

EQ Review

Educational Quality in the Developing World



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Demonstrating that All Means All: Basic Education and Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities hold the key to the successful realization of the goals and the spirit of the global campaign to achieve education for all. Decades of research and practice have proven that children with disabilities can thrive in a learning environment, and that families, schools, and communities benefit when educational systems invest not only in their inclusion, but in their development and potential.

A recent report by UNICEF's Innocenti Research Center (Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities, Innocenti Digest No. 13, October 2007), estimates that there are approximately 160 million children with disabilities in the developing world. UNESCO has asserted that the vast majority of these children – perhaps over 90 percent – are not attending school.

Over the past decade, the international community has begun to approach the educational inclusion of children with disabilities as a human rights issue, and increasingly as a means to strengthen a child-centered approach to education. Good practices to date include the development of the “Ten Questions Screening Instrument” (see text box on page 4) to determine the prevalence of childhood disability, a tool that has been validated by the OECD and put into use in a few settings by the World Bank. Many donors are funding the provision of technical assistance to ministries of education to strengthen often-nascent special needs education units and to advance teacher training. Other donors are investing in global and grassroots advocacy, seeking to engender and harness the political will necessary to ensure that all really does mean all.

USAID and its implementing partners have taken some meaningful and proactive steps to address disability rights issues within the context of the delivery of international development assistance. USAID's own Disability Policy, approved in August, 1997, provides the necessary framework for the advocacy and programmatic interventions discussed in this issue of the *EQ Review*.

The articles which follow examine a few current programs that are working to demonstrate that children with disabilities can and should benefit from programs that support basic education. A USAID program in Russia supports the work of the NGO Perspektiva, demonstrating the important contributions that disability organizations can and must make to ensure that national and international investments in education offer meaningful opportunities to children with disabilities.

In addition to providing direct support to schools, a program in Vietnam is building capacity at both the government and civil society levels to strengthen and advocate for policies on inclusive education. In India, a program funded through EQUIP1 is working to train teachers to identify children with learning disabilities, and importantly, to improve strategies for increasing learning outcomes. Finally, efforts are underway in three countries and in Washington, DC to raise awareness of, and pilot test, successful strategies to ensure that disabled peoples organizations become stakeholders of programs in basic education and other sectors.

These and other interventions prove that disability advocates and inclusive education experts bring to the basic education community the technical resources needed to address the challenge of scaling up these smaller interventions to move toward the larger investments that will begin to reach **and** teach a significant number of the sizable population of children with disabilities.

For more information, please contact AIR Principal Project Specialist Jerry Mindes, jmindes@air.org.

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Educational Equality for Russian Youth

Perspektiva, a Russian NGO, together with eleven regional members of the “Education for All” Coalition, is implementing a USAID-funded program to ensure educational equality for Russian youth and children. The goals of the program are to strengthen the capacity of the Education for All Coalition to effectively advocate, promote, and implement inclusive education practices locally and at the national level; promote positive images of disabled people in twelve communities to break down barriers and negative attitudes toward implementing inclusive schools; and to increase the ability of parents and disabled people locally and nationally to advocate for the right to an equal education for disabled children and youth and for the rights of people with disabilities in general.

Since September 2006, more than 5,000 people (including local educators, government officials, media and member of the community) have participated in public education activities and trainings on the importance of inclusive education. Furthermore, the program has established several successful public awareness campaigns on inclusive education including funding several public service announcements, disseminating inclusive education brochures, participating in a film festival on “Breaking Down Barriers”, and organizing several public rallies in various regions throughout Russia. These campaigns have been widely received by the government, media and general public. For example, the campaign “Children Should Go to School Together” that launched in the spring of 2007 in all project cities, has been endorsed by the Moscow City Duma’s Committee on Education and Science and by others. For more information on Perspektiva or its programs, please visit <http://eng.perspektiva-inva.ru>.

For more information, please contact Lloyd Feinberg, Perspektiva CTO at lfeinberg@usaid.gov or Anne Hayes, Disability and Gender Specialist, Investing in Women and Development (IWID) Fellow United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at ahayes@dcfwvf.org.

Inclusive Education in Vietnam: From Local Models to National Policy

In May 2006, Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) issued regulations on inclusive education (IE) for children with disabilities, moving the issue from a humanitarian initiative to a legal mandate. This landmark action opens access to a quality education for the estimated 750,000 disabled children in Vietnam who have yet to enter a regular classroom.

The USAID-funded Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities program, implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), builds upon past pilot projects, lessons learned and best practices from thirteen years of experience in Vietnam. The three year program combines direct support to local schools in the northern and central provinces with nationwide policy advocacy in cooperation with four MOET departments. Inclusive education is used as a springboard for full inclusion of children, adolescents, and adults with disabilities and encourages involvement of people with disabilities in all aspects of the project. The goal is to expand and deepen cooperation with policymakers in the sectors of education, health, and labor.

In order to reach Vietnam’s ambitious goals, the program is currently working together with the MOET to strengthen the legal foundations for IE at all levels of education, including secondary and higher education, and through a specialized pre-service curriculum in teacher training colleges and universities. Additionally, a technical school is offering international-standard information technology training for disabled youth, linking to job placement in this growing industry.

In the target provinces, attendance rates are close to or surpassing national targets; however, children with more severe disabilities (including many of those believed to be affected by Agent Orange) are not yet included at the same rates. Since coordination among the various sectors involved in support to people with disabilities continues to be a challenge, the Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities program is also joining efforts with the National Coordinating Council on Disability and the growing number of non-governmental disabled peoples’ organizations that are forming part of Vietnam’s civil society.

For more information on the Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities program, please contact the CTO, Ms. Brett Jones, at bjones@usaid.gov.



Ngo Hoang Anh (center) is one of 250,000 disabled children learning in an inclusive environment in Vietnamese schools. Through support from his peer group, teacher and family, he has shown dramatic improvements in health, sociability, and development.

(Photo: Nguyen Le Khanh / CRS Vietnam in Yen Mo district, Ninh Binh province, 2006)

REACHing Children with Special Learning Needs in India

REACH India, a four and a half year project funded by USAID, reaches out to vulnerable, at risk and excluded children and complements the Government of India's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) campaign to provide education to all children. The project, working with 101 local NGOs through a variety of initiatives and a wide range of approaches, is reaching out to more than 200,000 at-risk children, including approximately 3,000 children with disabilities.



An NGO resource center remedial class in India

As a part of its overall approach, REACH India works with four NGOs that address the needs of children with disabilities. Though these NGOs have been working in the field of disability for a number of years and have ample experience, the REACH India project gave them a new opportunity and a new canvas to work on – working in formal schools (for AADI, Manovikas and Ummeed) and transferring their experience to others (for Digdarshika). These NGOs are pursuing innovative models and strategies to reach out to children with various types of physical, learning, emotional and behavioral disabilities. In addressing the needs of children with “hidden” disabilities such as attention-related disorders, the project is reaching children whose needs are often not attended to or are un-diagnosed, especially among the more marginalized sectors of society.

The approaches of all four NGOs have certain common characteristics: identification of children, sensitization and awareness raising for parents and communities, specialized teacher training, and the provision of remedial help without isolating these children. However, each NGO is approaching inclusive education with interesting variations.

The NGO **Manovikas Kendra** is ensuring that children with learning disabilities due to dyslexia, dysgraphia (neurological disorder resulting in writing difficulties) and dyscalculia (learning disability in learning or comprehending mathematics) are able to cope with the curriculum and do not drop out of school due to these learning disabilities, which are often not taken seriously by teachers or parents. Special educators and resource teachers identify children through a screening process consisting of behavioral checklists, academic records and individual case histories. Remedial classes are conducted twice a week and are tailored to each child's specific needs through a holistic rehabilitation process.

The NGO **Ummeed** works to improve the quality of education and social adjustment for children with emotional and behavioral learning disabilities by improving classroom management. One school is identified each year and inclusive practices are integrated among all stakeholders involved with the school - from the management to the teachers, parents, students and the community. The project coordinators observe classroom activities by paying special attention to children with disabilities and the way teachers manage them and make recommendations. Psychosocial services are provided, education modules are created, and adjustment interventions are implemented.

The NGO **AADI** is working in five government schools on a pilot basis. The project promotes inclusive practices and culture through a whole school development approach by influencing existing practices at the school level to support inclusion of children and by evolving appropriate and replicable models that address specific educational and social needs of children with disabilities. AADI is also transforming its own special school that catered to disabled children, into one that serves both disabled and non-disabled children. The project team helped to develop national level guidelines for evaluation of children with disabilities. The Delhi government has decided to scale up this model to 25 additional schools.

The **Digdarshika Institute of Rehabilitation and Research** is an NGO specializing in physical disabilities and mental health. With the assistance of REACH India, the organization is working on inclusive education and reaching out to children with disabilities. Advocacy programs are used to sensitize the community regarding disability and the rights of such children through street plays, film shows and discussions.

Today around 3,000 children with disabilities have been identified by these NGOs and are undergoing remedial education in the NGOs' resource centers. Many of these children are in the process of being mainstreamed into local government schools with the help of government authorities. Additionally, efforts are being made to replicate the interventions with government support in other areas.

For more information please contact Sourav Banerjee, REACH India Project CTO at sbanerjee@usaid.gov.

Engaging Disabled People’s Organizations in Development Cooperation

The “ENGAGE” Program is a two year project in the preliminary stages of implementation, awarded by USAID to the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in September 2007. ENGAGE will work in three developing countries to design and implement pilot projects that mark and clarify the intersection between disability rights and the often complex architecture of mainstream international development assistance. Through this unique “inclusive development” program, ENGAGE will engage disabled people’s organizations in development cooperation and provide training to USAID and its implementing partners.

The approach of ENGAGE includes three inter-related components, implemented in three countries – Honduras, Pakistan, and Zambia – including (a) establishing a national Working Group on Disability and Development as a forum for disability groups to meet regularly with donors and implementers to advance policies and programs that promote inclusive development; (b) launching model inclusive development pilot programs that strengthen a disability dimension within existing USAID investments in the Basic Education, HIV/AIDS, and Governance sectors; and (c) designing and organizing training sessions on inclusive development for USAID and its implementing partners in the three country settings and in Washington, DC.

The ENGAGE project will strengthen the capacity of disability organizations to become active partners in the design and implementation of development cooperation; develop model inclusive development strategies that benefit individuals with disabilities in the three county settings, and that can be adapted and replicated throughout USAID’s program interventions; and provide training that results in the inclusion of a viable disability dimension in a significant number of USAID requests for proposals, and meaningful partnerships between USAID implementing agencies and organizations of and for people with disabilities.

For more information, contact Lloyd Feinberg ENGAGE CTO at lfeinberg@usaid.gov.

Ten Questions (TQ) Screening Instrument

1. Compared with other children, did the child have any serious delay in sitting, standing or walking?
2. Compared with other children, does the child have difficulty seeing, either in daytime or at night?
3. Does the child appear to have difficulty hearing?
4. When you tell the child to do something, does he/she seem to understand what you are saying?
5. Does the child have difficulty in walking or moving his/her arms or does he/she have weakness and/or stiffness in the arms or legs?
6. Does the child sometimes have fits, become rigid or loose consciousness?
7. Does the child learn to do things like other children his/her age?
8. Does the child speak at all (can he/she make himself/herself understood in words;
9. For 3- to 9- year-olds ask:
Is the child’s speech in any way different from normal (not clear enough to be understood by people other than his/her immediate family?

For 2- year- olds ask:
Can he/She name at least one object (for example, an animal, a toy, a cup, a spoon?)
10. Compared with other children of his/her age, does the child appear in any way mentally backward, dull or slow?

Source: Zaman S S (Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh), Khan N Z, Islam S, Banu S, Dixit S, ShROUT P and Durkin M. Validity of the ‘**Ten Questions**’ for screening serious childhood disability: results from urban Bangladesh. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 1990; **19**: 613–620