

Midterm Evaluation of Project on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Tien Giang Province



Final Report by EENET CIC

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Abbreviations

CST	Community Support Team
DOET	Department of Education and Training
DOH	Department of Health
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
DPO	Disabled People Organisation
EENET	Enabling Education Network
EENET CIC	Enabling Education Network Community Interest Company
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NMA-V	Norwegian Mission Alliance in Vietnam
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOH	Ministry of Health
PMB	Project Management Board
RC	Resource Centre
SCIE	Steering Committee for Inclusive Education
TOR	Terms of Reference

Executive Summary

The evaluation of the project on inclusive education (IE) for Children with Disabilities in Tien Giang Province was based on, and responds to, the following objectives:

- How does the project achieve its objectives and outcomes?
- How does the RC and educational units fulfil their roles, duties on developing a comprehensive system to support children with disabilities at project sites in the province?
- What are the main lessons learnt for local partners and Norwegian Mission Alliance in Vietnam (NMA-V) on developing inclusive education in the future?

Some of the main concerns that run through all findings of this evaluation are:

- the lack of involvement of people with disabilities in all processes of IE,
- the lack of planning, by all stakeholders, for sustainability of IE in the province, and
- the lack of communication, between stakeholders, that would form the basis of an effective support system for children with disabilities

The findings from the various visits and meetings, and the analysis of this data and consequent recommendations will be presented according to the following themes:

- **Awareness Raising:**
The consultants found there appears to be very little stigma attached to disabilities in the three districts. However, it appears to be the attitude of the majority that people with disabilities require a lot of special attention and this is a major barrier to independence and inclusion. Raising awareness is necessary at all levels and should fully involve people with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. It is vital that these two groups of stakeholders have a voice throughout the process.
- **Teacher Training:**
The teachers who were interviewed and observed appear to have little knowledge on inclusive education. The perception seems to be the children are 'in school' so therefore included. They appear to work hard and are open to new ideas but lack support in professional development and training. There has been some training from the resource centre but specific to individual disabilities and mainly at the time of a child's enrolment into school. There is no clear data kept on training provision.

- **Early Intervention Program at the Resource Centre**
 Children come with their parents to the resource centre and receive sessions with Resource Centre (RC) teachers. Parents are actively involved in early intervention sessions and encouraged to learn techniques that they can implement with their children at home. The RC offers group activities for children and parents in the early intervention programme. There are links with some schools and communities, however not all parents and schools were aware of the activities at the RC. The planning and implementation of rehabilitation and physiotherapy services, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, would be a very positive step forward in the project.
- **Identification and Assessment**
 Community support teams and parent groups, if capacitated and mobilised could prove to be very effective in the identification of children with disabilities. Assessment is currently thought of by many as a medical issue rather than functional. RC staff and teachers should be trained in basic functional assessment so they begin to think about what a child **can do**. In other words they should begin to see the child and not the disability. There appears to be very few activities taking place in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MOH).
- **Vocational Training**
 The consultants visited several young people in their places of work who appear to be independent and have sustainable livelihoods. There is very little happening at the RC and those activities that were observed follow the common misconception that people with disabilities only have the capacity to sew or make jewellery. Plans should be implemented for restructuring of the program beginning with forging stronger links with the business world and a survey of the needs of employers and the job market. Any training plans could then be in line with the needs of the job market.
- **Assistive Devices and Training Materials**
 For this area the consultants were looking at teaching materials for IE both in schools and at the RC. This includes reference materials for capacity building and teaching aids to be used in lessons and for sharing skills.
 The second area taken into consideration during this section of the evaluation was assistive devices for rehabilitation, for example adapted desks and seating. Basic support such as appropriate, supportive seating can be the difference between whether a child is included or not.
- **Sustainability**
 There appears to be concern about sustainability of the project and this concern was raised during interviews with management at the RC. The consultants found no planning for sustainability after 2017. Planning must include all stakeholders and actions should begin immediately. Sustainability will only be possible if all major stakeholders take ownership of the project and are fully committed to IE.

- **Accessibility**

For this section the evaluators looked at physical accessibility. It is not only about access for all to buildings, transportation, public spaces like pre-schools and primary schools but also about cleanliness, and safety. In many of the locations visited during the evaluation, rooms in use were on the second floor and reachable only by staircases and not accessible for children with disabilities who were part of the class. The implementation of an effective rehabilitation service could begin to look at the physical barriers in the learning environment. Strategies need to be in place to make adaptations, even small ones such as hand-rails, to aid independence for children with disabilities.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Ms Luu Ho Thanh Truc, Ms Nguyen Thi Mai Huong and Mr Tran Bao Minh at NMA-V's office in Ho Chi Minh City for their support and facilitation of the evaluation. Their advice and logistic arrangements have been constructive and helped us to conduct the evaluation in a cooperative, effective and transparent manner.

We would also like to thank the following institutions and their management and staff for their support and hospitality during the field visits:

- Government officials in Tien Giang province;
- Government officials of Cai Lay and Cho Gao district and My Tho City;
- The Resource Centre;
- The Deaf Club;
- The young adults visited in their places of work;
- Anh Duong pre-school;
- Dang Van Be primary school;
- Hoang Hoa Tham primary school;
- Long Binh Dien primary school;
- My Hanh Trung pre-school;
- My Phuoc Tay pre-school;
- My Tinh An pre-school;
- Tan Binh primary school;
- Thanh Tri–primary school;
- Phu Kiet pre-school;
- Phu Kiet primary school;

The visits to the project partners, the observations and interactions with management, parents, teachers, and children were very informative. The cooperation of everyone involved was highly appreciated.

Finally allow us to wish all of those who are carrying forward inclusive education programs in Tien Giang province every success in the pursuit of an inclusive society where all children, youth and adults are provided with opportunities to prosper and succeed. To be able to live their lives with greater independence in communities who embrace and value diversity of abilities and backgrounds. We are truly impressed by your dedication, motivation and achievements.

Alexander Hauschild and Diane Mills
December 2013

Introduction

Project Background

In 2009 NMA-V in cooperation with Tien Giang provincial Department of Education and Training (DOET) implemented a project titled '**Support for inclusive education for children with disabilities**'. The first phase of the project from 2009 until 2012 in Cho Gao and Cai Lay districts was aimed at:

- Awareness-raising on the needs of children with disabilities.
- Resource Centre capacity building.
- Capacity building for teachers, rehabilitation staff, community staff and families of children with disabilities.

In 2012 the project expanded to My Tho city.

The project objectives are that children with disabilities:

- receive early intervention and quality IE;
- are oriented and trained in vocations in order to have sustainable livelihoods

The expected outcomes are that:

- awareness on children with disabilities changes positively;
- capacity of RC staff and teachers towards different types of disabilities and IE in pre-schools and primary schools improves;
- quality of the technical support system in the district improves;
- a programme on vocational training and job creation is formulated and effectively operated.

Expected Results of the Evaluation

The evaluation aims at answering the following questions:

- How does the project achieve its objectives and outcomes?
- How do the RC and educational units fulfil their roles and duties on developing a comprehensive system to support children with disabilities at project sites in the province?
- What are the main lessons learnt for local partner and NMA-V on developing inclusive education in the future?

Evaluation Methodology

The approach to collect data for this evaluation has been divided into two major stages:

1. Preparation & Desk Study
2. Field Research

Preparation & Desk Study

During the first stage, the evaluators reviewed the materials submitted by NMA-V. Through email and Skype conversations individual findings from the documentation were discussed between the two consultants, as were follow-up strategies for certain findings from the desk research. The evaluators developed a set of guiding questions based on the terms of reference (TORs) and the results of the documentation review. Using these questions the evaluators were able to work separately in the field whilst keeping a common focus (see Annexes: 'Proposed research questions for Midterm evaluation of IE for children with disabilities in Tien Giang Province').

The following documents were made available to the evaluators for review:

- Plan of action year 2010 inclusive education project, Tien Giang province
- Annual plan of action year 2011 inclusive education project, Tien Giang province
- Plan of action year 2012 inclusive education project, Tien Giang province
- Statistics of schools and children with disabilities in inclusive schools for school year 2013/2014
- Report on the survey of children with disabilities and inclusive education in Tien Giang
- Evaluation of Norwegian Mission Alliance Vietnam development program
- Word file on project structure

Field Research

The two evaluators worked together during visits to:

- Provincial DOET (11.11.2013);
- Meetings at the RC (12.11.2013);
 - Early intervention observation;
 - FGDs (Focus Group Discussion) with Parents of children in early intervention programme and RC teachers;
- Phu Kiet primary school (13.11.2013)
 - Government officials: steering committee for inclusive education (SCIE), woman union, and district DOE

They then worked independently during visits to:

- NMA-V office Ho Chi Minh City (11.11.2013);
- Phu Kiet pre-school (13.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- My Tinh An pre-school (13.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- Long Binh Dien primary school (14.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- Phu Kiet primary school (14.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;

- Tan Binh primary school (14.11.2013)
 - Government officials: SCIE, woman union, and district DOET;
- My Hanh Trung pre-school (15.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- My Phuoc Tay pre-school (15.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- Tan Binh primary school (15.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- Dang Van Be primary school (15.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- Meetings at the RC (12.11. & 16.11.2013);
 - Meeting with Deaf Club;
 - Observation of vocational training;
 - Visit young adults in their places of work;
- FGDs with Parents of children in early intervention programme and RC teachers;
- Anh Duong pre-school (18.11.2013)
 - Classroom observations;
 - FGDs with teachers and parents;
- Thanh Tri primary school (18.11.2013)

- Government officials: SCIE, woman union, and district DOET;

This strategy enabled the consultants to utilise the time more effectively. By working independently for some of the time they were able to visit a larger number of sites and therefore expand the number of target groups. By working together on some visits the consultants were able to establish a common approach to facilitation/questioning in addition to a shared reflection on the data.

During the field research the evaluators used a range of participatory techniques to elicit opinions from teachers, parents, children and other key informants. Methods included focus group discussions, group work, interactive play sessions and photo elicitation. Some of the more in-depth participatory techniques that had been suggested in the evaluation proposal had to be dropped because of time constraints. Students in pre-schools and primary schools have a full schedule from morning until late afternoon, and so it was not possible to spend enough time with them to carry out drawing, mapping, transect walks or drama sessions. Nevertheless, the activities that were possible enabled the evaluators to gather sufficient data to offer a clear overview on the current situation of inclusive education in Tien Giang Province, and thus make informed analysis and recommendations.

During the field work phase, the evaluators spent one day jointly analysing their findings, identifying lessons learnt, discussing the report and developing initial recommendations for the project.

Methodology Constraints

Translations

NMA-V staff, with the agreement of the evaluators, acted as translators during all meetings of the evaluation. The benefits of such an arrangement are that the translator is familiar with the project and terminology. The potential constraints of this arrangement are that the translations might be biased, that FGD participants might feel reluctant to be critical of NMA-V, or that the translator becomes tired over the course of the day and thus the quality of the translations decreases.

FGD participants

During some FGDs with teachers and parents, school principals and the RC's director and vice-director were present. The evaluators believe that this influenced the discussions and may have biased the results to some extent. Staff might have been reluctant to be critical of their supervisors, and parents might have been fearful of sanctions if they were seen to be too critical. For instance, in one pre-school a very stern Vice Principal continually initiated dialogue with the parents and at one point even held a book up to shield her face as if instructing the parent in their answers, thus rendering the data gathered from this FGD as unreliable.

Once this potential problem became apparent, the evaluator, with the support of NMA-V staff, politely asked school principals and the RC's director and vice-director not to attend any further FGDs.

The schools selected the participants for the parent and teacher FGDs. The evaluators had no information about the participants of the FGDs prior to the meeting. Inevitably there is a risk that participants were chosen who favour the current arrangements at schools and that those with critical voices were not selected to participate.

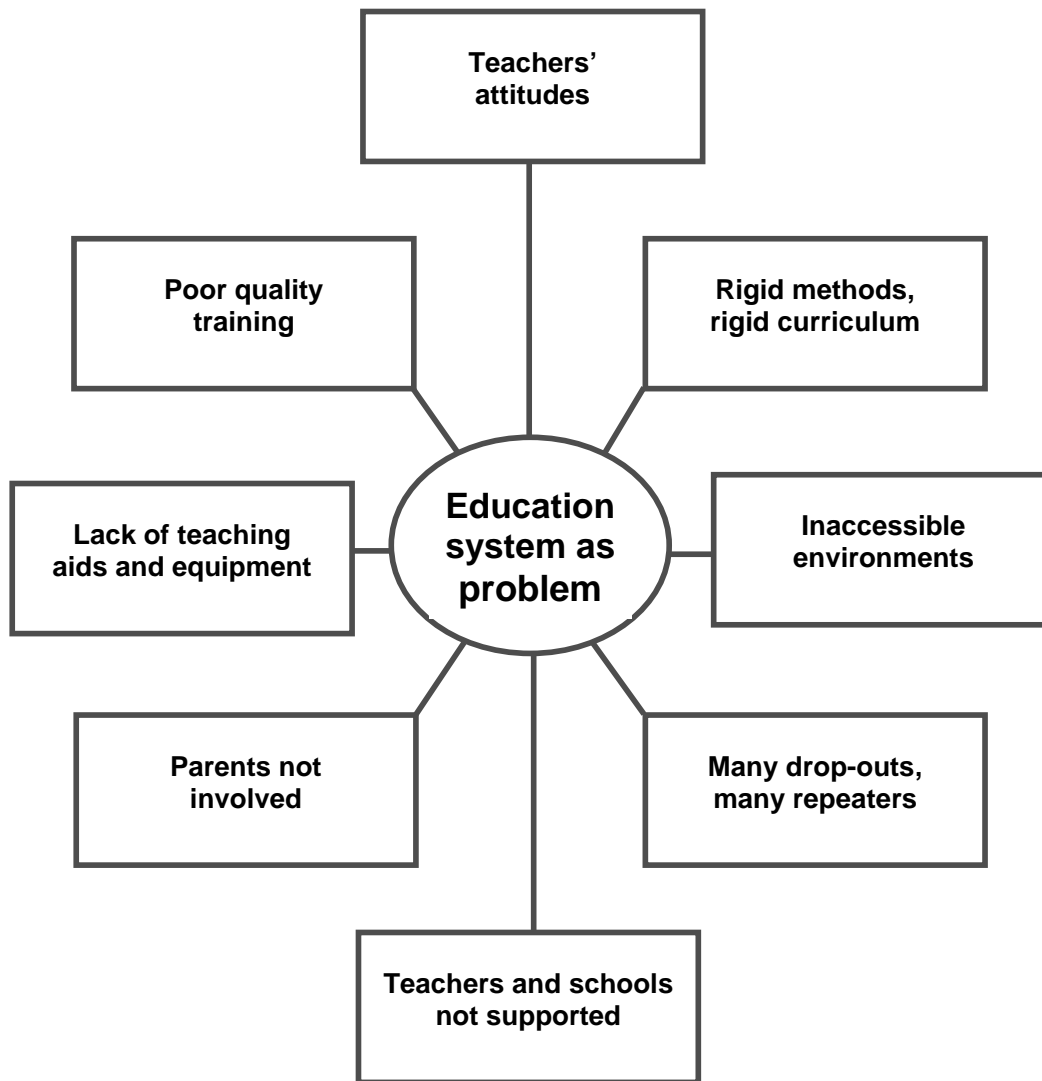
Classroom observations

The classrooms observations were limited by time. The evaluators had the opportunity to observe several classes in most schools. The observation time was between 10 minutes to one full school hour or per-school session. The evaluators were therefore only able to gather an overall impression of the teaching style in some classes. A longer observation period over several days would have enabled them to gain a more accurate understanding of teachers' skills, methods and overall capacity, and of the relationships in the classrooms (between teachers and pupils, and among pupils).

Evaluators Understanding of IE

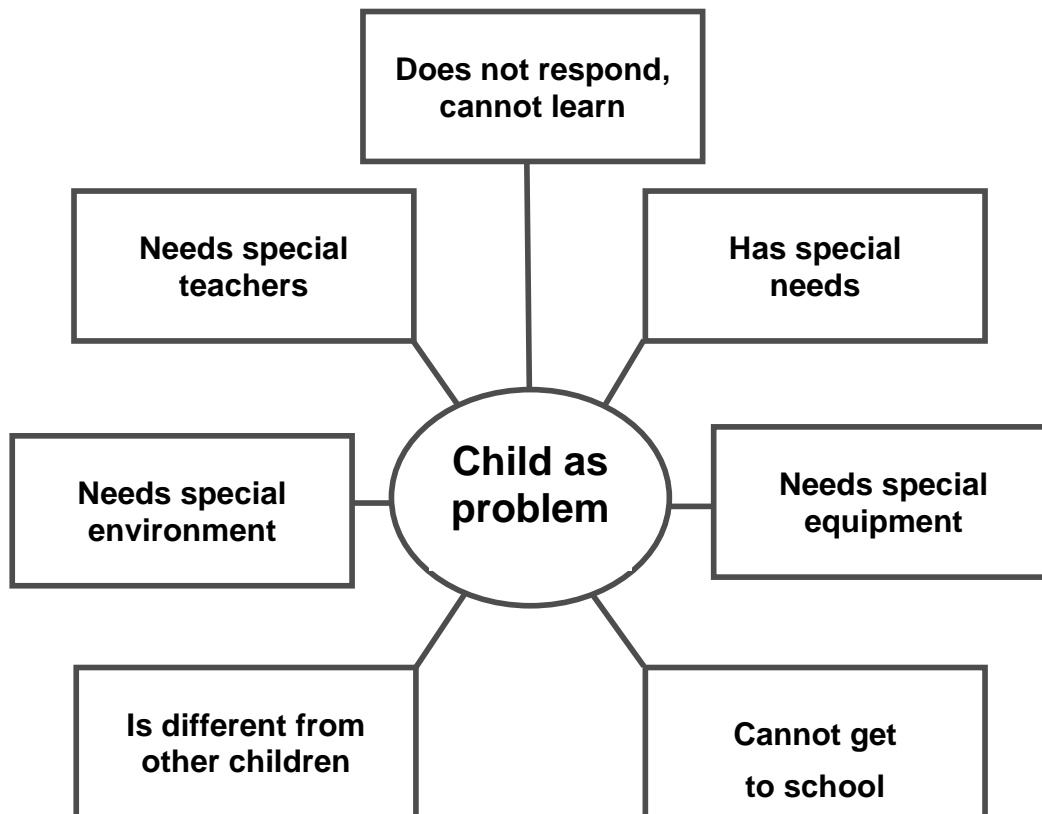
Inclusive Education

This evaluation is based on the evaluators interpreting IE as a continuous process of whole-school improvement, where schools, education officials and the community identify barriers to children's access, participation and achievement in education and seek solutions to overcome these barriers. It is not only about bringing children with disabilities into schools. It is about making schools and communities aware of their obligation to educate all children and develop the necessary policies, attitudes and practices/skills to do so. Inclusive education is not just about access, but about ensuring that children actively participate in the learning process, and achieve both academically and socially. In an inclusive education system, barriers to education are perceived as being within the education system. The education system strives to adapt to, and be flexible enough to meet, the individual needs of all children in the community.



Integrated Education

Integrated education seems to have a similar approach to inclusive education in that children with disabilities are placed in mainstream schools. However, an integrated approach mainly perceives barriers to inclusion as being within the child and not within the education system. It therefore aims to change the child to fit into the school, while the school (and its policies, attitudes and practices) remain largely unchanged. If the child cannot change and meet the school's expectations, he/she is left to fail or drop out.



Content of the Evaluation

Analysis of the data revealed several key themes. The findings from the various visits and meetings, and the analysis of this data and consequent recommendations will therefore be presented according to these themes.

Awareness raising

Raising awareness about inclusive education, disability, rights, equality, etc., often forms the backbone of an inclusive education programme. Awareness-raising work has therefore been an important aspect of the NMA-V project.

Aims of awareness raising within the project

The project aims to achieve the following in regards to awareness-raising:

- In the first quarter of 2012, consolidated the project management board (PMB) with the cooperation between Tien Giang provincial DOET, RC and NMA-V.
- Consolidated IE Steering Committee Board in Cho Gao and Cai Lay districts; and established a Steering Committee Board in My Tho City.
- 70% of primary schools and pre schools in Cho Gao and Cai Lay Districts and 30% of primary schools and pre schools in My Tho City have children with disabilities participating in Inclusive Education and coordinate with RC in early intervention and inclusive education.
- 70% of parents who have children with disabilities in Cho Gao and Cai Lay districts and 30% of parents who have children with disabilities in My Tho City knew how to take care and educate their children at home and cooperate with the schools.
- 6 new community supporting groups in the project sites are established.
- 1 parents of children with disabilities club is established in Cai Lay District.
- At least 05 companies in Tien Giang province will receive young people with disabilities to work in the companies.
- 5 new football for all clubs are established, 90% of football clubs have

participation of children with disabilities.

- Information about IE project is broadcasted monthly on radio and television.

Activities to achieve awareness aims for parents

The project plan states that it wants **'70% of parents who have children with disabilities in Cho Gao and Cai Lay districts and 30% of parents who have children with disabilities in My Tho City knew how to take care and educate their children at home and cooperate with the schools.'**

An official at DOET when asked about barriers for inclusive education indicated the parents:

'Parents do not accept that their children have an impairment.'

'Parents think that their children with disabilities cannot learn.'

'Children from poor families whose parents do not care about their future.'

'Children of young parents where parents do not have a good cooperation with the teacher.'

Reflection and recommendation:

It is important that parents and other caregivers of children understand inclusive education, what services are offered, as well as what will change in schools and the education system to accommodate pupils' needs. The parents must believe in the project and its goals. Only then will they start to send their children to inclusive schools.

Not having the parents of children with disabilities 'on-board' is a great loss for the project. Parents of children with disabilities are an effective tool to influence school policies. They have the potential to become active agents for the project and inclusive education.

The project plan for 2012 does not recognise parents as major stakeholders. Raising-awareness activities mentioned are for 'Vietnam Day of People with Disabilities 18/04', 'Inclusive Mid Autumn Festival' and 'International Day of People with Disabilities 03/12'. The objectives in the plan appear to be aimed at the general population with no specific mention of parents and caregivers of children with disabilities.

The provincial DOET indicates that parents have misconceptions about their children (with disabilities) and therefore create barriers for the development of

inclusive education. It is the evaluators' opinion that parents do not have these misconceptions without a reason. Parents usually take decisions related to the development and future of their children based on what they think is possible. If parents come to the conclusion that formal education at this stage of the project is not feasible or relevant for their children, the project needs to create more awareness about what is offered and how children with and without disabilities are supported in school.

The evaluators recommend:

- Implement more awareness campaigns for parents of children with disabilities and other children who face challenges in school. Inform the parents about:
 - the benefits of education for their children,
 - their children's right to education,
 - their obligation to give their children education,
 - inclusive education and what it means for them as parents and for their children. Explain that parents and children will receive additional support, and individualised services to develop the children's potential.
- Other government units like community support teams (CSTs), women's union, farmer union etc. should be encouraged to hold awareness activities supported by co-facilitators from the project.
- Home visits should be part of the early intervention when a school, district DOET, CST, women's union etc. receives information about a child not in school.

During FGDs with parents in pre-schools and primary schools parents explained that they are participating in the parents' clubs established by the RC. During the meetings, parents have the opportunity to exchange experience, support one another and discuss school issues.

Reflection and recommendation:

- The parents' clubs meeting are held only three times a year. It is recommended to have meetings more often to keep parents motivated and react when they face challenges. It is important to keep minutes of the meetings including:
 - parents' feedback on the development of their children,

- parents' feedback on teachers' performance,
- parents' input for monitoring and evaluation of the project
- These minutes should become
 - an advocacy tool aimed at schools and government officials,
 - indicators for the parents' perception of their understanding of IE, their children's abilities, the school's performance and the overall performance of the project.
- Current members should also be proactive in involving more parents in the club.

Activities to achieve awareness aims for teachers

Most of the planned activities listed under 'Raising awareness for RC's teachers and key teachers of Cho Gao and Cai Lay district' are rather technical workshops than awareness raising activities:

Excerpt of activities and objectives on 2012:

Activity:	Conduct advance trainings for staff and teachers of RC on early intervention and inclusive education programs at Institute, university
Objective:	Improve technical capacity in early intervention and inclusive education for staff and teachers of RC
Activity:	Conduct training course for teachers of RC and key teachers of pilot schools on how to assess children with mental retardation by using Kyoto toolkit."
Objective:	15 staff and teachers know how to assess and use Kyoto toolkit
Activity:	12 workshops on "support directly on design and implementation of effective lessons" (Each type of disability includes 2 courses: 01 for primary school and 01 for pre schools)
Objective:	360 staff of RC and teachers of pre schools and primary schools in the project sites are supported directly on how to design effective lessons for children with disabilities in types of: hearing impairment, learning difficulties, language difficulties and visual impairment (03 days / workshop)
Activity:	Conduct training on advance skills of inclusive education for children with autism
Objective:	15 teachers of RC and teachers of schools including autistic children in project sites are trained on teaching children with autism.

Activity:	5 days of intensive training course on IE for children with hearing impairment for staff, teachers of RC and key teachers of DOETs in the project sites
Objective:	Improve the knowledge on IE for 30 staff, teachers of RC, staff of DOETs and teachers teaching IE in the schools
Activity:	5 days of intensive training course on IE for children with learning difficulties for staff, teachers of RC and key teachers of DOETs in the project sites
Objective:	Improve the knowledge on IE for 30 staff, teachers of RC, staff of DOETs and teachers teaching IE in the schools
Activity:	5 days of intensive training course on IE for children with language – communication difficulties for staff, teachers of RC and key teachers of DOETs in the project sites
Objective:	Improve the knowledge on IE for 30 staff, teachers of RC, staff of DOETs and teachers teaching IE in the schools
Activities:	5 days of intensive training course on IE for children with visual impairment for staff, teachers of RC and key teachers of DOETs in the project sites
Objective:	Improve the knowledge on IE for 30 staff, teachers of RC, staff of DOETs and teachers teaching IE in the schools
Activity:	Conduct case studies
Objective:	10 RC’s teachers will carry out case studies for teaching material’s references
Activity:	Support English courses for RC’s staff (12 months)
Objective:	At least 2 teachers can translate document and communicate with consultant (NMA support 50% fee for the course).
Activity:	Enhance training skills for trainers by proactive training methods
Objective:	RC’s teachers and key teachers of the project sites are more confidence when they carry out trainings in local areas.

Reflection and recommendation:

- Activities for awareness-raising should not be held as technical workshops for teachers on how to teach children with disabilities. Awareness campaigns should rather focus on the whole community’s (including teachers) obligation to ensure that children with disabilities have access to education and what the community must do to become more inclusive. Contents of awareness workshops could be:

- legislations supporting inclusion,
- disability models (medical model, charity model and social model),
- the difference between inclusion and integration,
- the underlying causes or discrimination, and
- roles of community members in awareness raising campaigns.
- Technical workshops for stakeholders should include:
 - Education planners on how to make the education system more flexible.
 - Principals and teachers
 - on how to include and teach children with disabilities,
 - on how to develop assistive teaching devices, and
 - on how to promote parental involvement.
 - Parents on how support their children. In these workshops parents should learn about their role and obligations.
 - CSTs should be trained in how to build up a network of support for children with disabilities.

Government officials understanding of inclusive education

During the focus group discussions with SCIEs, DOET, ministry of education and training (MOET), PMB and RC it became clear that most of them have very little understanding of inclusive education and what distinguishes inclusive education from integrated education.

During the initial meeting with the provincial DOET, officials claimed that inclusive education is not limited to the three project districts but has already spread throughout the whole province. It is the evaluators understanding that they mean that children with disabilities have access to mainstream schools.

During a meeting with officials in Cho Gao district, government officials did not answer questions related to their understanding of inclusive education or gave answers that were not relevant to the questions. The evaluators opinion was that their understanding of the project's goal was to enrol children with disabilities in

mainstream schools, without actively rebuilding the education system in a way that enables schools to adjust to the needs of the children.

This finding is further supported by government officials in Cai Lay district who indicated that they have been implementing inclusive education since 1996.

Reflection and recommendation:

To implement an effective inclusive education project that is relevant for the needs of children, parents and other caregivers, it is important that all stakeholders have a common understanding of inclusive education. In an inclusive education project that mainly focuses on children with disabilities, stakeholders should have a clear understanding of:

- the differences between inclusive and integrated education;
- the differences between the medical, the charity and the social model of disability;
- the concept of barriers to access, participation and achievement in education.

The evaluators therefore recommend the project:

- to hold inclusive education workshops for members of the SCIE, Woman Unions, RC management team, CSTs and PMB.
- The trainings should be participatory
- The trainings should focus on the differences between inclusive and integrated education as well as disability models (medical, charity and social model).

Involvement of persons with disabilities in awareness campaigns

In Cho Gao district, the evaluators asked the SCIE if persons with disabilities were involved in planning and implementing awareness activities for the community. The officials just smiled and answered that persons of disabilities are not capable of doing such things.

Reflection and recommendation:

The statement that 'persons with disabilities are not capable of contributing to awareness campaigns' strongly indicates that there is a need for further awareness creation within the SCIE. This statement demonstrates a negative

attitude towards people with disabilities and the evaluators recommend more in-depth awareness training for government officials that should include:

- All stakeholders have to focus on the abilities of persons rather than the disabilities. Persons with disabilities should be made more visible and given a voice during awareness campaigns. Positive role models should be actively sought.
- People with disabilities should be actively involved in all stages of raising awareness; from planning to implementation.
- Persons with disabilities should also be present in the PMB. The project has to lead by example – inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Build capacity of persons with disabilities, including members of the deaf 'Deaf Club', with the long-term aim of full involvement into all aspects of the project.

The project plan of action for 2012 states as an indicator for 'Awareness of community on children with disabilities positively changed' that

- 70% of primary schools and pre schools in Cho Gao and Cai Lay Districts and 30% of primary schools and pre schools in My Tho City have children with disabilities participating in Inclusive Education and coordinate with RC in early intervention and inclusive education.

Reflection and recommendation:

The number of schools enrolling children with disabilities does not necessarily indicate a positive awareness change. Increased enrolment of children with disabilities can occur due to stricter implementation of government policy. A statement by the principle at My Hanh Trung pre-school during a FGD encourages this finding:

'Inclusive education is a guideline of the government and we are ready to receive children with disabilities.'

- The evaluators recommend that the project revises the indicators for achieving greater awareness among parents.
- More suitable indicators could be change in parents':
 - perception of the importance of education, and
 - Perception of the abilities of their children.
- It is hard to measure these changes. FGDs are an effective tool to get an impression on how the parents feel.

Teacher Training on Disabilities and Inclusive Education

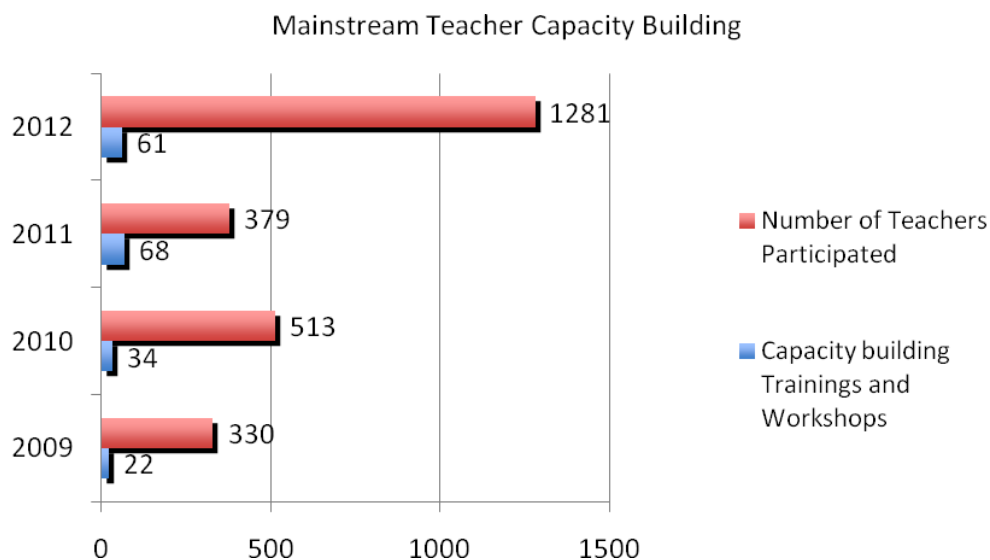
Teacher training is a vital element of any inclusive education programme. Teachers require various levels of training and support if they are going to become skilled and confident teachers who are able to include all children in their classes. Training and support includes **raising their basic awareness** of children's rights to education, of disability issues, and of discrimination (causes and ways to tackle it). It also includes **enabling teachers to not only learn about the theory of inclusive education, but develop the practical skills needed to transform theory into practice** in the classroom. A third level of training and support for teachers within inclusive education programmes is their **ongoing learning, through formal professional development activities and through informal opportunities to exchange ideas and problem-solve** together.

Aims of the training within the project

Within the NMAV project, the proposal/work plans aimed to achieve the following in relation to teacher training

- 70% of teachers having children with disabilities in Cho Gao and Cai Lay districts can able to design and carry out lessons effective for each type of disability.
- 80% of teachers having children with disabilities of pre-schools and primary schools in Cho Gao and Cai Lay District have skills of early intervention (for pre-schools), change perceptions on ability of children with disabilities and apply the methods which have learned in teaching for children with disabilities.
- 30% of teachers of pre-schools and primary schools having children with disabilities in My Tho City, can know characters of each type of disability and able to make the individual education plan for children in inclusive learning.
- 100% of satellite schools will receive the support from RC on early intervention and teaching methods of inclusive education.
- 240 teachers of schools in Cai Lay District and My Tho City are trained in making individual education plan for children in inclusive learning.
- 120 teachers of pre and primary schools at the pilot districts (Cai Lay District and My Tho City) are trained on counselling skills in inclusive education.
- 360 teachers participated in training course on inclusive education for children with disabilities with different types of disability.

Reach of the training



Between 2009 and 2011, around 1222 teachers participated in trainings/workshops, which is a significant achievement.

The exact numbers trained in each school were not available. Some schools reported that ‘most’ teachers had been trained (although exact numbers were not made available to the consultants, nor were details of the content of the training). In other schools participating in the project it appeared that just a small proportion of teachers have been trained. For instance in Phu Kiet Pre School, just 7 out of 26 teachers had received disability and inclusion training.

Reflection and recommendation:

When only a small proportion of teachers in a school are aware of or have knowledge about IE, the challenge is greater for a project to achieve the kind of whole-school change approach that is central to inclusive education (see section Evaluators Understanding of IE on page 15). To be effective, inclusive schools need to have all teachers (and indeed all managers and support staff) ‘on board’ with the principles and basic practices.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The project should aim to achieve a whole-school approach to inclusive education. This means reviewing its plans and approach to teacher training, to ensure that IE skills and knowledge are reaching all staff.
- This does not necessarily have to mean a more expensive programme that delivers more training workshops, however. Instead it could involve the development of more facilitated peer-to-peer sharing and learning. This would go beyond a traditional cascade training approach (in which

one trained teacher passes on key messages to their colleagues). Instead it could involve, for instance, support to develop small action research activities in the school, through which diverse stakeholders (teachers, principals, parents, officials, etc.) can investigate specific inclusion challenges and work together to find solutions (using their own experiences in and out of school, doing research on the internet, asking questions to RC staff, and generally 'experimenting' with ideas).

- Such an approach, as well as helping to engage the whole school in a practical way in learning about and sharing ideas for inclusion, is also likely to improve the sustainability of inclusive education, by empowering diverse stakeholders to become self-sufficient problem-solvers.

Overview of training for teachers

The RC delivers capacity building activities for mainstream teachers and holds experience-sharing workshops for them. Some teachers have also attended workshops abroad with support through the project. The RC has trained mainstream teachers to develop individual education plans (IEPs). During FGDs some teachers indicated that they only received brief, basic training when a child with disabilities joined their school, but that there was no provision of follow-up training. Other teachers indicated that they had been trained in specific subjects like hearing impairment, speech, mobility and learning disability, but not trained more broadly on inclusive education.

During a meeting in Cho Gao District, officials mentioned that some teachers have been trained to carry out home visits to discuss inclusion issues with parents (who are then encouraged to further share what they have been told).

However, neither the RC nor NMA-V could provide the consultants with a clear overview of the trainings provided to teachers, to help verify or supplement the ad hoc information gathered from the various meetings and FGDs.

Reflection and recommendation:

The lack of available information about training is a concern to the evaluators. It is vitally important for inclusive education projects (and for individual schools) to keep clear records of training (and other staff learning opportunities). This does not just mean recording how many teachers are trained and where and when. It also means keeping a clear record of the content and methodology of training and other learning activities, so that there can be on-going reflection about which approaches or messages are more/less useful, have more/less impact on teachers attitudes and practical skills/confidence, etc. Teacher training activities should be regularly reviewed and revised to take account both of new research and ideas around inclusive

education, and changes happening within the local context. Training for teachers will be more effective, relevant and sustainable if it is based on such a process of regular review and improvement.

It is therefore recommended that:

- A database should be set up to ensure proper records are kept of all trainings. This will provide data for future evaluations, but more importantly will give the project vital information to help with reviewing and improving training on a regular basis.
- This database should include:
 - Workshop name
 - Workshop date
 - Workshop location
 - Details of the content and training methods used
 - Name and contact details of facilitator
 - Name and contact details of participants
 - Details of monitoring and evaluation activities, and records of participants' feedback about the training
 - Information on how many persons have been trained on which subjects.
- Future project plans should include space for regular analysis of training data and training content/methods, so that training courses can be revised/improved annually.

Impact of training

The RC's director indicated that mainstream teachers have learned better ways to teach children and also believed that the quality of the training courses offered had improved. He also indicated that school principals have become more aware of IE, as a result of training, and now actively search for children with disabilities who are out of school.

The evidence gathered by the consultants also suggests that the training and awareness work generally has had a positive impact on teachers' (and other stakeholders') attitudes towards disability. For instance, the consultants were told about the reduction or removal of stigmatisation of children with disabilities, and

teachers and parents (during focus groups) could not recall any instances of discrimination by fellow students or by parents of children who do not have a disability.

However, various stakeholders provided information that suggests on-going challenges that need to be addressed by expanding and improving approaches to training in future. These are outlined below:



Boy with mild developmental impairment gets peer support at My Hanh Trung pre-school.

Teachers' attitudes towards children with disabilities

Teachers on the whole demonstrated positive attitudes towards children with disabilities and a willingness (and a great deal of effort being made) to have them in their schools/classes. However, the way in which teachers interacted with or responded to children with disabilities suggests potential problems with the relevance and effectiveness of the training received (or the support to implement the training).

For instance, the consultant observed (and heard about) disabled children receiving a level of attention that may not actually be helping them to be or feel included. Attempts to engage children with disabilities often seemed to result instead in singling the child out. They also observed/heard about teachers being over-protective of children with disabilities, to the point where children were 'merely attending' class but not being challenged to do anything. Through evidence gathered during focus groups, teachers and other children appear to have the opinion that children with disabilities should automatically receive much more attention than others and cannot be left alone to do things for themselves.

For instance in one school the consultant observed a child with autism being physically moved around the class by the teacher and placed in a position, even though the child was capable of moving around independently. The teacher facilitated no interactions between the child and other children in class, even though the child was observed interacting with friends outside the classroom.

RC teachers also highlighted that mainstream teachers need to be better able to see or recognise the capacity of their students.

Reflection and recommendation:

There can be a fine line between offering a child some extra help and singling the child out as different. Being over-protective can have the unintended result of hindering the development of the children's independence and life-skills. The observations and accounts from stakeholders suggest teacher training may not be providing a clear understanding of disability and of how to work with children with disabilities in a way that empowers and enables them, rather than in a way that protects and potentially disempowers.

It is therefore recommended that:

- There should be a review of the content/messages of technical trainings and awareness campaigns. The project must ensure that its core communications clearly explain the difference between giving support and meeting the needs of persons with disabilities, as opposed to over-protectiveness and therefore singling children out and disempowering them.
- To help achieve this, the project should ensure that training and awareness messages are built around developing understanding of the three major disability models: medical model, charity model and social model. For inclusive education to succeed the project should focus on disability from a social model perspective.
- Further, NMA-V should consider encouraging the RC to involve people with disabilities and disabled people organisations in the process of designing and delivering training. Disabled role models should be able to assist in creating and delivering messages to teachers about how to work with disabled people in an empowering way and how to give appropriate support without over-protecting.



Pre-school pupil with disability receiving more attention than her peers.

Teachers' skills and capacity

During the field work, teachers stated that they often do not know how to teach all of the children in the classroom, especially children with autism and children with short concentration spans who sometimes become restless and start running around the classroom. Teachers said that they feel left alone. They are also afraid that they spend too much time focusing on the child with a disability and cannot give enough attention to the rest of the class. This is a common issue raised by teachers in various countries, and is by no means unique to the NMAV project.

The evidence gathered also suggests that teachers sometimes feel overburdened with including some children with disabilities during the very long school days, because of the close attention they feel obliged to pay to these children.

Classroom observations revealed a mixed picture in terms of teachers' general skills. Teachers often appeared to be enthusiastic, motivated and friendly. The observation records show some teachers who had planned lessons well and used varied teaching and learning methods. However, other teachers did not differentiate activities or take account of the fact that some children could not join in physical activities. Lessons were often not planned and implemented to meet the needs of individuals, and the use of rigid rows of desks further restricted the activities that teachers could use. Teachers often did not use any teaching/learning materials, and generally used teacher-centred approaches. In primary schools there was very little evidence of children's work on display.

During the initial meeting, NMA-V stated that '**... children (with disabilities) are in school but not learning ...**' and that this was because of teachers. The fact that teachers appear to be insufficiently skilled and/or confident to teach diverse classes raises clear questions about the content of teacher training – both general training and inclusive education training.

Reflection and recommendation:

A common misconception is that teachers need to be taught a range of separate, 'special' methods in order to teach children with disabilities effectively. However, the vast majority of skills that teachers need to teach a diverse class are in fact just good quality teaching skills. Training on inclusive education therefore cannot be seen as entirely separate from training on basic teaching skills. Indeed, by investing in improving basic teacher training – so that every teacher develops quality, child-centred teaching skills – countries can make the implementation of inclusive education more achievable and sustainable.

The evidence from this evaluation suggests a need for improvements to general teaching practices.

It is therefore recommended that:

NMA-V needs to review and revise the inclusive education training curriculum to help 'fill the quality gaps' that basic teacher training is currently leaving. This is likely to include, for instance, training on:

- Identification and intervention strategies for the classroom
- Practical classroom strategies for including **all** children
- How to plan differentiation and curriculum adaptation
- How to devise and adapt teaching and learning materials.

The training also needs to model learner-centred, participatory teaching and learning methods (i.e. practice what it preaches).

NMA-V also needs to engage with organisations, colleges or government agencies that influence or design basic teacher training. All teachers need to be learning (from day one of their training) the core quality teaching skills that underpin inclusive education. This is an advocacy message that NMA-V needs to put forward as part of its inclusive education work, even if NMA-V does not have the remit to directly get involved with reforming general teacher training.

However, no matter how much training teachers receive, they still need support and advice with specific challenges, whether these are related to disability, inclusion or other issues. Without follow-up support, teachers are more likely to revert to old attitudes or 'give up' trying to implement new/difficult practices – support systems are therefore vital for the sustainability of IE.

The project should therefore consider introducing itinerant teacher services to ensure that:

- mainstream pre-school and primary school teachers receive on-going (and practical, hands-on) support in the classroom.

- mainstream teachers have more regular opportunities to seek advice related to the students in their classroom.
- mainstream teachers have access to an on-going inclusive education professional development programme.
- effective planning and support is provided for the individual needs of all children in an inclusive setting, as well as planning and support for whole-school improvements.

Itinerant teachers – if appropriately trained and skilled - could also play a key role in facilitating the action research approaches suggested in section “Reach of the training”, as a way of enabling the whole school to engage in and learn more about IE.

Training needs and priorities

Training is most effective when it meets a specific conceptual or practical need. The evaluation evidence suggests that the training to date has not been sufficiently addressing teachers’ needs or interests. For instance, teachers at Phu Kiet primary school stated that they were randomly assigned to trainings and that the trainings were very often not provided according to the needs in their classrooms.

Further, as we have seen above, the training provided has often focused on specific disability issues, and not on improving teachers’ general teaching practices and enabling them to develop practical skills that will help them to support the presence, participation and achievement of all children in their class.

Reflection and recommendation:

It is often not easy to determine what training or support teachers really need. Indeed, teachers themselves may not always fully understand their own strengths and weaknesses, or accurately reflect on where they need the most help. A successful inclusive education project needs to invest significant effort in trying to understand teachers’ capacity and needs, and in developing innovative and effective learning solutions that are relevant to local needs.

It is therefore recommended that NMA-V:

- Develop a teachers’ capacity needs assessment mechanism that can be used on a regular basis to revise training plans. This would be more than just a regular survey/questionnaire, and would instead involve a process that enables data to be ‘triangulated’. For instance, it would involve asking teachers what training they think they need; observing samples of teachers to assess their practice strengths and weaknesses; and using

participatory techniques to gather other stakeholders' (children, parents and principals) views on teaching and learning practices. By reviewing teachers' capacity needs from these various perspectives, NMA-V can develop a more pro-active response to the challenge of teacher capacity building. The kind of activities needed for such a needs assessment would also link well with the action research approaches mentioned in section "Reach of the training"

- Using the capacity needs assessment mechanism, develop a more strategic approach to the organisation of training, so that teachers are being supported on relevant issues at appropriate times, and not randomly receiving training that they do not perceive to be meeting their needs.

The consultants observed that teachers had very little access to materials about inclusive education. Some teachers also stated during the field work that they were aware of the RC but had not visited and did not know what services were available, or could not access the services due to the distance of travel to the RC.

Reflection and recommendation:

One-off training courses cannot provide teachers with all the information and skills they need to implement IE. Effective inclusive schools/teachers are ones who are able to become increasingly self-sufficient, identifying and solving barriers to inclusion themselves.

It is therefore recommended that:

- In addition to developing itinerant teacher support, and developing action research approaches in schools, teachers should be supported to become increasingly independent 'inclusive thinkers and doers' through having access to diverse reading materials about inclusion, disability, child rights etc. There are already lots of materials available. NMA-V does not necessarily need to write/publish its own. Instead NMA-V could invest in identifying, translating (and if necessary adapting and simplifying) a selection of practical and contextually relevant materials which can then be disseminated to project schools and/or made available at the RC (with greater publicity about what the RC can provide).

Teacher trainers

The RC has facilitated a large amount of training, which has on the whole been appreciated by teachers. The evaluation data indicates that RC teachers do not necessarily have a high level of education/training on inclusive or special education, despite working to support other teachers on these issues. However, two RC teachers are currently studying for a Bachelor's Degree and one for a Master's

Degree in special education. The RC also invites experts on early intervention to share experiences

Reflection and recommendation:

Inclusive education is a complex and detailed issue – as we have seen, it involves much more than just placing children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. It is therefore essential that teachers (and parents, principals, etc) have access to support and advice from people who are very experienced and well-informed.

It is recommended that:

- NMA-V encourages/supports the RC to plan for more RC staff development as well as planning teacher training. The RC is likely to play an increasingly important role in future, particularly post-2017, and will thus be the key to the sustainability of IE. The RC also needs to be able to help build capacity in other, new RCs as IE expands in Vietnam. It is vital that the RC is staffed by personnel who are constantly learning and ‘upgrading’ their understanding of IE. RC staff also needs to be able to expand the RC’s remit to move beyond a heavily disability-focused interpretation of IE and increasingly take on a role of promoting and supporting broader implementation of IE, for more marginalised groups and from a more social-model perspective. Investment in RC staff development is therefore vital for ensuring that teachers receive relevant training.

Early Intervention Programme of RC

Early intervention is crucial in developing a child's potential focussing on strengthening her or his abilities. A successful implemented early intervention programme can minimise the effects that impairment has on a child's development.

The RC offers an early intervention programme for children with autism, developmental impairment, Down's syndrome, multiple impairments, and hearing impairment. Children come with their parents to the resource centre and receive sessions with RC teachers. Parents are actively involved in early intervention sessions and encouraged to learn techniques that they can implement with their children at home. The RC offers group activities for children and parents in the early intervention programme.

The project aims for early intervention

The project defines the following indicators in the work plan for 2012:

- At least 35 children with disabilities are received early intervention at RC weekly.
- At least 35 families of children with disabilities participated in early intervention are consulted and supported on how to take care and educate their children with disabilities at home.
- Quarterly, RC will support early intervention and share experiences at pilot pre-schools in the project sites.
- At least 07 children at pilot districts will receive monthly rehabilitation at RC, or at schools, conducted by doctors of Tien Giang Medical Rehabilitation Department.
- 100% teachers of RC are trained intensive early intervention skills.

Project activities for early intervention

The activities list in the project action plan for 2012 has four major headings for early intervention activities:

1. Reinforce Early intervention, Inclusive education in Cho Gao District;
2. Improve the quality of Early intervention, Inclusive education in Cai Lay district;
3. Conduct Early intervention, Inclusive education in My Tho City; and
4. Early intervention

The following is an example taken from the activities planned for Cho Gao district:

Activity: Technical supports on EI, IE and community supporting groups for Cho Gao District.

Objective: Support once a week for typical children with disabilities

Reflection and recommendation:

The content of the activity described above is unclear. Is it technical support on early intervention, technical support on inclusive education or technical support for capacity building of community support groups? The terminology 'typical children with disabilities' in the objective is also not clear and rather discriminative and should therefore be avoided. It is also not clear how children with disabilities are receiving support and benefit through this activity.

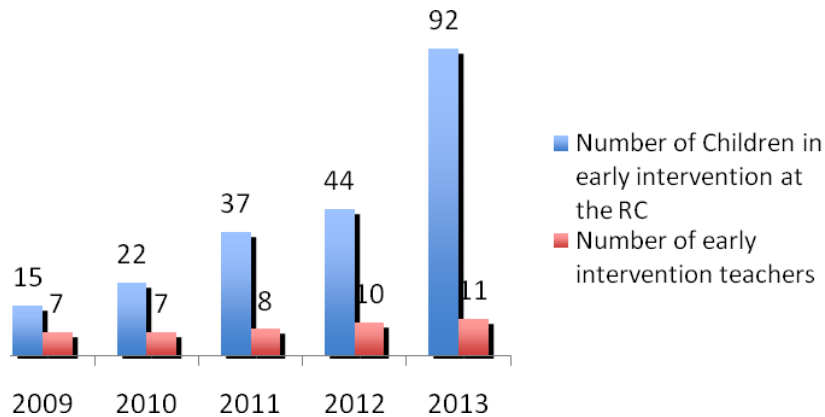
A lot of trainings in the project activity plan focus on early intervention training for pre-school and primary school teachers. It is important that the activities in the project plan are aiming at reaching the goals. Since early intervention activities are conducted at the resource centre and will be in the future at the satellite early intervention rooms, it is doubtful if a lot early intervention training for pre-school and primary school teachers is necessary.

The evaluators recommend that instead of the provision of early intervention training for pre-school and primary schools teachers, It would be more effective to consider:

- How to increase the number of early intervention staff at the RC.
- How to mobilise trained early intervention specialists from the resource centre to enable support for children and families at satellite bases or in the home.

Number of children receiving early intervention at the RC

The number of children enrolled in the early intervention programme at the RC is developing well. The number has almost doubled between 2012 and 2013. However the number of early intervention staff has not risen in line with this and the RC seems to have reached its maximum capacity. The RC has applied to the DOET for an additional two teachers but has not yet received confirmation that the application was successful. Currently two teachers are undertaking a Bachelor's Degree and one a Master's Degree on special education.



Reflections and recommendation:

The project has reached its goal in number of children and parents receiving early intervention in the RC.

- Due to the increased number of children receiving early intervention at the RC, more teachers with a background in early intervention should be assigned to the resource centre to increase its capacity to offer quality support.
- To better meet the needs of children with disabilities, the early intervention programme should expand to cover more disabilities and health conditions in addition to focusing on independence skills.

Satellite early intervention facilities

To overcome the early intervention programme's capacity barrier and increase its effectiveness, the RC began to develop early intervention rooms at pre-schools in the project area in addition to the eight rooms at the RC. The evaluators observed clean, large and rooms for this purpose. Unfortunately, some of the rooms have accessibility issues. For example the early intervention room at Phu Kiet pre-school is located in the third floor of the building. Since no elevators are available some students or even parents may face challenges accessing the room.

Reflection and recommendation:

- To increase the capacity of the early intervention programme the project should continue to develop early intervention rooms at pre-schools in the project area.
- Accessibility of decentralised early intervention rooms has to be

considered and adaptations and changes made if necessary.

- Consult persons with disabilities when planning additional early intervention facilities.

Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation

The plan of action for 2012 states as an indicator that 'At least 07 children at pilot districts will receive monthly rehabilitation at RC, or at schools, conducted by Doctors of Tien Giang Medical Rehabilitation Department.' Unfortunately, the evaluators neither saw evidence or were given information of these activities.

Rehabilitation and physiotherapy services should be offered by the RC. More children could be more independent if these services were available. The RC director indicated that a physiotherapy / rehabilitation specialist from overseas had recently been recruited for a two year period but had not started work yet.

The RC is also lacking expertise on developing low cost assistive devices, mobility aids and adjusted furniture.



The second boy from the left fully depends on his peers to be able to access the classroom and move around the school premises. Mobility aids and a classroom on the ground floor would make him more independent.

Reflection and recommendation:

- Implement a sustainable physiotherapy and rehabilitation service through capacity building of resource centre staff. To achieve this, health authorities like MOH and the Department of Health (DOH) should be involved.
- Training for parents and other care givers to enable reinforcement of physiotherapy and life-skills activities at home.
- A rehabilitation worker who is able to develop low cost devices,

equipment, mobility aids and adjusted furniture to support access to education for children with disabilities should be made available to the RC.

- The new specialist on physiotherapy / rehabilitation should not only offer his/her services to the RC and the beneficiaries but also develop a training programme for RC staff to share his/her skills to achieve sustainability and greater impact.

Identification and Assessment of Children with Disabilities

Project plans do not include actions and recommendations for identification and assessment of children with disabilities.

Projects identification and assessment programme

The current screening programme to identify children with disabilities is based on the government children's health checks. Children identified in this process are referred to community health centres, district hospitals or the provincial hospital for assessment. The whole assessment process appears to be medical and not functional.

The process of identification and assessment of children with disabilities was described as followed:

- SCIE members together with the child and his/her parents will visit the local community health centre. If the community health centre is able to do the assessment they will do it. If not, they are referred to the district health centre, or provincial hospital.
- The functional assessment will be done in the RC. However, the functional assessment is limited to intellectual assessment.

Reflection and recommendation:

- A network of community volunteers should be established for the purpose of identification. Capacity building would enable the volunteers to identify children with disabilities and other vulnerable children, at an early stage, and to make referrals for support. This could be done in partnership with groups such as the Women's Union, Community health workers, parents groups, and any non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are working effectively throughout each community.
- In-depth training for all resource centre teachers on how to carry out basic functional assessments. Functional assessment means to assess the abilities of the children and what can help to further improve their abilities. This approach is different to a conventional assessment where the results list all the things a child cannot do.
- The RC has to develop a referral system from where it can draw specialists that can support the RC teacher in assessing children and identifying suitable aids.

Community support teams

The idea of CSTs – community members who work voluntarily to support others who face challenges or hardship – seems to have great potential in identifying children who are currently not in school or facing challenges in school. It seems however that CSTs are underutilised or are not functioning at all. The reasons for this can be ineffective leadership, lack of motivation, pre-occupation, or a lack of knowledge.

An official at DOET made the following comment:

‘Community support teams are not active and may need training and motivation.’

Reflection and recommendation:

The community support teams have the potential to identify and intervene by making referrals for functional assessments to the RC. The RC staff could then decide if a referral for medical assessment should be made.

The evaluators therefore recommend:

- All members of the community support teams should be trained and equipped with skills and knowledge on
 - How to identify children who are not in school. This can be done through home visits, and during community activities.
 - Who should be contacted when a child is identified?
 - Providing community support and visits for families of children with disabilities in addition to more practical support, such as transport, where necessary.
- The community support teams and parent groups should implement awareness campaigns and screening programmes. People with disabilities, as well as other major stakeholders such as community health workers, should be involved in all processes from planning to implementation. The programmes should involve strategies that would enable the community to take ownership of the program of events and activities to focus on sustainability.

Vocational Training Programme

The RC offers vocational training courses on handicraft and sewing. The training is held in one room at the RC. After visiting the course rooms and holding meetings with the deaf club, the evaluators were unable to collect any relevant information on effective vocational training.

The current vocational training appears not to be a priority of the project management as very little seems to be happening. The only skills offered are handicraft and sewing. The facilities look unused and dull. The plan of action for 2012 contains an activity for vocational training, but content and purpose are very vague.

Activity: 'Organize vocational training for persons with disabilities at RC.'

With the objective that 'At least two jobs will be trained for 15 youth with disabilities at RC. Mobilize and coordinate with Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA), Commercial Department and other companies participate in job orientation, provide vocational trainings and recommend jobs for youth with disabilities.'

The fact that the vocational training has not received a lot of attention and is not as effective as it should be offers the opportunity to rethink and revise the overall project approach to vocational training.

Nevertheless, the evaluators have met youth with disabilities working at two different factories in My Tho City; one a gold smith and the other a belt factory. The young adults who have employment are hearing impaired. They received their vocational skills at the job provider and not at the RC. They all appeared to be happy in their jobs and work environment and all received good reports from their supervisors.



The goldsmith employs 4 young adults with hearing impairments.



A large group of young adults with hearing impairment are working at the belt factory. Their tasks include sewing and packing belts.

Reflection and recommendation:

The vocational training programme of the project needs to be revised and completely restructured. The current programme with teaching handicraft and sewing skills does not support children or young adults with disabilities to become financially self-sufficient. It rather reinforces stereotypes that persons with disabilities can only do these jobs.

In order begin reviewing and restructuring the vocational training programme the project management should assess the needs of the labour market on a regular basis. Also ask the children and young adults what they would like to do. Keep information in separate database.

- Which employers have vacancies?
- Which skills do the employees need?
- Is it possible to train these skills at the resource centre?
- Has the resource centre the capacity to train these skills?
- If not, would it be possible to engage in an on-the-job training in the employers premises under the supervision of the resource centre? This could also be long-term over the course of several semesters.

Disability awareness raising and job fairs could be held at the resource centre with potential employers from a wide variety of job sectors invited.

Monitoring and evaluation of youth in their place of work is very important. It should be carefully planned and implemented as both youth and employers need to feel that support is available should it be needed.

Assistive Devices and Training Materials

The project plan contains no objectives related to assistive devices and training materials. Their existence and quality is however important to the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project.

Training materials

During the field research, the evaluators did not see any resources such as training manuals or reference material for teachers, parents or government officials. The evaluators gave examples of some of the standard publications on inclusive education in the region like UNESCO's ILFE Toolkit¹ or Save the Children's Schools for All². The publications were unknown to RC teachers.

Reflection and recommendation:

High quality training materials with appropriate information to match the academic level of the target audience are important. To ensure that the trainings implemented by the project contain the right content, training facilitators need guidelines in the form of manuals or modules on which they should base their sessions. This limits the chance of facilitators including their own views on training topics, as these might not always be coherent with project policies.

Resources, training, and self-study materials should also be made available to everybody who would like to seek further information on certain topics related to inclusive education, early intervention, disabilities, accessibility, teaching methods etc.

The evaluators therefore recommend that the project should develop a library of resources on inclusive education for education planners, teachers, university lecturers, and parents. The library should be accessible to everybody who seeks information and its existence must be promoted. A further recommendation is that two publications widely used in the Asia region should be translated into Vietnamese and adapted to Vietnamese conditions and culture:

- UNESCO's ILFE Toolkit, and
- Save the Children UK's Schools for All.

In additional material is available in English on EENET's resource page: <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/>

¹ Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning Friendly Environments (ILFE Toolkit), UNESCO, 2008, <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/inclusive-education/resources/ilfe-toolkit/>

² Schools for All, Save the Children UK, 2002, http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/schools_for_all.pdf

Assistive devices

No assistive devices (teaching aids) for teaching were visible at the RC or during school visits and observations. RC teachers indicated during a focus group discussion (FGD) that they lack the skills to develop assistive devices for students with disabilities and have not received any training on how to develop them. Teachers at pre-schools and primary schools mentioned in FGDs that they would like to receive more teaching aids.

Reflection and recommendation:

The use of effective teaching aids should be introduced during teacher training.

The resource centre should build a bank of 'standard' assistive teaching devices ready for mainstream teachers. Mainstream teachers should have the possibility to consult the resource centre with their pupils' individual learning needs and the resource centre should be able to give advice in teaching techniques and assistive devices.

All IE training for RC staff and school teachers should include sessions on 'How to make and use effective, interactive teaching aids for the whole class'.

Sustainability

In 2017 the cooperation between NMA-V and DOET will cease to exist. During the first meeting at the RC, the director raised issues regarding the sustainability of the RC.

He mentioned that

‘Through the support from NMA-V, the RC has managed to build a very strong foundation for the future.’

He hopes that

‘When the project finishes in 2017, the local government will allocate more budget for the RC to continue to function.’

As well as

‘... that the RC will be able to mobilise additional funds through the community and individual donors.’

Reflection and recommendation:

The evaluators did not see evidence of plans for the end of the project. It is never too early to think about relevant and innovative exit strategies. If the RC is to continue to function and maintain or increase and its level of activity, realistic exit strategies must be put into place.

The evaluators recommend that:

- NMA-V together with the PMB, DOET and MOET has to develop an exit strategy for NMA-V when the project phase is over. A realistic exit strategy is crucial so that the inclusive education project supported by NMA-V becomes a government programme.

The exit strategy must include:

- RC centre funding including (in alphabetical order)
 - Awareness campaigns
 - Clubs initiated by RC
 - Early intervention at RC and selected pre-schools
 - Itinerant teacher services
 - Rehabilitation and physiotherapy
 - Running costs of the RC including building and salaries
 - Teacher training

- Vocational Training
 - SCIE funding
 - The resource centre management team should develop a strategy to raise the profile of the centre to ensure it will be recognised at district, provincial and national level as an important education service provider. Action should begin immediately to ensure the procurement of sustainable government funding before 2017.

Accessibility

This section will cover physical accessibility. Accessibility is not only about access for all to buildings, transportation, and public spaces like pre-schools and primary schools, but also about cleanliness, and safety. For example a ramp with an angle of 90 degrees cannot be perceived as a safe option.

Accessibility is an issue at various locations throughout the project. The evaluators are aware of the fact that some of the buildings are quite old and were designed and build without accessibility in mind. However, the findings and recommendations from this evaluation could be useful for designing and building new buildings and changing existing buildings.

The Resource Centre

Some of the early intervention rooms are located in the second floor of the building. A staircase gives access to the second floor.

All buildings at the resource centre have porches paved with ceramic tiles. These tiles become extremely slippery when wet and put persons with and without disabilities in danger of falling.



*Good example of an additional ramp leading to classrooms.
Unfortunately the tiles in use are very slippery when wet.*

Recommendations:

- Install handrails on the walls of staircases and along walkways where necessary.
- Porches should be paved with tiles that are non-slip.
- Slippery tiles should be covered with non-slip materials especially in rainy season,

The Provincial DOET Building

The building is not accessible. Five stairs lead to the entrance door. Ceramic tiles endanger persons who want to enter or leave the building. There is no elevator to reach the second floor of the building.



Provincial DOET building

Recommendation:

- Build a ramp on the staircase leading to the main door of the building.
- Ceramic tiles on the outside of the building should be replaced or covered during the raining season.

Schools

All schools visited have limited accessibility to the rooms of second and third floor. No elevator or handrails are available. Students' bathrooms, even those on the

ground floor are not accessible. The doorways are too narrow for a wheelchair to enter as are the WC cabins.

Reflection and recommendation:

It is important that students have access to all facilities of the school. This includes sufficient space to enter a classroom, sufficient space to move within the classroom, clean and large toilet facilities and a playground that does not have dangerous equipment or potholes.

The staircases in all school should have handrails on the stairs leading to the second and third floor of buildings. Schools should have a minimum of one wheelchair accessible toilet with handrails, clean water and toilet paper.

Conclusion

NMA-V has asked the evaluators in the TOR for the evaluation to answer the following set of questions:

- 1. How does the Project achieve its objectives and outcomes?**
- 2. How does the resource centre and educational units fulfil their roles, duties on developing a comprehensive system to support children with disabilities at Project sites in the province?**
- 3. What are main lesson learnt for local partner and NMA-V on developing inclusive education in the near future?**

How does the Project achieve its objectives and outcomes?

The project has the following development objectives for the time from 2010 until 2014:

By end of 2014, Children with disabilities and youths with disabilities in Tien Giang Province are cared; received early intervention and quality inclusive education; oriented and trained jobs to prove fully their potential and capacity; have stable job to help themselves, their families, and the society through the technical support from Center for inclusive education and the support from network at district and commune levels.

The evaluators split up the objectives into the following section and comment on the sections individually:

- Children and youth with disabilities are being cared for;
- Children and youth with disabilities receive early intervention and quality inclusive education;
and
- Children and youth with disabilities are oriented and trained in jobs to prove fully their potential and capacity, have stable job to help themselves, their families, and the society.

Children and youth with disabilities are being cared for

In the opinion of the evaluators this objective lacks clarity and is too broad for an inclusive education project. The evaluators' interpretation of its meaning is that

'The community's attitudes towards persons with disabilities changed positively.'

Generally the attitudes toward persons with disabilities are extremely positive. There was no indication of negativity from, government officials, teachers, principals, students or parents about inclusive education. The evaluators believe that the community understands that it is their obligation to give children access to mainstream school.

Efforts to create awareness should not stop here. CSTs should be further empowered to increase their performance so that they can become a powerful tool in awareness creation.

Unfortunately, not everybody seems to acknowledge that persons with disabilities are able to contribute. This is proven by the government official's statement regarding the inability of persons with disability to contribute to awareness campaigns.

Children and youth with disabilities receive early intervention and quality inclusive education

It is not enough to just give children with disabilities access to mainstream schools. It is also about full and equal participation and achievement.

To increase participation in numbers of enrolment, the project uses the regular government paediatric health check system to screen all children for disabilities. Children are identified and accessed at the district or provincial hospital. The project lacks here the important functional assessment.

To increase participation of individual students, the project offers early intervention. The current early intervention facilities at the resource centre have reached the maximum capacity. More early intervention teachers need to be based at the resource centre to enable it to offer support to more people. The project will soon open early intervention rooms at selected pre-schools in the project area. This is a good step to decentralise the early intervention efforts but will again raise the human resource question. In addition to the number of human resource, capacity building for current staff on autism, learning difficulties and visual impairment is necessary.

To enable students to achieve in education, teachers need to be equipped with the correct skills and knowledge for IE in addition to extra support from specialists. The school environment has to embrace each student's individual need and endeavour to meet those needs. It seems that currently, teachers have a positive attitude about disability and have received training on impairments and health conditions. However, they lack skills on good and innovative teaching methods as well as regular support through itinerant teacher services organised by the resource centre.

Children and youth with disabilities are oriented and trained on jobs to prove fully their potential and capacity, have stable job to help themselves, their families, and the society

The vocational training section of the project has the biggest need for rethinking, reorientation and restructuring. The project should forge stronger partnerships with potential employers with the aim of jointly developing training programs. The traditional handicraft and sewing courses will lead to limited success but it is important that everyone recognises the fact that people with disabilities have much greater capabilities.

How does the resource centre and educational units fulfil their roles, duties on developing a comprehensive system to support children with disabilities at Project sites in the province?

Staff at the resource centre appears to be motivated and committed to their roles and duties. There does however seem to be a lack of organisation and forward planning. The term, 'a comprehensive system to support children with disabilities', would indicate there should be a clear structure in place for support at the project sites. During the interviews and FGDs it was noted by the consultants that there was no clear idea of procedure for support. When asked what they do to request support from the RC no teacher or school manager could give a confident answer.

The IE training that has been offered to schools in the past has not been effective. No monitoring and evaluation documents were made available to the consultants however as they did not observe any good inclusion practice while in the classrooms they can presume that the training was ineffective.

Raising awareness activities do not appear to be happening in all the communities. Instead the RC organise larger, one-off events to mark days such as National Disability Day. Raising awareness is most effective if targeting all levels, from the Government down to local communities. A media campaign would be effective both locally and nationally; raising awareness this way would be a positive step towards procuring government support for a sustainable future.

What are the main lessons learnt for local partner and NMA-V on developing inclusive education in the near future?

Involvement of all stakeholders:

Throughout this evaluation the consultants have failed to find any involvement of people with disabilities in the project. If children with disabilities are to see positive

role models in their life people with disabilities should be fully involved in all processes of IE. The project should invest in the future of persons with disabilities by involving them in all decision-making, training and capacity building.

The evaluation looked at sustainability of IE in the province and this will not be achieved if people with disabilities are excluded. By investing in them now with effective training provision and support the project will ensure that people with disabilities have the capacity to be involved at all levels.

Rehabilitation services:

In several areas in the districts the consultants were told of children who were not attending school. They were told that the children were, 'just lying down at home'. An effective physiotherapy and rehabilitation service, in partnership with the MOH would be a very positive step towards inclusion for more children. During the school observations the consultants took note of several situations where specific children would be able to be independent with the correct support service. To offer such a service such as this and to involve MOH personnel in any training with further strengthen the bond between the project and the Ministry.

RC Staff and Teacher Training

There is currently no structure or records of any training that has taken place. A training plan should be implemented that would include an assessment of needs, consistency in training and tools for monitoring and evaluation. The training plan should include and start with a basic introduction to inclusive education. It is important that teachers know that children with disabilities should do more than 'attend' but should also have equal access the lesson. IE training should give them the confidence and practical classroom strategies to enable them to teach **all** children.

Planning and preparation for the inclusion of specific children with disabilities should take place as early as possible before the child starts the school. At the moment any training that is provided is done so at the time the child arrives at the school. If the teacher does not have the skills and knowledge to meet the child's needs, he/she is at a disadvantage from the very beginning. This is also a matter of communication between all stakeholders; if a strong network of support is in place for each child, planning for IE will become easier. Planning should always involve the promotion of independence skills.

Annexes

Proposed research questions for Midterm evaluation of IE for children with disabilities in Tien Giang Province.

The evaluation will be conducted by the use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to achieve the objectives:

- to make an overall independent assessment of the project's past performance
- to identify key lessons and propose practical recommendations for follow-up action.

For this evaluation we will facilitate focus group meetings as well as formal and informal interviews. The evaluation plan will be flexible as topics of and methods for investigations are influenced by what stakeholders consider to be relevant and appropriate. The list of questions may also be expanded on once we are on-site and encounter things we need to find out more about. This list will not be delivered as a questionnaire or a question and answer session during meetings but it will ensure that we remember to facilitate the discussions in specific directions. Both evaluators have a set of common questions in mind.

- What good practice is already in place and how can it be strengthened?
- Which ministries, organisations (**including DPOs) are involved in raising awareness of IE both at provincial and district level?
- What IE training has already been facilitated and what methods were subsequently used to cascade acquired skills and knowledge?
- What, if any, changes can be seen following the training
- To what extent do children with disabilities, youth with disabilities and families have input into the training programs?
- What, if any, aspects of IE are already included in the Teacher Training Programs?
- What are the additional training needs for education?
- How are training needs identified?
- How does the project document progress and achievements?

Understanding of IE

- Is there a definition of IE?
- Is the difference between the terms 'impairment' and 'disability' clear to all stakeholders?

Rights based approach to education

- Are stakeholders aware of national legislations related to IE, the CRC³ and the CRPD⁴?
- Are children's rights promoted? (e.g. participation, protection, education, health, play, birth certificate etc)

Resource centre:

- What is the role and function of the resource centre?
- What is the attitude of the RC staff towards IE and disability?
- What IE resources are available at the RC for both trainers and students?
- What support is offered to parents of children with disabilities
- What support is offered to teachers?
- Does the resource centre actively search for children who are not in school?
- Do DPOs have input into the RC activities?

Vocational:

- What is currently happening in the vocational training program?
- What training is offered?
- What are the links with the world of work?
- Is there any program for work experience in-place?

³ CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified 28th February 1990

⁴ CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed 22nd October 2007, not yet ratified

Notes from Focus Group Meeting

Approximate age range:

Approximate number with disabilities:

Types of disabilities:

.....
.....
.....

Who else is present:

.....
.....
.....

Detailed notes	Thoughts & observations

School observation checklist

School: _____ Class: _____

Classrooms / lessons

Look at:	I saw...	I thought...
<p><i>Decoration and resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walls decorated?• What sort of materials on walls?• Made by teachers, by pupils, etc?• Other materials in room?• Static or interactive materials?• Themes of the materials?		

<p>Layout and environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desks in rows/groups?• Flexible, easy to change layout?• Areas in room for different activities?• Any adapted seating arrangements?• Space per pupil?• Lighting and heating?• Accessibility?		
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<p>Teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods used? • Differentiation of lesson/methods for different learners? • Enthusiasm and energy? • Empathy with / listening to pupils? • Teacher's awareness of pupils' needs? • Use of teaching and learning materials? • Range of methods/pace during the lesson? • Gender of teacher? • Gender-equal teaching? • Use of classroom assistants? • Discipline methods? 		
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<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement with lesson?• Interaction with other pupils?• Use of learning materials?• Behaviour?• Approach/attitude towards teacher?• Gender balance in class?• Gender-equal interactions?• Self-presentation?• Freedom of expression?		
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Playgrounds / playtime / lunch break

Look at:	I saw...	I thought...
<p>Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Space and layout?• Surface material?• Accessibility?• Equipment?• Safety?• Eating areas?		

<p><i>Pupils:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Games played?• Interactions with each other?• Peer support?• Interactions with staff?• Gender relations?		
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<p>Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is present?• Gender balance?• What role are they taking?• Interactions with pupils or other staff?		
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<p>Processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rules and regulations?• By whom and how implemented?• Methods for ending lessons/breaks?• Supporting learners needs outside classroom (eating, toilet etc)?		
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