence. Exactly what are the pupils supposed to do/see/understand/hope for? – How will they learn that best? – Why is it a good idea to get them to learn it? Teaching and learning must appear meaningful to pupils as well as to teachers so that no pupil needs to ask, "Why do we actually have to work with this?" The pupil's reflection on, and her understanding of the aim or purpose of her being in a learning situation, are decisive for the pupil's attitude towards the teaching and so become a precondition for the quality of the teaching. A first attempt to define "quality of teaching" may very well be: "The teaching/learning is of high quality when the pupils learn that which is the aim or the objective of the learning sequence."

The Framework Conditions of the Teaching

A closer analysis of quality in teaching must focus on the many factors that have an effect on a learning sequence, - usually called the framework conditions of teaching. We assume that the framework conditions influence the pupils` performance and for want of something better, we often see the ideal framework conditions as the aim of quality. We believe that teaching in a well-equipped room will be better than teaching taking place under a tree, just as we assume that classes with few students will do better than those with many students, and so on. However, no studies have proved any simple or direct connection between framework conditions and teaching quality. On the contrary, the connection between input and output seems to be rather complex. So an actual

rating of the quality of teaching must – according to Johannessen - depend on a deeper analysis of the complex that consists of input, activities, and output. But even when we limit ourselves to measuring the framework conditions - because we assume that to be a sign of quality - then we must be aware of the fact that these conditions are not clear-cut. They depend on time and place, on culture, on life conditions, on economy – and much more. Confronted with such serious differences as to material and human resources, one has to forget all about a universal definition of "quality of teaching".

Quality and Relevance

In many places in the world, people complain that the objectives and the learning content of the school system consist of old habits and traditions without any relevance to the pupils or to society. Relevance does not only mean that the curriculum, the learning content must be a means of promoting "the good life", - for the individual as well as for the community. Relevance also has to do with our ideal of the learning process taking its starting point in the learner's experiences, problems and interests, and that it takes place in a language that the pupil understands. It also includes the teacher receiving help to "lift" student experiences to a higher level of knowledge, - help to generalise the students` contributions. From our cultural point of view one might add that the students must learn to see coherence, meaning and structure; they should learn to ask critical questions, to analyze, also in order to acquire political awareness and the qualifications necessary to take part in a democratic society.

Quality, School for All, - and the Parents` Role

Quality has a considerable influence on whether pupils are registered for school at all by their parents, and on whether they drop out of school. Making school attractive to the children and keeping them there - also the poorest of them –requires teachers that are present, motivated and competent. It requires sufficient learning material, textbooks, and such facilities that will make the students feel safe and keep them healthy. However, parents` idea of quality is not always in agreement with what is necessary for a good learning outcome. Undoubtedly, many parents have the personal experience that learning can take place only in an authoritarian atmosphere. This will therefore be their measure of quality. If this is changed in order to improve quality, the parents will probably meet the change with opposition. In order to keep particularly the girls in school, it is important that toilet facilities are satisfactory, and that the girls are neither subject to abuse nor to discrimination by the teachers or by the content of the textbooks.

Quality and the Teachers

It is often maintained that a qualified and well-paid teacher will deliver the most effective teaching. Despite many studies, this assumption is difficult to confirm - it also depends on the quality of the teacher's own education. In many countries, teacher training seems to suffer from a number of shortcomings which mean that there is little connection between theory and practice; that the teachers are not properly trained to face the most frequent difficulties of the job; that there is no follow-up of newly qualified teachers; and that in-service courses have no connection with the teacher's daily functions. High-quality teaching requires high-quality teacher training.

Quality and Methods of Teaching

It can also be very difficultto prove which teaching methods result in better learning than others. Hilbert Meyer, a German scholar of education, has based his work on international empirical studies which lead him to suggest eight characteristics of good teaching. It must be possible to observe and put these into practice and both students as well as teachers should be capable of implementing themwith the aim of analysing various ways of teaching, and they are applicable to all subjects. The characteristics are: clearly structured teaching, a considerable quantity of real teacher-time, a working climate that supports learning, clarity of learning content, communication that creates meaning, a variety of methods, consideration for the individual, and intelligent training.

Quality and Evaluation

If the students are given high marks, does that mean that the teaching has been of high quality? Here, it is important to distinguish between internal and external evaluation. Internal evaluation is interested mainly in the student's progress, and is meant solely to improve learning. The idea behind external evaluation is quite different, namely to sort the students according to their knowledge at a certain time. If there is a lot of focus on external evaluation, the result will be teaching that points towards the exam and what is required there. This is a problem because an exam covers only a small part of the whole learning content. It rarely tests the full range of aims of the learning. "Teach-to-the-test" teaching will usually be oriented towards facts and will be instrumental, - the students learn in order to cope with the exam and not in order to become more competent or knowledgeable. Therefore it is important to work at policy level to make sure that exam systems are in accordance with the often progressive educational reforms. Of course, marks are one measurable result of learning, a typical "output-object". Other output-objects may have been the drop-out rate, the size or the extent of the examination requirements etc. However, a quality aim for a learning sequence contains other highly important results, which are not easy at all to quantify, for example the participants` commitment, their interest and ability to use what they have learnt, the usefulness for local society, and the ethical category, attitudes etc., mentioned on page 1. Obviously, it is difficult to quantify that kind of complex components, and to attribute obtained results to one specific kind of teaching. Very often one has to rely on qualitative methods, e.g. interviewing participants.

What factors will advance quality? – A Summary

Eva Johannessen sums up her studies in the following statements about school effectiveness:
- Qualified teachers make a difference.
- Within certain limits, the number of students in the class is of less importance.
- Teaching/learning material is economically the most effective way of improving quality.
- Best learning if the mother tongue is the language of instruction during the first years.
- Fine buildings and excellent equipment have hardly any influence on quality.
- Exams seem to be a useful way of monitoring school quality.
- Healthy children with enough to eat learn best.
- Quality depends on serious and responsible leadership.

Any definition of quality in teaching is local. That is the conclusion of these pages. But based on the literature that has been used here, some characteristics of the teaching/learning situation are lined up below, - characteristics that in our western culture are believed to have an effect:
- If the whole sequence appears meaningful to the teacher as well as to the pupils.
- If the learning content is well-structured, logical, clear and coherent.
- If the learning situation is pleasant and positive with nothing to be afraid of.
- If the learning content/methods are adapted to the pupils` ability/stage of development.
- If the teacher shows confidence in the pupils` ability to carry out thetask.
- If the pupils are active learners and not passive listeners.
- If the teacher knows and masters her subject, - is more than well-prepared.
- If the teacher is enthusiastic about the whole situation.
- If the teacher is considerate and takes care of each child.

Quality and North-South Cooperation – Questions for Reflection

When collaborating in the support of education projects in the South, both South-NGOs and North-NGOs will want to know exactly what effect the programme, including its level of quality, will have on the students` learning, and also on life in the local community. The aims for this and ways of measuring them ought to be settled in close cooperation with the partner in the South, who must participate fully in the planning and the organisation of the education project and of the level of

quality. During this kind of dialogue, it is worth considering that also an education project may be seen as a political arena where different conflicts of interest are being played out. In the North, it is usually believed that a learning pattern, which is student-centred, problem-solving, critical and questioning, will give better results than a teacher-centred pattern. It is worth remembering, however, that the student-centred etc. pattern is culturally based on our western theories which were developed during more than a hundred years of political and economic life. It is a common experience that it is extremely problematic to introduce western learning theories and learning practices in other cultures.

In connection with the planning of an education project together with a partner in the South, it may be useful to reflect on the following questions:

- Should the Danish NGO describe/define "good teaching/learning" or should the South-partner? – or should the two do it together?
- How does one work towards qualitative change from one's own perspective and at the same time respect the local culture?
- According to our ideas, which competences ought the South-school give its pupils? Competences to manage life in the local context, or to be prepared for a life that is continuously changing?
- The curriculum is one means of fulfilling educational objectives. But will it influence the level of quality whether the learning content is derived from local, daily needs or from more abstract, traditional curriculum subjects?
- In the North, the usual signs of quality are "student-centred, critical thinking, problem-oriented, project-organized", but we cannot always take it for granted that our South partner will agree to that. Then what?
- What would/should a Danish NGO focus on during a discussion about teacher education/training and "the good teacher" in the South?

Further Reading:

Johannessen, Eva: Basic Education – also a question of quality. (Save the Children, Norway, 2005)
Fibæk Laursen, Per: Didaktik og Kognition (Gyldendal, Denmark, 1999)
Meyer, Hilbert: Hvad er god undervisning? (Gyldendal, Denmark, 2005)
Striib, Andreas: Undervisning (Klim, Denmark, 1996)
Education for All, - The quality Imperative, EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2005)

The Education Network Papers

Consist of a series of papers which present essential elements of the design and monitoring of education programmes in South. The Papers are based on the experience of the member organisations and offer a possible explanation of what good quality in education programmes is. You may use them as checklists and guidelines or as the starting point for further work internally in an organisation. They could also be used in the cooperation with partners in South for purposes of concept clarification, quality development, and the preparation of new employees or when new programmes are being launched. The Network member organisations include more than 30 Danish NGOs which all work with education in South. For further information, visit: www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk – where you will also find additional literature on the subject in the resource database.

To what extent have we achieved gender equality in education?

At a global level girls lag behind boys when it comes to access to education. When 100 boys enter school, only 95 girls do, - and in southwest Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, only 92 girls enter school for every 100 boys. Progress is being made and more and more girls are attending school, but the situation varies a lot from one country to another. In Afghanistan, Niger and Yemen, for example, the figures are 80 girls per 100 boys. In a few countries the situation has changed, and more girls than boys enter school, for instance in Ghana, Gambia, and Iran. However, fewer girls than boys manage to finish a primary education as they have a higher risk of dropping out of the school system. Thus, even fewer girls go on to secondary school in southwest Asia and Africa south of the Sahara, - only about 80 girls per 100 boys, and even fewer when it comes to further and higher education. In Latin America, among other regions, it seems to be the boys that lag behind at secondary level (based on statistics from 2005, Global Monitoring Report 2008, pp. 80-85).

In this paper we have chosen to focus primarily on the failure of girls to attend school, as this is a problem in most of the countries where NGOs work. But it is also important to be aware of the growing problems relating to boys in a number of countries.

Definition of concepts

A number of concepts are used to describe various aspects of equality:

- **GENDER** refers to the qualities of and the behaviour that is expected from men and women in society. Gender roles are socially decided and may well be influenced by factors such as education and economy. They vary widely among cultures and are often developed over time. The term 'gender' is used as explained above, and is as such different from the term 'sex', which refers to biological differences between men and women.
- **GENDER PARITY** is the first step towards equality. It refers to "number", i.e. a proportional representation of women and men in the educational system, for example equal numbers of enrolments/teachers.
- **GENDER EQUALITY** implies that men and women have equal rights, conditions and opportunities to develop - to contribute to and to enjoy the advantages of economic, social, cultural, and political development. This means that society values and appreciates men and women equally for their similarities and differences. Society will appreciate the different roles they play. Gender equality is often a long-term objective for development projects.
- **GENDER EQUITY** refers to strategies and procedures that are implemented in order to achieve gender equality. It involves equal representation, participation, and equal achievement of results. It does not necessarily mean identical treatment. The objective is both groups having a chance to have their needs met, and that they have equal access to opportunities.

International objectives

At the international level, objectives concerning *Education for All* were agreed upon and specified in the Dakar-Declaration from 2000. The Declaration contains six concrete goals and goal number 5

deals with equality. *"Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls` full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality" (The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000).* Equality is also part of the Millennium Development Goals for 2015: Goal 2: *"Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education"*, and Goal 3: *"Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015" (UN Millennium Development Goals).*

Why gender equality?

There are mainly two types of arguments for equality. According to the first, women are seen as "a means of development", expressed in slogans like "when you educate a woman, you educate a whole village". Another argument is that women have a right to development, to equality, to education, etc, because women are human beings and possess human rights just as men do. The two kinds of arguments are not mutually exclusive, but whether one chooses one or the other may mean quite a lot for the design and outcome of a development project. There is a tendency to see the "argument of effectiveness" as being culturally more sensitive and less threatening than an argument based on women's rights which may break up the power balance between the two sexes.

Why are girls behind in education?

There are several different reasons and they are often interdependent. When girls have less access to education, it is often for economic reasons, e.g. that parents cannot afford to send all their children to school. So they choose the boys, also because the boys are expected later to provide for their own families. That kind of traditional view of gender roles also makes the girls` work at home indispensable. Safety may be a problem - that girls run the risk of being assaulted on their way home from school, or that they may be abused at school. It should also be mentioned that some cultures cherish values that dictate that girls do not become too independent through education. If the girls attend school at all, various circumstances at the school may hamper the girls` learning and eventually lead to their dropping out of school, for instance lack of female role models (often few female teachers), discrimination, too little attention from the teachers, or curriculum/textbooks that repeat or express traditional gender roles instead of encouraging the girls to do school work.

Tools to promote equality in education

Below, you will find a number of suggestions and ideas as to how to promote gender equality in education at different levels.

Eight steps that work:
1. **Access for all children**: Ensured by making education free, with no charge for uniforms or learning material.
2. **Poor families should be supported**: For example through a school lunch system and scholarships.
3. **Good and safe schools**: And enough of them, near the children's homes. It must be safe to go to school, also for the girls.
4. **Civil society organisations**: Must add pressure, especially in relation to education in remote areas. The activities of the organisations must be extended and linked closely with the formal system. It is crucial that society and the formal education system continuously take full responsibility for the education of girls and of the poor.
5. **The local community must be involved**. It is crucial that people from the community (teachers, parents, female groups, etc.) work together to secure relevant, sustainable educational systems.
6. **Girls must participate in further and higher education**: On equal terms.
7. **HIV/AIDS must be tackled**: By developing clear and adequate strategies for prevention and relief.

8. **Invest more in girls**: Several poor countries have already increased their investment in education, but help from outside is needed.

(Source: Summary in: *Det brudte løfte til verdens piger. Hvad gør Danmark?* IBIS, 2005, based on the publication: A Fair Chance, Global Campaign for Education, 2003. See also Global Monitoring Report 2003-04, Chapter 7: Gendered Strategies for EFA).

Gender Audit

When working with gender and education, one can make an analysis of existing practice by mapping out the "gender dimension" (gender audit). 'Gender audits' can be carried out in different ways, both for the whole school or in a classroom. Concrete observations from a class help direct attention to practice. When carrying out a gender audit, one can look at and analyse:
- Exam results - differences as to who fails/passes
- Gender differences among employees (teachers, headmasters, administration staff)
- Number of pupils, their attendance
- Interaction in the class (whom the teacher speaks to, are the girls crowded together in the back of the classroom?), do the girls do the sweeping, clean the blackboard, and are the boys elected as "prefects"?
- Interaction among the pupils. Who are members of committees, and is the girls` role just formal?
- What kinds of sport are offered, and who participates?
- What kind of toilet facilities are there? Compare the girls` rooms with the boys` in the campus. Is there a difference in access to resources at campus?
- Instances of bullying/exploitation: was it reported, and what were the consequences?

Education and Training of Female Teachers

Female teachers function as role models at various levels in society. They can help change the idea of gender both among the children and in an entire village. Good female teachers exert a positive influence on the number of girls attending school and on how they benefit by it. We can work with the education of female teachers in several ways:
- Use a special "gender quota system" for women and give scholarships to women.
- Appoint dedicated, local women without formal qualifications. Support them with special supervision and training in order to develop their subject knowledge and their teaching ability.
- Use inventive procedures of appointment for well-qualified women, particularly in rural areas, for example by also transferring the woman's husband to a local job, through various kinds of rewards, and/or through a special welcome to the village.
- Invite local women to support the female teacher, for example by looking after her children.
- Creative recruiting campaigns focusing on women and their active roles.
- See to it that schools have a positive attitude towards female teachers.
- See to it that women have access to training (transport and child care), that they participate in decisions and are not simply just "present".
- Create networks for female teachers, enabling them to share experiences.
- Build up mentor programmes for new female teachers with a strong leader as a role model.

Gender-aware Teacher Training

This is one more step towards helping girls stay in school. Gender-aware training is intended for both male and female teachers and aims to get teachers to give an equal amount of attention to both girls and boys. The training is also meant to prevent sexual abuse of girls at school. The following

short suggestions may be useful in various contexts where the aim is to raise awareness of gender and the problems associated with gender:

- To begin with, try to acquire knowledge of the participants` thoughts and ideas about gender.
- Various opinions or ideas about gender are examined in order to work WITH them and not AGAINST them. Our language use reflects our concept of gender.
- Gender roles/stereotypes and problems can be illustrated by means of role plays in which the audience participates by suggesting solutions, - perhaps by showing alternative scenes with new possibilities for action.
- Attitudes may be changed by creating a vision, "the best scenario" for the village or for the class.
- Point out and discuss how and why changes in traditional practice can provoke anxiety.

Further Reading:

A very useful theoretical overview of various ideas about gender can be found in: E. Unterhalter: The Capabilities Approach and Gendered Education. Theory and Research in Education, 1, 2003.

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), www.ungei.org

Education for All Global Monitoring Report: The Leap to Equality, UNESCO, 2003-4

A fair Chance, Global Campaign for Education, 2003

Det brudte løfte til verdens piger. Hvad gør Danmark? IBIS, 2005

Gender Training, Equate 2007

Gender Training, Commonwealth Secretariat and Common Wealth of Learning, 2004

Practising gender equality in Education, Oxfam, E. Unterhalter 2007

The Education Network Papers

Consist of a series of papers which present essential elements of the design and monitoring of education programmes in South. The Papers are based on the experience of the member organisations and offer a possible explanation of what good quality in education programmes is. You may use them as checklists and guidelines or as the starting point for further work internally in an organisation. They could also be used in the cooperation with partners in South for purposes of concept clarification, quality development, and the preparation of new employees or when new programmes are being launched. The Network member organisations include more than 30 Danish NGOs which all work with education in South. For further information, visit: www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk – where you will also find additional literature on the subject in the resource database.

Definition of mother tongue education

Mother tongue education is the process of teaching and learning in school or other contexts where pupils are taught all subjects in the language they know best, normally the language they have spoken since birth and which they speak at home.

It is not always easy to define which language is a person's mother tongue. In many societies, two or more languages might be spoken from birth and used in different contexts. In practice, mother tongue education is sometimes defined as schooling which takes place in the language the child knows well enough to be able to use it in order to develop conceptual understanding and independent thinking.

Definitions of bilingual education

Bilingual education can take different forms:
1. The mother tongue and the second/foreign language are developed in parallel throughout school. Both languages are used in the teaching of all subjects although this can only be done to any great extent in the second language after several years of schooling.
2. Schooling takes place in both the mother tongue and the second/foreign language until the second language is thought to be sufficiently well developed to be used as the language of teaching. At this point, the second/foreign language takes over.
3. Schooling takes places entirely in the mother tongue for the first few years of education and then switches entirely to a second or foreign language when it is thought that the pupils should be able to study in the second/foreign language.
4. Schooling takes place entirely in the second/foreign language with no formal use of or teaching in the mother tongue at all. Tuition in the mother tongue may be available in some contexts on a more individual level. (This model cannot, of course, truly be regarded as bilingual education as schooling takes place in only one language).

Research has shown that only the first model allows both the mother tongue and the second/foreign language to develop to the full[1]. The second and third models allow the second language to develop so that it can be used fully for educational purposes, but studies indicate that the mother tongue ceases to develop once it is no longer used and taught in school. The use of the fourth model cannot guarantee the development of either the mother tongue or the second/foreign language; pupils taught under this system risk not being able to develop either language to an adequate level for educational purposes.

A typical context in the South

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[1]See for example: *Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education. A Collection of Conference Papers*, Uddannelsesnetværket, 2008. (available at: www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk) and *Optimising Learning and Education in Africa – the Language Factor*", UNESCO, ADEA, GTZ, 2006.

In most African countries there are many different language groups, and in many countries a former colonial language (e.g. English, French or Portuguese) has been chosen as the official and common language – sometimes alongside a number of the major local languages. This obviously poses a challenge for the education system, which has to make sure that all pupils learn the official language – or at least one of them. The general tendency in the African school system has been to either use the official language as the language of instruction throughout the school system, or to use the mother tongue (or other familiar language) as the language of instruction in the initial years of schooling, and then shift to the official language (as described in model 3 above). The pedagogical rationale behind this approach is that pupils will learn the foreign/official language best when it is used as the language of instruction in all subjects from an early stage. In general, both parents and society support this policy because they associate success in later life with the ability to use the foreign/official language.

In many Latin American countries there are a number of indigenous (Indian) languages that have been marginalised in favour of Spanish – both in society, where Spanish is the official language, and in the school system, where education was for long periods only offered in Spanish. This tendency is slowly turning, as indigenous people's organisations increasingly succeed in having their languages and culture accepted as part of the national culture and school system.

The importance of bilingual education

One result of policies that favour the use of the foreign/official language as the language of instruction in schools is that most pupils do not become competent users of the foreign/official language because they are not actually taught it – its use as a language of instruction does not alone guarantee proficiency. As this lack of competence comes to permeate the education system, school teachers do not learn to speak the foreign/official language well either, resulting both in their lack of ability to teach the language to their pupils and in the use of methods that focus more on memorisation than on the development of critical reflection and independent thinking. In later life, lack of competence in the foreign/official language can result in restricted access to the country's intellectual products and limit possible involvement in relevant aspects of citizenship.

A second result is that the pupils perform poorly in the school subjects that are taught via the foreign language. They cannot understand input or respond to questions or tasks, and they cannot engage in the reflection and interaction necessary for learning. Later, this also leads to restricted access to important aspects of the life of an active adult citizen. The importance and status given to a foreign/official language involves – directly or indirectly – the stigmatisation of local languages and cultures and thereby a lack of respect for the background and identity of the pupils taught in school. It also denies the opportunity for citizens to use their mother tongue to develop aspects of their culture, identity and personal expression. A common argument against the use of mother tongue or bilingual education is that it is too expensive. Here, it is important to insist on the use of welfare economics as the basis for economic viability studies, in other words: studies which show not only the immediate financial costs but also the long-term economic and societal benefits[2].

Recommendations regarding mother tongue and bilingual education for NGOs working with education programmes:

- The education and further qualification of school teachers is central. Teachers need to be aware of the potential and effects of mother tongue and different models of bilingual

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[2] See for example research by Francois Grin and by Kathleen Heugh (e.g. in the publications mentioned in note 1).

education. In contexts where a second/foreign language is used as a medium of instruction, teachers should be qualified to speak the language and both *teach* it and teach *in* it.

- It is essential to differentiate between and to separate in practice policies concerning foreign language teaching and policies concerning the use of a foreign language as the language of instruction in schools. Studies in, for example, Tanzania, have shown that pupils become better at the second language (English) when it is taught as a separate subject rather than used as the medium of instruction. At the same time, the pupils become better at their subjects when they are taught in a language they master.

- The mother tongue is a significant element in the development of cultural self-esteem and identity. It is therefore important that mutual respect between culture and language groups is cultivated. This is also a central issue in educational situations where mother tongue schooling is not possible for all language groups, e.g. in multicultural contexts.

- At the same time, all citizens should have genuine access to society's majority language – also when this is a second/foreign language – in order to facilitate participation with equal rights and obligations in the society. This implies that the second language should be taught as a subject in all schools (but not used as the language of instruction from the beginning).

- The mother tongue and second/foreign language are most likely to develop to the full with the use of a language policy where both the mother tongue and the second/foreign language are taught and used as languages of instruction throughout the educational system.

- In situations where a second/foreign language will be introduced as the medium of instruction, studies point out that this should be preceded by at least eight years of mother tongue education. This period of time is regarded as the minimum needed to ensure that pupils are competent enough in their mother tongue and cognitive development to be able to cope with studying and learning in another language.

- It is important that parents become aware of the importance of mother tongue and bilingual education for their children's development and future educational and work opportunities. Many parents assume that the use of the second/foreign language in school will automatically give their children a better future and they are unaware of the situation of great disadvantage that it in reality can place them in.

- NGOs have the opportunity to exert political influence. This could be done by: (1) defining how mother tongue/bilingual education is a necessary element in quality schooling; (2) identifying the areas in which there is a lack of relevant knowledge; (3) coordinating the production and use of evidence-based knowledge and good practice; and (4) influencing the political agendas at national and international level for this field. 2008 is the UN year for linguistic rights – a window of opportunity setting this agenda.

Further Reading:

- *Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education. A Collection of Conference Papers*, Uddannelsesnetværket, 2008.
- *Modersmåls- og tosproget undervisning. Myter, realiteter – og konsensus? Konferencerapport*, Uddannelsesnetværket, 2008.
- *Uddannelse i udviklingslande – erfaringer og refleksioner fra et fagligt netværk* (kapitel 2: "Modersmålsundervisning"), Uddannelsesnetværket, 2007.

- Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heigh & Wolff, *Optimising Learning and Education in Africa – the Language Factor*, UNESCO, ADEA, GTZ, 2006.
- Dr Leslie Casely-Hayford and Adom Baisie Ghartey: *The Leap to Literacy and Life Change. An Impact Assessment of School for Life (SfL)*, 2007.

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Tool-Kit from the Education Network:
Paper No. 5:
'Best Practice' in Education Programmes

Definition of 'Best Practice'

The term 'Best Practice' is employed to describe the principle of learning from the experiences and successes of others in a particular field, in order to improve one's own work practice. In an NGO context it means focusing on documenting what functions and what does not function in practice when working with a particular subject employing specific methods. In addition, we also look at whether that which seems to function can be transferred to other situations and contexts; that is, 'Best Practice' is a gathering of knowledge about the effect of a specific practice.

When it comes to the area of education, the 'Best Practice' concept is somewhat problematic. It is an approach based on the belief that there is only one way to perform an action, and this way is better than all others; that is, it is a normative approach which may thus result in a degree of standardisation. This may not necessarily occur naturally in developing projects in the South where education and learning often take place in very distinct contexts and where the involvement of local participants is important.

The present tool-kit seeks to describe the 'Best Practice' concept in general and outline possible advantages and disadvantages in relation to education programmes.

'Best Practice' in Practice
 - When is 'Best Practice in fact 'Best Practice?[3]
According to UNAIDS there are three stages in the process of working with 'Best Practice':
1. Exchanging experiences
2. Investigation and pilot test
3. Documentation

The criteria employed for the test and documentation of approaches or strategies which are analysed in relation to 'Best Practice' vary. In its strictest form, the following criteria must be satisfied in order to be qualified as 'Best Practice':
- It must be effective, that is, give the required results
- It must be ethically acceptable
- It must be relevant, that is, focused on the required subject
- It must be able to produce the required results at the lowest possible financial cost
- It must be transferable to other locations and contexts
- It must be sustainable.

In practice – and according to UNAIDS' own recommendations – the 'Best Practice' concept may also cover activities which function partially, or from which we have learnt something that can be

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[3] The following paragraph is based on Bjarke Oxlund, *Manual on Best Practices* (Aidsnet, 2007).

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used in the future; that is, an activity which perhaps satisfies only one or two of the above-mentioned criteria may sometimes also be defined as 'Best Practice'.

The drawback of this approach is, of course, that it may rapidly become unclear whether a recommended practice is actually an instance of 'Best Practice' or not. For example, UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (IBE) has published a 'Manual for integrating HIV & AIDS education in school curricula'[4] which is a set of ten tools for use in the development of teaching methods and materials in preventive education in the field of HIV/AIDS. IBE's target is to make it possible for teachers worldwide to use their 'good practice materials and development tools'. The manual is written in such a way that it seems likely that it is based on research, and it claims that the tools are founded on relevant theories and research and an evaluation of the most effective HIV/AIDS preventive education programmes. However, the manual does not specify which criteria have been employed to define the tools as 'good practice'. If UNESCO's definition of 'Best Practice' is as flexible as UNAIDS', it means that the users of the manual cannot know whether a described tool is a thoroughly investigated, tested and documented activity, or whether it is 'merely' a good idea which by chance has worked well in a single project in a particular context. This makes the 'Best Practice' concept almost useless in practice as a guarantee for the quality of an activity.

The Pyramid of Practices

Another approach to 'Best Practice' is 'The Pyramid of Practices' developed by Advance Africa.[5] The pyramid model uses the same criteria as mentioned above to define 'Best Practice', but it distinguishes much more clearly between the various degrees of fulfilment of the criteria. In accordance with the number of criteria which an activity completes, it is placed in a specific section of the pyramid showing how much evidence there is for proving the activity as 'Best Practice'.

This type of analysis may be used at every phase in a project cycle. This means that the users of 'The Pyramid of Practices' know how much evidence there is to demonstrate that a specific activity is an example of 'Best Practice'. They can therefore consciously estimate how much 'risk' they run in implementing one of the categorised activities.

The Clearing House Approach

Most NGOs do not have sufficient resources to enable them to analyse their practice according to the strictest criteria of 'Best Practice'. A possible solution is to employ a 'Best Practice Clearing House' approach where several organisations in a network, alliance or in another kind of collaboration pool resources in order to carry out the analysis process. The procedure is in principle the same as when a single organisation investigates a 'Best Practice'. A 'Clearing House' approach identifies, collects and analyses activities, strategies or projects, and estimates whether they may be called 'Best Practice' in relation to the topic/area with which the organisations are working. The organisations have then access to the results, most often by means of a database.

For instance, the Danish School of Education (DPU) has a 'Clearing House' for education research whose aim is to create an overview of the knowledge of good education practice based on the concept of evidence-based practice,[6] and communicate it to practitioners and politicians. The main product of DPU's 'Clearing House' is a research review, where a group of researchers spend three to nine months investigating an area on which politicians or practitioners seek more information, so as to provide both an answer to the review question and recommendations for best practice.

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[4] http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/hiv-aids/hiv-aids-curriculum-manual.html
[5] The pyramid is reproduced in Bjarke Oxlund, *Manual on Best Practices* (Aidsnet, 2007).
[6] http://www.dpu.dk/site.aspx?p=9441

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TheRecipient's Active Role

Not everyone prioritises to the same extent this technical, evidence-based approach to analysis and evaluation of what functions in an NGO's work. Based on their own investigations of the work of their member-organisations, the British network, British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND), for instance, emphasise that North-NGOs' positive contribution to quality work primarily depends on their relation to those partner-organisations with whom they collaborate.[7]

BOND's member-organisations have pointed out that every single social condition in which they work is complex and unique, where the recipients rarely constitute a homogenous group and where many different conditions and interests have to be taken into consideration. A constant process of ongoing analysis and evaluation is necessary for the implementation of projects. The quality of this work depends on a good, continuous collaboration between NGOs in North and South, where the South-organisations are the primary actors in analysis and evaluation.

Employing this way of thinking as a point of departure, it is difficult to imagine how it could be possible to use a database consisting of completed 'Best Practice' strategies for universal application across borders, cultures and different local conditions. From this point of view, if one at all may speak of the possibility of constructing transverse 'systems' of any kind, it should perhaps be in connection with the development of reliable mechanisms for the coordination and evaluation of relations between organisations.

'Best Practice' in Education Projects

In its strictest form, the documentation of a method's or an approach's effect must, as mentioned earlier, be evidence-based in order for that method or approach to be labelled 'Best Practice'. The premise for evidence-based research is that one is able to find measurable and significant correlations between cause and effect which have a general validity.

In research in education, it is, however, generally agreed that it is indeed difficult to prove which kind of instruction leads to the best learning; that is, the correlations between cause and effect are often unclear and difficult to measure. Many believe that there are different factors which must affect the quality of the learning, for example the teacher's education, teaching methods, the size of the class, etc., but no investigation has been able to identify the decisive criteria with measurable certainty.

In other words, it is not certain (1) that learning can be measured well enough to be able to attribute it to a specific approach to education or teaching method; (2) that when one measures learning, one is actually measuring the effect of the approach which is being investigated; (3) that the results of the investigated learning and approach are generally applicable.[8]

When also taking into consideration BOND's member-organisations' claim that the quality of work in each project depends on an individually based collaboration with the partner- organisations in that specific local area where the project is rooted, it becomes problematic to find a convincing role for the 'Best Practice' approach in its strictest form in relation to education programmes.

This should not lead us to the conclusion that it is impossible to measure any effect of education programmes, or that education programmes do not maintain a high level of quality. However, one might perhaps conclude that, with regard to education, one should rather focus on

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[7] http://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/a_bond_approach_to_quality.pdf

[8] Jens Dolin, 'Fyraftensmøde om evidens i uddannelsessammenhænge', Uddannelsesnetværket, 12 May 2009 (http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/events.php?mode=view&iEventID=229).

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approaches/methods which give positive and demonstrable results in certain contexts rather than approaches/methods which are able to fulfil all the previously mentioned criteria. That is, of the three levels in the 'Pyramid of Practices', the results might 'only' be on the next-highest and not the highest level; it is important that the users of the results are aware of this.

Scepticism in relation to 'Best Practice' should not result in a full rejection of the scientific principles for documentation which lie behind the approach, and which may still be employed as a kind of 'guiding principle' in connection with the evaluation of the quality of education programmes.

Finally, the problems regarding the pedagogical aspects of education programmes in connection with 'Best Practice' do not rule out, of course, the possibility of using 'Best Practice' principles in other aspects of education programmes, for instance framework elements in the analytical, planning and coordinating phases and areas outside the actual teaching and learning situation: for example, parents' involvement in school life, girls' safety at school, advocacy in relation to education, etc.

Further reading
- Bjarke Oxlund, *Manual on Best Practices* (Aidsnet, 2007)
- DPU Clearing House: http://www.dpu.dk/site.aspx?p=9441
- BOND on quality: http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/quality.html

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NGOs in the North and South are increasingly engaging in advocacy for the right to education for all. They work with advocacy in many different ways, ranging from mobilising communities at a local level to joining advocacy coalitions at a national level, to campaigning for education at an international level. In 2009, the Danish NGO Education Network organised a training program on how to work with education advocacy in a rights-based approach. This tool kit summarises the main points from the process on how to engage in education advocacy:

A definition of advocacy and a rights-based approach to education

Advocacy can be defined as: *"The process of influencing key decision-makers and opinion formers (individuals and organisations) for changes to policies and practices that will work in poor people's favour."*[9] We find this definition useful also for NGOs working with advocacy for education and seeking to ensure that everyone has access to education – including marginalised, vulnerable and poor groups.

A rights-based approach to development focuses on linking the international human rights system to processes of development. The right to education has been universally recognised since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) in which Article 26 states: "*Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory…education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms…*"[10] A rights-based approach thus identifies both the education rights and also the so-called 'rights-holders'- who are all human beings. Within a rights-based approach, it is also necessary to identify who has the responsibility to fulfil the right, the so-called 'duty-bearers'. With regard to education, the duty-bearers are states, national and local education authorities and donors who all have the responsibility for the provision of quality education. A rights-based approach is participatory, placing poor and marginalised people at the centre of their own development process. It empowers them through their direct involvement in the building of their skills and confidence to demand and secure their rights. The same approach also encourages and enables duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations in relation to the poor and marginalised.

Advocacy for education in practice

An advocacy programme for education will pass through several phases: (1) Problem identification, research and analysis; (2) Strategy development, planning and action; (3) Evaluation (monitoring and evaluating the progress of the advocacy initiative and learning lessons for future action)[11]. It is important to note that a programme of education development will involve not only the carrying out

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[9] Definition by The British NGO Action Aid (quoted from Projektrådgivningen, presentation for the Education Network, 1st February 2009: http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/rdb/uddnet1234187143.ppt

[10] *Education Rights: A guide for practitioners and activists* (Action Aid International, 2007), p. 20. See also here listed a number of other relevant human rights conventions.

[11] Projektrådgivningen, presentation for the Education Network, 1st February 2009 (see note 1).

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of these phases of advocacy, but also the capacity-building of NGOs, organisations and governments to become capable of carrying them out in a constructive and sustainable manner.

1. Problem identification, research and analysis

A central element in a rights-based approach is an investigation of the root causes of a lack of quality education. An investigation of this type reveals imbalances of power and equality in a society and is important in the process of "empowering rights-holders to claim their rights and enabling duty-bearers to meet their obligations."[12]

The framework of the "4As"[13] provides a model for investigation of the right to education. It aims to encourage a participatory approach to the consideration of different aspects of the right to education in a specific context. The four dimensions are:

1. *Availability* – that education is free and government-funded, and that there is adequate infrastructure and trained teachers able to support education delivery.
2. *Accessibility* – that the system is non-discriminatory and accessible to all, and that positive steps are taken to include the most marginalised.
3. *Acceptability* – that the content of education is relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, and of quality, and that the school itself is safe and the teachers are professional
4. *Adaptability* – that education can evolve with the changing needs of society and contribute to challenging inequalities such as gender discrimination, and that it can be adapted locally to suit specific contexts.

The "4As" analysis can be carried out in a participatory way: various groups from either within a development project's target group or other affected groups in the community can be brought together to analyse and define how they see problems of education provision in their own context. The use of the "4As" framework helps to ensure that the true cause-effect relationships within educational issues are uncovered, and that the policies that are eventually adopted will have some likelihood of solving the specific problems identified. In the advocacy process, it is vital that there is documented evidence for the identified problems. This is essential in order to convince authorities that there truly is a problem. Documentation can take many forms and may be quantitative, for example in the form of statistical information about the number of children who attend school or the ratio of boys to girls. Or it might be qualitative, for example personal testimonies about an aspect of an education rights violation. CSOs with practical experience in the field have an advantage regarding the documentation of education rights violations because they have contact to population groups whose rights are violated. This gives qualified documentation from CSOs a high level of credibility in advocacy. Furthermore, it emphasises the importance of CSOs/NGOs also engaging in education service delivery in order to stay in touch with the populations and their realities. The "Advocacy Triangle" demonstrates how successful development approaches need to work on the three interlinked dimensions of service delivery, advocacy and organisational development.[14]

2. Strategy development, planning and action

Once the violation of relevant education rights has been documented and rights-holders and duty-bearers identified, an advocacy programme can be conducted on one or more of several levels: local, national and/or international.

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[12] The Danish Institute for Human Rights, *Applying a rights-base approach* (2007)
[13] *Education Rights: A guide for practitioners and activists* (Action Aid International, 2007), p. 24
[14] A model developed by the Danish NGO Network Tematisk Forum. See draft at :
http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/index.php?mode=show&iMenuID=23&txID=23

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At the **local level**, advocacy initiatives might include the following:

- Raising awareness in the community about the right to education, including for girls/women and minority or marginalised groups, e.g. through peer educators, communication techniques such as posters, role plays and songs or a participatory process of analysis with the wider community (perhaps using the "4As" technique described above);
- Working with local schools to explore possible routes of action to increase enrolment and retention rates generally, with additional focus on gender and marginalised groups and investigation of the implications of private schooling;
- Cooperating with local government in countries where education is decentralised, e.g. exploring whether reasons for failure to deliver education are due to lack of resources, lack of capacity, corruption, etc., or collaboration on specific tasks such as evaluation;
- Working with media to create direct publicity for an education rights campaign and/or to help improve an education rights campaign's communication strategies and techniques;
- Where relevant, working with lawyers in relation to local legislation, local courts or local applications of a national constitution;
- Ensuring that information from national and international levels is available and accessible at local levels, taking language choice and literacy levels into consideration.

At the **national level**, advocacy on education rights consolidates local work and can include:

- Analysis of the national constitution's commitments to education delivery, and campaigning for influence on constitutional amendments and implementation at national and local level;
- Work with the media, relevant CSOs and teachers' organisations to encourage national debate on the right to education;
- Use of international binding conventions on human rights and of declarations such as Education for All framework and the Millennium Development Goals to raise awareness of and apply pressure to secure the national right to education;
- Seeking new legislation (instead of constitutional amendments) in cases where this is appropriate, e.g. a law to guarantee the right to education if this does not exist in the constitution, or a law that focuses on the rights of a minority group facing discrimination;
- Court action to try to enforce the right to education, often starting with a test case that in itself can prove to be a powerful tool for advocacy;
- Direct collaboration with the national government on the delivery of the right to education through meetings, conferences and experience-sharing, e.g. the provision by CSOs of support in the practical implementation of education policies, and trialling of new initiatives.

At the **international level**, civil society can work jointly to advocate for education:

- National education coalitions, international NGOs teacher unions and other organisations have joined forces in the *Global Campaign for Education* (GCE). GCE has members in over 120 countries and works through lobbying and campaigning to put pressure on national governments and the international community in its work for Education for All. National coalitions have also been formed in regional networks in Asia, Latin America and Africa (see links under 'further reading').
- The Global Action Week (GAW) is organised by GCE and its members around the world every year in April to campaign for Education for All. Global Action Week is one of many ways in which activities at local, national and regional levels are linked to influence the international agenda for education.
- At the international level, conventions, treaties and global policy initiatives can also be used as tools for political and moral pressure, and in addition, legal appeals can be made to international bodies in cases where the legal route is either not available or has been unsuccessful at national level.

3. Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of advocacy work should, like any evaluation process, take its starting point in the goals set for advocacy in the context concerned. The following monitoring/evaluation questions – posed in association with relevant indicators – might be useful in relation to advocacy:

- Which education rights have been violated? To what extent have these rights been restored to rights holders and what evidence indicates that this has happened?
- To what extent have the rights-holders become aware of their rights; to what extent have they been actively involved in the identification of violation of their education rights, in the planning of action in relation to the restoration of education rights and in any campaigns?
- To what extent have the duty-bearers become aware of their duties in relation to education rights and to what extent have they constructively taken action?
- What evidence was used to document the violation of education rights? To what extent have the documentation methods employed been constructive in the gathering of evidence?
- At what level (local, national or international) has action been taken to restore education rights? To what extent has action proved to be successful?

Further reading

- *Education Rights: A guide for practitioners and activists* (Global Campaign for Education & Action Aid International, 2007). English and Spanish version can be downloaded here: http://www.actionaid.org/main.aspx?PageID=175
- *Applying a rights-base approach,* The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2007
- Danish NGO Education Network training program for NGOs in advocacy for education, 2009: http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/index.php?mode=show&iMenuID=23&txID=23
- The Right to Education Project (RTE): www.right-to-education.org
- Global Campaign for Education: www.campaignforeducation.org
- ANCEFA: Africa Network Campaign on Education For All: www.ancefa.org
- ASPBAE: Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education: www.aspbae.org
- CEAAL: El Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina: www.ceaal.org

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Introduction

Sustainability is one of the decisive criteria in the assessment of development assistance and projects. The objective to create sustainable development is essential both in the Danish strategy for cooperation with civil society as well as in many other strategies and declarations. Among other things, the sharp focus on sustainability reflects experiences gained in the development assistance projects of the 60s and 70s. Often, changes made under said projects were not lasting and the target group had only relatively little benefit from the development assistance. The sustainability aspect serves to ensure that the project will bring lasting positive changes and that a relationship of inappropriate dependency on the part of cooperative partners or target groups has not arisen after the conclusion of the project/effort. It should be noted, however, that there is no simple recipe for how to achieve sustainability in education projects. There are many challenges which also derive from the natural variation in the local context of the projects.

Definition

As with many other key development assistance concepts, there are many different definitions of sustainability as a concept. The Project Advice and Training Centre (an association of small and medium-sized Danish NGOs) has decided that courses, counselling and the administration of development project funds be based on the following definition of sustainability: *"An actual development assistance effort is sustainable when the partner organization and/or target group in consequence of the effort gain(s) lasting benefits and effects that may be continued after the discontinuation of the effort. It must be possible to establish the credibility of the sustainability of an effort prior to launching the effort, and the sustainability must be assessed in the light of the nature and size of the effort as well as its own objectives."*[15]

In 1989, OECD provided another, frequently used definition of sustainability: *"A development program or project is sustainable when an appropriate level of the project's benefits or effects may be continued for a prolonged period after the majority of the financial, management, organizational, and technical assistance by an external donor has ended."*[16]

Sustainability has many, highly different, aspects which will be dealt with individually later in this Paper: financial sustainability, institutional/organisational sustainability, and social/political sustainability. Seeking funding in a Danish context, one needs to pay attention to the fact that Danida and The Project Advice and Training Centre place great emphasis on whether the application takes the sustainability of the project into consideration (although not necessarily all aspects of sustainability).

This means that:

- The sustainability of the effort must be assessed relative to the lasting benefits on the part of the partner organisation/target group. It is the benefits/effects of the effort which are to be maintained and carried on - not necessarily all the activities or the project organisation.

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[15] Project Advice and Training Centre Position Paper no. 1: DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY
[16] OECD 1989

- The scope of the lasting benefits/effects depends on the project in question and must be assessed relative to the objective of the effort itself.
- The benefits/effects must be continued for a prolonged period - not necessarily indefinitely.
- It must be possible to continue the benefits/effects after the bulk of the assistance has ceased - not necessarily the assistance in its entirety. It is okay to continue cooperating with the partner organisation about new projects with new target groups or new objectives.
- The continued diffusion of the benefits/effects of the effort to other partners or target groups will also be considered a continuation.

Different Aspects of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability includes a number of different aspects. For example, political and social sustainability will be crucial in a project that deals with the property rights of farmers, while financial and organisational sustainability will carry heavy weight in a project that works to establishing micro-financial institutions for poor target groups. The following forms of sustainability have particular relevance in relation to education projects:

Financial Sustainability[17]:

Funding of education in one form or the other is necessary to secure sustainable educational activities. Ideally, the government is responsible for funding education for its subjects – and based on a rights-based mindset, the government is under an obligation to satisfy the right to education of its subjects. To a limited degree, the citizens could also contribute to the funding: the affluent, for example, could pay for education at private schools. And the less affluent and the poor could contribute by building schools in their communities or paying a part of teachers' salaries. But for the education of the majority of the population, 'external' funding is required. So, what is the role of NGOs when they enter the scene and fund education projects – and how should they approach financial sustainability? It could be said that for a limited period the NGOs step in and perform a 'service delivery' task which the government cannot undertake. If financial sustainability is to be present beyond said period, the NGO must either get the government to take over the project (which links to advocacy) or enable the partner to apply for funding from other larger donors (which links to capacity development.) It is important, however, that service delivery and application for other forms of funding do not establish a parallel system that in the long term will counteract sustainability. Focus must be on a rights-based approach where the goal is that the 'duty bearers' in the project context (often the government or local/regional governments) are encouraged to fulfil their obligations and are supported in their efforts. Among others, the challenge herein is to get the government/authorities to accept their obligation as a 'duty bearer'. If this fails, they are unlikely to assume economic responsibility, and the project will not be financially sustainable.

Institutional/Organisational Sustainability:

It must be relevant in any development project/programme to consider and include how to strengthen the structures that in the long term will potentially have to continue working with the project or its objective. In education projects, the presence of institutions that on some level will be able to offer education is also a must. This could be a matter of capacity developing:
- The relevant public authorities with the responsibility for education at the national and local levels: for example, this could be in relation to special innovative approaches that have been prepared and which it would be desirable to have the authorities continue. Such strengthening of the responsible authorities is an integral part of working rights-based.
- The partner organisation: this could be an overall strengthening of the organisation by means of organisational development or again in relation to special innovative educational approaches which they can use in the long run, or in relation to education advocacy.

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[17] Notes from the meeting "Sustainability – with focus on education" arranged by the Educational Network and The Project Advice and Training Centre on November 3 and 3. 5, 2008, in the Danish cities of Århus and Copenhagen.

The Education Network Papers

- The education institution itself: which could be strengthened at managerial level and/or in relation to involving the local population/parents who in the long term would support the education institution. This is also necessary in a rights-based approach.
- Teachers and teacher associations: this could be via the introduction or improvement of relevant education or supplementary training, e.g. in teaching approaches and teaching methods which strengthen rights-based development in the local community.

Within this aspect of sustainability, ensuring local enbeddedness is also the biggest challenge. Ownership at all levels is a must in order for authorities, organisations and education institutions to undertake the task of continuing the objective, structures and methods of the project.

Social/Political Sustainability
This aspect of sustainability is possibly the most basic aspect in that the objective of the project and the changes it will trigger in a community must be socially, culturally, and politically acceptable in order for an education project to become sustainable. It may be useful to ask oneself and each of the organisations participating in the project, individuals and stakeholders one or more of the following questions:
- Is there a group with the political will and ability to make an effort to ensure the objective of the project, and will there be groups or individuals who will oppose the objective of the project? For example, if the accomplishment of the project objective changes the basic relationship between the teachers and school authorities, will it then trigger resistance at the authority level?
- Have the partner organisation and target group taken ownership of the project and its objective? For example, do the teachers believe that the newly acquired teaching methods will be executable in the classroom and that they will improve the learning processes of the students, or will they continue teaching the way they have always taught?
- Are the changes the project intends to bring about socially and culturally acceptable? For example, is it socially and culturally acceptable that the teaching approach of the project causes the students to ask critical questions about the ways their families and society think and act?
- Are there any social and cultural forces that will support the changes, or any social and cultural forces that will oppose the changes? For example, do the childrens' parents believe that the new teaching approaches introduced by the project are healthy for the future development and opportunities of their children?

A great challenge within this aspect of sustainability is to acknowledge that the local context of each project is individual and that the objective, implementation, and evaluation of the project must be built up based on such changes as will be acceptable to society in the given context. In other words, no 'best practice' solutions.

Challenges in Relation to Sustainability

Education and Sustainability
- As previously mentioned, all projects are characterised by local circumstances. This means that it would be difficult to arrive at 'best practice' solutions that would work in all contexts.
- Sustainability in education can mean different things. No doubt strategies will vary depending on whether it is a matter of sustainability in relation to the number of students who finish school or the number of educated teachers, the use of participatory and democratic teaching methods, the involvement of parents and the local community, political acceptance, the continuance of new efforts, etc. Many projects/programmes cover several aspects of education which naturally makes the issue of sustainability more complex.
- Sustainability is also a political issue; for example, when it comes to the prioritising of primary, secondary and tertiary education. Some people will say that increased focus on one area over

another is more sustainable for the education system whereas others will want to focus on qualitative aspects within each level. These different perspectives may be hard to unify during the planning of a project.

Local Embeddedness/Continuance

- It is necessary to secure ownership of the changes the project seeks to produce; if not, the quality of the continued work may drop when the economic support ceases. The ownership concept covers not only that the changes must be perceived as relevant and appropriate in the local cultural context, but also that political willingness on the part of the authorities to implement the changes is achieved.
- It requires a lot of resources to include the exit strategy and sustainability of the project from the beginning.
- It must be ensured that it is the contents and objective of the project that achieve sustainability and not (merely) the partner organisation in the South that facilitates the project.

Evaluation of Sustainability

- The diversity of education projects due to highly varying local circumstances makes it impossible to establish a sustainability evaluation formula. Hence, projects must be 'measured' differently.
- It is tempting to try to establish a 'best practice' in sustainability, but this might work to preclude projects with different innovative or creative approaches.

Possible Strategies in Relation to Sustainability

In summary, the following strategies are possible in an education project which reach beyond the project itself:

- A strategy for financial sustainability beyond the life of the project (via advocacy in relation to the government and/or capacity development of the partner to apply for funding from other donors).
- A strategy for institutional capacity development (of the partner organisation, the education authorities and/or education institution and local community).
- A strategy for diffusion effect (development of innovative approaches to education and diffusion to other NGOs and/or authorities).

Further Reading

Danida: Aid Management Guidelines Glossary, February 2006) (http://amg.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/3845FDB0-028B-4866-AB9B-1DCB7E83A905/0/AMGGlossaryFeburary2006finaldoc.pdf

OECD 1989: Sustainability in development programmes: a compendium of evaluation experience
European Commission: Aid Delivery Methods, Volume 1: Project Cycle Management Guidelines, March 2004)
(http://www.euromedyouth.net/IMG/pdf/pcm_guidelines_2004_en.pdf)
Project Advice and Training Centre Position Paper no. 1: DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The Education Network Papers

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concept clarification, quality development, and the preparation of new employees or when new programmes are being launched. The Network member organisations include more than 30 Danish NGOs which all work with education in South. For further information, visit: www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk – where you will also find additional literature on the subject in the resource database.

The ability to read, write, compute, and deduce useful information from written material is crucial in order for an adult to navigate satisfactorily in today's information and knowledge society. The purpose of this Paper is to discuss various literacy training programmes and the experiences gained under such programmes, and to focus on some of the challenges that arise when planning literacy training programmes. This Paper focuses on the challenges in adult literacy training which - to some extent - is significantly different from teaching children.

Definitions

Literacy Training designates the process through which the learner acquires reading and writing skills. To some people, arithmetic skills are viewed as an integral part of literacy training ("*the three Rs: reading, writing, arithmetic"*) while others consider such skills to be supplementary to literacy training. However, the English concept "literacy" is wider than the Danish "skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic" as it also refers to other communicative competences. This concept, and thus the understanding of what literacy training entails, has continuously changed concurrently with changes in society, international political areas of focus, national priorities, and research in the field.

In the 1960s and 70s, major national literacy training programmes in the South brought focus to application-oriented reading, writing and arithmetic skills that were to empower the learners to enable them to contribute to socioeconomic development. The 1978 UNESCO definition of functional literacy skills reflects this and is still in use: "*A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his (or her) group and community and also for enabling him (or her) to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his (or her) own and the community's development.*'

In the 1980s, 90s, and 2000s, the understanding of literacy training has been influenced by challenges such as globalisation, new technologies and media, and a political focus on concepts such as 'knowledge society' and 'lifelong learning'. A more nuanced perspective on the fact that reading and writing skills are used differently in different social and cultural contexts and that "*literacy*" must be perceived as a series of communicative skills in various contexts using different media has evolved. Focus is on local relevance, local cultural platforms, and which languages are used. Especially based on a critical instructional perspective, civil society has focused on the fact that literacy should not merely focus on skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, but also be combined with awareness-raising and the activation of learning processes that empower the learner to become a critical and active citizen and contribute to a socially fair development.

Most recently, in 2009 (e.g. at the UN world conference on adult education Confintea VI), literacy as a continuous learning process came into focus. For years, the unilateral focus of many programmes was 'basic adult literacy' without the inclusion of possibilities of further learning and learning environments. From considering so-called 'post-literacy' activities as being separate elements, focus is now on maintaining the skills that are acquired through lifelong learning.

Real-life Examples – Approaches to Literacy:

The list of literacy programmes is as long as the number of literacy definitions. With a view to providing an idea of how the many different literacy programmes are planned and to show the diversity of the methods, we have compiled a list of some of the known (recognised) programmes. At present, there are no comparative studies providing empirical scientific evidence upon which basis it could be determined what would be the most effective method in adult literacy.

- Brazil is a pioneer country in partnerships between government and civil society. Since the MOVA literacy movement was started by Paulo Freire in the 1990s, MOVA has collaborated with civil society organisations which have implemented the project with local government funding. In 1996, the federal government launched the Alfabetização Solidária programme which was based on partnerships between local governments, businesses, and higher education institutions. The national literacy programme, Programa Brazil Alfabetizado (PBA), was introduced in 2003. PBA funds an expansion of the literacy work on behalf of government bodies and NGOs with adult literacy experience.
- The Action Aid REFLECT method is an example of a literacy method which integrates the Freire-inspired critical instructional literacy method with the participatory method. The result is an approach to literacy which is adapted to the context, the local language, and the needs of the learners. Focus is on encouraging and empowering the learners to play an active role in their own learning processes, strengthening the communicative skills of the learners in a broad sense, and empowering the learners to critically analyse their own contexts and work for socially fair development. The method was piloted in 1993 with good results, and several REFLECT projects have since won UNESCO Literacy prizes.
- The *The International Reflect Circle* (CIRAC) REFLECT effort was created in 2000 as an international network based on already existing regional networks and made it possible for REFLECT practicians from various organisations to share their experiences in Spanish, Portuguese, French and English.
- Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) is being used in different contexts, particularly in connection with the teaching of nomadic social groups or to improve the quality of the teaching and the content of education in remote areas where teachers are scarce or insufficiently trained.
- The Cuban Method, "Yes I Can", which is being promoted by the ALBA nations and won the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Teaching Prize in 2006, uses video in the instruction.
- The Family Literacy Project in South Africa is a good example of a programme that empowers and maintains the reading skills of adults and children with success.
- In India, the Planet Read organisation experiments with Same Language Subtitling (SLS) of popular cultural programmes such as Bollywood movies and music videos. The method is cost-effective in an Indian context where millions of poor Indians with weak reading skills have access to TV and a desire to sing along.

Important Literacy Programme Planning Elements

Teaching Quality
Dedicated, well-educated teachers or facilitators are a cornerstone in effective literacy programmes. Educating local people to do the job with a view to ensuring the continuous commitment of the people who know the contexts of the learners has proven to be a success. Past projects suggest that focus should be on ensuring coherent relevant training, experience sharing, and supervision. Lessons learned in relation to teacher salaries and voluntary communal work are diverse; but generally it is being advocated that governments should pay the teachers to ensure continued commitment.

Learner-based Application-Oriented Literacy

Literacy programmes are often organised outside the formally institutionalised national education system. Adult learning research emphasises the importance of seeing and using learning spaces in different formal and informal contexts,[18] and there is good experience of ensuring that literacy is directly relevant to the working and living situations of the learner[19]. Some programmes/projects are based on the work and interests of the learner (e.g. farming or trading at the market) or launch new income-generating activities in connection with literacy courses, e.g. in the form of microcredit. Programmes increase the chances of success when they acknowledge and are based on the learners' abilities, knowledge, and experience of life, and tie in with work-related education or training and address important personal and local societal challenges[20].

Different Approaches Depending on Language

The various languages and written languages require different learning strategies. For example, strategy and average learning time may differ immensely depending on whether you are working with Chinese characters, or the Arabic or Latin alphabet. The Roman alphabet alone involves different learning strategies: from the traditional 'a-b-c' approach to other approaches that focus on phonetic understanding and analytical approaches that are based on generative words (e.g. Freire) as the starting point for discussion, phonetic analysis and reading/writing. In relation to choosing the language of instruction in multilingual contexts, evidence shows that the learner should be able to speak the language they are learning to read and write. At the same time, however, the advantages and drawbacks of teaching using the local language and the official languages used in a given context respectively should be balanced.

Adults/Children Perspectives

Adult literacy is particularly interesting in the light of the positive synergy effects in relation to educating children. Experience with so-called *'twin tracking'* of adult and primary education or family-oriented programmes is good: educated parents are more likely to send their children to school, and children and adults may develop their skills together, e.g. through homework help or by making reading a shared, fun activity.

Developing Learning Environments

It is important not only to establish literacy programmes but also to create and enhance 'literary societies' and learning environments. The theme for the 2006 Education for All Global Monitoring Report was 'Literacy for Life' and it argues that the time has come to end the artificial division of 'literacy' into basic skills and 'post-literacy'. For example, the development of 'literary societies' and learning environments could consist in surrounding the learner with writing in various forms, e.g. road signs, posters, newsletters and newspapers, magazines, books, and local libraries. Literacy programmes are often tied to themes such as health, business, or public education based on overall social and economic development considerations; but reading for fun and local literature interests should also be prioritised (e.g. literary easy-to-read books, comics, or photography short stories.) In relation to choosing learning strategies and developing learning environments, focus is also on the use of information technology to an increasing extent.

Partnerships and Political Prioritisation and Literacy Funding

A significant challenge in terms of adult education is the division of roles between civil society players and government institutions in the provision of education programmes. The chance of a

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[18] (e.g. Lave and Wenger)
[19] cf . Rogers 2005, GCE 2005
[20] DFID (2008)

literacy programme being effective is greater when adult education is a government priority at all levels. In countries with governments that are not capable of fully providing and/or funding literacy programmes, it is important that the government actively forms partnerships with the private sector, civil society, and international donors to secure complementary educational initiatives. On the part of civil society, focus is especially on how many resources the government allocates to literacy; and in 2007, players at the international level joined forces to advocate for 3% of national education budgets being allocated to adult education as well as sufficient funding per participant (at the so-called Abuja Call for Action, 2007).

Further Reading:

UNESCO Literacy Portal: http://www.unesco.org/en/literacy/
UIL database of effective literacy training programs
http://www.unesco.org/uil/literacyprogrammes/programmes.html
UNESCO 2009 Global Report on Adult Learning and Education
UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 – Literacy for Life
Action Aid REFLECT database: www.reflect-action.org; including REFLECT toolkit
'Communication and Power' and 'Counting Seeds for Change'
Writing the Wrongs. International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy (2005) Global Campaign for Education
DFID practice paper (2008) Adult Literacy: an update
DVV – Adult Education and Development
Rogers, A (2005) Training adult literacy educators in developing countries. Literacy for Life. Unesco
Oxenham (2008) UNESCO effective literacy programmes - options for policymakers
Abadzi H. (2003) Adult Literacy. Improving Adult Literacy Outcomes - lessons from cognitive research for developing countries
Abadzi H. (2003) Adult Literacy. A Review of Implementation Experience. The World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, Washington, D.C.
Wenger, Etienne (1998) Communities of practice – Learning, mening and identity, Cambridge University Press

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The aim of this paper is to present an overview of some of the main challenges, aims and recommendations for NGOs working with technical and vocational skills development (TVSD).[21]

Over recent years, the challenge of creating employment for youth and adults with limited education background has increasingly come into focus - and TVSD plays a key role in this respect.

Developing relevant vocational skills is a huge challenge when it comes to young people and adults who have had only limited access to the formal school system. Many different models exist: better integration of technical/vocational training in primary school, improved availability of vocational training at advanced levels, or offering development of relevant vocational skills in the informal educational system. At the same time, it is a challenge to establish the link between training and work life in order to improve the chances of getting a job, or support to start up a small business.

When it comes to supporting job creation, this field is naturally the responsibility of the state and technical and vocational training institutions in cooperation with labour market institutions and private enterprises. But NGOs also have an important contribution to make in this field, based on their vast experience in offering training and education outside the formal education system, reaching weak or marginalised groups, mobilising local communities and developing new partnerships.

Definitions:

In this paper, we have chosen to see TVSD as in the following definition: "*Skills Development is not equated with formal technical, vocational and agricultural education and training alone, but is used more generally to refer also to the productive capacities acquired through all levels of education and training occurring in formal, non-formal and on-the-job settings, which enable individuals in all areas of the economy to become fully and productively engaged in livelihoods and to have the opportunity to adapt these capacities to meet the changing demands and opportunities of the economy and labour market.*"

This definition is by King and Palmer, 2006, and it corresponds to the inclusive and broad definition of TVET used in the UNESCO and ILO Recommendations on TVET for the Twenty-first Century. [22]

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[21]This paper is inspired by the experiences of the member organisations, and on the conference*: "Technical and Vocational Skills Development in Africa: The role of NGOs",* February 2009 as well as workshops on TVSD program design with Richard Walther, January 2010 (organised by the Danish NGO Education Network and the Child and Youth Network). Please see reference to these events and background papers in the section 'Further Reading' at the end of this paper.

[22]Many African countries and donor agencies use different terminologies to talk about the same concept. "Technical and Vocational Skills Development" (TVSD), or just "Skills Development" (SD), is increasingly used by many donor agencies as the preferred term for what used to be called "Vocational Education and Training" (VET) or "Technical and

Important considerations when preparing TVSD programs:

The role of NGOs in TVSD:
Service delivery such as the provision of large training centres and heavy machinery demands a lot of resources on the part of NGOs and should not be their main function. NGOs play a role in testing and piloting small scale try-outs and pilot projects, and searching for best practice to be integrated into the local/national training and education system. As innovation and entrepreneurship are key factors in growing and vibrant business environments, NGOs can contribute with knowledge, and with testing and developing effective concepts. It is therefore recommended that NGOs concentrate on small-scale, cost-effective and integrated training programmes focusing on developing and piloting innovative curricular initiatives, the piloting of TVSD models and development of applied extra-curricular issues/programmes such as life skills, entrepreneurship training and marketable skills for employment and business.

Training should meet the demands of the target group:

In order to create successful and sustainable TVSD programs, it is important that TVSD strategies are relevant and tailor-made for a specific context and target group. When planning a TVSD programme, the social positioning and possibilities of the target group should also be taken into account, e.g. noting the importance of age and relationships between generations, language, ethnicity and gender in gaining access to, and completing TVSD, as well as achieving employment afterwards. NGOs may also engage in supportive mechanisms (conditional cash flow, counselling on education and employment, and accelerated phase-in programmes, etc.) to ensure that also vulnerable groups benefit from training and job opportunities in cooperation with local partners and/or government structures. It is recommended that local stakeholders, including the target group, should be involved and committed throughout the project process. Strengthening and acknowledging the resources of local partners and learners is also key to facilitating self-organisation, entrepreneurship and self-employment.

Training should meet market demands:

Relevant TVSD training should be planned according to market demands and local conditions. It is vital to ensure that TVSD programs are based on thorough analysis and research of the local context, market and actors, and that the program will feed into existing structures such as employment and demand/supply chains or create new structures to ensure that the TVSD intervention will lead to employment in existing sectors or facilitate creation of new jobs/sectors. Weak links between training centres, the professional and economic actors constitute a severe challenge, and successful TVSD very much depends on involving actors within the sector as well as trade organisations. Often TVSD interventions (unfortunately also among NGOs) are quite traditional (like offering carpentry and sewing) instead of including new sectors that might have a bigger employment potential. Another important field is the agricultural sector which has often been left out of formal TVSD approaches, even though the agricultural sector has a large employment potential in rural areas.

Vocational Education and Training" (TVET). Some consider SD to be a much broader concept than TVET, as TVET is seen as referring to formal and informal sources for skills acquisition but excluding informal learning on the job. In general, African country-level policy makers and employers continue to use the TVET definition to define training in formal, non-formal and on-the-job settings (Source: UNESCO (2002), Technical and Vocational Education and Training for the Twenty-first Century. UNESCO and ILO Recommendations: http://unesdoc.unesco.org)

The program should be aligned with broader national strategies:

TVSD should be designed as part of more general schemes and programmes and aligned with broader development targets for, for example, employment. NGOs and TVSD interventions cannot stand alone, but have to be seen in relation to both the formal and the non-formal educational system, improved models of job placements and mentoring, development of job seeking and job creation (entrepreneurship) skills, forming or affiliation with relevant actors in the field. TVSD interventions must also be aligned in accordance with and directed by prognoses linked to economic, social and occupational benchmarks.

Developing partnerships and sharing experiences

NGOs should prioritise, promote and facilitate professional networks at a local level with players involved in TVSD, which is vital in order to share lessons learned, reinforce quality, enhance efficiency and improve access and outreach without duplicating or continuing bad practices. Strategic coordination, networking and capacity building of implementing actors are obvious roles for NGOs which will then promote quality TVSD rather then merely providing solutions where others have failed to do so. It is advisable that NGOs partner with relevant government-, business-, trade-, and/or labour organisations, or relevant research institutions in the North or South, to optimise existing 'know-how' and to secure sustainability and context-specific TVSD approaches. Also accreditation mechanisms, certification and measures for quality assurance are yet to be developed and need attention, otherwise the TVSD market risks becoming an unregulated mix of public, private and NGO interventions with no assurance of level, quality and certification.

At a structural level there is a need to engage in renewed public/private partnerships that can integrate the diversity of the formal, non-formal and informal TVSD sectors, facilitate various TVSD pathways and employment opportunities, and recognize both formally and informally acquired skills. A major challenge is to ensure coordination of efforts and synergy effects among government initiatives, private sector initiatives, civil society organizations and NGO activities. Private/public partnership support must - in all interventions - be given priority – as well as a line of action that endeavours to influence structural factors such as shared standards, teacher training and accreditation.

Restructuring traditional pathways:

There is a need to create flexible TVSD pathways with multiple entry/exit points and links, bridges and ladders between formal and informal education, in-service training, mentorships, job placements and between different actors, areas and levels of qualification.

NGOs may also hold a comparative advantage in relation to public/ private service providers in organising and mobilising people working in the informal sector. NGOs may mobilise and support existing or emerging organised structures to the benefit of job seekers and other informal sector players – employers, business owners, emerging labour unions etc. Strengthening the informal sector in organising itself may further its ability to function as a regulator of fair working and business conditions and ensure sustained efforts in facilitating TVSD learners' employment. When linking TVSD training with more traditional formal education programs and literacy approaches, a move towards more context- and work-based literacies is recommended.

Engagement in advocacy for TVSD

A key competence of most NGOs is the capacity development of partners and support for coordination and advocacy. NGOs are significant players in making the voice of local civil society heard on national and even global TVSD agendas.

National civic platforms should be established in order to undertake joint and effective advocacy for the rights of people to decent work and employment opportunities. Such platforms can urge governments to secure TVSD as a recognized part of national educational politics, reflected in Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) and sector policies/action plans. Not least should lobbying be pursued for conducive policies concerning quality, relevance and access – supplemented by accreditation policies and incentives for involvement of the private sector.

Further reading:

African Economic Outlook, OECD 2007/2008
Africa Commission, Second Meeting of the Addis Ababa, 20 November 2008, Synopsis
Richard Walther: Skills development and the world of work: Challenges for Education and Training (Synthesis report from the Biennale on Education in Africa, Mozambique 2008)
King, K. and Palmer, R. (2006): Skills Development and Poverty Reduction: the State of the Art, Post-basic Education and Training, Working Paper no. 7, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.
ADEA Biennale 2008: Beyond Primary Education:
http://www.adeanet.org/Biennale%202008/en_index.htm
Conference on Technical and Vocational Skills Development in Africa: the Role of NGOs, February 2009: http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/events.php?mode=view&iEventID=193
Designing technical and vocational skills development programs - NGO training workshop with Richard Walther, January, 2010:
http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/events.php?mode=view&iEventID=275
Database on Danish NGO projects in relation to youth, education and employment:
http://orgdb.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/

The Education Network Papers

Consist of a series of papers which present essential elements of the design and monitoring of education programmes in South. The Papers are based on the experience of the member organisations and offer a possible explanation of what good quality in education programmes is. You may use them as checklists and guidelines or as the starting point for further work internally in an organisation. They could also be used in the cooperation with partners in South for purposes of concept clarification, quality development, and the preparation of new employees or when new programmes are being launched. The Network member organisations include more than 30 Danish NGOs which all work with education in South. For further information, visit: www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk – where you will also find additional literature on the subject in the resource database.

Volunteering is a practice where people work without payment – often for a limited period of time. When volunteer work is carried out in relation to development work in the South, there are usually three parties involved: the NGO/organisation in the North, the partner organisation in the South and the volunteer. The objective of this paper is to be an inspiration for consideration and discussion of how both the volunteer and the sending and receiving organisations can benefit from the volunteer's stay.[23]

Over the years, the role of the volunteer in development work has changed. Earlier assignments often involved carrying out concrete tasks to fill in the void of trained and skilled personnel in the South in particular areas of work. Today, the emphasis is more on building organisational capacity in the South, developing new working methods and trying out new approaches. The role of the volunteer is changing accordingly to that of a facilitator and to carrying out more abstract and complex assignments. This has also lead to a change in the demands on the volunteers' education, preparation and ability to function as facilitators in a given project.

Volunteering, teaching and learning

When it comes to education and development, there are always a number of factors that the volunteer and the organisations working with volunteers have to be aware of and consider. One of the first things to be aware of is the necessity to approach the whole project with a humble attitude. It takes a lot of preparation to become familiar with the local context, traditions, culture and values – and in particular how this affects local ways of teaching and learning. There can be a tendency for parents, teachers and learners in a local context to expect the volunteer, who comes from e.g. Europe or the USA, to be an expert and to 'know better' – a perception perhaps also shared by the volunteer him- or herself. It is important to adjust these expectations and to look at the volunteer more as a source of new and different inspiration.

Another very important issue is values in education and educational methods. The Northern and maybe particularly the Scandinavian view of education and educational methods can be quite different from that of a community in Africa. For example, within the Scandinavian tradition, much emphasis is placed on participatory and learner-centred methodologies. That, however, can be very different in the area where the person is volunteering. The traditions, the values, the norms, the culture and the perception of right and wrong – these can all differ a great deal from those of the volunteer. Both the volunteer and the receiving community need to be aware of this and - to some extent - be prepared to deal with it.

This creates some challenges and opportunities in the cooperation between the organisation in the North, the partner in the South and the volunteer. It is necessary to be aware of exactly what the project involves: its aim, processes and philosophy, because the volunteer will usually join a project

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[23]This paper is based on the experiences and contributions from former volunteers and Danish organisations working with volunteers. Inspiration to the paper comes both from the Education Network youth group 'Infokaravanen' and from a public meeting held by the group in 2009 (read more about the group here: http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/groups.php?mode=show&iGroupID=3)

which is already up and running. Furthermore, like any participant in a project, the volunteer must gain as much knowledge as possible about the locality, the social circumstances and the values inherent in the life of the community.

Who are the volunteers volunteering for and who gains from it?

- Often volunteering is seen in an altruistic perspective, but in many cases students work as volunteers to enhance their own skills and general development, often with the aim of attaining employment later on in life.

- Often the volunteer is only working for a short period of time and the ambition of the work therefore has to be measured against this. The volunteer cannot save the world in a short period of, say 6 months, and it is not the volunteer's job to do so!

- Often it is a mixture of selfish motives and the wish to contribute to a better world that drives the volunteer. Wanting to react to the world's unfairness is fundamentally a positive element; the matter then often gets stranded at the point of: 'how to go about this'...?

- Personal experiences of voluntary work can contribute to the volunteers' vision of the world, openness to other cultures and voluntary work thus contributes to creating citizens with a global perspective.

Challenges and questions the volunteer should ask themselves before going:

- The unreflected belief that the volunteer is better, or knows better, than the people already working or living in the developing context.

- Why am I going, and where am I going? Is the main objective to just 'get out'; is it a specific type of work or a specific region? What is the driving force behind wanting to volunteer?

Possibilities for the volunteer:

- To broaden their minds and get a better understanding of the complexity of education and development.

- To be able to give ideas and broaden the minds of people who have never left their region.

- To offer perspectives on some of the elements where a project 'gets stuck' because people have been working with it for a long period of time.

Challenges for organisations working with volunteers:

- Ensuring that there is an equal relationship and transparency in the co-operation between partners, both in the preparation and the commitment to having a volunteer.
  - How does one ensure that the receiver has the time and capacity needed to receive the volunteer? Volunteers require a lot of resources when they arrive in a new location, but often both the volunteer and the sending organisation view the volunteer as an asset only.

- Ensuring that there is agreement on expectations between both the volunteer, the receiver and the sender.
  - Making sure that there is an agreement on the Terms of Reference for the work between

all involved parties and that all parties' expectations, both during and after the stay, are clear. Likewise, the role the volunteer is expected to play needs to be clarified.

- ◦ Thorough preparation of the volunteer is needed in order for him/her to know what to expect from the stay and the communication channels must be made clear in advance so that both the volunteer and the receiving organisation know where to address any challenges/ frustrations or general questions.
- ◦ Making sure that the volunteer is properly equipped to perform the tasks expected during the stay. For example, if the person is going to teach, it is important that he or she knows something about good teaching practice - also in the local context where the teaching will take place.

- Ensuring sustainability.
  - ◦ If the volunteer is working in a school, it might be wiser to have the person involved in training teachers by sharing methods rather than teaching a class of students (which will be left to a local teacher with different methods after the volunteer leaves).
  - ◦ What kind of power structure is the volunteer entering...? Who wants the volunteer and why? Who placed the advertisement for the volunteer and who tells the volunteer what the work assignment is? These are important questions to settle beforehand, if the positive effect of the stay should be sustained in the long run.

Opportunities for organisations working with volunteers:

- A close, long-term relationship between a volunteer and a local population may hold many interesting perspectives, and perhaps it is possible to prioritise these kinds of relationships so that particularly the intended recipients (the local population) – not only the volunteer – benefit from the voluntary work.

- The organisation can have 'new eyes' take a look at their project and practices, and the employees in the organisation, e.g. the teachers, can get input as to new perspectives and methods.

- It is a good idea to make use of the extra resources the volunteer brings to the community, e.g. by having the volunteer fill in gaps and carry out tasks where there is not enough personnel. The volunteer could, for example, assess the organisation's capacity or measure educational efficiency in relation to the pupils.

Information work upon return

Upon the volunteer's return, it may be a good idea to combine the voluntary work with information activities. This may have a broader effect than the actual work the volunteers carry out in the South. The volunteer can contribute with 'fresh' and real life stories from the South and, as a young person, he can also communicate with other young people with a certain credibility. For the volunteer himself, communicating experiences upon return can also be part of a reflection process on what has been learned during the stay.

Here, however, it is important to have a strategy for the prioritisation and implementation of information work both by the sending organisation and the volunteers themselves – not to mention which stories are told. It is important to portray real stories - not just stories that sell. It is very important for the volunteers to refrain from contributing to 'poverty tourism', where only the 'exciting' stories about poverty and destruction are portrayed, after returning from a period of volunteering. Again - good preparation and self-reflection, both for the organisations and the volunteers, help ensure that expectations are met.

Points to sum up volunteering and its challenges:

- If you choose to volunteer and you do it for your own sake, that's fine - as long as you are aware of this.

- It is important to have volunteers, not just for the local communities but also so that the volunteers can influence development from home on a long-term basis.

- It is important that the stories of volunteering are told, but they have to be real so that the picture portrayed of the developing countries is realistic.

- If you have not given your role as a volunteer enough consideration, there is a risk that you may contribute to the 'poverty tourism' image rather than actually do something good for someone else.

- Volunteering is a good thing because it means taking ACTION.

- Finally, on a more practical note, it is recommended that all arrangements are settled before the volunteer arrives in the South; that the volunteer is insured and it is clear who holds which responsibilities and who does what.

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