

# Education Rights: A guide for practitioners and activists



# ► Acknowledgements



Stuart Freedman / ActionAid

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This guide is dedicated to the late *Katarina Tomasevski*, former UN special rapporteur on the right to education. Katarina gave invaluable advice for the first section of the guide, she was, and continues to be, an inspiration to education rights activists around the world.

This guide was produced by ActionAid for the Global Campaign for Education.

Written and compiled by *Kate Newman* based on ideas and contributions from a range of education practitioners and activists from around the world.

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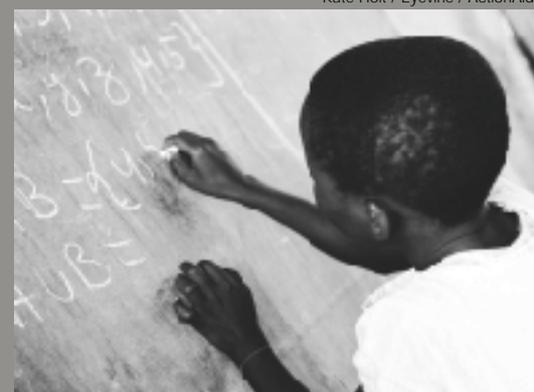
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# » Abbreviations

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome  
ANCEFA – African Network Campaign on Education for All  
ASPBAE – Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education  
CBO – community-based organisation  
CEEAL – Latin American Council for Adult Education  
CEF – Commonwealth Education Fund  
CEDAW – Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women  
CIRAC – International *Reflect* Circle  
CSEN – children with special educational needs  
CSO – civil society organisation  
DEO – district education office  
ECCE – early childhood care and education  
EFA – Education for All  
Four As – Accessibility, acceptability, adaptability, availability  
FTI – Fast Tract Initiative  
GATS – General Agreement on Trade in Services  
GCE – Global Campaign for Education  
GDP – gross domestic product  
GWA – Global Week of Action  
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus  
ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights  
ICERD – International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination  
ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
ICT – information and communication technologies  
IMF – International Monetary Fund  
INEE – Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies  
ILO – International Labour Organisation  
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals  
NFE – non-formal education  
NGO – non-government organisation  
OVC – orphans and vulnerable children  
PRA – participatory rural appraisal  
PRGF – Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility  
PSI – Policy Support Instrument  
PTA – parent teacher association  
SMC – school management committee  
UN – United Nations  
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural  
UNHCR – United Nations High Commission for Refugees  
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund  
UPE – universal primary education  
VAG – violence against girls  
WTO – World Trade Organisation

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This resource pack draws on learning and experience from work in education by ActionAid, our partners, and coalitions of which we are part, over the last thirty years. Originally formed in 1972, ActionAid now works in 42 countries around the world, linking with a wide variety of partners at local, national and international levels. We have drawn together this pack to share a wide variety of experiences in education, highlighting how different initiatives contribute to a human rights-based way of working. Building on these examples, the pack develops a range of ideas and methodologies to put a human rights-based approach to education into practice.



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## Introduction

Approaches to international development have shifted considerably over the last thirty years. What is now clearer than ever is the importance of strengthening the voices of the poor and marginalised, while at the same time engaging with international and national power holders. This resource pack reflects ActionAid's intention to work simultaneously at all levels, taking a holistic approach to transforming education. However, focusing on six strategic areas in education (the right to education, excluded groups, financing education, citizen participation, rights in education, and education for all), the pack prioritises work at the local level. This is based on our belief that work at this level should be the starting point and should guide all other work. Local people know their own context, their needs, aspirations and realities, and work at the district, national and international levels should build on, and complement this. It is also due to the recognition that understanding a human-rights approach at grassroots level is complex and needs strong support. There are many difficult

choices to be made, and differing priorities and expectations to manage.

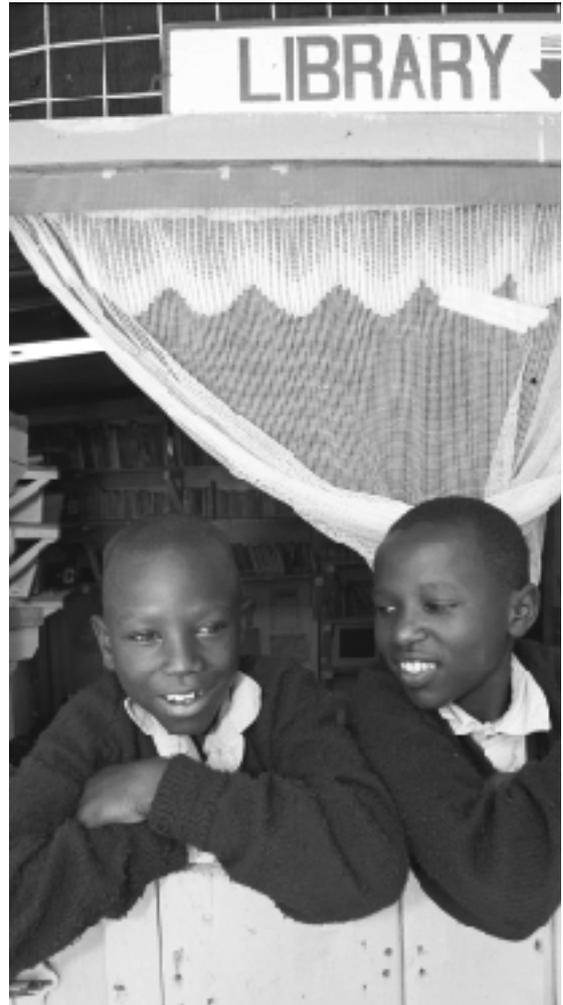
There is an international consensus around education. It is generally agreed that education is valuable, that it is a right in itself, and that it is central in promoting other rights, including women's rights and gender equality. While this lack of controversy can be beneficial, it can also cause problems. Firstly, because it is hard to keep education on the agenda, to make it high profile and exciting. But also because although we might all agree that education is a 'good' thing, there are a wide variety of views around issues such as how education should be delivered, what makes quality education, how education can promote women's rights, who should be the decision-makers in education, how much funding should be given, which parts of the education system to prioritise, etc. This pack aims to get people thinking critically about education issues, and to engage others in these debates, to work from the grassroots upwards to transform education rights into a reality.

# Some background to the pack

## From service delivery to rights

Although the idea of a rights-based approach has become common currency in development theory, many struggle to understand what this means in practice. This, perhaps, is particularly the case for those working at community level. Those involved in work at this level interact on a daily basis with people living in poverty, people who do not have access to education, or indeed many other services. Service delivery is an attractive option. It is concrete, measurable and visible; it is what we, NGOs or charities, have been doing for years; it is often what communities expect from us; it is what donors fund us for; and it meets an immediate need. Because of our experience and these expectations it can be difficult to move away from this role. However, as development theory and practice evolves, it is clear that service delivery, on its own, is not a sustainable way to tackle poverty and injustice, and that we have a responsibility to move away from this approach.

When NGOs deliver education services, sustainability problems occur for two major reasons. Firstly, because of the financial commitment involved in service delivery, a civil society organisation cannot guarantee indefinite funding and continuous service provision. Secondly, because of the impact service delivery can have on the relationship between citizens and their government. Through playing a service delivery role, NGOs come to be seen as the key service providers, and this leads to an erosion of the contract between citizens and their government.



Governments have obligations; they are morally and legally required to ensure the entire population access their human rights, including the right to education. These duties are reinforced by national constitutions and international conventions, which are ratified states and are binding to all future administrations. By contrast, NGOs are not elected, and their accountability structures are much more complex. Strengthening the relationship between citizens and their government is crucial for a long-term solution to poverty.

## What is a human rights-based approach?

Taking rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), as its basis, a human rights-based approach views poverty as an abuse of human rights. These rights are upheld in international law through the International Bill of Rights and subsequent human rights treaties. Human Rights are the 'minimum standards' needed in order to live a life of dignity, they are **indivisible, inalienable and universal** – by definition they belong to every human. If a national government does not respect, protect and fulfil human rights for every woman and man then it is in violation of its obligations. However, while rights may be guaranteed by a particular state or government they are yours because you are human, not because of your particular citizenship. This means that while process of securing of rights might differ from country to country the rights themselves do not change.

Human rights have been developed and defined through many years of struggle, by different people in different parts of the world.

Unfortunately, due to historical, social, cultural, political and economic forces, many people, especially women, are unable to realise their human rights. These rights are systematically denied to many, merely because of who they are or where they live. A human rights-based approach confronts these rights abuses, working with people to claim their rights through dynamic, and sometimes messy processes of

► **Human Rights are universal and inalienable, they belong to everyone and cannot be taken away. National Governments and the international community are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, for all women and men, and poverty is a human rights violation. A human rights-based approach focuses on achieving these rights. It follows a process which puts poor and excluded people at the centre, builds their skills, capacity and confidence to demand and secure these rights, while engaging with and challenging governments and other actors to uphold their obligations.**

resistance and change, of engagement with and transformation of relations of power. It may also enable them to define new rights, or new content to existing rights, valuing their context and perspective and recognising that rights, and rights abuses, affect people differently because of their gender, ethnicity, age, education etc.

The approach is not only about *what* you achieve, but also *how* you achieve it (see overleaf). This means putting poor and excluded people at the centre of this process, transforming the power relations that keep poor people poor and recognising the centrality of unequal gender relations in this process. It involves raising people's awareness of their human rights and empowering them through building their skills and confidence to demand and secure these rights. However, work is also needed at other levels, working with governments, civil society and donors to ensure that they are fulfilling their obligations, to transform structural inequalities and power relations, challenge discriminatory practice and ensure conditions which are conducive for all to enjoy their human rights. .

Finally, a human rights-based approach also means being aware of our own power and influence, as international NGOs, national NGOs and other civil society activists. It means reflecting critically on our role, ensuring that we are contributing to building the relationship between citizens and their government, and between government and international bodies, rather than creating spaces and filling them ourselves. It also means being aware of the power we have when engaging with others, whether they are community members, local organisations or government. This power can help to open doors, to involve people in discussion and action, but if we are not careful it can also be abused. We need to constantly keep a check on this, and work with our partners, be they other NGOs, social movements, trade unions or poor communities, to develop accountability systems to help ensure that we remain a positive force in the struggle for the right to education for all.

For more details on the right to education see **Section One**.

## How to implement a human rights-based approach to education

Taking a human rights-based approach means carefully planning work so that, for example, the poorest of the poor and those who suffer multiple discriminations, are reached. The approach involves a broad spectrum of people, from community members to grassroots activists to local, national and international NGOs, to trade unions and other civil society actors. And it means working in different ways with the range of stakeholders, at different moments in the process. Understanding that sometimes government might be a collaborator, for example, if it is showing interest in fulfilling its obligations while at other moments a key target, for example, if it is continually failing to invest in delivering the range of human rights.

Based on this premise, this pack develops ideas for achieving rights to, and in, education. It does this by building on the following principles for work:

- 
- **Identifying and targeting specific ‘rights-holders’,** the most poor and oppressed people who may suffer multiple discriminations which impact on their ability to access and enjoy their rights;
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- **Recognising the centrality of gender and power relations** and their impact on people’s ability to access education or be involved in transforming education, and therefore prioritising work in this area;
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- **Exploring the root causes of inequality and exclusion,** getting to the core of why people do not have access to their human rights, understanding the impact of tradition, culture and politics;
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- **Creating spaces and organising people** into a reflection-action process and working with them to analyse power, challenge unequal power relations and secure human rights;
- 
- **Building from the grassroots to the national and international,** understanding that each level has distinct but complementary roles to play;
- 
- 
- **Linking with others,** including education coalitions, social movements, teachers’ unions, the media and government as appropriate, based on the understanding that we should be working together, complementing each others’ work, not competing with each other; or wasting resources through duplication of work;
- 
- **Taking a holistic approach,** focusing on education as an entry point but recognising that there are many issues which impact on people’s ability to access education and that these are complex;
- 
- **Exploring the roles of different actors and stakeholders,** from local cultural custodians, to national elites, to the international financial institutions, all of whom need to be included in the struggle for education rights;
- 
- **Using participatory methods** to actively engage rights-holders in influencing, designing and monitoring education policy and delivery, ensuring that complex information is translated and repackaged to make it more accessible at the grassroots;
- 
- **Learning from and documenting experiences,** and sharing these with other practitioners so that practice can continually improve and evolve;
- 
- **Being honest about achievements,** not over claiming success, recognising that there are many different forces at play, and other initiatives which influence people’s reality. It is also important to be open about challenges and failures, which can be great for learning and strengthening practice.
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Jack Preece / ActionAid

## From local to national and international

This pack is focused on work at the local level, but locates this in relation to national and international policy influencing and campaigning. As civil society activists, working with people at the grassroots must be the basis of our work. This is the only way to ensure an active and empowered community, which will demand quality education from their government long after we have moved on. It is the only sustainable way of working. In addition, grassroots experience enhances the impact and legitimacy of work at national and international levels. It gives the evidence from which to develop policy positions and make claims, and ensures that work at all levels is responding to the real needs of those living in poverty.

Working across all levels requires respect for different perspectives, clear roles and space for all to play to their strengths. It requires recognition of the different knowledge and skills that each person or organisation brings. It needs collaboration, not competition, and a constant awareness of, and strategies to minimise, potential conflicts and unequal power relations. Fundamentally, this relies on excellent systems of information flow and communication, as well as transparent and accountable decision-making processes. All this is easier said than done, and achieving this synergy requires commitment. The pack suggests ways to make those connections seamless, ensuring that practice is strengthened because of the links created at every level. For the pack to be used effectively you will need to consider how you are connecting to the other levels, to strengthen your knowledge, analysis and impact. This includes developing strong feedback processes, so that activists at every level are informed of the outcome and impact of activities at any other level.

Therefore, at the local level people should be:

- **Reflecting on and analysing their context**, drawing on local realities and information accessed from partner organisations at national and international levels;
- **Developing strategic action plans**, targeting individual, community and local actions, based on in-depth analysis;
- **Building partnerships**, mobilising others and developing networks;
- **Researching** and generating evidence (which can be used locally and nationally);
- **Communicating** at local, national and international levels, through written documentation, as well as using oral and visual media;
- **Linking** with government, media and other powerful actors.

At national and international levels people should be:

- **Taking a lead from, and supporting the local process**, and expanding the policy influencing space, to ensure local voices will be heard at national level;
- **Making information accessible**, through translating, simplifying and producing alternative materials using diverse communication media;
- **Developing relationships** with government, media, academics and other powerful actors;
- **Organising public events**, focused meetings and conferences, creating public awareness and mobilising;
- **Transforming locally-generated information** into evidence-based policy, as well as coordinating additional research to strengthen local analysis;
- **Working in coalitions** with other civil society actors.

# The pack itself

## What is this pack?

This pack focuses on six strategic areas that are central to, and provide a framework for, a human rights-based approach to work in education. These are:

1. Understanding and securing the right to education;
2. Working with excluded groups;
3. Financing education;
4. Promoting citizen participation in education;
5. Securing rights in education;
6. Advancing a full 'Education for All' agenda.

These six areas make up the six sections of the pack. Each section begins with a brief overview of the key issues to be considered, and then discusses a range of activities which could be developed within a scheme of work. Short practical examples are given, from a wide range of countries. The majority of the activities focus on work at the local level, but national and international links are also discussed. Within each section we have chosen two or three areas which are analysed in more detail.

A list of useful resources are shared in an annex at the end of the pack.

## Who is it for?

This pack is targeted at anyone working on education issues and interested in using a rights-based approach, with a focus on people-centred advocacy, rights and power. The pack will help to strengthen education work across the board, whether you are working exclusively on education or taking a broader social justice agenda.

We hope that the pack will be used directly by local NGOs and other community organisations at the local level. However, we expect that it will be of interest to programme coordinators, many of whom sit at national level. They are often responsible for supporting and giving strategic direction to the work of their colleagues at local level and this pack should be a useful resource. In addition, those working at the national level can use the pack to understand how to link effectively, both locally and internationally. Finally, the pack should also be useful for those working at the international level, helping them to understand the types of work and processes that occur at local and national levels, and to explore how their knowledge, skills and focus could complement and strengthen work at these other levels.

## Engaging with the pack

The pack aims to get you thinking critically about your work in education, to give you ideas and methodologies to implement work in any of six areas. These are guided by a human-rights framework, which positions the debates and guides you through some of the key choices you will need to make for the work. The approach is a participatory one, aimed at involving a wide range of people to debate and act on education issues which affect them from a variety of different perspectives.

The different sections of the pack are cross-referenced extensively as the nature of work at community level means that it is difficult, and unproductive, to focus on issues separately. You will frequently find that when working on one topic, issues relating to another section arise. Therefore it is recommended that you take a brief look through the whole pack, familiarise yourself with the contents and be ready to move between the sections as necessary.



Jack Picone / ActionAid

## Planning and adapting ideas from the pack

The materials are designed to inspire. They can be used as resource materials to help in a planning process or as training materials to build the capacity of colleagues working on the right to education. You may find other uses for the materials, such as to structure evaluation processes or influence other organisations in the way they approach their work in education. You should see them as the starting point for your work and should not allow them to limit you. While some of the activities presented in the pack can be used directly it is expected that you will need to adapt the ideas for your particular objectives and context. You could plan a workshop involving key colleagues and partners to adapt this pack for your work, taking specific sections and thinking through what you would need to do to put these ideas into practice.

A key starting place is to reflect on **what sort of organisation, partnership or coalition you are**, thinking about the skills, capacities, focus and contacts you have. For example, a national CSO might have good access to national government and a range of information sources which will help support national level work, as well as being useful for local level analysis and action, but it may not have the contacts and legitimacy at local level to engage directly with community members, school management committees or local education stakeholders. This means that you might consider partnership with other organisations to ensure good implementation at local and national levels. In making this decision it will be important to understand what other civil society actors are doing, how you will position yourself, what your niche is, and how you will add to rights-based work on education, rather than competing with, or replicating what others are doing.

Once you have decided where your focus of work is, who you will be working with and how, it will be important to ensure you have a **good understanding of your 'how things work' context**. This involves awareness of current government policy and priorities (especially with respect to education); key influences on government (for example, are they swayed by national media and national opinion, or do they pay more attention to international influences?); the nature of advocacy and campaigning in your country, and the experience of rights and democracy at the local level (Is it common to organise demonstrations? Is more influence wielded over government through direct confrontation or through collaboration? How developed is civil society? Is there a concept of local participation and democracy?). This will help you decide which activities will work best in your context, how long-term your vision should be and what strategies you should follow (see also the stakeholders analysis, page 31).

A third element is to **understand education in your context**. How close is the government to achieving the Education for All goals (including ECCE, secondary and adult literacy), who are the excluded groups, why are they excluded? How will your work contribute to strengthening their rights to and in education?

An important element in this planning and reflection process is to analyse the specific ideas and activities contained in the pack, exploring how they might evolve in your context, suggestions for doing this include:

- 
- **Using a case study:** read it through carefully and think through any questions you would like to ask the organisation involved (even if they are not available to answer your questions, this process will still be useful to help you consider the issues involved). What are the differences between your context and theirs? How will this impact the process? Do you agree with how they did their work? What would you do differently? What outcomes would you look for?
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- **Using a participatory tool:** it might be a good idea to practice the tool within your team, using the process to reflect, analyse and plan based on your context and experience. This will give you insights into how the tools work, and will help you support others to use the tools. It will also give you ideas about the information you'll need to source to support this work, additional questions you might want to ask, how to link the tool into wider reflection and action, etc.
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- **Using generic ideas:** you might find it useful to mix and match ideas in the pack. For example, an idea might be presented in one place (for example, analysing a school budget) and a process mentioned elsewhere that you think would be helpful in supporting this work (for example, building relationships with government). To do this you should familiarise yourself with the range of techniques included in the pack, so that you can apply them as appropriate in any given situation. When you select a topic to work on, think: How will I do this work? Who will I work with? What methodologies could I use?
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- **Using your own experiences:** often you will have experiences, which are not reflected in this pack, but which will provide the foundations for your work. It is important to value the work you have done already, and think through how you can build on it using some of the new ideas contained here. You may also have experiences which challenge some of the ideas contained in the pack. Maybe you tried something and it did not work, or you found a more efficient way of doing it. The pack does not pretend to give all the answers. Some ideas are just not appropriate in some contexts. It is important that you take a lead from your experiences, using them to decide how you will work with the ideas in the pack.
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## Documentation

Documenting work is important for many reasons:

- The process itself can help those involved reflect on their experience, sharpen their analysis and plan for action in the future.
- It is useful for record keeping, and can help in monitoring, review and evaluation processes.
- It is a key element of accountability – whether this is accountability to participants, stakeholders and partners, our own learning, our colleagues and organisations or donors.
- It can support actions and enable communication with wider audiences, raising awareness of specific issues for influencing and provide evidence for your advocacy and campaigning work.
- Finally documentation can also be useful for sharing experiences with other civil society actors, locally, nationally and internationally. To share your challenges and successes, new ideas and innovations, and lessons learnt during the process.

When planning your work with this pack we would encourage you to integrate documentation strategies throughout your work, to support your own learning as well as to enable you to share insights with, and inspire, others. Documentation does not have to be written; you can use photos, drawings, video and oral communication.

There are many choices made in documentation. And the following are key issues you will need to consider in planning the documentation process, as well as the product.

- **Aims and objectives:** Why are you documenting? What do you hope to achieve? What will your documentation focus on? What is its scope?
- **What:** The content of documentation will reflect your aims and objectives. For example, you may document a community experience of education campaigning to share with others, or your own reflections and learnings from being a project coordinator, as a tool for others to draw on.

- **Audience:** Who are your audience? Why would they be interested in this particular document?
- **Participation:** Who will do the documentation? Is it a participatory process with people documenting their own experience, or is an external person going to document the process. You need to reflect on how different people might contribute, what needs to be done to enable them to contribute and how they may benefit from their involvement. This will include an awareness of **power relations**, asking whose voices should be heard in the documentation, and how they will be heard.
- **Format and media:** This will depend on your audience and objectives. Different audiences will require different media. For example, a written document, showing quantitative information expressed in tables, may be taken more seriously by government officials, whereas a series of posters or photos may be more effective for communicating to members of the public. It is also important to look at your documentation skills and capacity. For example, if you decide a video would be the best format to document your work, you might need to involve someone with video expertise.
- **Language:** This has two levels, the language chosen for documentation, as well as the specific words and style of language used. Will the documentation be in the dominant language, in the local language or bilingual? Will it be complex and technical, or is simplicity important? Are you reporting specific facts, or would a story communicate the message more clearly? These decisions will be informed by the aims and audience involved.
- **Accessibility and relevance:** It is important to find a balance between including all the relevant information and making sure that the document is not overloaded.
- **Process:** Who will be involved when? What feedback loops are there to check that information is accurate and valid? Who is given a chance to comment on the documentation? An awareness of power relations is essential, as this will determine whose voices are heard in the final product.

## Disseminating/sharing experiences

It is not enough just to produce good documentation; you also need to think through how you distribute it, and how you will ensure it reaches the intended audience. There are many different strategies depending on your objectives and audience. Documentation for advocacy and influencing purposes are mentioned throughout the pack. However, it is also important to share learning and experiences with other civil society activists at local, national and international levels.

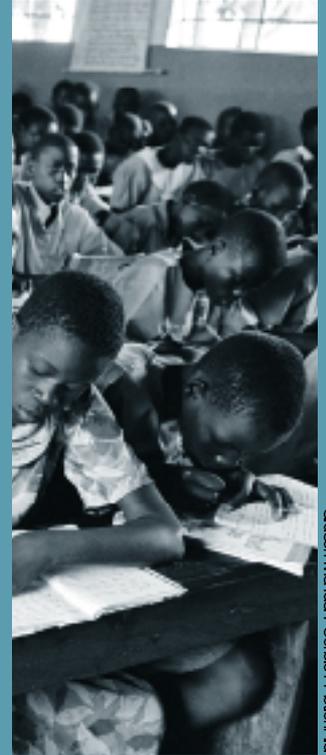
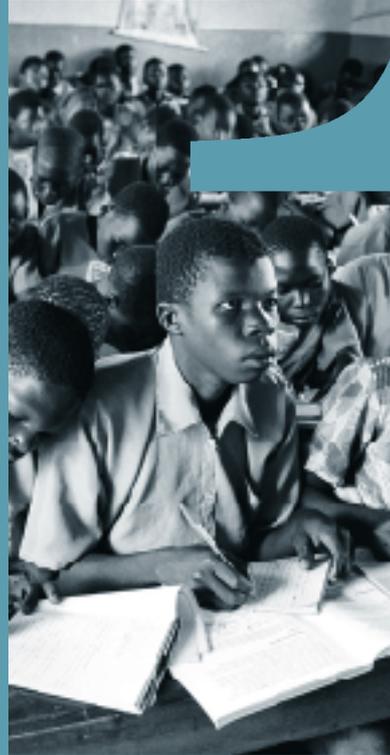
This could be done through the networks and coalitions of which you are part. It can also be useful to develop key target groups for specific types of documentation; one group might be particularly interested in local level experience, whereas another has more interest in the national level processes and action. You may also seek out new targets for a specific publication. For example, if you documented work on girls' education you might disseminate this to education networks as well as women's organisations. This means actively seeking opportunities to ensure that there is an audience for your materials, and following up the documents you disseminate, finding out how they have been used and how you could make them more relevant and useful.

Experiences should also be shared regionally and internationally, through the various networks that exist (ANCEFA, GCE, CIRAC, etc.). ActionAid would also be interested in hearing about your experiences in using this pack. We could share these through the Education Action publication, distributed to over 4000 organisations and individuals worldwide, as well as through the networks that we are part of. We would be particularly interested to hear how you have adapted and experimented with the ideas contained here, your successes, challenges and lessons learnt, as well as new methods and ideas you have developed.

The ideas contained here are a starting point but much more learning will develop as you experiment with these ideas in practice. And this should be shared with others. Rights-based work in education is continually evolving, and we hope that practical use of this pack will help us move closer to making education rights a reality.

The right to education has been universally recognised since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and has since been enshrined in a range of international conventions. However, while the vast majority of countries have signed up to, and ratified international conventions (such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) far fewer have integrated these rights in national constitutions or provided the legislative and administrative frameworks to ensure that these rights are realised in practice.

## Section One



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## Understanding and securing the Right to Education

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### ► Types of information that are useful for this section:

- **International Conventions:** Copies of the relevant sections of international declarations, charters and conventions, including the Convention on the Right of the Child, Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **Legal information:** Details of which international conventions have been ratified, national constitution and other national legislation related to the right to education – how is the right to education defined?
- **Official data:** Number of children in and out of school, EFA and MDG progress reports, information on education providers – public and private division.
- **Information on government:** Level of decentralisation, who is responsible for the Right to Education, how does government work – who are the key people to target for collaboration and influence?
- **Human Rights organisations and lawyers:** Who are the key contacts that you could work with, what previous work has been done on the right to education? What about other social services – could learning be used?
- **Information on international links and pressures:** What IMF and donor conditionalities exist, are there plans under GATS?

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The right to education has been universally recognised since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and has since been enshrined in various international conventions, national constitutions and development plans. However, while the vast majority of countries have signed up to, and ratified international conventions (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) far fewer have integrated these rights in national constitutions or provided the legislative and administrative frameworks to ensure that these rights are realised in practice. In some cases the right exists along with the assumption that the user should pay for this right, undermining the very concept of a right. In others, the right exists in theory but there is no capacity to implement this right in practice. Inevitably, a lack of government support for the right to education hits the poorest hardest. Today, the right to education is still denied to millions around the world.

As well as being a right in itself, the right to education is also an enabling right. Education ‘creates the “voice” through which rights can be claimed and protected’<sup>1</sup>, and without education people lack the capacity to ‘to achieve valuable functionings as part of the living’<sup>2</sup>. If people have access to education they can develop the skills, capacity and confidence to secure other rights. Education gives people the ability to access information detailing the range of rights that they hold, and government’s obligations. It supports people to develop the communication skills to demand these rights, the confidence to speak in a variety of forums, and the ability to negotiate with a wide range of government officials and power holders.



Sophia Evans / NIB Pictures / ActionAid

<sup>1</sup> K. Watkins, *The Oxfam Education Report*, (Oxford: Oxfam, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> A. Sen, ‘Capability and Well-Being’, in M. Nussbaum and A. Sen (eds.), *The Quality of Life*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 30-53.

## ▶▶ The Right to Education

This box provides a summary of the Right To Education, drawing extensively on *The Economic and Social Rights Handbook* compiled by Florence Butegwa. Many of the issues touched on in this box are picked up again throughout **Section One**. This box merely gives a brief overview of the legal basis for the right to education, broad concepts of the content of the right, and an indication of the obligations which come along with this right.

### What is a human right?

The right to education is a human right. A right is something which you are entitled to, which you can claim. Having a right means that someone else has an obligation. If someone has the right to free education, then the government or school can not require that you pay to access education (except through a broader system of tax collection). Human rights are universal and inalienable. They are inherent. We are born with them. They cannot be given, or taken away. As such, human rights are non-discriminatory, and should not be influenced by sex, ethnicity, nationality, etc. (although special measures, as long as they are reasonable and justifiable, can be introduced to ensure everyone has the equal opportunity to enjoy that right – see below). They are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace, and are the basic standards without which people cannot live a life of dignity. They are proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and reinforced by many legally binding international covenants and conventions, as well as in national constitutions.

Although human rights are theoretically universal and inherent they can be denied through violations in practice. Often people are unable to access their human rights because of who they are, and where they live. Discrimination is rife in every society, limiting for example, women's ability to participate in public forums (or household decision-making), or those from minority groups from receiving appropriate education. Discrimination, which prevents people from accessing their human rights, is an abuse, undermining the very concept of a universal right.

### International law and the right to education

The right to education has been recognised since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. Article 26 of the Declaration proclaims that: *'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory...education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial or religious groups...'*. The right to education has been enshrined in a range of international conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social And Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), The Convention on the Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and more recently, The Convention On The Rights of The Child (CRC, 1989). It has also been incorporated into various regional treaties (detailed in boxes on page 47 and 48). Beyond this many countries have made provisions for the right to education in their national constitutions.

While the right to education is universally recognised the way it is interpreted at national level differs substantially. This means that although every human being holds the same right regardless of any national law, the ways of securing this right differ greatly from location to location. For example, in some countries the right to education may be legally enforceable through national legislation, in others it will be important to look to international law and standards.

## Understanding the right to education

In addition to being a human right in itself, the right to education is often considered an enabling right. It brings better health and employment opportunities, enhanced national growth, democracy, respect for human rights and equality. Because of its enabling quality there are many other human rights which link to the right to education – such as the right to freedom from forced labour, the right to work and the right to participate in decision-making.

There is no absolute agreement as to how to define the right to education but the aims and objectives of education, as defined in the international covenants and treaties include the following:

- The development of human personality, a sense of dignity of individual talent, and mental and physical ability
- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as cultural identity, language and values
- Enable people to participate effectively in a free society
- The promotion of understanding, tolerance, friendship among all groups, and to maintain peace
- To promote gender equality and respect for the environment<sup>3</sup>

Primary education should be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable (for 4As see box, page 25), and Article 13 (2) (a) of the ICESCR asserts that primary education must be compulsory and available free to all (see box on compulsory education, page 38). The 4As also apply to secondary education, although the ICESCR recognises that secondary education might take many different forms, and that although it should be available to all there may be progressive introduction of free education. I.e. States must prioritise the provision of free primary education but they also have an obligation to take concrete steps towards achieving free secondary and higher education.

## Gender and the right to education

At this point in time gender inequality in education is extreme. Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve in education. Two thirds of the 781 million illiterate adults are women. There is a need for affirmative action to challenge this rights abuse, and such action is encouraged through international law. For example, general comment 13, paragraph 32 of the ICESCR allows for the '*adoption of temporary special measures intended to bring about de facto equality for men and women and for disadvantaged groups...so long as such measures do not lead to the maintenance of unequal or separate standards for different groups and provided they are not continued after the objectives which they were taken have been achieved*'<sup>4</sup>. Moreover access to education alone is not a sufficient condition for the right to education. Discrimination within the education system must also be abolished, and education materials and processes must not reinforce gender stereotyping (see **Section Two**, page 73), they should combat it.

## Rights and obligations

These rights also suggest obligations: '*the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed that States are duty-bound to ensure that education is aimed at strengthening the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms*' and the ICESCR guarantees that the right to education will be exercised without discrimination of any kind. There is also a clear obligation on the part of the international community to support the right to education, as interpreted by the committee to the ICESCR (who are the authoritative body, charged with monitoring legislation related to the covenant). Finally, if free primary education, which meets the 4As standards, exists there are obligations on the part of parents and guardians to ensure that their children are in school.

<sup>3</sup> F. Butegwa, *The Economic and Social Rights Handbook – Building Capacity for Sustainable Development*, An Alliances for Africa Training Resource, p.74-5

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p.80

➤➤ The ideas contained in this section focus on transforming the abstract concept of a right into a tangible reality. This involves understanding what the right to education needs to include, and then working with people to enable them to access their right. While the main focus of this section is on primary education the ideas and process can, and should, be applied to any area of education – linking ideas for securing the constitutional right to the wider EFA agenda (see Section Six).

## Grounding the right to education locally

The right to education is an abstract concept and although the right itself may be enshrined in a series of national laws and international conventions, this is meaningless for people who have never experienced the right, and may not know that the right even exists for them. They are likely to be unaware of their constitution or how it can be legally enforced. Grounding the right to education locally means transforming the abstract concept into a concrete reality; it means looking at current provisions for the right to education, and exploring what local people need to make their right to education a reality.

### PREPARATORY WORK

#### ➤➤ **Understanding the legal basis of the right to education:**

It is important to do some initial research before introducing the right to education at local level. Although the right to education is universal the way national constitutions and legislation interprets this right will vary and may be limited. This could limit the ability to enforce the right nationally. For example, the state may or may not have ratified certain treaties, or enshrined the right to education in national legislation. The status of the right, and the level of detail given about the right within the constitution or national legislation, will influence how you plan and implement your work.

- 1 The first stage of this work is to raise awareness of the right, just letting people know that they have the right and are currently being denied it can be enough to raise people's interest in being part of a process. And knowing that you have a right is empowering in itself.
- 2 The second stage is to make this right meaningful at local level. This means exploring current provision on the right to education, understanding what is offered in the constitution and what would need to be provided in order for the right to be realised.
- 3 The third stage is to build people's skills, knowledge and confidence so that they can hold the government accountable to deliver on its obligation, and to fulfil the right to education.

The ideas below need to be adapted and prioritised depending on the status of the right to education in your area (see box previous page).

## Introducing the right to education to 'rights-holders'

There are many ways to raise awareness on an issue. The method chosen will depend on the current links you have, and the scale of intervention. For example, the box to the right describes how a travelling caravan using street theatre was able to raise awareness of the right to education across an entire state in India. You could also use community meetings and links with local groups and schools. This initial stage involves communicating clearly that the right to education exists, and that it is the government's responsibility to deliver this right. For people to be empowered, and claim their right they need to be aware of its existence. But just saying 'you have the right to education' on its own can be quite meaningless.

### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## ORISSA, INDIA

In Orissa, India, a campaign was launched to enhance the quality and coverage of primary education. Orissa Shikshya Abhiyan is a platform of NGOs, the teachers' union and other trade unions, and brings together diverse civil society organisations that have not previously collaborated. Using an 'Education Caravan', which took two street theatre groups over 6,000 kilometres through 30 districts of Orissa, the campaign demanded a 25 per cent increase in the state education budget; the appointment of trained teachers; quality education and a common schooling system. The Caravan raised public awareness through more than 100 public meetings, using street plays to communicate the current status of education in Orissa. The campaign linked up with celebrities, such as Dilip Tirkey, the captain of the Indian hockey team, who called for children to come to school. They also worked closely with the media, which has given the campaign well deserved coverage for its achievements, especially in securing hostels for girls from tribal communities so that they can attend school. The campaign has also joined with the Forum against Child Exploitation and the Campaign against Child Labour to link issues of child labour directly to issues of lack of access to education.



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## Making the right to education meaningful: The 4 As

A framework of '4 As' has been developed to help people think through different dimensions of the right to education.<sup>5</sup> By using a participatory process this framework can become a tool to enable people to think through what the right to education means to them, and compare their current reality to this ideal context.

The 4As can be summarised as follows:

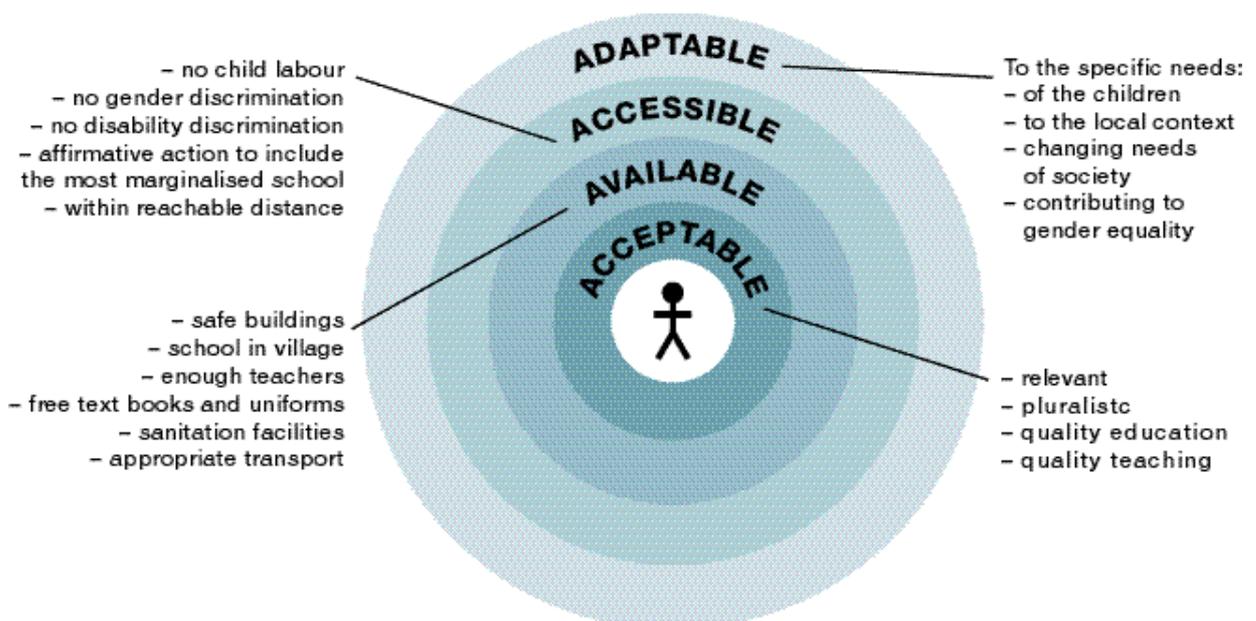
- **Availability** – that education is free and government-funded and that there is adequate infrastructure and trained teachers able to support education delivery.
- **Accessibility** – that the system is non-discriminatory and accessible to all, and that positive steps are taken to include the most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

Analysis based on the 4As:

Using an *Education Rights Circle Diagram* you can use the 4As to analyse local education provision and work with the local group to identify specific criteria by which education could be evaluated. The four circles show different aspects of the right to education. The inner circle shows issues that will make education acceptable to the individual or group. The second circle identifies the 'ingredients' which would make education available. The third circle ingredients that would make education accessible, and this is framed within the context of the wider environment of how the adaptable the education is – the outer circle. Through asking the question 'What would make education available to us?' (substituting the different 'A' word each time the question was asked) the group can develop the ingredients and conditions for the right to education.

For the outer circle the group should consider issues in relation to their current reality which impact on education (these may have a negative impact on education and the challenge will be to think through what needs to be put in place to facilitate education rights). Once the diagram is generated the group could compare their lived reality to this ideal context. This involves looking at where the differences and similarities are, analysing why these differences occur, and developing strategies for action.

**Education Rights Circle Diagram**



<sup>5</sup> Developed by Katarina Tomasevski, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education.

In addition to the more detailed questions exploring the 4As (see box) it may also be useful to facilitate a more general discussion on the state of education locally. This will not only help local people to view education within the wider context, but also help in exploring why the right to education is important. By exploring the current context and the desired future those involved will be better able to plan their actions to secure the right to education. You may find it helpful to draw on some of the ideas in Section Five to help document the discussion. The information on *Reflect* in Section Six will also help here.



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## General reflection questions include:

- How does current education provision in our area compare to the ingredients we have highlighted in the Education Rights diagram? How does it impact on girls and boys, is there a difference? What are the gaps? Why are these gaps present? For example, there may be a school but no sanitation facilities, or the costs might prevent some children from accessing the school. It will then be important to look at who determines the costs, makes decisions about sanitation, etc.
- How has education in the local area changed over time? For example, maybe schooling was free but in recent years the costs have increased, or how has quality improved or deteriorated? Why has this happened?
- Do we send our male and female children to school? Why and why not? Are there particular groups of missing children?
- Who is denied the right to education? How? What would need to change to make education available to them? Are there specific changes needed to reach specific groups, for example girls? For example, is education only available in one language and therefore inaccessible to minority groups who do not speak the language?
- How does education benefit us and our community? Does it benefit boys and girls / men and women differently, how? Why is education important? What do we hope to achieve through education?
- What can we do to make the right to education a reality? For all children, what are the gender and power relations we need to be aware of?

This last question will bring up a series of different types of action, which might be focused at the local level, or may require national action. The group may decide to do more research locally, or access official documentation detailing their right to education. This will help contextualise their analysis and help them to understand where and how rights abuses are occurring. The questions in the box (left) could help guide this process. In addition, it will be important

## QUESTION

The following questions will help local groups understand the status of the 4As in the local area. They could be adapted and used in local surveys to explore further the right to education in practice.

### ➤➤ Exploring the **availability** and **accessibility** of education

#### Availability

- Is primary education free and compulsory?
- If not, is there a government plan to achieve free and compulsory primary education, with a reasonable time frame and budget?
- Is sufficient money allocated for all children to receive primary education?
- Is the state making concrete steps towards achieving free secondary and higher education?
- Are teachers well trained, and do they receive domestically competitive salaries, do they have appropriate working conditions, teaching materials and the right to organise?
- Are school buildings safe, do sanitation facilities exist, is there safe drinking water, a library, ICT resources?

#### Accessibility

- Is education accessible to all, without discrimination on any grounds – for example race, colour, ethnicity, sex, language, religion, economic or social status? Are positive actions made to reach the most vulnerable? Are there any laws, such as preventing child labour laws, which need to be enforced to ensure accessibility?
- Is education within safe physical reach? Are there appropriate transport facilities?
- Is education affordable for all – this includes indirect costs such as textbooks and uniforms?
- Have all legal and administrative obstacles, such as the need for a birth certificate, been abolished?

to compare the locally generated ingredients for education with the elements included in national legislations. Through doing this groups will be able to identify specific gaps – either between what is included in the legislation and what is provided, or between what is currently included and what is needed to make education rights a reality.

#### ➤➤ **Para teachers**

In recent years there has been a spread of non-professional teachers, often poorly paid and trained with low skills and knowledge. It is important to consider at what point does having a non-professional teacher amount to a violation of the right to education? See **Section Five** for more information on para teachers.

➤ Exploring the **acceptability** and **adaptability** of education

**Acceptability**

- Is education pluralistic? Is it free from religious (or other) indoctrination? Are the curriculum and texts open and tolerant towards a range of different (religious, political, etc.) belief systems?
- Is education non-discriminatory? Are texts and curriculum non-biased and objective? Is the education relevant and culturally appropriate?
- Are there minimum standards for education (numbers of text books, methods of instruction, etc.), which are monitored and enforced by government (in both the private and public school systems)?
- Is the school safe? Is violence condemned? Are minimum health standards in place?
- Are there sufficient teachers? Are they trained to an appropriate standard? Are they properly supported and supervised?

**Adaptability**

- Is the school able to adapt education provision to the specific needs of their pupils and local children? E.g. are religious and cultural holidays recognised, are students with disabilities catered for etc.?
- Can education adapt to the changing needs of societies and communities? E.g. Is there adequate provision for linguistic and cultural minorities – balancing learning national language and culture with preserving their own? Is education adapting to respond to the HIV pandemic etc.?
- Is there a link between school leaving age and minimum age for employment, marriage, military, criminal responsibility etc.? What happens to young people if there is a mismatch of ages?
- Does schooling protect and enhance children's rights – e.g. does it prevent them from child labour or forced marriages, does it enhance their employability, increase gender equality etc.?

**QUESTION & ANALYSE**

➤ **Using visualisation techniques**

Many of these questions can be analysed further using visualisation techniques. For example a **River** (page 177) or **Timeline** could be used to explore the history of education in detail. A **Body Map** (page 172) could be used to explore a vision of an educated person – looking at what knowledge they have and how they might contribute to the community. A **Matrix** (page 239) can be used to analyse who the missing children are – plotting different categories of children along one axis, and reasons why they might not be attending school along the other.

## From analysis to action

The 4As provide a good starting point for analysis on the right to education, but it is crucial to move from analysis to action – which might be targeted at local, district or national level. This might include further analysis and documentation on specific issues, linking to national level campaigning on the right to education (specifically through collecting information for a test case) or raising awareness and acting locally – encouraging a range of other education stakeholders to act on the right to education.

### **In-depth analysis of specific issues:**

The Education Rights diagram will enable people to think quickly through the range of issues which make up the right to education, but it will not give space for reviewing specific issues in depth. The group might choose a particular issue and decide to explore it further among themselves, or do some research to find out more about it. This could involve accessing more official

information (which may require national level support) or generating local level evidence. In Section Five you can find some suggestions for local research and questions to develop indicators by which to measure different aspects of the right to education.

### **Documenting rights abuses:**

Having documented evidence is crucial in campaigning for the right to education, to support any claims you make about the current status of education. It is also an important way to get people to reflect further on their analysis, and can help in building confidence in local knowledge.

There are many different ways to document, as well as different types of information to collect. For example, it can be useful to have information to show numbers of children out of school, or teacher – student ratios, or to document a personal testimony, which gives qualitative details about a situation (and can be a useful, and emotive, tool to help people understand and even identify with the rights abuse).

## ACTIVITY

### ▶▶ Developing oral testimonies

Personal testimonies can be vivid and challenging, and can breathe life into an issue. The group may discuss an issue and decide to record a personal testimony, or seek out stories to illustrate a point or issue. In other cases the group may decide to approach someone outside the group who they know has a powerful story to tell. The testimony might be developed in pairs, through using a tape recorder, or it could be a wider activity, involving a whole group. It is important to put the person telling the story at ease, and not to overwhelm them with too many questions. Sometimes a visualisation technique, like a river (see page 177), may help the person tell the story in a more structured way. Once the story has been collected the group can review it, look at where additional information is needed, and restructure it as appropriate – ensuring that links are made to the analysis of the 4As discussion, and that the story can be viewed in relation to legislation on the right to education. It is important that the testimony reflects the tone and meaning of the original, and the person concerned is happy with the final version of the story. It might be that a signed contract is developed to agree how the story can be used. The story could be shared with the media or policy makers, or used in a test case. Knowing how you intend to use the story is important as it will impact on the way you produce the documentation, and who you share it with.

In deciding what sort of documentation you will use it will be important to consider the questions outlined in the introduction (page 15) such as:

- Why you are documenting the experience?
- Whose voices will be heard and what are the key messages you are trying to get across.

The research and documentation process itself can become part of an advocacy process, through involving a wide range of people you can raise awareness and interest in the right to education.

### Collecting evidence for a test case:

One option in pursuing the right to education is to use the legal system. Groups have successfully upheld the right to education through using constitutional provisions, international education law and other international legislation (such as anti-discrimination provisions). There are various benefits in pursuing this route, including raising public awareness and interest in the right to education, galvanising action across civil society, including the media and challenging the government directly to justify or change its policies. The types of evidence needed for each type of action (whether focusing on national or international level, education violation or wider discrimination) differ substantially, and it is important to be clear from the onset about the type of action you are pursuing. It is important that these decisions are made at the local level, with support and information from the national level (the legal process is covered in detail in the national level section, page 38 onwards).

Building on their analysis the group will need to identify a specific individual or group of people who are experiencing a specific rights abuse, and are happy for their experience to be publicised and taken nationally. For example, the language of instruction may exclude a minority group who do not speak the language; or there may be no school within 10 kilometres of the community, and no transport links, making it impossible for children to attend school; or the sanitation facilities may be inadequate, leading to parents withdrawing girls from school. It is important to establish

whether a violation exists (see box overleaf).

Once the individual or group, and the rights abuse has been identified a mixture of techniques can be employed to document the abuse. For example, as well as developing a personal testimony, which illustrates the person's educational experience (see box previous page), it will also be important to collect other types of information including:

- Other local people's view of the situation – for example, what do the teachers, SMC, DEO have to say? What have other children's and families' experiences been?
- Information about the local context, including how many others suffer from a similar rights abuse. Have any efforts been made to extend the right to education locally?
- Who is the perpetrator of the abuse? Is it local or national government? Who is the target for the test case?

In addition to collecting additional information you will also need to think through who you will work with in taking the test case forward. This includes identifying local and national media, education coalitions (or other relevant coalitions – for example HIV coalitions, women's movements, minority group movements etc.) as well as lawyers and legislative experts who understand the system and know how to prosecute a case.

### ▶▶ Linking financing and the right to education

Often prohibitive costs prevent children from accessing schooling, even in countries where education is free. In addition to enrolment or user fees, there may be a range of different charges, including: school uniforms, transport, school dinners, examination fees, textbook costs, sports days and contributions to non-teaching staff salaries. Developing understanding about the cost of education can be important in deciding what type of rights abuse is occurring, and who is responsible (see **Section Three**).

## ▶▶ When has the right to education been violated?<sup>6</sup>

It is very important to consider carefully whether the right to education has been violated, or if the denial is because of an inability on the part of the state. The right to education is only violated if the State deliberately prevents, or allows others to prevent the realisation of the right, or if the state does not act positively, when able to, to deliver a right. If, however the right is denied because of a genuine inability to fulfil this right (for example there are genuine resource constraints or specific circumstances that the state does not know or control) the violation does not exist. '*Violations are the result of unwillingness, negligence of discrimination*' and they can refer to a violation of the obligation to **respect, protect or fulfil** human rights.

If a violation occurs because a state is following a policy, or allowing others to act in a way, which prevents the realisation of the right to education then evidence needs to be collected to show how the policy or action links directly to a rights abuse, and how an alternative action could lead to the realisation of rights. Amnesty International identify core three ways the state might violate its duty to fulfil the right to education through:

- **Retrogression:** implementing policies which move further away from the right to education, such as decreasing investment in education when there has not been a general decrease in a country's economy or reallocating expenditure to another area (for example spending on the military rather than education).
- **Discriminatory non-fulfilment:** The obligation to non-discrimination cuts across all other obligations. This means that there is a violation if discriminatory laws, policies or practice are adopted (for example if teachers only speak official languages and not minority languages).
- **Failure to prioritise minimum core obligations:** The ICERSC includes a provision on 'progressive realisation' of these rights. If a state does take concrete targeted steps towards achieving the right to education, especially for the most excluded groups, this is a violation (for example if there is no prioritisation of free and compulsory primary education).

### Using the constitution locally:

As well as developing evidence for a test case at national level it is also important to focus on the local and district levels. This is because the rights abuse might be taking place at local rather than national level (for example because of lack of interest or through misallocation of resources) and because working collaboratively at the local level can extend your voice and influence nationally. Work might involve highlighting the relevant bits of the constitution and visiting local schools, the district education officer, local authorities or politicians etc. and discussing with them the constitution and its lack of implementation locally. Or you may make the constitution available to a local

group for local advocacy and lobbying (see box, page 39 for ideas about how to analyse what a constitution is really saying).

It is important to explore the difference between an *inability* to implement the right, and an *unwillingness* to implement the right. (see box) For example, it might be that funding does not reach the local level, and there are no revenue generation systems. This would suggest that the right is being abused higher up the system (see national level work) and that there is an inability to implement the right locally. Or the funds might be there but be allocated to alternative areas of work or be misused owing to corruption suggesting an unwillingness.

<sup>6</sup> This box is based on the publication: *Human rights for human dignity*, (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2005).

## Understanding government

Many people do not know how government works, or who has the ultimate responsibility to deliver education. It is likely that the supporting organisation will need to provide input here, and that much of the focus of the exercise will be on understanding the different roles and responsibilities of different parts of the government. Important government bodies include the different education bodies – for example, the Ministry of Education, the district education office and local government (the precise responsibilities of these bodies will vary from country to country, dependent on the level of decentralisation) and the Ministry of Finance (who is instrumental in determining the overall education budget, which influences every other decision in education). It is also important to understand the difference between officials and political representatives.

Depending on the type of group you are working with at local level you will need to decide how to share information about government functioning – it can be shared as official documentation, or simplified either in written format through a poster, or shared verbally etc. The group itself may decide to set up meetings or interviews with different officials and elected representatives to find out more about their roles.

Or it could be that the right is being abused at school level itself, because of lack of interest or capacity on the part of teachers and the school management committee. Depending on the level of analysis you have been able to carry out at local level you may present your case to the local education stakeholders, or involve them in further analysis.

### Involving others:

In designing any action it is important to understand who the stakeholders in education are, and what specific responsibilities they have. Through understanding the different roles different people have, or should be playing, you can target your work and decide who to involve and how. A simple starting point could be to use a **Stakeholders' Matrix** (see page 239), with stakeholders along one axis and a list of roles and responsibilities along the other axis (these could be generated through a brainstorming session and might include budgetary control, hiring teachers, maintaining quality etc.). Each stakeholder could be assessed in relation to the list of responsibilities, deciding which are relevant. You could repeat or extend this matrix by looking at what each stakeholder contributes to the education system. Different

stakeholders include teachers, students, parents, local government, education officials, national government etc. But you may also want to consider lawyers and media – who can influence the education system even if they themselves don't have a direct stake in it.

### Discussion questions include:

- What connection does this person or group have to education?
- What gives this person or group power in relation to education?
- How much influence do they have on decision-making on the education of an individual child; at school level; local or district level; nationally; internationally?
- Is this situation that we have mapped out an ideal or reality? If it is a reality, is there anything we would like to change? If it is the ideal, how might we move from where we are now, to the ideal situation?
- How does my role, position, access to information etc. influence how I have understood this picture? Would others see this differently? How?

The analysis could be taken further using an **Education Systems diagram**. This is a useful tool to understand a system as a whole, to explore the dynamics and relationships which exist within a system as well as understanding how power operates. This analysis is important in planning what action to undertake and who to target. It can be used to locate the local school in relation to the national or international picture.

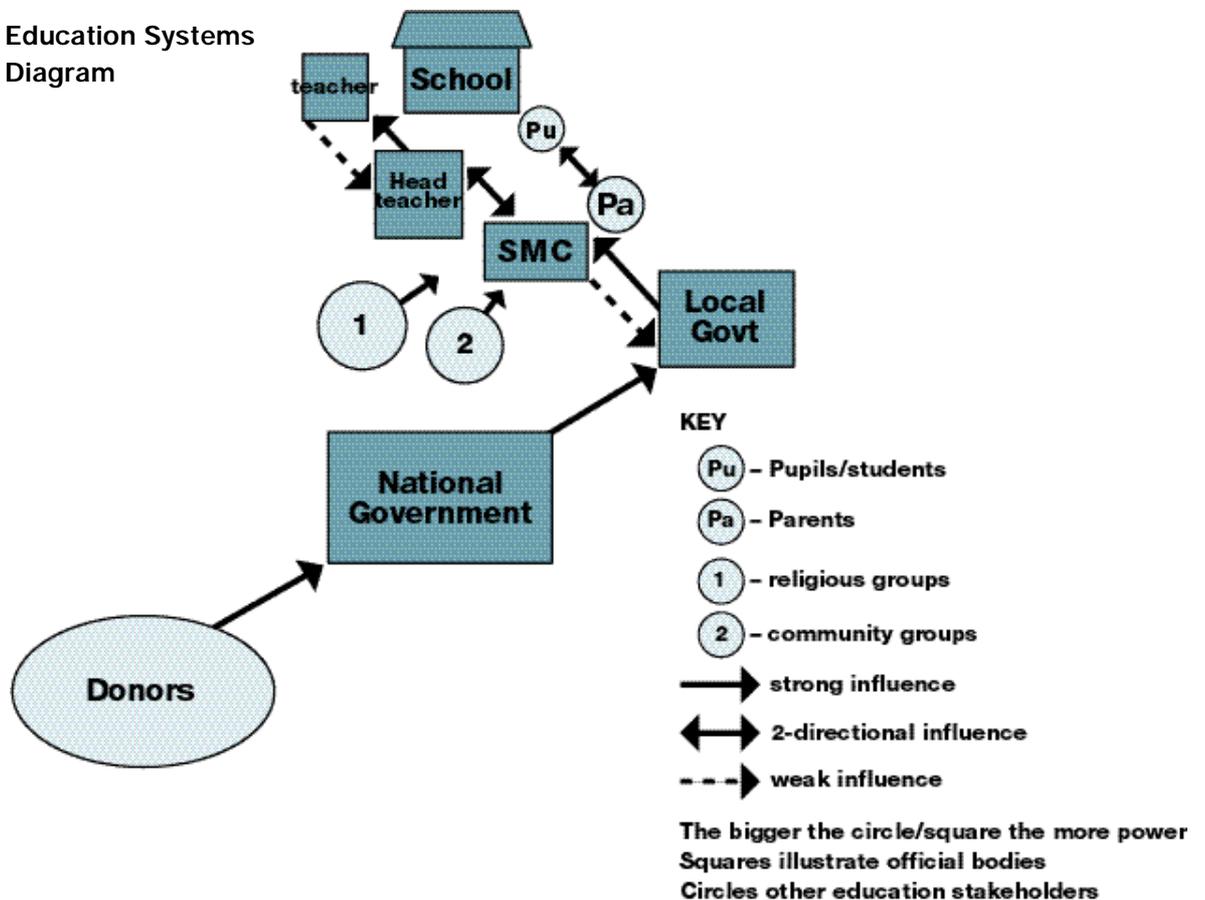
This should help you identify information blocks, or obstacles to securing the right to education, as well as help to highlight anything you feel (you) should change in the system.

Using different shapes, colours or symbols you can map out the different types of stakeholder, their roles, how they contribute to securing education rights, their relations (for example are they strong or weak, positive or negative), and also how much information they have access to, how much power they have etc. Systems diagrams can be as simple or as complex as you like depending on how far you wish to take the analysis. An interesting exercise is to look at information and communication flows across the system: who has access to what information; who links with who; where does decision-making occur and how does this impact power relations, influence in the system etc.



Jack Picone / ActionAid

### Education Systems Diagram



**Possible actions with different education actors**

Based on an understanding of the different roles and actors you can decide which groups to target for your work. Actors and likely actions include:

- **Community members:** this might involve raising awareness on the right to education and encouraging people across the community to become involved in the struggle for the right to education. This could include facilitating an analysis process, based on the 4As, with the wider community, or for certain members of the original group to become peer educators, linking to different groups in the community to share information on the right to education. You could also use a range of communication techniques, such as posters, role plays and songs, to ensure that information about the right to education is accessible widely. The aim here would be to develop wider support and therefore stronger voice for the right to education. As part of this process it is important to reflect on who you are reaching – ensuring that the most marginalised sectors of society are given the opportunity to become involved. You should develop specific strategies to target women and relevant minority groups. This could also build into local level coalitions – either involving a range of different groups (such as women’s groups, youth groups, teachers’ unions) or linking across different communities to form district-level education coalitions (see Section Four for more information on coalitions). The other reason for working with the local community could be to challenge cultural prejudices which exist locally. Often the reasons for people not accessing their right to education are based in local social structures and inequalities (Section Two highlights these issues from a range of different perspectives). Winning the case for the right to education for all at the local level is the first step to winning this case more widely.

**EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE**

**KALANGALA DISTRICT, UGANDA**

Kalangala district, Uganda is made up of many small isolated islands, which historically have had very little access to education. One of the few schools which had existed was closed down because teachers salaries were not being paid (as parents were unable to pay the school fees) and there were no educational materials or school management committee.

To gain government funding the school needed a code number, and this is only provided to functioning schools. Through the efforts of the local community the school developed an interim funding and operational structure and was able to reopen. One year later, the government registration came through and the school was able to function properly. It now has four classes.

This initiative was only possible because of the continual engagement with the local government, and the district education inspectorate. By linking to them from the start of the project, their support for the school was guaranteed. The local community was able to work with the Ministry of Education to ensure the school was properly recognised and funded.

- **Local schools:** The school itself may have instigated policies which discriminate against individuals or groups. Often members of the school management committee introduce a range of user fees which poorer families can not afford, or specific practices in the school exclude groups of people – this might be through religious practices, or due to lack of safety for girls, etc. A first stage in securing the right to education could be to work with the school to explore the range of actions

they could take to increase enrolment and retention rates and reach out to the most excluded groups. This will draw on the ideas in **Section Four**, specifically those relating to SMCs.

- 
- **Local government:** in many countries education delivery is decentralised, and managed by local government. There are various reasons why local government might be failing to deliver education – it could be a resourcing issue. In this case, the first stage of any work would be to explore whether this issue was real (i.e. there are insufficient resources) or created (resources are being spent elsewhere – either on other services, or disappearing through corruption). If the former is the issue local government could join your campaign for the right to education, if it is the latter you could go through a process of budget analysis or budget tracking (see **Section Three**). Or it could be a capacity issue. For example, the local government workers may not have the knowledge, skills or time to look at how to make education rights real for different groups of the population. They may not have the ideas or experience to engage with specific groups, and feel unable to adapt education provision to different contexts. Here you may work with the local government sharing experiences of reforms that have extended the right to education. This may include sharing previous non-formal education experiences, and exploring ways these initiatives could be scaled up or implemented by government. You could also collaborate with them on specific roles, such as monitoring schooling – regularly evaluating local education provision against the 4A framework.

- 
- **Media:** Engagement with the media could happen on two levels. Firstly you could work with them so that they actively support your campaign. This could be through press briefings, inviting them to meetings and events, or through writing letters, producing radio broadcasts etc. actively using the media to raise profile. Secondly, you might work with the media to minimise negative stereotypes which they might be portraying through their writing or broadcasting, and

## ▶▶ Moving on from service delivery

Education is the government's responsibility, and therefore civil society action should focus on pressuring and supporting the government to fulfil its duty. However, many NGOs such as ActionAid, have years of experience of delivering education. In some areas they have been the main service provider. The transition from service provider to facilitator or advocate is complex, and needs to be done in a responsible way, to ensure that communities are not left in a worse position than before. Moreover, the lessons learnt and skills developed through work in non-formal education are valuable and should be shared with the government, enabling them to deliver the right to education more effectively.

raise awareness of the role they are playing in perpetuating denial of the right to education. A third way of engaging with the media is to invite them to build your capacity on communication techniques; this could link back to the earlier work on documentation.

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- **Lawyers:** Although the main focus of work with lawyers is at national level you may want to involve lawyers locally, both to help you interpret local legislation, or to engage with local courts, depending on the legal structure in your country.
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▶ Parents have the right to secure the education of their children in accordance to their religious and philosophical convictions, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child reinforces this right through emphasising the importance of non-discrimination (see box, page 48). Some would argue that this means that there is a role for private education provision, to enable parental choice. However, as the points here show, non-public schools undermine public schooling. Therefore it is important to focus on public provision, while recognising that public provision does not imply that all provision should be identical. The importance of acceptability and adaptability in education mean that public provision should be targeted towards the specific context of those accessing the education. And public schools need to be flexible and responsive to the communities they serve.

### **Non-public schools:**

The activities outlined above focus on building from an analysis of the right to public education, looking at how that right is being denied and then linking to a range of different people who could help in accessing that right. However, it is also important to look at external factors which impact on the public education system – such as the influence of private schooling. Private, or non-public schooling, is delivered in a range of different ways – it includes community schooling, schooling delivered by NGOs or faith groups or by businesses and education trusts. In many areas there is social or peer pressure to send children to private school. This might be because the quality of teaching, infrastructure, instruction materials is better, or because there is no other option, the private school is the only one which exists locally. In some places private schools may be seen as having a higher status, even where they provide a worse quality of education. It is important to understand why children are sent to private school, as a first step to challenging private education. Work in this area includes:

- **Defining private education** – there are a range of different types of schools which could be described as private, including community managed schools, and NGO schools as well as schools run by private individuals, companies or trusts. Some schools will be targeted at the very rich, some to middle classes, and others at poorer communities, who are led to believe that private education has a status or value that public education cannot provide, or who do not have access to public education. It is important to be clear about what is a private school in your area.
- **Mapping private education** – Where are the private schools? Who goes to them, What is the balance between private and public education provision? Why do parents feel the need to send children to private school? For example, is it because of a lack of public provision, because the public provision is of poor quality, because of status or peer pressure, etc?
- **Understanding costs** – It can be useful to look at comparative costs between private and public schooling, specifically the amount of money spent per child. Questions include: what costs are involved in private schooling? What is the expenditure per pupil in a specific private school – how does this compare to public school expenditure? How do the different types of private school differ in the costs involved? This could provide information as to the level of investment needed to fund free primary education. It can also be a useful reflection tool, for parents and guardians to consider why they are sending their children to private school
- **Exploring the impact on public schooling** – The impact could cover a range of issues – firstly looking at whether and how the public system is subsidising private education (through teacher training, material development and through offering tax breaks); as well as looking at the local impact of a likely two tier system, which divides children according to which type of school they have attended. It will also be

important to look at the impact on children directly – for example if a child attends a private primary school is she or he able to enter state secondary school? Are the qualifications equivalent?

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- **Lesson learning** – Often private schools are more successful at involving parents and supporting community management structures, as well as introducing a range of alternative pedagogies into the classroom. It could be useful to look at how this has been achieved and what types of learning could be brought into the state system, asking: what is distinct about the specific private school experience? How was this achieved? What challenges did they experience? How do learning outcomes compare to public school learning outcomes? Etc.
- 
- **Critiquing private schooling** – The spread of private schooling in an area can, in some cases, lead to the government reducing investment in local public schools, or using public funds to subsidise private schools. Moreover, their presence may reduce the power of any collective voice calling for reform of the public system as those who send their children to private school will no longer have a stake in the public system. The local group could develop a locally relevant critique of the impact of private schooling. Who is it impacting and how? Have the numbers of private schools changed in the recent years? Has this impacted on public education provision? How?
- 
- **Challenging NGOs involved in non-formal education** – There is a long history of NGOs delivering non-formal education, however, this action makes NGOs complicit in privatising education, it undermines the teaching profession, is unsustainable and contributes to distancing people from their government. The local group could look at the impact of NFE provision, exploring the level of provision. Asking how NFE provision has impacted on public education provision. As well as looking at who are the teachers and what training they have received.
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Michael Amaradia / Network / ActionAid

## Working at the national level

Much of the work on the right to education at national level involves researching information to support and strengthen local work, linking with lawyers and amplifying voice through working in coalitions with the media etc. It is through linking the local level analysis and action to national level that links with the constitution itself can be made, influencing its wording and implementation. National level work also includes encouraging national debate on the right to education, using advocacy techniques to make this right a reality. And linking internationally, either through linking to international processes and using international conventions to secure the national right to education, or through working horizontally across countries to advocate for the binding nature of international conventions to be strengthened, to make the right a stronger possibility in reality.

In recent years, education activists around the world have focused a lot of energy on the Education for All framework – first asserted in Jomtien in 1990 and then strengthened in Dakar in 2000. Although this certainly offers a vision for a better future, unfortunately the framework has no legal status. The fact that the global community has failed to live up to resource promises cannot be addressed through legal action. This is also the case with the Millennium Development Goals, which have no legal standing. This means that a different set of reference points needs to be used to make the right to education a reality, this is likely to involve your national constitution and national legislation on education, gender or child rights. However, it is important to recognise that international conventions provide the framework or reference points by which to evaluate national legislation. These are the standards by which you should hold your government to account. It is therefore necessary to access the relevant international treaties (see boxes, pages 47 and 48) to enable you to engage on the right to education at national level.

## Understanding the right to education in your country

Once you have familiarised yourself with the relevant international conventions (as well as identifying which ones your country has ratified) it can be useful to look your national constitution (if your country has one) and national legislation regarding education. This will include general legislation on anti-discrimination as well as education specific laws. While many countries have ratified international conventions, such as the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or the Convention on the Rights of the child, they may not have enshrined these in national law. Alternatively, legislation might exist, but may not be implemented in practice. In addition to looking at the legislation it is also important to access research and documentation relating to the right to education. This might include reports made to international committees (many of the international conventions require countries to produce annual reports on progress) as well as a range of NGO and academic reports that have been compiled by different actors. These alternative reports may present a different viewpoint on the progress in relation to specific legislation.

Once you have established the status of the right to education in your country you can determine the most appropriate action. You will need to decide whether you are campaigning for a constitutional amendment, for new legislation, or for implementation of the current constitution or legislation. Each of these targets suggests different strategies for action. Possible activities include: public awareness raising; research; coalition building; advocacy; or instigating a legal process – a test case – for the right to education. As part of this process it will also be important to access information on your legal framework and system, and identify potential allies who could collaborate in any action. All this work should link, and react to, analysis and action coming out of local engagement.



## ▶▶ Understanding the constitution

The precise wording is very important for any constitution or legislation. The more ambiguous the wording, the more ways there are to interpret the provision, and the easier it is for the government to fail in its duty to provide the right to education. Legal documents are notoriously difficult to understand, often containing jargon and difficult language. It can be helpful to access legal expertise in analysing documents. Here we draw on extracts from the Albanian and Bangladeshi constitutions to illustrate the issues you need to consider when analysing your constitution.

**Albania:** *'Everyone has the right to education. Mandatory school education is determined by law.'* It is unclear from this extract whether the constitution makes education mandatory or if further legislation is required. *'Mandatory education and general high school education in public schools are free.'* The only thing that is certain is that everyone should attend high school and it should be *free*. However, it is not clear who should provide the education. It is certainly arguable that the State should provide it, but the law does not say anything to obligate them to do so. This is a real weakness as it suggests that no one could easily be held accountable for the failure to provide education.

**Bangladesh:** *'The State shall adopt effective (key word) measures for the purpose of: establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such a stage as may be determined by law.'* This extract clearly identifies the State as the body responsible for providing uniform education for all. The only limitation is the phrase 'as may be determined by law'. However, this refers only to the extent (years) of free education, but does not give the option as to whether or not to provide free education.

The Bangladeshi extract confers far greater responsibility on the government than the Albanian one. It should be noted that both include the vital aspect that the right to education should be made available for all children.

Key questions to aid in understanding the constitutional provision include:

- Who has the right to education? What does this right include?
- Is anyone identified to deliver this right? Who?
- Is this right provided for a set number of years? How many? Is this adequate?
- Is further legislation needed to enforce the constitutional statement?
- Is education free? Is there a set level of expenditure required (for example in Costa Rica public expenditure on education cannot be less than six per cent of GDP)?

Any constitutional provision on the right to education should be binding and unambiguous, conferring the obligation on the government. The constitution should include clear language on the nature of the right; who has the right; and the responsibilities of the government. It should also include a clear statement on the right to remedy human rights violations, and mechanism for holding the government to account. In some cases (for example, in Taiwan and the Philippines) the constitution actually specifies a percentage of national budget which is dedicated to education. This can be a powerful mechanism to argue for proper investment in education making funding obligatory rather than discriminatory. See **Section Three** for ideas on financing education.

The final drafting of the amendment was not as strong as many campaigners had wanted. The amendment only recognised that children aged 6-14 have the fundamental right to free and compulsory education, but did not mention older children and adults. The right to education campaign is on going, looking both at legislative and implementation issues. Although a constitutional amendment has been achieved there are still questions about what this means in practice. Nevertheless, there is considerable learning from this experience as shared by some of those involved in the campaign:

- **1. Having a very broad-based movement is helpful** – Education is an issue on which many people will mobilise. Don't just stick with the usual suspects. Bring in unexpected voices and groups. Make strategic links with people who you might not work with in other contexts. Define the common ground and work on that.
- **2. Work with the media** – national print, radio and TV as well as having some international links. Organise a group of journalists who have some interest in education and give them exposure to the reality of schools in the country and the experiences of individual children who have been excluded. Build their analysis over time.
- **3. Work with parliamentarians** – as this is the group who can actually introduce legislation. A cross party consensus always helps! If there is no existing education committee, explore what it takes to form one, or form an informal group or parliamentary caucus. Build the capacity of this group. (See box, page 54 for more ideas).
- **4. Work with lawyers** – make sure that you are systematic in knowing how to draft an amendment

### **Mobilising for new legislation:**

In other cases it might be more appropriate to focus on new legislation, rather than a constitutional amendment. This will depend on your country context and the comparative strength of the different documents, the ease of engagement, etc. The focus of the new legislation will also be highly contextualised. For example, if the right to education exists, but is not clearly defined, you might campaign for the bill with abroad focus – guaranteeing the right to free compulsory education for all. Or, if there is legislation in place but certain groups are being denied their right, you might prefer to focus on the particular group which is facing discrimination – this could be girls, disabled children, pastoralists etc.

In framing the bill it will be important to consider the provisions of existing international treaties, as well as looking at the general comments of treaty bodies (accessible online see box, page 47 for details); the constitutions or education bills from other countries, and the '4 A' indicators (developed at local level). It is also important to make sure that the wording is clear and unambiguous (see box previous page). As with any mobilisation effort, you will need to consider a range of actions to achieve the aims. This will include working with other organisations; building relationships with government, especially the legislature; and raising public awareness and profile for your demands.

## Analysing and translating information

In addition to understanding the current constitutional and legal provision on the right to education yourself, it is also important to raise awareness among others you should think through who you should be sharing this information with, and how you can share it. The material is likely to be useful for work at local level, raising awareness of the right to education, and also for national level mobilisation (which will include linking to education coalitions and other civil society movements, as well as the media). Depending on your target audience and context you might produce posters explaining the relevant legislation, or produce audio versions, or translate the key points into local languages etc. The following questions will help in making these decisions:

- Which piece of legislation makes the most powerful case for the right to education?
- How can we communicate this information most effectively to our audience?
- Are there specific pieces or segments of the legislation that we want people to know about, what do we expect them to do with it? How much detail do they need to know?
- Are there any conditions which impact on how this legislation is used or implemented?
- Is there any other contextual information which we need to communicate which will help people understand or interpret this information?
- How does the legislation relate to the 4As (see local level) – which aspects are covered sufficiently, what would we like to change?
- Is there specific legislation that we should be identifying and repackaging given what is emerging from the local context?

You may also want to communicate any steps the government is currently taking to deliver the right to education. For example, do they seem to be taking this legislation seriously? This might be shown by looking at whether they are monitoring and reporting on its implementation. It could also be done through looking at budget allocation (see Section Three). This is important as understanding your government's level of commitment to the right to education is necessary in guiding you where to target your efforts.



Michael Arrendilla / Network / ActionAid

## Pursuing the legal option

In some instances you may decide that it would be useful to try 'the right to education' in the courts, this route is particularly applicable if your country is governed by a common law system (see page 49). Such action is based on the premise that if someone has a right to education there is the possibility of taking those responsible for the right to court, to ensure that the right is upheld. The test case is a campaigning tool. It can be used to raise awareness of a particular group of people who are being excluded from the right to education, or to put pressure on the government to fulfil their obligation. The legal process should be accompanied with wider campaigning and advocacy to ensure media interest and government response.

There are many reasons to choose the legal route; if you are successful the impact could be far reaching, transforming education nationally. The case could be used to set a precedent, forcing the government to act more generally on education. Even if your case is not successful the process of awareness raising and mobilisation will not only ensure that the right to education is placed on the national agenda but could help empower people at every level, strengthening coalition working and pressurising the government. Additionally the very process of putting together a case for litigation can focus the mind analytically and help you understand what rights to education exist in your context. The process described below concerns the steps you will need to go through to develop a legal case. However, the thought process outlined will also be useful in developing understanding of the right to education in your specific context, as well as how you might present this right to the government, media, academics etc. So it can be useful to follow the process even if you have no intention of taking a case to court.

Before embarking on a legal case it is important to consider carefully the risks involved. These include risks to the

individuals involved; to your relationship with the government; to the wider campaign on the right to education.

*Individuals or groups involved:* The idea of pursuing the legal route should emerge from work at the local level, and the local community should take the lead in selecting individuals or groups to be part of the case. You should ensure that they are aware of the level of publicity the case might generate, and the impact this may have on their lives, both within the home and their local community. It is also important to understand what might happen to them as a result of the case, will they be victimised, by whom?

*The government:* Pursuing a legal case is an action of direct confrontation, it is likely (at least during the trial itself) to make relationships with the government difficult, you will need to consider whether the risk is worth it. This will probably depend on the nature of your relationship with the government, as well as the steps they are taking to achieve the right to education – here there is a need to distinguish between an inability and an unwillingness to realise the right to education. If a government is making progression towards the right it may not be the right time to instigate a legal case.

*The campaign:* A legal case can be a long slow process, and distract those involved in fighting for education from other work. It is also worth considering what will happen following the case. It might be that:

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- you win the case, a symbolic victory, but not the struggle, or that

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  - winning leads to de-mobilisation – a decrease in momentum or interest, or

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  - the case is won but there is no way of enforcing the outcome. All of these outcomes can be damaging for civil society activists and for the continuing struggle for the right to education.
-

Finally, while it is important to mobilise around the case, and large scale mobilisation can also help to ensure that individuals are not victimised, and that outcomes are enforced, it is also important to consider how publicity might impact the case itself. Sometimes publicity can be seen to prejudice the case. It is therefore important to focus on the issues raised by the case, rather than the specific circumstances of the individual involved in the case.

All these issues will help as you move through the following steps to develop your legal case.

## ▶▶ Preparing a legal case

To prepare the legal case you will need to go through a five-stage process.

1. **Understand the legislation**, which laws, what is their remit or constituency, how can you apply them etc?
2. **Collect evidence**, who has had their right violated, how, was this violation because of inability to meet the right to education, or unwillingness (if it was the former there probably was not a national level violation, but you may want to consider the international route). Is it a systemic (the entire population) or individual (or specific group) violation?
3. **Frame the case** – choose specific parts of the legislation which have been violated, and link this to evidence that prove the violation, prepare your arguments – what will you argue and how?
4. **Choose which court** to take the case to (a local lawyer or human rights commission should be able to advise you on this).
5. **Mobilise** – civil society movements, activists, media etc. ensuring that you have public awareness and support but that you will not be accused of prejudicing the case.



Stuart Freedman / ActionAid

## Some common jargon

Legal documents are complex and use a lot of highly technical language. Here are some of the words you are likely to come across:

- **Adjudication:** This is a decision made by court or a committee.
- **Appeal:** In some courts you will have the right to appeal if the judgement (or verdict) is not what you expected, and you believe it is incorrect. This means you can ask the court to revisit the evidence, or take the evidence to a higher court to review the case.
- **Convention:** A multilateral treaty, usually negotiated through an international organisation, and binding to all those who ratify it.
- **Declaration:** An explicit statement or announcement, generally a non-legally binding resolution.
- **Domesticate:** To nationalise international law. This involves passing national legislation to enshrine international law at the national level.
- **General comments:** Committees of international conventions publish their interpretation of the convention in the form of general comments.
- **Jurisdiction:** The authority given by law for a court or another body to administer justice (usually limited by subject matter or geographical area); the area over which government or another body exercises control.
- **Litigate:** is to take a case to a court of law.
- **Party:** A party to an agreement refers to the individual, organisation or government who has signed the agreement.
- **Petition:** the term often applied to the complaint presented to a court or treaty body.
- **Plaintiff or complainant:** the person who is taking out the case, in some cases they will be the person who has had their right to education violated, in others they will be acting on behalf of this person or group of people.
- **Provision:** This refers to the clauses within a specific law; it describes a condition to be met or action which must be carried out.
- **Ratify:** The process used by states to get national level approval of a particular treaty or convention. If governments ratify a treaty they, and all future governments are bound by it, they are said to **accede** or **succeed** to a treaty. A government can be a **signatory** to a treaty without ratifying it at national level. This means that they agree with the treaty, but do not feel ready to implement it yet.
- **Reservation:** When a government ratifies a treaty it may in many cases (unless it is expressly forbidden) it can amend certain parts of a treaty, for example if it believes it is not able to fulfil the requirements of a particular clause at this time. This is called a reservation.

## Key lessons from the case: of Dilcia Yean and Violeta Bosico (shown right)

The case holds important lessons for those who decide to pursue the litigation route.

- Be aware of the politics around the case – will you get a hostile reaction from government, how will you minimise this (or use it to your advantage), will this bias the court's judgement?
- What language would you like the media to use in describing the case, can you work with them on the significance of the language used (e.g. through orientation workshops, in press packs, etc.)
- What do you know about the body which decides which cases to prosecute? Is the decision entirely judicial or is there a political element? What are the priorities of the body, or the individual's on that body, how can you choose and frame your case to make it most likely to be heard?
- How will you frame your case generally – will you look at the specific violation to the right to education, or look at the root causes of this violation, which is most likely to be successful, which will the courts pass judgement on?
- How does the litigation process fit into your wider struggle, what steps can you take to ensure that the case is a positive experience, even if the judgement is not won, or the ruling implemented?
- Who can you work with to get the expertise knowledge you need, and strengthen your ability to raise the profile of the case, nationally and internationally if appropriate?

## THE CASE OF DILCIA YEAN AND VIOLETA BOSICO

In 1997, Dilcia (10) and Violeta, (12) were refused their request for birth certificates by the Dominican civil registry. Both girls are Dominican-born but of Haitian descent. Without a birth certificate, Dilcia and Violeta were effectively denied their right to a nationality and to related civil, economic, political and social rights. They were expelled from school, as only children with Dominican birth certificates are allowed to study.

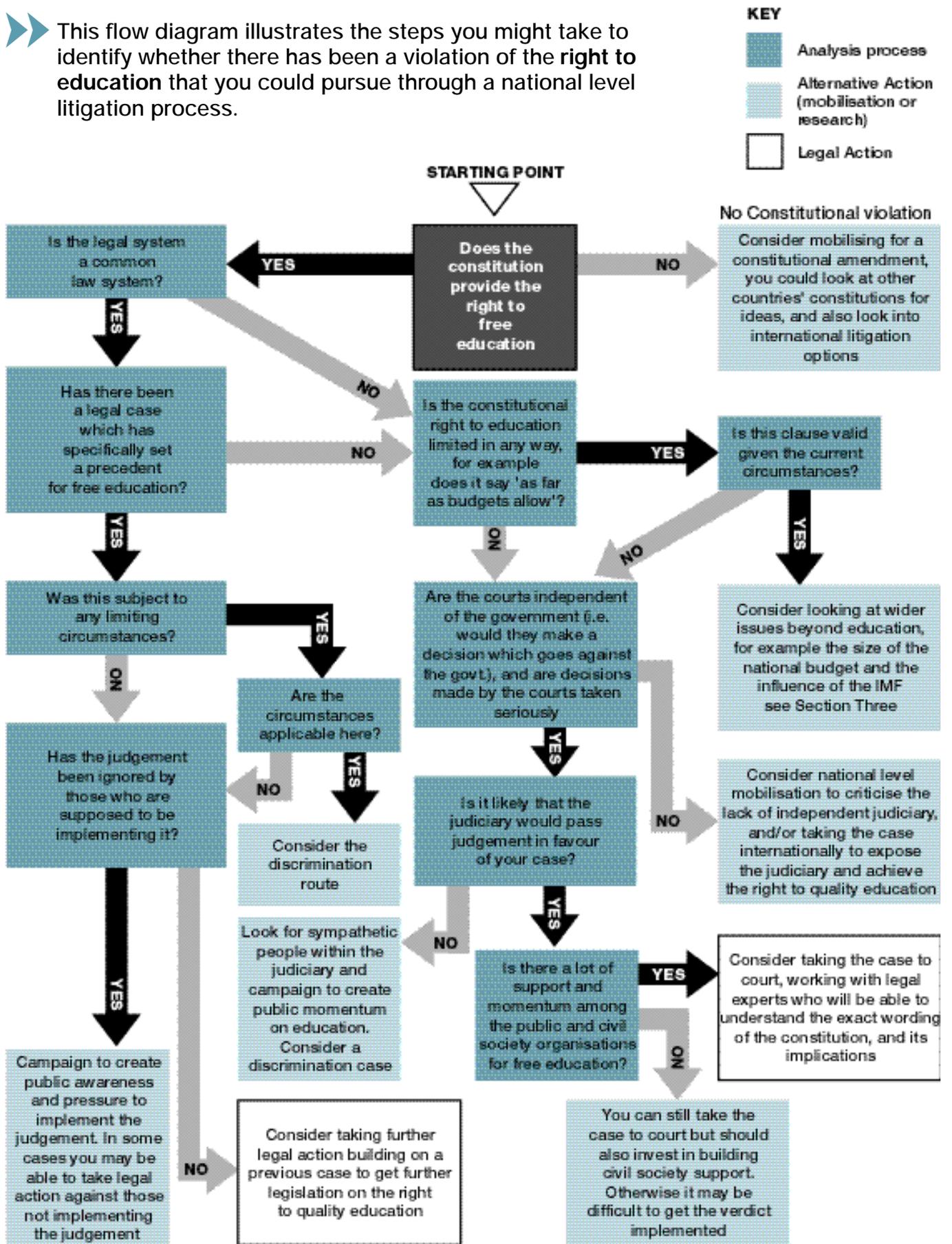
The Movement for Dominican Women of Haitian Descent (MUDHA), together with the Center for Justice and International Law, and the Human Rights Law Clinic at the University of California, Berkeley filled a complaint before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, alleging multiple violations of the American Convention on Human Rights. This international route was chosen as it was felt that the level of national discrimination against those of Haitian descent was so high that the national judiciary would be biased. It was also hoped that by taking the case to an international court, the issue would get international coverage and debate.

The case was brought on the grounds that the girls' civil rights had been breached, specifically their right to identity and nationality. International courts are less happy to directly rule on economic, social and cultural rights, as these are thought to be policy related and therefore to be decided by national government. However, by drawing links between the breach of civil rights and their impact on other rights, specifically health and education, the breach is given a human dimension, and this is what brings media publicity. During the litigation process those taking the case distributed a press packet and press releases to ensure wide media coverage and publicity. The government's reaction was unanticipated and hostile. They launched a press campaign to discredit the case, building on the prejudice which already existed against Haitians.

Due to the high number of cases submitted to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2,000-3,000 per year) it took five years for the case to be referred to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and another two years for it to be tried and for the Court to reach a verdict. In September 2005, the Court found that the Dominican Republic had violated a wide range of rights enshrined in the American Convention, and held that because the Dominican Constitution has the *jus soli* rule of nationality (nationality is granted based on place of birth) the process applied to the two girls was discriminatory. The court awarded each of the girls \$8,000 for damages. It also ordered the government to circulate the sentence publicly, offer a public apology to the victims, and institute a broad range of institutional reforms, relating to nationality and access to education, to ensure that the violation did not happen again.

The government has not complied with any of these judgements, and has yet to publicly apologise or pay the \$8,000. But they have issued birth certificates and the girls did access schooling. Even without the implementation of the Court's ruling the girls, and others of Haitian descent, have gained significantly through the proceeding. They have gained legitimacy for the right they have been fighting for for years, to be legally recognised as Dominican, and they know that there is an international court, and movement, which agrees with them. This has helped strengthen the struggle.

➤ This flow diagram illustrates the steps you might take to identify whether there has been a violation of the **right to education** that you could pursue through a national level litigation process.



## ▶▶ Key treaty provisions on free and compulsory education

There are a series of global treaties which may have been ratified by your government and include the right to education. Here are some key excerpts from a range of treaties referring to free and compulsory education. These treaties can be used: to enforce the right to education, through recourse to their international bodies (this is especially the case for the ICESCR which has a committee); or to influence the creation of national legislation – for example through campaigning to ensure the domestication of international law, or through the taking of a test case using the domestic court system. It is important that you have up-to-date information on each treaty and UN arrangements, before embarking on detailed action.

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):** Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.  
[www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm)

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- **UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960):** The States Parties to this Convention undertake to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which ... will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment ... and in particular: a) to make primary education free and compulsory.  
[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_c\\_educ.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_c_educ.htm)

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- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966):** Primary education shall be compulsory and available free for all.  
[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_cescr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_cescr.htm)

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- **Protocol of San Salvador to the American Convention on Human Rights (1988):** The States Parties to this Protocol recognise that in order to achieve the full exercise of the right to education: a) Primary education should be compulsory and accessible to all without cost.  
[www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/basic5.htm](http://www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/basic5.htm)

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- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):** States Parties recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: a) make primary education compulsory and available free for all.  
[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm)

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- **Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child (1990):** States Parties to the present Charter shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realisation of [the right to education] and shall in particular: a) provide free and compulsory basic education.<sup>7</sup>  
[www.umn.edu/humanrts/africa/afchild.htm](http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/africa/afchild.htm)

<sup>7</sup> K. Tomasevski, *Manual on Rights-based education*, (Bangkok: UNESCO, 2004) p.12

## ▶▶ Key provisions on non-discrimination in education

In addition to treaties which specifically mention the right to free and compulsory education there are a range of treaties on non-discrimination which range from specifying the obligations of governments to prohibit discrimination in access to education to preventing discrimination through education (for example in relation to textbooks and curricula). Key provisions are as follows:<sup>8</sup>

**UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960):** The States Parties to this Convention undertake to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which ... will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment... the term 'discrimination' includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular:

- a. Of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level;
- b. Of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard;
- c. ... of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions ... [such systems are permitted for pupils of both genders, for religious or linguistic reasons, and private education is also permitted if its object is not to secure the exclusion of any group].  
[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_c\\_educ.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_c_educ.htm)

### **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965):**

States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:

... (v) The right to education and training.

States Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the field of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination. [www.ohchr.org/english/law/cerd.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cerd.htm)

### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979):**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- b. Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
- c. The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging co-education ...
- f. The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
- h. Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning. [www.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cedaw.htm)

### **ILO Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989):**

Measures shall be taken to ensure that members of the [indigenous] peoples have the opportunity to acquire education at all levels on at least an equal footing with the rest of the national community.

Education programmes and services for the [indigenous] peoples shall be developed and implemented in co-operation with them to address their special needs and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations.

The imparting of general knowledge and skills that will help children belonging to the [indigenous] peoples to participate fully and on an equal footing in their own community and in the national community shall be the aim of education for these peoples.

Educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and particularly amongst those that are in most direct contact with the [indigenous] peoples, with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history text books and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples. [www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/62.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/62.htm)

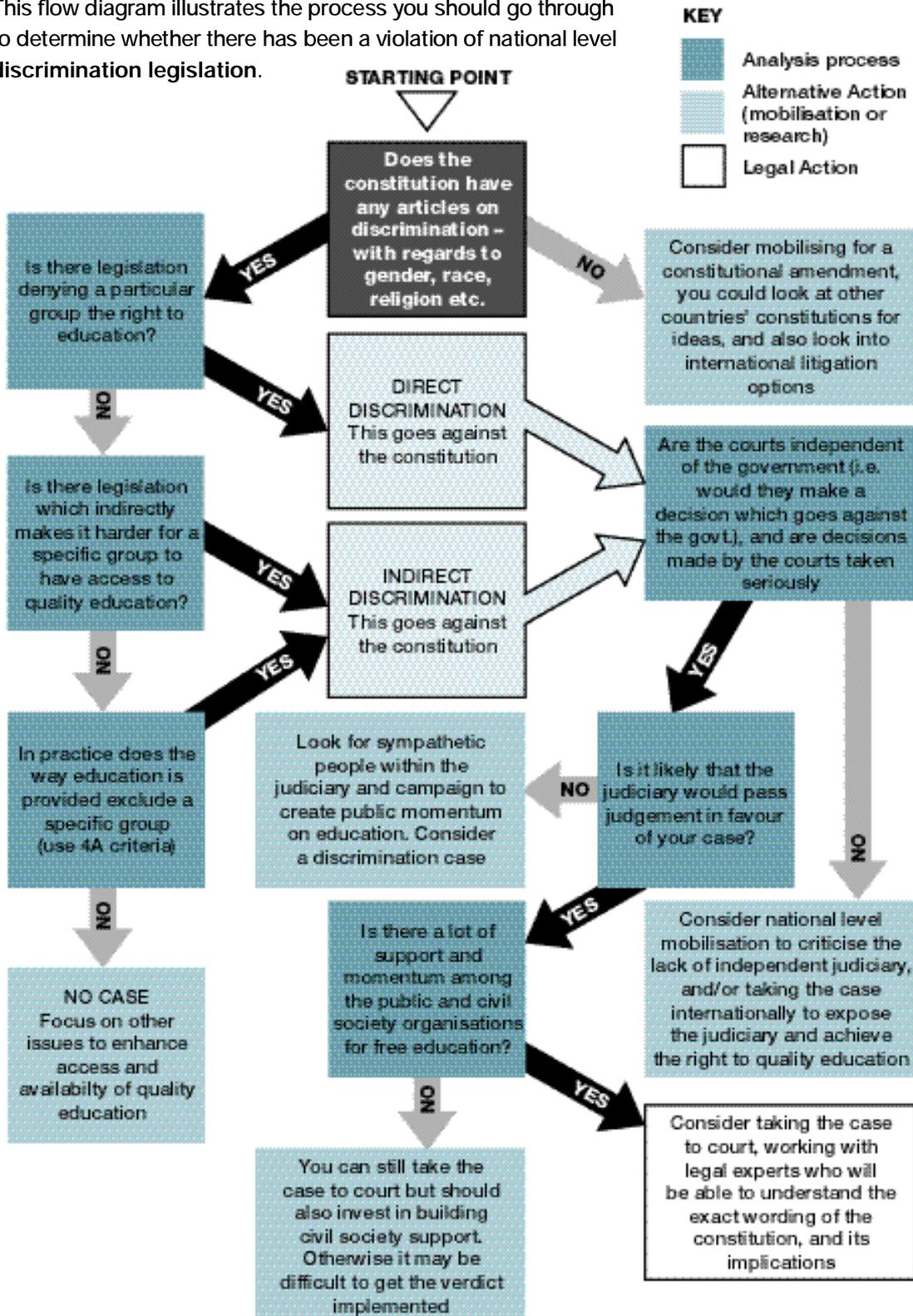
<sup>8</sup> K. Tomasevski, *Manual on Rights-based education*, (Bangkok: UNESCO, 2004) p. 27

## Key provisions on non-discrimination in education (continued)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):

Recognising the special needs of a disabled child, assistance ... shall be designated to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education ... In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language. [www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm)

This flow diagram illustrates the process you should go through to determine whether there has been a violation of national level discrimination legislation.



### **Developing a country profile:**

Before embarking on a legal case it is important to understand certain information about the legal procedure in your country. A good starting point is to look at the **legal system** used in your country. This is likely to be a civil law or common law system (some countries will also have customary or Muslim Law but this is usually limited to specific areas of law, for example around personal conduct).

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■ **The civil law system:** In countries following this system law is determined by legislation, set by parliament. The courts can therefore base their judgements on codes and statutes passed down from parliament. This suggests that parliament is the place to test the right to education, and you might take a case to an ombudsman or against a specific politician – about how they have interpreted the law. You could even push for a referendum, but you would be unlikely to litigate as the courts have little power to generate new interpretations of the law.

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■ **The common law system:** In this system both parliament and the courts can make law. Law is based on prior cases, meaning that a case can set a new precedent, altering the law for the future. In this system it is likely that you would litigate rather than go through parliament.

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There are also two different ways international law passes into national law:

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■ **Dualist legal system:** In a dualist system international legal obligations are only binding at national level if national legislation is adopted. This means that there is a two stage process in signing up to international treaties.

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■ **Monist legal system:** In countries with a monist legal system international law is automatically enforceable as domestic law, so if an international agreement is ratified no further legislation is needed.

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As well as understanding the legal system it is also important to know if your country has a constitution, and what it says about education, as well as whether it has a constitutional court or Human Rights Commission (to link up with lawyers who are familiar with how these courts operate). Finally it will be important to know what national legislation exists on education and human rights, as well as which global or regional treaties and conventions your government has ratified. Once you have collated this information it can be useful to publish it as '*A guide to the Right to Education in ..... (your country)*'. This way others can benefit from your research and you can raise awareness of the right to education.

As well as understanding the legal context it will also be important to identify potential partners in the case, for example human rights lawyers, experts on the legal system etc. Who will be able to help you put together a case and argue it in court? There maybe lawyers who are committed to the concept of the right to education and happy to collaborate with you for little financial incentive.

### **Collecting suitable evidence:**

Once you have understood the legal context, the next step is to collect evidence to support your case. This will include identifying who has had their right violated and how. It might be an individual violation, where an individual or small group of people are suffering through an act of direct discrimination, or due to lack of specific legislation to protect their rights. Or it could be a systemic violation, where an entire population is denied their right to education, perhaps because budgets are being allocated elsewhere. The different scenarios will suggest a different case procedure (see flow diagrams pages 46 and 49). The individual process will focus on selecting a specific individual to participate in the litigation procedure, perhaps involving the national human rights commission. The systemic violation will probably involve a public-interest litigation (where any person can litigate in relation to a constitutional violation, even if that person is not the victim), or a judicial review

(which involves asking the courts to review a law or the actions of government or public authorities, which might lead to legislative or policy changes).

Depending on the type of case you will need to collect different types of evidence to prove that a violation has taken place. This will include statistics or personal testimonies which can back up your case, and individuals who could be called on to give evidence. It should draw on the work from the local level, as well as government data and independent research. Section Five gives more details as to how to produce and use statistics.

**Framing the case and choosing a court:**

Framing the case and choosing which court to take the case to are important next steps. This includes identifying the specific rights which have been abused, ensuring that your argument is clear and that the desired outcome has also been identified. You will also need to be clear about which laws you are referring to, the precise meaning of these laws, and precisely where the violation occurred. For example:

- Does the legislation provide for an **absolute right** – for example ‘everyone has the right to education’ ‘or is the **right qualified**: ‘the right to education will be provided according to the state’s ability to pay’. In the first case you might ask whether it is clear who should provide the right, and whether the right is free. In the second you will be more interested in understanding whether the government is making efforts to realise the rights, is there a clear timetable, reasonable budget allocation, etc.
- Alternatively you may refer to a **negative right**. Here the right prohibits certain action, for example there may be an anti-discrimination law which supports the use of local language, prohibiting discrimination based on language. If the State or others try and interfere with a school that chooses to operate in a local language of choice, this might be an abuse of the anti-discrimination law, thus providing the case for a violation of a right.

- In looking at the law it will be important to understand how the law has been **interpreted in the past**, and it can be useful to link to national lawyers for support in ensuring you have understood the law correctly.
- If the constitution or national law does confer responsibility on the government with regard to the right this suggests that they should **respect** (should not interfere with enjoyment of the right), **protect** (prevent third parties from acting to violate the right) and **fulfil** (to implement appropriate legislation, polices and budget to realise the right)<sup>9</sup>. It will be important to identify how which aspect of this process is being violated (see box, page 30).
- If there is no specific law on the right to education you will need to look at **anti-discrimination legislation** – and explore the possibility of violation on the grounds of gender, race, religion, etc. This can be found within anti-discrimination law and within education or human rights legislation so it is important to look at both to find the most appropriate provision. In some cases it will be easier to use anti-discrimination law then education legislation as anti-discrimination law is never qualified and refers to a civil right (see box overleaf).

Once you are clear about the law and the violation you will need to decide **which court** to take the case to, which will be dependent on national context. Factors to consider include:

- Will a decision made by this court be respected and enforced? Will implementation be monitored?
- Will the court create a legal precedent?
- Can the case be appealed if unsuccessful?
- What might be the unintended consequences on the individual or community if this court is used?

<sup>9</sup> These principles reflect a consensus on how Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should be implemented and are taken from the Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of ESC rights agreed in 1997

The final stage will be to prepare your argument:

- What is the most powerful way to present your evidence?
- How is the government likely to respond, and what defence might they present?
- Is the government likely to contest your evidence? How? How might you respond?

It can be useful to use rehearsal for reality role plays, with legal experts if possible.

## ACTIVITY

### ▶▶ Rehearsal for reality

Rehearsal for reality is a theatre for development<sup>10</sup> technique which enables groups to practice situations that they are going to face, and prepare for how they might respond to them. For example, the group could practice being the prosecuting lawyer, the witness, a juror etc. and immerse themselves in that role, acting the part and requiring others to respond to them. By subtly changing the character of key players, or the information they have, the whole situation can change dramatically. Groups should practice different scenarios to understand how they might react to the situation, and identify actions needed to ensure they are properly prepared.

### ▶▶ Using anti-discrimination legislation

Unlike much of the legislation concerning the right to education, anti-discrimination legislation is very rarely qualified. Such legislation is not subject to excuses such as the lack of resources, it is absolute and cuts across all other discrimination. This means it can often be more powerful to draw on anti-discrimination legislation, rather than focus on education specific law. Moreover, many courts are more willing to pass judgement on civil and political rights, than economic, social and cultural which they see as the government's domain (see box, page 45 on the case of Yean and Bosico). In addition there is considerable interest internationally in civil and political rights, and these movements can be linked to when raising public awareness of your test case.

Using anti-discrimination legislation, which often refers to civil and political rights, requires creativity, to make implicit implications explicit, developing connections which may not have been previously recognised. For example some argue that the violation of the right to education is a violation of the right to life, as without education it is not possible to live a life of dignity, but others will interpret the right to life as the right not to be unlawfully killed. If you were to pursue this route you would need to collect specific evidence to demonstrate how a violation of the right to education means the right to life has been violated.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (London: Pluto Press, 1979) or [www.theatreoftheoppressed.org](http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org)

## ➤ Pursuing an international route

The international route should only be pursued if the domestic route is not available or has been unsuccessful. Having said this, the international route can help to highlight and document the human-rights situation domestically and therefore is useful in creating pressure at national level. While the majority of international forums are committees rather than courts, their views and opinions have political and moral value and can be an effective lobbying tool, even if they are not legally binding.

Usually, anyone can bring a complaint to an international body, as long as they live in a state that has ratified the treaty, that the treaty body has the recognised competence to deal with complaints, and that there are no reservations that prevent the committee from considering the particular case. There are two main types of international court or committee which may hear a case related to the violation of the right to education – those established by UN treaties, and those established by human rights treaties. There are also two political routes – through the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women, which focus on systemic violations and may be brought against any country in the world. The third option is the World Bank and IMF inspection panels.

Each type of complaint will have its own process to follow. For example the three **UN bodies** which accept individual complaints, CEDAW, ICERD and ICCPR, have the following two to three year process:

- Submission of a complaint to the secretary general, who brings it to the attention of the relevant treaty body.
- The body registers and examines the complaint, considering whether it is admissible, and whether there has been a violation.
- The State is then required to respond, and the complainant (the person or body that submitted the complaint) can reply to the State's response.
- The body then issues its views. If a violation is found the State will be expected to provide compensation and/or change the law.
- There is no appeals process.

The process of preparing a case is very similar to that of a domestic case, and the relevant law and case reference documents should be examined carefully.

In the case of the **Commission on Human Rights**, the initial stages of the process are similar. However, once the government has responded, the process is private. You will not receive information about the government response or be informed of any further progress of the complaint. This means it is much harder to follow up any action.

### Mobilisation:

As mentioned above, the legal case is a tool in achieving the right to education for specific groups or extensive parts of the population. But it is important that any legal process is accompanied by a wider effort to raise awareness about the issues behind the case. This will include linking to your education coalitions (see **Section Four**) as well as thinking through how to link with media, government

officials, education activists and perhaps even the judiciary. A good starting point could be to run orientation workshops for the different groups interested in the case, focusing on the range of issues raised. Another option is develop briefing papers which can be used by the media (making sure that the information will not prejudice the case) or use the range of campaigning tools, such as mobilising with children and local groups, as detailed in **Section Four**.

## Working with the government

Before pursuing a public litigation case it is important to review your current and potential relationship with government. You should consider how the litigation will impact on this relationship and if there are different avenues that you should be pursuing which may be more effective in the long run. For example, the government may be interested in delivering the right to education, and have shown positive moves towards this but need support in thinking through how to do it. For many governments the education system is centrally planned and driven, and this might limit its flexibility and ability to meet the needs of specific groups. You might find that you have certain NFE experiences which the government could take on which might help to extend the right to education. Or you may provide specific skills, knowledge or resources over the short term to build government capacity for the right to education.

Strategies for engaging with government include organising meetings, conferences and events to share success stories and learning for education in specific contexts – such as education for different excluded groups such as those detailed in **Section Two**. It could also involve bringing in experiences from overseas, especially if a new initiative is being trialled, which has been attempted elsewhere. Or you may work with government over a longer time period, using capacity building workshops, regular updates and planning meetings or implementation support. While the rights-based approach challenges direct service delivery, civil society organisations working in partnership with government to deliver services can be a short term measure to achieve sustainable education provision in the long run. This is particularly the case if you are sharing skills or strengthening government capacity.



Dominic Sansoni / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### GUATEMALA

In Guatemala in 2003 there was very little interest among **politicians** in the Dakar accords and EFA goals. The National EFA coalition realised the need to create political awareness and interest in the issue, as a crucial starting point in achieving education rights. Their campaign had two main strands: raising public awareness through workshops, leaflets and radio broadcasts; and political lobbying work, targeting specific individuals to gain their support to move education up the political agenda. The Global Week of Action (see **Section Four**) sent politicians 'back to school', as well as bringing 900 people (mainly children) to the National Congress to share their educational experiences. Eventually, the Ministry of Education agreed to look into their concerns and increase the education budget. Towards the end of 2003, a group of 20 child leaders met with the Parliamentary Commission to remind them of their earlier commitments.

This stage-by-stage approach (from awareness raising, to dialogue, to grassroots participation and social mobilisation) was crucial in raising government interest in education. It ensured that positive dialogue was maintained between civil society and the government at all times, so that spaces for advocacy and influence were used effectively. Through this work, the coalition realised that government members are often only superficially aware of issues surrounding education, and civil society can play a role in raising their awareness. It is easier to engage at critical moments (for example if there is a teachers' strike), the challenge is to get continued involvement.

Another area of work in Guatemala has been to develop working relationships with civil servants. This is a multi-stage approach beginning by analysing the political climate, trying to work out what government might do, and selecting issues which are likely to emerge as important in future. While researching these issues, it is important to be aware of the counter arguments that the government might put forward. Once the evidence is clear, the next stage of the strategy is to meet with officials. It is important to decide what role to play in these meetings. Some meetings might be friendly, others more confrontational. The important thing is to meet regularly, so that you have the trust to survive more confrontational sessions. According to members of the Consulting Commission for Education: *'The relationship with the Ministry is like a marriage, sometimes we fight and sometimes we make up'*.



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

## ➤ Challenging privatisation and liberalisation

Governments fail to deliver on the right to education for many reasons, and often international pressures undermine national ability to deliver this right. The role and impact of the IMF is explored in **Section Three**. This focuses on how the macro-economic framework favoured by the IMF constrains government spending and can limit investment in education, especially with regard to teaching staff. However, there is also pressure on the right to education which comes through the WTO. The 'General Agreement on Trade in Services' (GATS) has been under discussion for many years and in some countries governments are under pressure to offer up education as a tradable service. This threatens the conception of education as a human right, and is also likely to be damaging to the quality of education, as well as impacting on the rights of those involved in the system – for example undermining the bargaining power of teacher.

Trade in education can impact on the running of schools, training of teachers and production of textbooks. It will be important to look at which aspects of education your government is offering up as a service which can be traded. Depending on the context of your country you may wish to do further research or campaigning in this area – it may be useful to link to trade experts and civil society organisations or networks specialising in trade.

In addition to the pressure for liberalisation in education there is also the challenge of privatisation. Private education threatens the quality and investment in state education reinforcing a two-tier system, where those who can afford to pay receive better services. Moreover, in many countries the state actually ends up subsidising private education, through tax breaks, training teachers, administering exams, and investing in further education, which often only serves those who have gone through the private system. It could be useful to do further research in this area – exploring the numbers of children going to private school, as well as developing an understanding of the comparative costs and qualities of different forms of education. Tackling private education is often difficult for those working in NGOs, as many staff members send their own children to private school. A good starting point for this work is to reflect on your own personal experience, why you send your children to private (or state) school and the potential impact of your choices.

## ➤ Extract from the Parktonian<sup>11</sup> Recommendations

Education is a fundamental right and a core government responsibility. Public education, even where under-resourced, remains the most effective means to guarantee quality education for all. Yet private education in multiple forms is on the rise everywhere, undermining the capacity for education to be an equalising force in society. Education International and ActionAid International recommend:

- The rise of private education should be actively checked.
- The key means to reverse the rise of private schools is to improve the quality of public schools – getting more teachers, better infrastructure, more resources, better salaries, manageable class sizes and better trained teachers.
- We should work together to fight for a common school system which is genuinely free, to ensure government schools work effectively and to win over parents so that they want to send their children to public schools.
- We should demand better regulation of private schools and an end to all government (and international donor) subsidies to private schools (and taxes on any profit-making institutions).
- All teachers in private schools should be governed by the same rules, regulations and salary scales as government teachers.
- We should exchange information about negotiation processes in the WTO and jointly lobby to oppose the inclusion of education in GATS.

<sup>11</sup> The Parktonian Recommendations are the result of a three day meeting with senior staff from ActionAid and a range of teachers' unions

While the ideas contained in this section focus specifically on the right to education, many of the ideas could be adapted to work on any specific right, or to work more broadly across the spectrum of human rights. Indeed, it is hoped that through engagement in this process, those who are suffering multiple rights abuses will develop skills and confidence to secure other important rights.

## Section Two



Warrick Page / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

## Working with excluded groups

# Contents

## Working with excluded groups

►► Types of information that are useful for this section:

- **Excluded Groups:** What forms of exclusion exist, who are the excluded groups, where are they based geographically?
- **Organisations:** Are there organisations, networks, movements of excluded groups, what partnerships and alliances can be made?
- **Education Stakeholders:** Who are they, what are their different roles, how might they be involved in securing the right to education?
- **Education materials and policy:** Is there specific discrimination integrated into school curricula, materials or the way education policy is designed and implicated?

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**B**y definition everyone has human rights, but in practice this is not the case. In every society certain individuals and groups of people have their rights systematically abused. Their ability to access the right to education is undermined because of who they are and where they live. This might be because of cultural expectations, citizenship status, geographical location, caste, race, gender, disability or poverty. Those most excluded are likely to be discriminated against because of various aspects of their identity, and these multiple exclusions are frequently internalised, so that an individual may be unaware that they have any rights at all. While the ideas contained in this section focus specifically on the right to education, many of the ideas could be adapted to work on any specific right, or to work more broadly across the spectrum of human rights. Indeed, it is hoped that through engagement in this process, those who are suffering multiple rights abuses will develop skills and confidence to secure other important rights.



**When working with excluded groups, it is very important to recognise that no group is homogenous. Within any group there will be further exclusion.**

For example, within a poor community it is likely that there will be unequal gender relations and girls will be less likely to access education. Children with disabilities or children who are from an ethnic or linguistic minority will also be less likely to access education. However, girls with disabilities, or girls from an ethnic minority will be even less likely than boys, in a similar context, to secure their right to education. This means that it is critically important to explore power relations within the group, and how wider prejudices are reinterpreted and reinforced within groups.

Deciding who to work with is a key element of a human rights-based approach. There are two main reasons for working directly with excluded groups. Firstly, because it is these groups who will be able to hold government responsible over time for delivering their right to education. This is important to ensure that the government continues to fulfil its responsibilities, and in order to strengthen the relationship between government and its citizens, a theme revisited in **Section Four**. To do this members of excluded groups, the right-holders, need to understand what the right means, and feel ownership of it. Secondly, in order for education to be of good quality, relevant and appropriate, rights-holders need to be involved in defining education from their perspective.

While working with excluded groups you will need to draw on many of the ideas included elsewhere in this pack, to build citizen participation and explore issues of the right to, and rights in education. You will also need to be aware of other issues, beyond education, which impact on people's ability to secure that right. This may involve partnering with organisations working with other issues, such as women's organisations, or organisations of people living with HIV, and working flexibly so that the right to education is understood within a social justice framework.



Jessi Hurd/ReportDigital/ActionAid

# Who to work with

While the causes and impact of exclusion vary greatly among different groups, the strategies for engaging with those groups, and for working together to secure their right to education are largely similar. This section gives an overview of this process, and then expands these strategies, drawing on examples from practice, to look at work from the perspective of one specific excluded group – girl children. This is followed by a range of other examples, which describe briefly the way organisations have worked with nine other excluded groups, drawing out some of the key issues which affect the specific excluded group, and how programmes have been designed to respond to these issues.

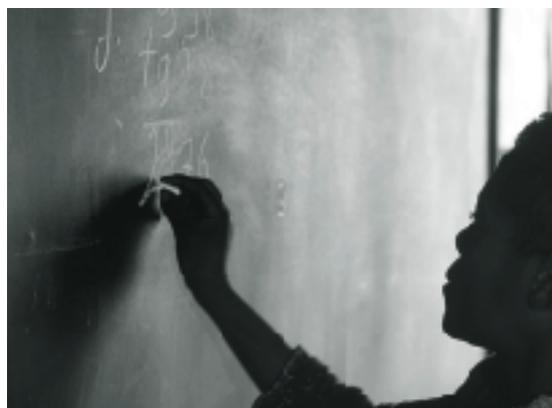
There are **five key clusters** who it is crucial to involve in your work with excluded groups, these are:

1. The excluded group itself;
2. The school and those involved directly in the school (teachers, SMC, students and other staff);
3. The local community and community groups;
4. The local government and other local bodies outside the community (NGOs, faith groups, business, teachers' unions, local media, etc.)
5. The national government and other national bodies (education coalitions, teachers' unions, the media, NGOs, business, etc).

Depending on the nature of the excluded group, it may also be appropriate to engage with international bodies. For example, there are a wide range of international women's movements and a series of international policy frameworks which could be targeted to enhance girls' rights to education. However, if you are working with a minority ethnic group, or particular issue group there may be fewer opportunities to link internationally and it is likely that the majority of the changes you are hoping to achieve will be targeted at national level. You will need to evaluate the potential for international links given the specific context.

## Strategies for work

The different clusters outlined above have different roles to play with regards to transforming the education experience of the excluded group, and therefore the strategies to engage with each cluster, and how you draw them into the process will differ substantially.



The strategies outlined here are not comprehensive but give an indication of ways to engage the different clusters in this work, and the types of roles and activities they might take on. While recognising the need to prioritise and focus work, deciding who to target and which issues to address, it is also worth noting that if you only work with one of the clusters you are unlikely to achieve sustainable change. At some point it will be important to consider them all.

## ►► Some basic assumptions

This section is written based on the assumption that those reading the pack will have a range of different skills and expertise. Some readers will have experience of engaging with community groups, others of policy advocacy, research, or capacity building, etc. Because of this, the section focuses on the broad headlines, the **what** rather than the **how**. It shares examples of how others have worked, rather than exploring the detail of what is needed to actually put the ideas into practice. There are many resources available on the range of methodologies mentioned here, for example on participatory learning, advocacy, documentation, etc. (See **Annex** for further details.)

It will be important to do an initial mapping of which organisations exist locally, and to explore different ways of engaging with local populations. Who you link to and the types of partnerships you develop will be dependent on the skills, knowledge and links you have already. It is important to invest time in developing a strong working partnership at the start of any work on education rights. For example, if you are based at local or district level you may need to find allies or partners to help you link local analysis to national policy debates and opportunities. Alternatively, if you are a national organisation, you will need to identify organisations with a strong local base. The ways of working described below assume that you (or your organisational partners) have good community links as well as presence or connections nationally.

Whichever strategy you follow it is important to recognise that this work will take time, and that you will need to commit human resources (and financial resources) over a significant period. This is because many of the interventions require reflection on behaviour and an attitude change, and also because a capacity building process can lead to problems if abandoned half way through. For example, if you build the capacity and confidence of an excluded group, but do not offer support as they develop their action they may not have the ability to handle likely conflict or backlash from the wider community. Similarly, behaviour change interventions need to be regularly supported and monitored, to enable people to continue with the new behaviours they have developed. If you withdraw this support too soon they are likely to return to previous behaviour. However, the level of intervention and support you give to a process will change over time, and this should be reviewed regularly to ensure appropriate support and sustainability.

## ACTIVITY

### ►► Classifying stakeholders

**In all this work there will be a range of stakeholders who will emerge through your mapping as having a relationship to education or to the specific excluded group. It will be useful to understand more about each stakeholder and how they are working currently and then decide how you might approach them for involvement in the work.**

For example: are they familiar with a rights-based approach; do they invest in capacity building and empowerment of excluded groups? Are they an ally, a potential partner, an influencing target, a gatekeeper? This analysis should be done at the planning stage of your work; you could brainstorm various categories of stakeholder, as well as characteristics of stakeholders – their specific skills, knowledge, influence on education system, influence on public etc. See **Section One**, 'Involving others', for more ideas on stakeholder analysis.

## 1. Working with the excluded group

The excluded group should take a central role in the fight to secure their right to education. It is only they who will have an in-depth and realistic understanding of why they or their children are not in school. This experience and perspective should form the basis of defining the content of the right to education as well as the necessary steps to secure the right to education in their context. The first stage of work is an awareness-raising process, drawing on the ideas of **Section One** (See grounding the right to education locally). This should be followed by a systematic participatory analysis of the following factors:

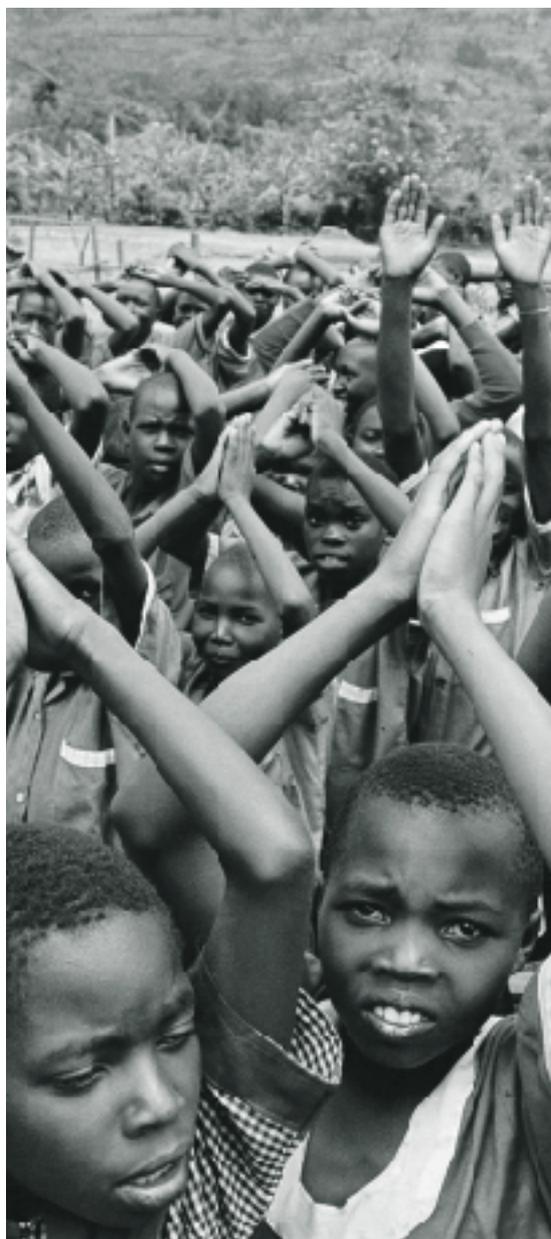
- a. their **experience** of education, and the current obstacles to education;
- b. their **identity**, gender relations and experience as a group, and how this impacts on education;
- c. their **view of what education** should be like, what quality education means;
- d. what they think needs to be put into place so that they can enjoy quality education.

► Analytical tools for each of these stages can be found elsewhere in the pack (especially **Sections One and Five**).

It might also include wider analysis on the nature of the exclusion itself, such as:

- In what way are you excluded as a group?
- How does this general exclusion relate to exclusion in education?
- What could be done to mitigate this exclusion?

This reflection might suggest actions which go beyond the realm of education and it will be important to consider who to link to to follow this wider agenda.



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

However, working with excluded groups is not just about analysis, there needs to be an empowerment process, which links awareness-raising and the development of critical consciousness with ideas for action and transformation. The analysis should link directly to skill and capacity development, confidence building and a range of targeted actions. This confidence and capacity building process can be slow and difficult. Members of excluded groups will not only need to confront their internalised oppression, but also learn how to deal with the attitudes and behaviour of the wider community. This suggests a continual process of reflection, analysis, learning and action should be followed; enabling the group to develop their own support mechanisms and ways to engage with the wider community. Specific actions might include:

- involvement in sustained learning processes for social change, for example drawing on the *Reflect* approach (see Section Six);
- campaigning at the local level on the right to education (for example meeting with the school, community and local government, to share analysis of the education context and plan positive interventions);
- proposing alternative education models that would enable them to enjoy their right to education;
- researching and documenting specific issues (the current context, school budgets, school text books, bias in the media, etc.);
- identifying other organisations to work with at local and national level;
- developing positions, and statements for people-centred advocacy and influencing. (To be used at local and national level).

It is likely that the groups will move between these activities and whichever are chosen will depend on the specifics of the context. For example, understanding why, and where the rights abuse is occurring is a key step for defining action – is it a local or national issue? Is it just an education issue or part of wider discrimination against the group? Understanding what other groups exist in the area and the potential for collaborative efforts is also important in developing actions.

The implementing organisation should support the excluded group to make their own decisions about which activity to prioritise, while facilitating access to relevant information when appropriate, and using their power and relationships to create opportunities and space for further advocacy.

## QUESTION & ANALYSE

▶▶ For any of this work, it is important for any group to spend some time reflecting and analysing the success of one activity before moving onto the next, asking themselves:

- Did the activity run as planned? How did it differ? Why did this happen?
- What was the most surprising outcome? Why?
- What can we learn from this experience?
- Is there any impact/outcome that we should investigate more?
- How did we work together? Did we work well as group? What power relations existed? How did they impact on our work, do we want to change these? How could we do this?
- What would we do differently next time?

It is useful to document this type of reflection, for the group's own learning, and to share insights with others.

## 2. Working with the school

The aim of working with the school is to transform it into a place where all children, can enjoy their right to education. If a group is currently excluded this is likely to be either because there are insufficient resources, or the group is not prioritised, or a mixture of both issues. While the school may be the location of exclusion this is unlikely to be a deliberate ploy on the part of the school. Rather it is likely that there is wider societal discrimination against the group, and the school is complicit in this action. It could be that the specific group lack representation in the school – either because their children are not attending or because they are under-represented and un-empowered generally in society.

The first step therefore is to raise awareness among school staff of the exclusion, and the resulting rights abuse. This could link to a capacity-building programme for the school management committee or the teachers and students themselves. It can be very positive to run this kind of initiative in collaboration with the excluded group – so that they take a lead in prioritising, designing and delivering any training course.

Once awareness is raised, and there is an understanding of responsibility for action on the part of the school (and this may be a long slow process) the range of actors in the school should be encouraged to reflect on what they can do to overcome the current situation. This might include:

- Taking action **within the school** – looking at infrastructure, teaching techniques and materials, classroom management, behaviour of students etc. to make their school more accessible to the excluded group;
- Linking to other local groups to achieve **support** (funding, human resources, approval of plans, etc.) to transform their school;
- Link to other local groups or schools to **campaign for policy change** at local or national level, on the basis of the experience of excluded groups in the area;
- Working with the **local government/ district education office** to gain their support for local initiatives, and share experiences, to provoke similar change across the region.



### 3. Working with the local community

Work with the local community is similar to work with the school. There will be an initial process of awareness-raising, including the identification of attitudes and behaviours which are discriminatory. Many of these will have long ingrained histories and will take some time to change.

Behaviour change is a long-term strategy, and it should be balanced with some 'quick fixes' which may be less politically contentious and involve the community more immediately. These include concrete practical actions targeting the school itself, or other community practices which impact on the excluded groups' ability to access education. They could involve anything from infrastructural support (such as separate latrines for girls) to community agreements on specific issues, with integrated accountability mechanisms, so that community members share responsibility to transform discriminatory practice. While focusing on these 'quick fix' ideas it is important to keep the longer-term vision, of transformation of power and therefore behaviour and attitude change, in mind. It could be that the excluded group engage with the wider community on a regular basis, using public meetings to share their analysis through a range of techniques (e.g. theatre, song, discussion forum etc.) and encouraging the wider community to become part of the struggle for education rights.

For example, in trying to combat **child labour**, community members might agree not to employ children, or buy from children. However, it is important to recognise that this will have a negative impact on family economy if other structures are not put into place. Therefore such an initiative should only be undertaken if the causes of child labour are well analysed and systems are put into place to address the root causes of the problem. This might include hiring of adults, paying minimum wage, ensuring acceptable work conditions.

### 4. Working with local organisations

The involvement of local organisations will depend on the exact nature of the organisation. Much of this work will focus on encouraging, pressurising and supporting the organisation to play its legally mandated role. For example, local government is the service provider and should be exploring ways of including excluded groups in its education provision. This may include pushing specific initiatives which target those groups. While the local media has a responsibility for information dissemination, and should be ensuring a cross section of voices and opinions are shared in their communications. It should also be aware of the way certain stereotypes are reinforced through reporting language and preferences, and act to minimise this.

Local businesses, faith groups, traditional groups and leaders, and NGOs should be encouraged to support government education processes rather than delivering their own services, which undermine the relationship between government and citizens, reduce sustainability of education rights and can lead to further discrimination against specific groups (see **Section One** for more information on non-public schools).

Working with local institutions follows a three stage process:

- Building awareness of the issues around the exclusion of particular groups;
- Ensuring that they are fulfilling their responsibilities in regard to education for these groups;
- Encouraging them to join your campaign and action to secure education rights – through influencing policy and education provision at the national level. Or you may join their campaign, if they have one and it is coherent with your priorities (for example, in some countries district-level networks exist which are a key platform for action for local people, see **Section Four**).

## 5. Working with national organisations

In every country there is a range of networks and coalitions operating at national level and it is important to understand how you can link with these. There are two types of coalition that are particularly relevant in working with excluded groups – those formed to campaign on education issues, and identity-based coalitions, representing specific excluded groups. When working with a national coalition, the local group needs to be clear about why and how they will link with the coalition, and how they will ensure positive power relations. (Likewise the national coalition should be reflecting on its role and ability to link positively with the local level, see **Section Four** for ideas). Local groups should be able to share their experiences and reality, influence their policy positioning and focus, while also benefiting from the knowledge, expertise and information available through the national coalition – to extend their analysis and understanding of the issue.

As well as civil society networks, it is also important to consider the government and the media – both of which have specific roles to play. You may offer a series of capacity building initiatives to further their understanding and ability to fulfil their role, or develop a longer-term partnership to ensure that the education system is able to respond to the needs of excluded groups.



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

# Girls' education

▶▶ This section explores different ways to work on the range of issues around girls' education. Men dominate over women in every country around the world, leading to widespread discrimination against women and girls. The impact of unequal power relations and discrimination is often felt more severely when material poverty exists, as this increases vulnerability. Inequality in society inevitably has an impact on education provision and content, as well as the ability of girls to enter, and remain in, school.

Girls make up around 56 per cent of the 77 million children not in school, and women make up two thirds of the adults who are illiterate. Even girls who do enrol in school may have irregular attendance due to other demands on them, and the fact that their education may not be prioritised. Girls are more likely to repeat years, to drop out early and to fail key subjects, and in most countries girls are less likely to transition to secondary schooling. Sadly, in many places, girls who do attend school may be subject to physical and mental abuse. There are numerous reports of teachers taking advantage of their position of power and sexually abusing girls.

## Unpacking discrimination

It is not possible to tackle girls' education directly without an in-depth understanding of how discrimination manifests itself in the specific context. It's important to work with the group to identify the types of discrimination faced by women in the community. This will later inform the strategies for action. Types of discrimination may include:

- Gender-defined roles (collecting firewood, childcare, domestic tasks);
- Cultural practices (early marriage, female genital mutilation);
- User fees (families prioritise boys education);
- Safety concerns (lack of sanitation, violence, rape);
- Belief that there is no long-term benefit (once married a girl leaves her family, or education does not help the domestic role);
- Lack of role models (no female teachers from the area);
- Inappropriate curriculum, (education system designed to benefit boys);
- Teachers' assumptions and expectations (that girls do not need education and will not do well).

Discrimination works on two levels: societal prejudice, preventing girls from accessing and enjoying education; and educational prejudice, reinforcing the position and condition of girls in society.

As the lack of access to education is a symptom of wider gender and power relations it is unlikely to be overcome if tackled in isolation. A first step will be to look at how girls are considered in society, and why girls are not in school. This will involve working with a wide range of different people (girls, women, boys and men), to enable them to reflect on their prejudice and influence on girls' education. It is also important to recognise that many of the issues which keep girls out of school may be difficult to discuss. For example, while rape or violence against girls might be a key reason for girls to stay away from school, it may be difficult for community members to talk about this.

## GROUP ACTIVITY



Domitic Sansoni / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

As well as understanding how women and girls are discriminated against it is also important to understand how women and girls are valued in the community – by themselves, as well as by men and boys.

This could be explored using the **Ideal Woman Body Map**. Participants from the local community should work in peer groups to develop a body map which illustrates the ideal woman – what she would do, what skills and knowledge she should have, her attitudes and behaviour, etc. Then the different groups should come together and discuss their illustrations of the ideal woman. How do the different ideals differ and how do they compare with reality? How has the role of women changed over time? How do these expectations impact on the life of women in the community (the ability to go to school, get married, integrate in society, etc.)? The exercise could be repeated looking at the ideal man, girl or boy.

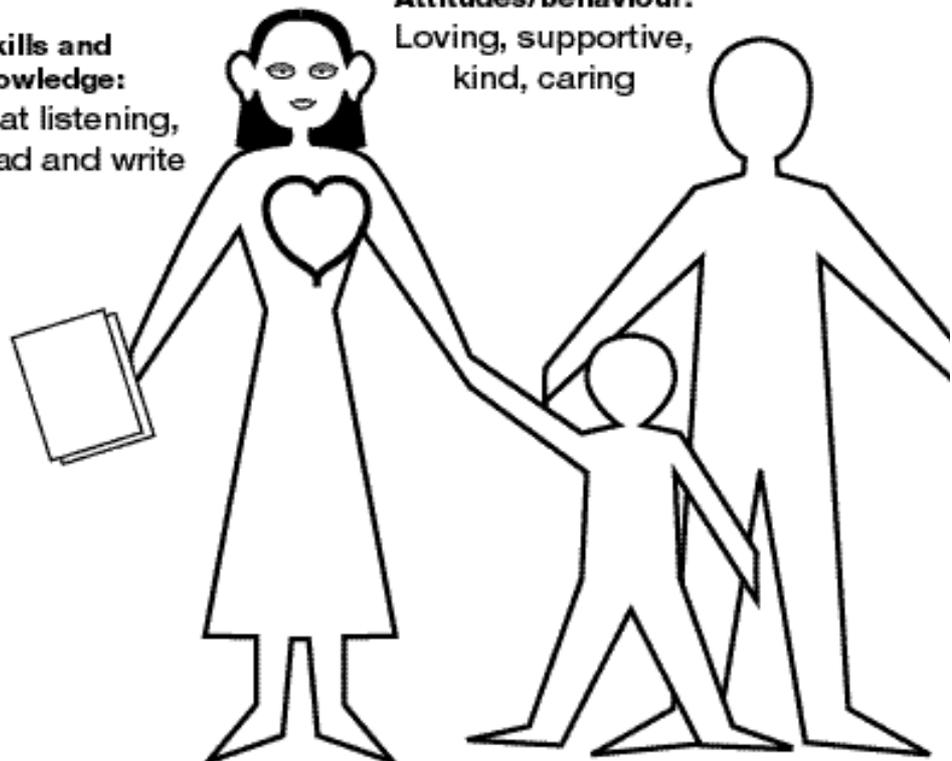
## QUESTION & ANALYSE

▶▶ A good first step is to reflect in your own organisation, or to work with local participants or community-based organisations, to address the following questions:

- Which of these aspects of discrimination are relevant in your context?
- In what way are they evident or how is the discrimination manifested?
- How do they impact on the ability of girls to access education?
- What does this suggest for the different steps you could take to tackle the denial of education rights for girls?

**Skills and knowledge:**  
Good at listening,  
can read and write

**Attitudes/behaviour:**  
Loving, supportive,  
kind, caring



## Strategies for action

An overall strategy for work on girls' education should cover the following areas:

- Working with girls, to build the critical consciousness, confidence and capacity to confront discriminatory behaviour and claim their education rights.
- Working with schools (teachers, students – including boys, and other stakeholders) to create a safe and appropriate learning environments for girls.
- Working with the wider community (women, men, boys, cultural custodians and local leaders) to raise awareness of, and challenge, discrimination against girls.

- Working with education policy makers to ensure that the education system is non-discriminatory and actively promotes girls' education.

These strategies require work at local and national levels. It will be important to map who is doing what in girls' education, to understand where the gaps are, and who best to partner, or try to influence. This could include a range of organisations such as: CBOs, faith groups, women's organisations, SMCs, youth groups, other NGOs, local and national government.

### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## KENYA

Social and cultural contexts play a major role in limiting girls' access to education. Therefore, the only way to improve girls' access to education is to engage the family, wider community and other locally powerful people. In Narok District, Kenya, it was important to involve the local community leaders, police, and government institutions, to get them to think critically about girls' education, and the issues which prevented them from accessing schooling. For example, the link with the police was crucial in preventing early marriages, a key factor leading to girls dropping out of school.

However, it is also important to work with the girls themselves, to strengthen their voice and demand for education. ActionAid Kenya initiated a girls' forum, which linked girls in school with girls out of school, so that they could exchange experiences and look for ways to increase access to education. Girls need to know that they are important in society, and that education is their right.

This initiative was also supported by women's groups in 60 villages across the region. These groups have been functioning for about three years and use *Reflect* (see Section Six) to look at issues of women's empowerment, income generation and adult literacy. Through participation in the groups, the women are empowered to challenge their husbands and the wider community on the importance of girls' education. This pressure at the household level has contributed enormously to girls ability to access schooling. Unfortunately, there are still wider issues that need to be tackled. The lack of school infrastructure in pastoralist communities, and the continuing practice of female genital mutilation, are two issues which ActionAid Kenya will be focusing on in taking this work forward.

Roselyn Odhiambo, a teacher at Sirimba Primary School in Busia District commented: *'Having the girls in school throughout the year had become such an uphill task. At one point we were blaming the girls whom we felt didn't want to take their studies seriously. But I later realised that I needed to understand the girls better and get to know what really affects their education. The idea of bringing the girls together in their own forum has given me the opportunity to understand them better. When the idea of the forums began, the girls were too shy to speak. They feared talking about what affected them. They thought they would be victimised by their parents or teachers. But as time went by, the girls began to open up'*.

### Working with girls:

This will include work in and outside the school system. It involves creating a safe and supportive space for girls to meet, to discuss and critically analyse their context and share experiences. A female teacher or female community leader who has received specific training (on rights, facilitation skills, confidence building techniques, etc.) could lead the group. They (the group leader and girls) should have access to the range of information and materials available about their rights (see **Section One** for ideas). For example you should look at how the rights of women and girls are protected in the **national constitution**, and repackage and share relevant pieces of information as a way of initiating discussion. If there is no national constitution or women's rights are not mentioned, you might want to share information about the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, or the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women**, instead.

If working with girls in school, the main focus will be on sharing experiences of education – this might include experiences within the school, of getting to school, or experiences relating to the family and wider community – analysing how they are supported or obstructed from attending school. This analysis could also include looking at why other girls are not in school – building from their perspective about what the issues might be. (see **Kenya** example, on previous page).

## EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

### NIGERIA & GHANA

Because of the multiple discriminations they face strengthening girls' education does not just mean getting girls into school, but also ensuring that they have access to information and places that have traditionally excluded women. In **Nigeria** the Federation of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), organised a series of excursions to interesting sites and institutions around Lagos and other activities for 48 girls from primary and secondary schools in Lagos State. This included a visit to an independent television station where they met newscasters and learnt about the processes involved in television broadcasting. The girls also visited the Lagos State House of Assembly, where they sat in and observed proceedings in the House. They had the opportunity to talk to the clerk and speaker of the House. Initiatives such as these can help young people realise the range of opportunities available to them through education, while also increasing their understanding of the world around them and their right to participate.

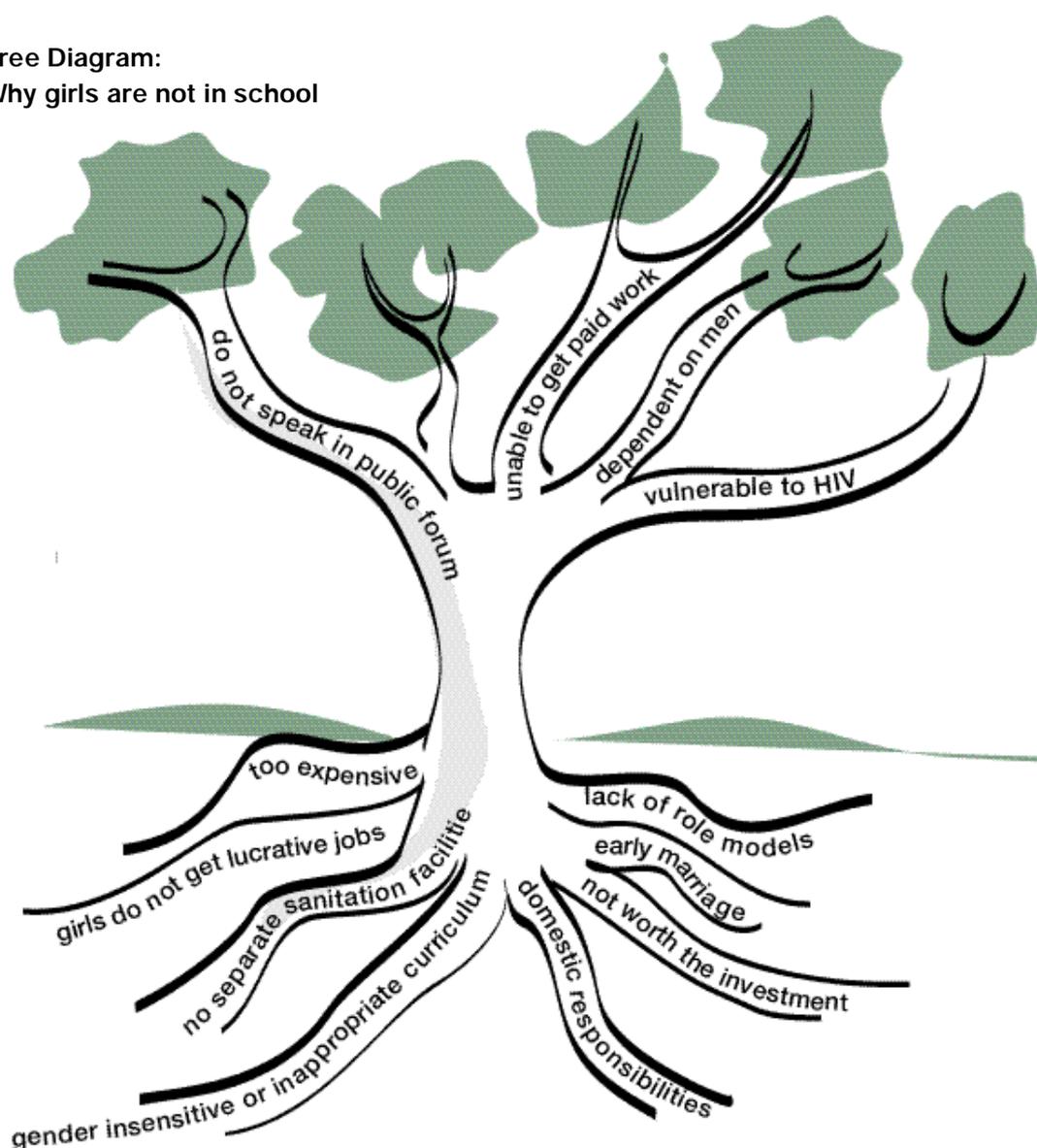
In a similar initiative in **Ghana**, a girls' camp is run annually. Girls spend ten days together and discuss issues such as sexual reproductive health. They also have the opportunity to meet female role models, visit education, health, tourist and industrial establishments and have a chance to share and learn together, to build confidence and aspirations for their future. While the camps have been very successful ActionAid Ghana have realised the need to work with boys also to retain girls in school.

If working with girls outside the school system, the focus might be on why they are not in school as well as sharing lived experiences. A tree diagram could be used to look at why girls are not in school. The roots illustrate the causes – why girls are not accessing school, and the branches show the impact of the lack of access – the denial of the right to education.

As well as encouraging critical reflection and analysis it is important to support girls in developing action plans to secure their right to education. This might involve focusing at a family level – to look at how family based discrimination prevents girls from attending school and develop systems to overcome this, including raising awareness in the family about the importance of education.

It could also involve the wider community – the girls might build their analysis into an awareness-raising tool – and develop a drama to illustrate the conclusions of their discussion. Or they may seek the involvement of a range of local organisations – including the school itself, local government, faith based groups, women’s groups, village development committees etc. and discuss with them their role in tackling issues that prevent girls from accessing education. Moving beyond the local community, it can be empowering to link to other groups of girls – for solidarity, to share experiences and to amplify voice at the district and national levels for change in education policy making.

Tree Diagram:  
Why girls are not in school



### Working with schools:

There are various discriminatory practices which happen within the school which prevent girls from accessing education. These might include the attitudes and behaviour of others in the school, the school's physical environment (such as whether sanitation facilities exist), or the content of learning materials.

Issues such as school location and time-tabling may also impact on girls' ability to secure their right to education. Obviously, the different issues involve a range of responses. These might build directly on the girls' analysis, but involve additional information and capacities held by the various education stakeholders. Often discrimination against girls is so pervasive that those involved in perpetuating the discrimination are not even aware this problem exists. This means that a first stage of the process is to get those involved to reflect on the stereotypes they hold about girls, and girls' education.

#### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### NIGERIA

A lack of **female teachers** reinforces prejudice against girls' education. ActionAid worked with Novib in **Nigeria** to look at this issue. The programme worked with girls, the SMC and the local education authority to demand more female teachers. They also linked to the national teachers' union and the State University Basic Education Scheme. By engaging with such a range of actors the message was spread widely, and the number of female teachers has increased in the area, providing role models for the children, and challenging traditional stereotypes of who a teacher is.

Working with the school could include:

- 
- **Monitoring girls' enrolment, retention and completion rates:** in many countries the ratio of boys to girls is similar in the early school grades but reduces as you move up the school. By monitoring this the group can look at when girls drop out of school, and follow up to look at why this might be, what strategies could be put into place to encourage girls to stay in school
- 
- **Capacity building and awareness-raising:** for teachers and pupils on gender relations and gender sensitivity (see **Section Five** for more ideas). Capacity building should be participatory and empowering, enabling children and teachers to reflect on their experiences with regard to gender – both in the home, with their peers and in the school itself. Through linking discussions to personal reflection, people are more likely to see the connections and start a process of behaviour change. This should be accompanied with textbooks and pedagogical tools to support teachers to implement what they have learnt.
- 
- **Specific initiatives:** The school could instigate specific projects to encourage girls into school – this could include reviewing the school environment (infrastructure, textbooks, teaching staff) as well as setting up counselling and support services for girls, or creating spaces for girls to meet and discuss. It could also include an outreach programme, to encourage out-of-school girls into school.
- 
- **Campaigning and advocacy work:** The school is also in a good position to reach out and influence other actors to consider girls' education. This could be through their relationship with the DEO, or through linking with other schools in the area – sharing innovations and strategies to enhance girls' education.
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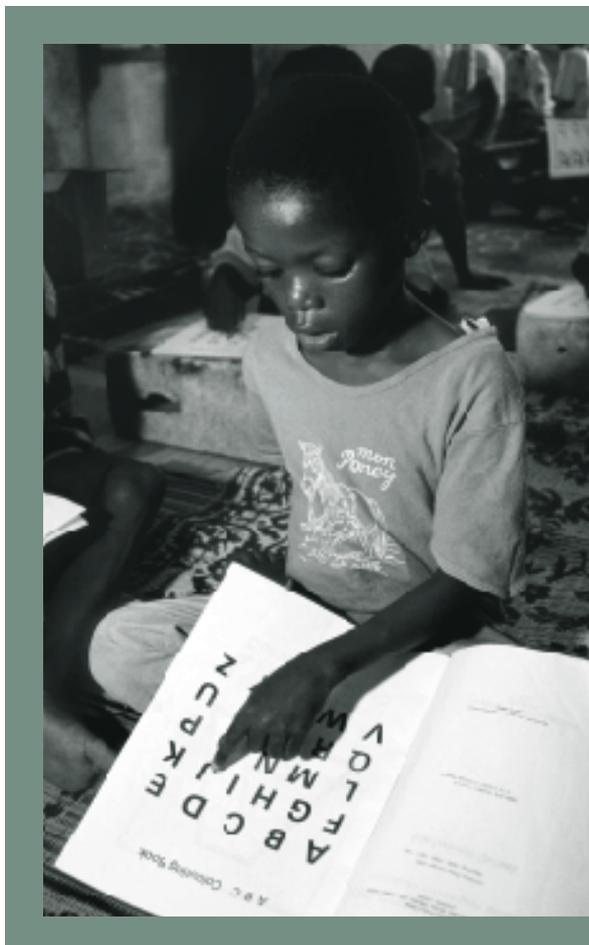
## ACTIVITY

### ▶▶ Analysing text books

Text books will often describe 'real life' situations as a way of posing problems, encouraging reading, discussion and analysis. Unfortunately these 'real life' situations are often highly stereotyped and may reinforce existing gender and power relations. An interesting exercise could be to look through text books used in schools across a variety of subjects. Questions to ask include:

- Is gender-specific language used? What is the impact of this language use?
- How are boys and girls portrayed in the book? What are they doing? What about women and men? What roles do they play?
- How might these pictures influence the children using the books? What are the books saying about acceptable behaviour, roles and attitudes for girls/women and boys/men?

At first it can be quite hard to see gender discrimination in textbooks, as the stereotyping may be so pervasive in society that the textbook is not seen as portraying anything abnormal. This may be overcome by a wider discussion about gender roles in society, perhaps brainstorming the types of work men and women do, or using a daily routine chart to look at the workloads of women and men in the local community. Exploring the impact of these different roles should include an analysis of power relations and rights, looking at how specific daily routines affect peoples' ability to enjoy their rights. The group should then return to looking at the textbooks.



Lisa Taylor / ActionAid

## EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

### MALAWI & THE GAMBIA

Getting the support of mothers for girls' education is key in increasing enrolment, and completion of schooling for girls. So, in Malawi, a faith based organisation, Deeper Christian Life Ministry supported the formation of mothers' groups. These groups were given training on government policies relating to girls' education, such as the re-admittance policies, which enable girls to return to school if they have dropped out for any reason. The mother's groups then engaged with diverse community structures and education stakeholders, as well as with girls themselves to enhance the number of girls in schools. The work of the mother's groups has led to widespread community change. For example, the community has changed the cultural practice of using school girls to escort funerals to the graveyard; they have formed local by-laws to ensure parents send their girls to school; they have worked with the schools to ensure the government policy of readmission is implemented; worked with the village headmen and political leaders to reduce early marriage; reactivated the school management committee and parent teachers association through interacting with them regularly and developing stronger relationships with the teachers. However, there are still many challenges – both because the school structures (SMCs and PTAs) are weak and unaware of their responsibilities; and because it is very difficult to challenge cultural practices – for example, the initiation ceremony, which takes two weeks, and still clashes with the school calendar.

In The Gambia efforts focused on capacity-building programmes for female teachers to equip them with the skills to promote enrolment, retention and academic achievement of girls in schools, especially in rural areas. The programme included ideas of gender mainstreaming as well as raising awareness on government provisions for girls' education. The impact of this work was extended further by encouraging the teachers to run a similar training workshop at local level to create awareness among parents and communities on the importance of enrolling, retaining and allowing girls to complete the basic education cycle. This training targeted parents, female teachers, PTAs, members of Mothers' Clubs, some opinion leaders and student leaders from different schools.

#### **Working with the wider community:**

The wider community clearly has a role to play in supporting girls' education, and many times education can be used as an entry point to discuss other social and cultural issues which define gender relations and expectations of girls. Gender relations cannot be changed overnight but through strategic engagement with the wider community, and through strengthening girls' education, it is hoped that they will slowly change overtime. The aim of work at the local community level is to gain support for girls' education, and from this basis encourage the local community to design strategies and actions to make girls' education a reality. The community can also play a role in engaging with the school to ensure that it is respecting girl's rights, and that teachers are acting responsibly and accountably.

For example in Malawi, ActionAid worked with Fawe to tackle violence against girls in schools. This was a broad reaching initiative which involved PTAs, SMCs, mothers' groups and local leaders. The idea was to empower these groups to take an active role in protecting girls from violent behaviours in their respective areas. One result of this intervention was the traditional authority banning the practice whereby girls are subjected to having sex with old men when they reach puberty. In addition to this work, Fawe also used the concept of *Tilankhule* (Let us speak out) borrowed from Tanzania, to work with the girls themselves to express their views and opinions on obstacles they face. This involved a series of school workshops, facilitated by teachers and bringing together members of the community and school pupils. In the workshops girls conducted panel discussions to identify factors hampering their education and suggest possible solutions.

## Working with the local organisations:

Often the local government or district education office (depending on the level of decentralisation) will be the potential key player in supporting initiatives for girls' education. These could include:

- **Collaboration with local teacher training colleges**, or national government to secure greater numbers of female teaching staff in the local school and to integrate gender training into the teacher-training curriculum;
- **Allocating school development funds** to build sanitation facilities for girls or other initiatives to support girls inclusion;
- **Budget analysis** to look at funds allocated to supporting girls' education and propose alternative budgets (see Section Three);
- **Analysing and influencing the curriculum** – exploring whether it is gender sensitive, is there space given to look at gender and power issues (in teacher training and in class), developing alternative units;
- **Sourcing alternative textbooks**, which do not gender stereotype;
- **Capacity building** for local government on gender awareness and girls' education.

The local government or DEO may also play a role in linking to national government, encouraging them to take girls' education seriously. This could be through sharing lessons learnt through local initiatives, or creating space for local voices to be heard nationally. This could also be supported through engaging with local media, encouraging them to document local education experiences. This may involve sharing stories of individual girls, and why they are or are not accessing education (though it is important to analyse the potential impact on an individual before sharing their story).



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

### **Working with national organisations:**

Work at the national level includes a range of activities to build on processes taking place at the local level. These may include:

- **Linking to women’s movements** – encouraging them to look at issues of education, learning from them about how to tackle gender and power relations.
- **Using evidence generated at the local level** – such as individual stories, statistical data, details of innovative work to increase girls’ attendance in school, and disseminating this through links to the media and conferences with civil society activists, academics and government.
- **Creating space for local voices** – building on relationships with government and other links, setting up meetings or events that bring local people to the national government (or national government to local people), etc.
- **Policy analysis** – looking at a range of policies which impact girls’ education (this will include education-specific policies as well as other social and economic policies) and translate these into accessible formats to be used at local level.
- **Curriculum analysis** – asking is the curriculum gender sensitive, how does it support people to learn about and challenge discrimination, does it provide models for equitable practice, how can you engage with, and transform the curriculum? (see **Section Five**).
- **Budget analysis** – looking at targeted spending (to support girls’ education) as well as the impact of general spending on women and girls. The aim of this work is to understand more about how government is prioritising education, as well as identify potential sources of funding which could contribute to strengthening girls’ education.

►► **Specific education issues which will be relevant at national level include:**

- **Analysing expenditure on ECCE and secondary education** (see **Section Six**);
- **Reviewing adult literacy / female literacy statistics** – to show the longitudinal impact of lack of girls’ education;
- **Considering specific subsidy programmes targeting girls** (for example for free school meals) – while ensuring this does not undermine campaigns for abolishing user fees, and free education for all;
- **Linking to other priority areas of feminist debate**, for example policies on violence (see **Section Five**), work place discrimination, pay issues, and childcare provision, and understanding the links with education;
- **Looking at the links between HIV and gender**, and girls’ empowerment;
- **Linking with textbook production companies and publishers** to produce alternative learning materials;
- **Linking with teachers’ colleges** to integrate women’s rights into their training curriculum.

# Disabled children

In many countries children with disabilities are excluded from school. This is particularly the case if a girl child has a disability. In some cultures children with disabilities are seen as a curse, and as such are hidden away from the wider community. In others, it is more a matter of priorities. Perhaps the costs associated with education mean that a child without a disability is prioritised, as educating a disabled child is seen as a wasted investment. Or the school may not have the facilities or teaching staff to include children with disabilities.

Work on disabilities needs to include:

- **Challenging community prejudice** – looking at what is seen as a disability, why, what expectations community members have of disabled children, what disabled children spend their time doing, what is their employment potential, etc.
- **Developing skills, capacity and confidence** – to work effectively with disabled children, building teacher confidence and ability to work with a range of different disabilities, or bringing in teachers with specific skills and training.
- **Providing additional funding** – to ensure school infrastructure is appropriate for children with disabilities: that the classroom is accessible, the books are appropriate, there are accessible sanitation facilities, etc.
- **Developing inclusive education policies and practices** at national, local and at school level – to ensure proper investment in inclusive education, as well as good interaction at school level, challenging any potential bullying or exclusive behaviour.

▶ **Teacher:** *'Children with learning difficulties need extra stimulation to engage in the learning process, in this classroom we use lots of tactile materials and bright colours, so that those who are not able to speak are able to interact with the learning materials.'*

Samburu, Kenya

It is also crucially important to engage with disabled children directly, to build their confidence, awareness of their rights, and capacity to communicate. In Bangladesh participatory processes, such as *Reflect* (see Section Six), are being adapted for use with groups of disabled children. This is working particularly well with groups of children with the same disability (for example the children are deaf, or partially sighted) as the children are able to develop their own systems of communication, which play to their strengths. Such group work has enabled participants to discuss issues among themselves, as well as communicate their understanding and perspectives to the wider community.



Jerry Matthews / ActionAid

# Pastoralists and migrant workers

Migration has severe impact on education access and continuity of education. Most state systems are just not set up to deal with a migratory life-style and the vast majority of migrant children fail to complete school. Although the context is very different for pastoralist communities, the impact on education is broadly similar. The nomadic nature of many pastoralists means accessing mainstream education is difficult. Education systems have not been widely developed to provide for communities that move from place to place. There is a long history of low educational involvement among these communities. For example, in Ethiopia gross enrolment rate among pastoralist communities is about 10 per cent, and adult literacy barely exists. The demand for child labour is high, and the investment in education is low. If parents and guardians have not been to school and have little interest in education, it will be hard to argue the case for them to send their children to school. Interestingly, the gender dynamic for nomadic communities is not always obvious. For example, in Mongolia, pastoralist girls were able to stay in hostels to continue their education, while the boys had to stay and herd animals with their parents. It is important to consider how lifestyle and mobility impacts on gender relations when planning any interventions.

As the experiences discussed below show, there is a need to look at how education delivery can be adapted to the daily lives of pastoralist communities and migrant workers. However, it is also important to look at the discrimination they suffer because of who they are and how they live their lives, and to ensure that whatever education model is created it does not contribute to further marginalisation and discrimination. This often means linking with wider movements – such as land movements – as well as tackling the education issue directly, through:



Petarik Wiggins / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

- **Engaging with government** to fund and adapt education delivery models appropriate for children with migratory and nomadic lifestyles;

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- **Developing mobile schools**, or the possibility of moving between schools (challenging government education delivery models, and ensuring that alternative delivery models are funded appropriately);

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- **Developing systems of distance education**, for example via radio with intermittent teacher contact;

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- **Developing appropriate teaching and learning materials**, which draw on local knowledge, daily experiences and aspirations, and examinations which respond to these;

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- **Increasing awareness and interest in education** among the community and ensuring parental involvement in school governance (see **Section Four**);

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- **Promoting appropriate teacher recruitment** – it can be difficult to get a teacher to agree to be part of a mobile education initiative, over time community members may train to be teachers, but in the meantime other incentive packages will need to be explored.

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- **Working with migrant or pastoralist children** directly, raising awareness of their right to education and supporting them to develop strategies which enable access to the right.

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## ►► Appropriate curriculum

In Samburu district, Kenya, the majority of the population are pastoralists. Isabella Lekarsia, zonal education officer and school monitor, said of the curriculum:

*'The exams are biased. For example, in a composition piece the children are told to describe a cash crop which we don't have here. Or to talk about a car accident, they might never have seen a car! They are never asked to talk about an elephant, or cattle herding. But I don't have a voice to challenge the curriculum, I am just told it by Nairobi. Children have to imagine how a car looks!'*

**Linking to local knowledge:** In Ethiopia, EMERDA, a national NGO, works to increase pastoralist access to basic education by linking pedagogy directly to the traditional methods of debate and dialogue used within pastoralist communities. Through linking to traditional methods, EMERDA have been able to engage directly with pastoralist communities, and involve them in designing appropriate educational opportunities for their children – drawing on their knowledge and understanding of the social environment. However, education has not been limited by the use of traditional methods, EMERDA have also been able to look at social issues such as gender and health.

**Making nomadic education work:** In Nigeria there are over 10 million pastoralists, with an estimated 3.1–3.8 million children of school-going age. Of these, only 500,000 are in school. In the 1980s, under pressure from academics and researchers, State governments in the north-east of the country began to look into the issue, establishing the National Nomadic Education Programme in 1989. However, there was weak institutional

interest and inadequate funding, and the government battled with the challenges of establishing and running mobile schools, recruiting, training and maintaining teachers for schools as well as providing relevant curricula and materials.

In a three-year project, the Pastoral Resolve (PARE) used its knowledge and experience of working with pastoralist communities to strengthen government institutions, and develop systems for the active involvement of pastoralist communities in the education of their children. The project involved a broad range of activities – from school construction, teacher training, and materials development, to the setting up of PTAs and community education development committees, as well as information dissemination, networking and advocacy. Through involving the range of stakeholders (pastoralist communities, teachers and supervisors, government bodies, traditional institutions, NGOs and pressure groups) it was possible to develop concrete action plans with those responsible for the implementation.

However, it wasn't all easy – it was challenging to convince high-level policy makers to sit at the table with local pastoralists. Some openly complained. Also *'balancing the need to state the true situation of nomadic schools (which could be offensive) and pleasing policy makers by applauding their enormous contributions to education (which could not be true)'* was tricky.

Any education initiative needs to balance respecting and building on local knowledge and lifestyles with challenging some of the perceptions and discrimination which exist within it. For example, this means looking at how gender relations operate within the pastoralist/ migrant workers community and potentially challenging these. It also means balancing the acquisition of skills to continue in this lifestyle, with acquisition of new skills and knowledge which may present new opportunities – both within the current lifestyle and outside it.

*Developing new education systems:*

Because of drought problems and lack of local employment opportunities, many poor tribal families from Orissa state in India are forced to migrate to Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh (AP), to spend six months of the year working in the brick kilns. This work is not only dangerous and challenging for the families, but also leads to problems for children's schooling. It is estimated that 10,000 children migrate each year. At least one third of them have never been to school. Moreover, those who have attended school can only do so for six months of the year, and this impacts on their success rate, as well as causing problems for readmission and moving up the school grades.

This reality led ActionAid to develop a cross-state initiative. Sympathetic high-level officials in Hyderabad were persuaded to set up an interstate meeting, bringing key people from Orissa to the event. These state representatives also met with kiln owners and workers, and began to understand the scale of the issue. Following on from this meeting, the first step was to try and persuade families to leave children in Orissa. Working with the District Collector, residential care centres

were set up, managed by the local community but accessing government services – such as the right to a mid-day meal. However, this only worked in some cases, as families were worried about what would happen to the children, especially girls, left behind.

The second step was to work with the families while they are at the brick kilns in Hyderabad to ensure that children are able to re-enter school in Orissa. This is a complex process, as children over the age of six are valuable labourers, and it has been difficult to persuade the families to allow their children to study – often they end up working in the kilns after school.

However, there has also been considerable success through the creation of bridge schools. While the children are in AP they attend schools which are located within the school structures in AP (although some have been constructed directly in the brick kilns) and supported by the AP government (which provides a mid-day meal), but taught by teachers from Orissa, using textbooks in Oriya (from Orissa) – the teachers' pay (with a 25 per cent contribution from ActionAid) and textbooks are supported by the government of Orissa. Every six-months, when the children return back home they are provided with a certificate from the AP government, which states that they attended school and passed the grade, so that they are able to re-enter the schools in Orissa and continue their education.

As well as dealing with the impact of migration, ActionAid and other NGOs are also addressing the root of the problem – the supposed drought, and lack of work in Orissa. Recent legislation which introduced a 'job card' should make it easier for workers to find employment near their homes. Part of the work is to raise awareness of the existence of this legislation. Issues of drought mitigation are long-term and political, and are being addressed through a variety of methods.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> For more details see: K. Thompson et al, *Bolangir to Hyderabad and the politics of poverty*, (London: ActionAid, 2005).

# Linguistic/ ethnic minorities/ dalits

In many countries linguistic or ethnic minorities are marginalised, and dalits or the 'untouchable caste' suffer extreme discrimination. They may live in remote areas and have little access to information or resources, they may be discriminated against through prejudice and denial of cultural rights, and the curriculum offered may not be appropriate to their lives.

Work with such groups involves valuing their language and culture, and looking at how their knowledge, skills and preferences can be integrated into the education system. It may involve arguing for alternative curricula and pedagogy, for specific issues to be integrated into teacher training, or for people from minority communities to be trained as teachers. It could also include looking at issues of funding and resourcing for education as well as bringing issues such as bilingual, or alternative, education models onto the government agenda. It is likely to also include raising awareness and interest in education locally, as many parents and guardians will not be sending their children to school, perhaps because of the prejudice and exclusion they suffer there. However, a likely first step is awareness raising on the right to education. Marginalisation and oppression suffered by these groups may mean that they are unaware of their rights. Building awareness and possibility for action is clearly the first stage in any initiative.

Issues of education using minority languages are complex. While it is important for children to learn in their mother tongue, and various studies have shown that this enhances the learning potential, it is also important for them to access the language used nationally – the language of power. Without it they will be

unable to communicate easily beyond their local area, or access the range of official information which is relevant to their lives and rights. Ideally communities should have access to bilingual education throughout primary and secondary schooling.

ActionAid took a two-pronged approach to tackling the issue of language barriers in Ha Giang province, **Vietnam**. ActionAid Vietnam supported teaching Vietnamese to preschool children and teaching local languages to primary school teachers. Cu Thi Phua, a 7 year-old girl in Khung Nhung village of Ha Giang Province, reflects on the experience:

*'I did not like going to school because I often got bad marks. I did not understand what my teacher said as I was unable to speak and listen in Vietnamese (language of the majority) whereas my teacher was unable to communicate in my ethnic language. I was extremely scared when I was asked to answer questions. My classmates always mocked at me when I wrongly answered. I told lies to my parents that I had been ill and felt exhausted from travelling for 40 minutes over rocky mountains to reach the school – as an excuse to stay at home. The teacher came to my house shortly afterwards. She encouraged me to return school. I was persuaded and came back to school. My teacher now can speak H'Mong language and she even gives more understandable lessons by telling stories, using visual materials to illustrate the lessons. All students in my class find it easier to understand and obtain higher marks. We are now eager to go to school every day.'*

In **Guatemala**, CNPRE (National Permanent Committee on Education Reform – which links 80 indigenous organisations) is collaborating with the government to look at how to develop education that values the languages and culture of the indigenous (Mayan, Garifuna and Xinca) peoples. One group, Association of Mayan Education Centres (ACEM) has been working to develop an appropriate curriculum that links to the lives of 12 ethnic and linguistic

groups – and builds the type of society that they collectively envisage. The curriculum development process looked at pedagogy and resources, evaluation systems, organisational support and training. It aimed to show that formal learning is compatible with the conservation and development of culture, and that bilingual education does not just have to be a way to transit from Mayan language and values to a western lifestyle. The initiative started in the Mayan education centres and schools, but through influencing and collaborating with the government, the curriculum has now been extended so that it can contribute to strengthening the cultural identity of thousands of Mayan children.



# Religious Groups

Religion is clearly a complex issue, depending on how it is used and interpreted can bring with it both positive and negative forces. Many people around the world have some kind of faith, and this guides the way they live life and the choices they make. Religion and culture are interwoven, and parents and guardians often wish their children to be brought up with specific cultural values. In many countries formal education is associated with Western, Christian values (particularly in Africa for example, where many schools were originally set up by Christian missionaries) and children may be withheld from school as it is seen as clashing with religious teachings.

The important issue when considering religion and education is to look at how education can promote religious tolerance, and how schools can embrace the diversity of religions and culture. In many cases, the work will include looking at whether a particular school is promoting one religion over another – this could be through textbooks, teaching, or extra curricula activities. Work here will include reviewing teaching and learning materials, and developing policies on diversity and celebration of religious difference. In some countries, for example **Pakistan** and **The Gambia**, the desire for Islamic education is widespread. In such cases, it could be more appropriate to look at how to encourage Islamic institutions to use mainstream curriculum materials, than to insist that children are sent to school rather than to a madrassa. This work will involve ensuring that religious education itself is tolerant and gender sensitive. And to look at the way that government monitoring of standards can be applied to a range of different institutions.

With a 95 per cent Muslim population in The Gambia, the demand for Islamic education is on the increase. Madrassa schools, that use Arabic as their language of instruction, have been recognised as part of the formal education system since 1988, and by 2004 almost 15 per cent of primary school enrolments were in madrassas. However, there is still no budgetary allocation for madrassas in the national budget, most schools are privately funded and run, and use their own syllabus. This means that madrassa schools' infrastructure, and often the education itself, is of poor quality. The Commonwealth Education Fund is working with the government to merge the state and madrassa systems, integrating the syllabus as a way of achieving quality primary education for all. Following a dialogue between those running the madrassas and the education department, a senior post was created in the Ministry of Education, and a wide-reaching process was initiated to review the syllabuses of the two systems. Now students are able to study the same content in the different institutions. By collaborating in this way, The Gambia has been able to enhance its record of provision of primary education while ensuring that all students receive the same quality of education. There is still more work to be done, not least to strengthen the capacity of teachers working in the madrassa schools, but the initiative has been a great first step in building the links between different education stakeholders, and in formally recognising madrassas as a place for primary education.

# Street Children

*'The term street children refers to children for whom the street more than their family has become their real home. It includes children who might not necessarily be homeless or without families, but who live in situations where there is no protection, supervision, or direction from responsible adults.'*<sup>13</sup>

Children are often highly mobile, and may alternate between living on the streets or with their families. However, some children simply have no family to rely on, they live on the streets and are utterly homeless. Children living on the street have little or no access to school, they are often abused by older children and adults, including the police, and are offered little protection by the state. Often they are involved in scavenging, begging, hawking, prostitution or theft.

In Ghana, the group, Youth Alive, initiated a project to get street children into school. The first stage of their work was to engage with street children themselves, asking why the children were on the street, the challenges they faced and their aspirations. This was followed by a workshop involving a broad range of stakeholders – NGOs, government agencies, parents and the street children themselves.

Youth Alive community development workers visit sites around the city where street children are often found. Children are recruited into the project, and placed in a shelter, where they are provided with financial support and daily necessities. After a period of three months the children start classes, with the support of volunteer teachers. The classes follow the national curriculum, integrating child rights issues, and building the confidence of the street children to speak out on their rights.

The children are given one year of preparatory classes, and are then assessed and enrolled into the state school system at the appropriate level. Once the children are enrolled in the formal system Youth Alive works in partnership with parents and guardians to ensure that they remain in school. Youth Alive organises quarterly meetings with children, parents and school authorities. Youth Alive also runs capacity-building and awareness-raising workshops for educational stakeholders on the issues of street children, so that they can adapt their policies to meet the needs of these children. However, there have been some difficulties with parents, who are over-dependent on Youth Alive's initiative and financial support, and do not take the lead in encouraging their children to go to school. The project coordinators believe that in the future they will need to do more targeted work with parents to ensure their support and commitment to the initiative.

In addition to Youth Alive's approach it is also important to consider wider advocacy work. This will include the children themselves: enabling them to reflect on their status, the impact of their status and concrete actions they could pursue to challenge their social exclusion. However, there should also be wider research and influencing and campaigning work targeting national legislation on children's rights. This includes mobilising a range of actors to ensure the reality of street children is tackled at every level, by the family, local community and government.



Katie Holt / EyeFrame / ActionAid

<sup>13</sup> <http://hrw.org.children/street.htm>

# Child labourers

Children not in school are not playing games, they are working – whether this is at home, in the field or in factories, whether it is paid or unpaid. The MV foundation in India believes any child not in school is a child labourer, and rejects the view that child labour cannot be challenged effectively because poor families depend upon it: *'poverty is not taken by the courts as an excuse for crime. Nor should poverty be taken as an excuse for keeping children out of school'* (Dhananjay from MV Foundation). Instead MVF argues that lack of education re-enforces poverty – and that when children are removed from paid work employers are forced to raise wages for adults. Therefore, child labour is contributing directly to poverty and needs to be challenged. Key to their success has been the non-negotiable set of principles (see box). They build their work on these, mobilising rural youth and the wider community.

Over the last 15 years MV has succeeded in having 400,000 children withdrawn from work, working with these children to get them as far as Class 10. Initially there were major problems of drop-out but now, with active community support, drop-out rates have decreased. MVF works with the children directly as well as with the wider community and state structures. Local youth have been a key actor in the initiative, carrying out household surveys to look at the number of children in school and receiving training and support to run residential camps and bridging schools. The different players are all necessary to enable children to participate in bridge schooling and get into state schools as soon as possible. The government plays a role in supporting the entry into schools, while the community contributes through withdrawing their children from child labour, and ensuring the schools are delivering quality education. As part of the work the youth have reached out to sympathetic teachers, community leaders and government

officials. In each village of between 1000-2000 households, Child Rights Protection committees are established, representing all sections of the community (leaders and landlords as well as traders, young people, women etc.). The committees are responsible for negotiating with government officials, schools, employers of bonded labour, etc. They work to protect child rights in and out of school. It has been important to include powerful people as they have more influence over employers who are reluctant to stop using child labour. Initially there was resistance from employers and from the upper castes. This was not simply a matter of their economic interests. There were also deeply held social and cultural issues at stake. The powerful did not appreciate being challenged by the less powerful. It was extremely important to win some of them over – otherwise the villages could have simply become locked in unproductive conflicts. But, MVF's experience has also shown that parents are often the first point of resistance to getting children into school and

## ▶▶ The non-negotiables

- **All children must attend full time formal day schools** (not night schools or non-formal education centres).
- **Any child out of school is a child labourer** (whether waged, non-waged, in factory, fields or home).
- **All work/labour is hazardous: it harms the overall growth and development of the child.**
- **There must be a total abolition of child labour** (any law regulating child work is unacceptable).
- **Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned** (e.g. arguments about the 'harsh reality' of poverty, the necessity of children's earnings, poor quality of teachers or schools – these are all anti-children).

it is necessary to get them on board if issues of child labour are really to be tackled.

It is not just about getting children into school. It is about keeping them there. Contracts have been developed where parents promise to keep their children in school and teachers promise children will achieve basic learning objectives. The volunteers (youth) are also able to advise parents of opportunities available (for example, government subsidies for girls who want to continue to intermediate education). MVF also uses its position and power to engage with the government – for example persuading them to have more flexible enrolment systems that do not depend on the production of birth certificates, and enabling children to be enrolled at any point in the school year. A key position taken by MVF is that as an NGO they can demonstrate what can be done about child labour, but it is crucial for government to mainstream successful approaches, and tackle child labour more broadly.

► *'The camps are a mobilisation activity NOT an education activity. These are non-students working with non-teachers in a supportive environment. The real teaching happens in schools. We say very clearly that the formal school is absolutely vital. Perhaps in the context of the spread of para-teachers we need to define a new non-negotiable: that formal schools require trained, professional teachers.'*



Karen Robinson / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

# Children affected by HIV and AIDS

It is estimated that 15 million children, mainly in sub-Saharan African, have lost one or both their parents to AIDS, and the number is likely to reach 25 million by 2010.<sup>14</sup> HIV and AIDS have a major impact on the ability of children to access school. In many places, children whose parents died of AIDS are discriminated against in the community, and excluded from school. This might be because they cannot afford to pay the costs associated with education, or because they have to take on adult responsibilities in the household. Children, especially girls, whose parents are ill with AIDS are often forced to drop out of school to become the primary carer for their parents, and they may be the only family member able to earn an income.

Beyond the financial and logistical difficulties which impact on children's ability to access education there are also issues of stigma and discrimination that the children face on a daily basis. Many communities struggle to discuss HIV and AIDS openly and there are a range of myths that surround the virus, which mean that often its existence is denied. This stigma makes it difficult for schools to respond to the issues presented to them with HIV, as well as making it problematic for children and their guardians to address the impact of the disease at a household level. Moreover, there is the psychological distress children suffer from having lost a parent.

And yet, education has been proven to have a positive impact on the spread of HIV. Numerous studies have demonstrated how the completion of primary education reduces risk of HIV by as much as 50 per cent. Education enhances a young women's ability to make choices over her sexual and reproductive health; it delays her first sexual encounter and makes her more likely to insist on condom use.<sup>15</sup>

Issues of pedagogy and the impact of HIV and AIDS on teaching staff are explored in Section Five. The focus here is on how to work with excluded groups, and the school system, to ensure that orphans and vulnerable children are able to access their right to education, and that the school is able to respond to their needs.

It's necessary to work on various levels:

- **Responding to poverty** – user fees discriminate against all children, but especially those with HIV or children orphaned by AIDS. A key strategic priority is to abolish all school fees, and to introduce subsidy schemes to financially support the education of OVC.
- **Raising community awareness** and support for initiatives to ensure the rights to and in education are respected for OVC.
- **Linking to other movements** – for example HIV and AIDS coalitions, networks of HIV-positive people and women's movements who will be looking at these issues from another perspective.
- **Capacity building within the school** – to challenge discrimination and ensure that the school is able to respond to HIV, specifically to deal with the emotional trauma a child might be facing.
- **Campaign for school feeding programmes** to ensure that all children, but especially HIV-positive children are receiving nutritious food. It might also be important to link up with health care professionals to ensure that children's (and teachers') medical needs are met.

<sup>14</sup> Highlights report, 'School Fee Abolition Initiative Workshop', 5-7th April 2006, Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>15</sup> See James Hargreaves and Tania Boler, *Girl Power: The impact of girls' education on HIV and sexual behaviour*, (ActionAid International, 2006).

In Osun State, Nigeria, Life Vanguard called a community meeting to generate community responses to the problem. One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the formation of a care and support group for orphans and vulnerable children. In addition, the community members and the NGO achieved a consensus on the following:

- The children will not be discriminated against based on their parents' status.
- The NGO would provide support to the family to enable them to send them to school.
- The children would be allowed to come for meetings and interact with other orphans.

Work in Ghana has also focused on the issue of children orphaned by AIDS and their enrolment in school. Recognising the need to raise community awareness of the issue, as well as ensure that schools are able to support children properly, this initiative had a broad range of activities including:

community awareness-raising on HIV and stigma; training of counsellors on psychosocial counselling; advocacy meetings (traditional authorities, media, and people living with HIV), to encourage networking and collaboration to fight stigma and discrimination; and the use of radio and television to promote the project. The project also supported income-generating activities among primary carers, such as the grandmothers. Mba Awini, a child in Bawku, comments

*'Anytime I meet my fellow children who have lost their parents through AIDS I feel encouraged that we are not left to suffer. I always encourage our group members to take their education seriously...I think it is possible that if we continue schooling we could become some of the leaders of our country in the future, and so we should learn hard and pray for better times ahead.'*



Stuart Freeman / ActionAid

► Work at the national level could also include budget analysis and budget tracking to understand government commitment to and investment in an HIV response – from an education perspective. Groups might track expenditure on teacher training, on support programmes for Aids orphans, on HIV education materials etc. for more ideas see **Sections Three and Five.**

# Children affected by conflict

Conflict leads to displacement, to physical and mental trauma and fear, and to coping with loss and disruption to daily lives. Conflict is likely to impact on a child's possibility of going to school. UNESCO estimate that more than 27 million children and youth in countries affected by conflict lack access to formal education. The school building might be destroyed, it may be too dangerous to make the journey to school, and teachers may have been killed or displaced. Unfortunately, conflict breeds conflict. But bringing children together within a school system is one of the few ways to build relationships and trust between warring factions. Moreover, schooling can offer stability and routine to an otherwise disrupted life, giving children some sense of normality. Despite this, education is often neglected in emergencies and there has been a lack of funding for education in humanitarian responses.



Marick Page / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

Education has been identified as integral to any humanitarian response by the inter-agency network for Education in Emergencies. The INEE have developed minimum standards for education in emergencies, founded on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Dakar EFA goals and the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter. These standards can be used as capacity-building and training tools, as well as for planning and monitoring education provision. The standards cover five areas:

- Community participation and use of local resources;
- Partnership, and inter-sectoral linkages (e.g, with health and sanitation providers, food aid, etc.) to ensure a positive learning environment, physical safety and psychological well-being;
- Teaching and learning – curriculum, training, instruction and assessment;
- Teaching and education personnel;
- Education policy and coordination<sup>16</sup>.

Unfortunately even with this attention on education there is still the danger that education funding will fall through the cracks, as humanitarian agencies believe it is a development agency response, and vice versa, and neither invest appropriately. This means that one key intervention is to track budget allocations from a range of agencies for education in emergencies. Current interventions can be measured against the standards, and good quality future interventions designed. This involves ensuring that teachers are properly trained and supported, that children are safe within the school grounds and that the learning environment is positive and forward looking.

<sup>16</sup> see <http://ineeserver.org/page.asp?pid=1240> for more information

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### SRI LANKA

The tsunami in 2004 devastated many communities around the coast in Sri Lanka, destroying school buildings as well as killing large numbers of staff, students and their families. In the reconstruction effort, ActionAid linked with the Department of Education at the University of Colombo to explore how using a psycho-social approach to education could not only help children cope with the trauma of the Tsunami but also begin to build bridges between different ethnic and religious groups in the east of the country.

A one-year programme was developed to support schools directly. This programme included a focus on active citizenship, children's participation and social cohesion, transforming learning processes from the the examination-focused, highly-competitive and individualistic culture endemic in the present system to experimenting with learner-centred and holistic approaches. By working with a range of different schools, and facilitating direct dialogue between the schools, which had Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim pupils, the programme not only looked at how children could re-adapt to learning and life in general after the Tsunami, but also how school could contribute to social cohesion in the local communities. Working with a national university meant that lessons learnt through the approach could be translated into policy positions and used for wider influencing.



# Children without citizenship

Education is a right, and the government has a responsibility to deliver that right – but what happens if you have no citizenship? Which government is responsible for delivering the right, and how can you hold them to account?

There are many people around the world who reside in countries where they are not recognised as citizens. They may have crossed the border from one country to another, or have moved between states within a country (this has been the case in Nigeria, where people are described as non-indigenous if they move to a new state), with neither state recognising their existence. Or they may be trapped within a country due to

conflict (for example, there are Pakistani refugees in Bangladesh who have lived there since partition in 1971). Or they may have citizenship, but not have a birth certificate to prove it. In many countries the lack of a birth certificate can mean denial of the right to education (as was seen in **Section One** with the case of Yean and Bosico, page 45).

Ensuring that those without recognised citizenship can access education involves various initiatives. While an obvious first step is to look at why the particular group does not have citizenship, and to work on this wider issue, it is also important to work with the local or district (and if appropriate national) government to develop systems of integrating those without citizenship into mainstream education. This may involve the government becoming more flexible with their own rules, or accessing international support and funding (for example from UNHCR or UNICEF) to support the education of temporary citizens – or refugees. It is likely that you would want to partner with specific



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

organisations representing these groups to take this work forward.

Providing access to education is not the end of the story. It will also be important to look at whether the education is appropriate to the needs of the target group, whether they can access it in their language, and whether the content of education is non-discriminatory and valuing diversity.

#### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### NEPAL

In Terai region, **Nepal**, there were major problems with birth registration and citizenship. Parents simply do not register the birth of their children, and this causes problems when they try and send their children to school – if you don't have a birth certificate you cannot register at school. As part of a much wider initiative looking at adult learning, groups of women were mobilised across the region. One of their priority issues was to encourage birth registration. They worked on two fronts. Firstly they raised awareness among the public on the importance of birth registration. Secondly, they engaged with the Village Development Committee and registration secretaries to make the process cheaper, easier and quicker. Now nearly all children are registered across the region.

Key to work in this area is the understanding of the relationships between local, national and international level. What is spent on education locally is determined by national policy, which in turn is influenced by international policy agendas.

## Section Three



Stuart Freedman / ActionAid

## Financing Education

# Contents

## Financing Education

### Types of information that are useful for this section:

- **Budget:** Information on the budget process – annual cycle, opportunities for civil society engagement, key bodies involved in the decision making process.
- **Expenditure:** Information on national, district and local education spending, as a percentage of national budget and national GDP, expenditure on different elements of education.
- **Revenue:** Information on tax structure, user fees, other sources of national income for education.
- **Budget analysis experts:** Are there national organisations which analyse the national budget, does anyone do budget tracking work, what information exists on the education budget?
- **International pressures and conditionalities:** Information on IMF conditions, fast track status.
- **Education statistics:** Produced by different organisations (including government) and sex disaggregated, for example relating to education access and provision, excluded groups, teacher – student ratios.

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Everyone agrees that education is a priority. However, prioritising education in public expenditure is a different issue. Governments face many challenges in allocating their budgets and, while they may claim to support education, they do not always 'put their money where their mouth is'. By analysing financing issues we can gain insight into government priorities and the factors that influence spending, and at the same time collect information which can be useful for our campaigning and influencing work. Key to work in this area is the understanding of the relationships between local, national and international level. What is spent on education locally is

determined by national policy, which in turn is influenced by international policy agendas. By enabling people to explore issues of education funding, various opportunities are created to locate the local situation within the wider picture, and develop mechanisms for local people to engage in the big questions of national economic policy.

## ►► The right to education financing

Article 2 of the International Covenant On Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states: '*Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of the rights*'<sup>17</sup> implying not only that states must prioritise resources for the right to education, but also that the international community must support national governments to do this. There are a number of national constitutions that protect minimum resource allocations for economic, social and cultural rights and '*the constitutions of Brazil, Costa Rica and the Philippines, for example, have been used to challenge budgetary allocations for education, in the courts through public interest litigation and on the streets through direct action to demand compliance with constitutional obligations*'.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the obligations placed on governments by the ICESCR there are two other reference points to consider in financing education. The first is a UNESCO 1996 report, *Learning: The Treasure Within* Delors et al, which suggested that governments should invest at least six per cent of GNP in education. This is now widely used as a reference point for minimum levels of investment in education. The second is the fast track initiative (see page 122), which recommends that countries should spend 20 per cent of their national budget on education.

This legislation and recommendations can be powerfully used to campaign for appropriate resourcing to education, to ensure that everyone is able to secure their right to education. And if such legislation exists already at national level it is important to draw on this in any of your budget analysis work, tracking whether or not the legislation is being respected and implemented. However, in using this information it is important to consider, what the available resources are, what the constraints to government expenditure might be, where and who should be targeted to ensure appropriate spending on public education. This could include the general public, local and national governments as well as the international development community.

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_ceschr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ceschr.htm)

<sup>18</sup> *Human rights for human dignity*, (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2005).

This section starts by looking at local engagement on budgets. Taking the concrete example of a school budget, the diverse ways of engaging with budgets are explored, looking at how to ensure that you are informed and that your advocacy work is well-evidenced and targeted. Actions at the national level are then considered, suggesting how national-level work can link to local-level analysis and action. Finally the international dimension is discussed.

Those working on education issues often focus their energies on campaigning for greater allocations to education within the national budget, and more efficient and transparent systems to manage disbursements and expenditure. However, it is the wider macro-economic context which guides the total public budget, the size of this budget 'pie' influences the allocation for education expenditure. The public budget is influenced by the policies and preferences of international actors, specifically the IMF. Using the example of teachers and the public-sector wage bill the influence of the IMF on education provision, and therefore education rights, at local and national levels is analysed.

The budgeting process is a complex one, and there are various roles civil society can play at different points in the process. Decisions about what to prioritise and where to spend money are only the beginning of financing issues. It is important to look at whether the expenditure is disbursed as planned, whether it has the desired impact, and how the budget impacts on different parts of the population. It is also important to understand where the money comes from, and how this influences the decision-making process and final expenditure. Finally, it is important to look at the information which influences expenditure choices; to understand how accurate this is, and whether you are in agreement with the types of information selected. All these issues are considered in this section.



Mark Phillips / ActionAid

# Understanding budgets

Budgets are the key to understanding the planning choices any organisation makes. They show the limits and potential that the organisation has to work with. In the case of government, they are the instrument for communicating revenue and expenditure plans – they not only reflect government policy; they operationalise it. Budgets are the entry point to exploring issues of education financing, *'Through engaging with a budget, decision making and accountability can be improved, policies and practices can be changed and corruption and inequity exposed.'*<sup>19</sup> However, in order to use budgets to challenge plans and priorities, the processes and power issues involved in budget management need to be understood, as well as the budget's potential impact.

There are many different definitions of a budget. The diagram on page 98 outlines some of the principles of a good budget. A budget is a planning tool – it matches expected income and expenditure, and gives details of the choices government (or any other organisation) is making regarding revenue collection and expenditure priorities. However, a budget is not neutral. It is subjective; full of value-laden decisions and different interests. While some believe a government budget should be re-distributory, sharing the wealth of the rich with those who are less well-off, others believe that government budgets should be minimal. Budgets therefore reflect political priorities, economic understandings and the level of commitment to an idea of social justice.

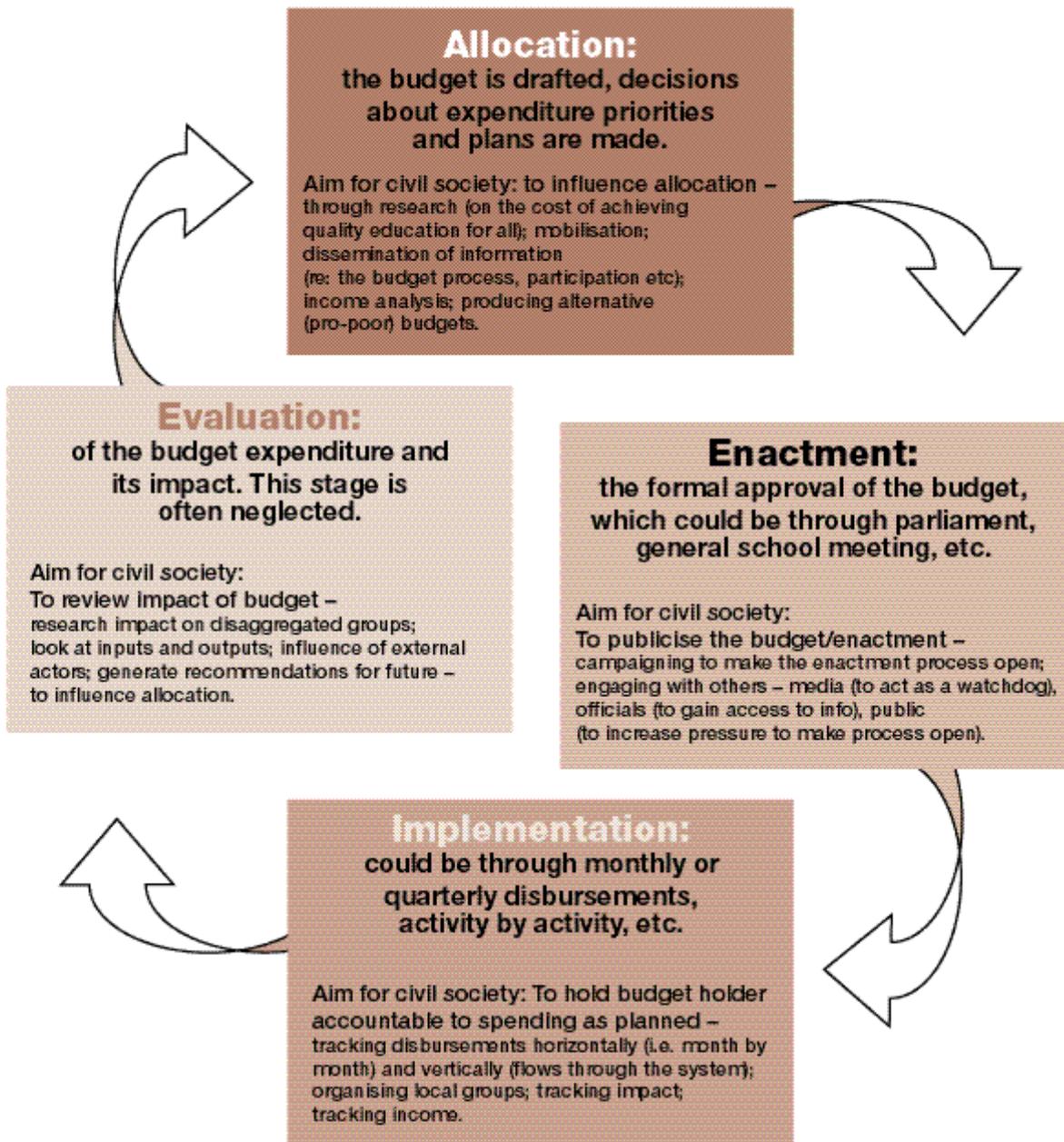
There are three ways to engage with budgets: **budget analysis** (understanding what is contained in the budget, the information which informs the budget, and the impact of the budget on different people); **budget tracking** (monitoring disbursements to see if they are timely and in accordance with allocations, and monitoring flows through the system from international to national to local level) and **budget influencing** (producing alternative budgets, lobbying and campaigning to change budget allocations, offering alternative information).

A workshop in Nigeria came up with the following definition for an ideal budget: *'A budget should be a people-centred instrument for the generation of wealth, its management, including fair and equitable distribution, is for the purpose of promotion of national growth and development'*. Some might add that a national government budget should ensure that everyone is able to access their human rights, which the government has a legal and moral obligation to deliver. This last element suggests the importance of understanding the different needs of those affected by the budget, for example, a budget is likely to affect men and women differently. These must be taken into consideration when planning and allocating the budget, as well as when monitoring and evaluating its impact.

Budgets, be they household budgets, school budgets, organisational budgets or government budgets, all follow a similar cycle, although inevitably this cycle is more formal in some spheres than in others. This means that no matter what budget is being discussed there are certain stages that this budget will go through, and certain activities that can be used at each stage. The diagram overleaf gives an overview of the four key stages in a budget, what is happening with the budget and the types of activity which civil society could engage in at each stage.

<sup>19</sup> See 'Budget Analysis', in D. Archer and K. Newman, *Communication and Power*, (London: CIRAC, 2003).

## The budget cycle and suggested activities at each stage



### Ongoing activities:

– Monitor functioning of the budget cycle. Does one stage lead to another?  
How open/transparent is the budget cycle? What space is there for citizen participation?  
How meaningful is this participation?

– Key words describing a good budget include: sustainable, policy driven and planned; balanced (i.e. income is equal to expenditure, including reserves) predictable; developmental; equitable; time-bound; clear; comprehensive; public; monitored; participatory; gender-sensitive; accountable; contestable; efficient; flexible; based on sound assumptions; transparent.

# Working at the local level – the school budget

and whether there are other ways that the budget should be prioritised.

As the previous diagram illustrates, there are many different ways to work with budgets and different activities which can be pursued at different points in the budget cycle. This section is divided into three key areas: budget analysis – which covers the different aspects of the budget it is important to understand and engage in; budget tracking; and budget influencing – which looks at the range of actions which can be undertaken to influence the budget allocations and process.

➤ This section focuses on work a local group could do to engage with education budget processes. This group is likely to be the school management committee (SMC) although in some cases it will be more appropriate to work with another group (see Section Four for more details).

The first point of engagement for SMCs and PTAs and others working on education issues at the local level is likely to be with the school budget. By exploring issues around the school budget, groups can begin to build up a picture of what is possible to change and influence in education locally, what resources should be being received, and what the constraints are. This series of exercises and reflections is designed to build skills and understanding of the local school budget within the context of national and regional power relations, priorities and preferences, as well as international influences and potential constraints. While the focus is exclusively on the school budget many of the ideas contained here can be used to look at other budgets – whether at local level (for example local government budgets, district education office budget, NGO budgets) or nationally.

The question of budgets may arise naturally through analysis of another education issue, for example the shortage of physical resources such as classrooms, textbooks, sanitation facilities or teachers. Analysis of allocation in the budget can be a useful way to look at why these resources are lacking,

## ➤ Introducing budgets to a community

A common way to introduce the concept of budgets is to start looking at household budgets. Expressing household income and expenditure in the form of a budget can help in understanding the form and content of more complex budgets. There are a variety of participatory tools which can be used to analyse household budgets. See *Communication and Power*, for ideas.

Although household budgets are a good entry point engaging with other budgets is still likely to be a complex process. It is useful for the implementing organisation to translate key aspects of school budget information (for example, the allocation for each pupil, or for school development) into an easily accessible form. This includes producing posters or other visuals illustrating the budget allocations, or using movable objects such as stones to look at the different aspects within a particular budget.

## QUESTIONS

### Questions to engage people with the school budget:

- How much is the total budget? What are the different sources of funding? Who contributes the most? Often parental / guardian contributions will not be included in the budget information so it can be useful to run a separate activity to look at these contributions, for example, asking parents to list the different contributions they make to the education of their children, at different times of year. For example, in 2004, *The Family Literacy Project*, in KwaZulu Natal Province, South Africa, found that although registration fees were only, on average, 51 Rand, other costs associated with education (uniform, transport, sports days, food, building maintenance and stationary) totalled 1,073 Rand.
- What is the expenditure per pupil (i.e. total school budget / no. of pupils)?
- What are the different types of expenditure – for example: teachers' salaries, books, school maintenance, etc.? What are the most important areas for expenditure? What is missing? How would you allocate the expenditure differently? A pie chart could be constructed in order to compare the different levels of expenditure.
- Is the budget fair? Does it favour one specific group?
- How much would the school budget need to increase to allow all children in this area access to school – would this be on the same cost sharing levels?

*N.B.* It will be important to compare current expenditure to the 'ingredients' or indicators of quality education – see Section Five.

## Budget analysis

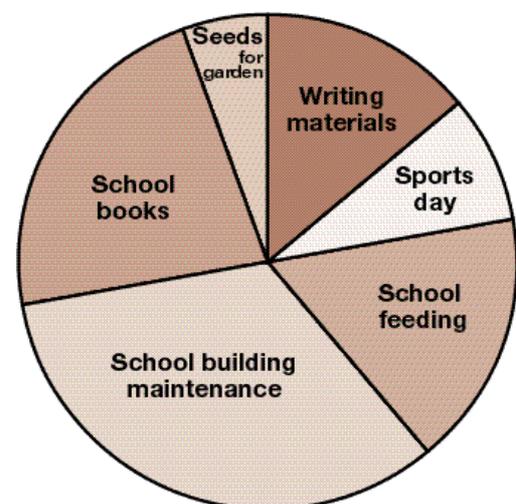
In most countries there will be laws that govern the accessibility of budgets. While SMCs in every country should have access to the school budget (budget management is likely to be one of their mandated roles) the levels of public accessibility may differ. Depending on what type of group you are working with you may need to go through a particular procedure to gain access to the school budget. The role (and power) of the implementing organisation is key in this.

Once the budget is accessed, the supporting organisation may need to translate the budget into an understandable format, and support community members or the SMC to engage with it (see box).

### Content of the budget:

A first stage of analysis is to understand where the income comes from and what is actually covered by the school budget. In many countries, teachers' salaries are determined and paid for centrally, and this information is unlikely to be in the school budget. However, other school staff (such as cooks, security staff, etc.) may be paid directly by the school. Other common costs for a school budget include learning and teaching materials, school meals, infrastructure development, examination fees, extra-curricula activities, etc.

Pie chart



In addition, school income will commonly come from a variety of sources. If there is a free primary education policy there should be some governmental transfers (either from local or national government); but this is likely to be complemented by parental contributions and fundraising initiatives.

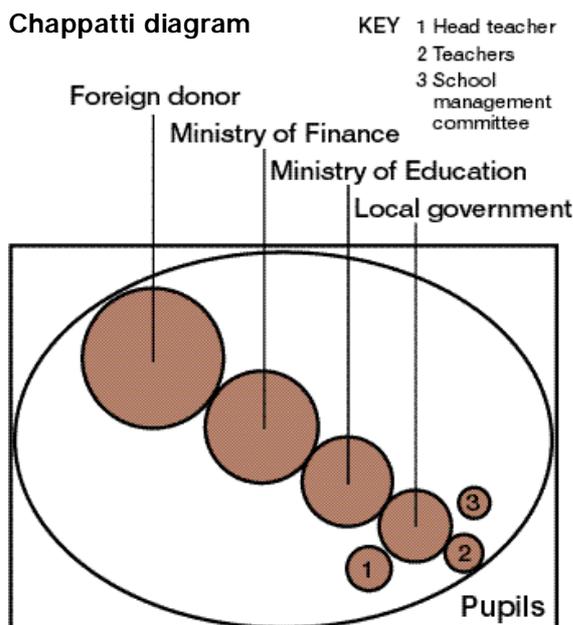
The exact make-up of a school budget will vary greatly from country-to-country, and within countries. Additionally, there is great variety in the levels of power schools themselves have to set the budget. For example, in Kenya, under their *Free Primary Education Policy*, there are direct transfers of funds from central government to the school, based on the enrolment levels in school. Whereas in other countries all school expenditure may be set centrally.

### Process of the budget:

As well as looking at what is contained in the budget it is important to look at how the budget is produced. For example, what information informs budget decision-making, who makes these decisions, how? These questions are important in understanding the rationale behind decisions and also how and who to influence to change the budget.

It can be useful to use a *Power in the School Budget Chapatti Diagram* to explore the power relations in a budget process more deeply. This involves placing a circle representing the school budget at the centre of the page and then thinking about all the education stakeholders, cutting out circles of different size to represent the power and influence they have in the budget making process. Laying these circles in relation to the school budget, with their placement representing geographical distance from the school helps map out who is involved in budget decision-making and how. It can also be useful to look at what it is that gives the different people power, and whether this power is positive. Does it help the system function effectively and democratically?

### Chappatti diagram



## QUESTIONS

### Questions to look at the budget development process:

- Who is involved in its production?
- Who approves it or controls it? Who monitors the budget? Who reports on it? Who is accountable for it?
- Where is the decision-making power?
- How much influence could you have on it?
- What choices are made producing this budget?
- Who contributes to / benefits from it and how?
- Who knows about it? Is it accessible?
- What is a good use of resources?
- What is the worst use of resources?
- What would you change about it and why?
- Is it transparent or does it hide things?
- Should anything be confidential – why?
- How important is this budget to you?

This analysis should lead to conclusions as to what the different roles exist in budget decision-making, specifically the role of the SMC, parents and students should be. Action plans will then focus on work to fulfil this role – with the aim that if the budget is managed accountably and transparently this will reduce corruption and mismanagement.

For example, in Uganda, school management has been decentralised since the introduction of universal primary education. However, in some areas this has meant that head-teachers centralised all the power in themselves, and parents and the SMCs and PTAs have not had access to full information on the school budget. To challenge this practice, ActionAid partnered with the district education office to train SMCs on school governance and budget management.

Reflecting on their experience, the vice chair of Nyakagei Primary School commented,

*‘We had to mop our house to ensure that parents, children, and staff get value-for-money. We had to realign the school budget so that the various beneficiaries get their due benefits; now all stakeholders know how much money has been received from where and where the funds went in terms of expenditure; and accountability no longer remains on paper with forged receipts and at times with an item procured twice. While the head teacher used to benefit from people’s ignorance, the doors got closed and even the most ignorant stakeholder started to know what she or he deserves’.*

Quarters	Releases	Withdrawal	Balance
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	1511340/-	1480000/-	31340/-
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	521617/-		
Top up,	280380/-	760000/-	42497/-
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	579290/-	522000/-	27290/-
Top up	428256/-	403000/-	25256/-

Budget information displayed at Nyakagei Primary School, Panyimur Sub County

In order to prevent corruption, the SMC developed an action strategy, detailing how school funds had to be displayed on school notice boards, and that joint SMC and PTA approval had to be given before money was withdrawn from the bank. Moreover, the head teacher could only withdraw the funds with a member of the SMC or PTA present. According to the treasurer,

*‘The Head Teacher had to sneak out of school for a week. We had closed the avenue for illicit diversion of school funds, and spending on personal interest. But, he had no option, either he had to abide by the agreed rules or look for another school. A copy of the minutes of the meeting was sent to the DEO and we emphasised to him that the rules will govern our school administration’.*

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### UGANDA

In further work on budget tracking in Apac and Bundibugyo districts of Uganda, supported by the Commonwealth Education Fund, a wide range of impacts have been felt. These include a reduced time-lag between disbursement and use of funds, routine public display of school budget with utilisation and disbursement schedules, and involvement of parents and children in planning and budgeting for the school. It has also unearthed ghost pupils, teachers and schools. Funds diverted have been recovered and errant officers charged in court. Children played a central role in this work – monitoring the use of funds as well as other issues impacting on education quality and the school environment – such as lesson planning, punctuality and school feeding. The process has improved school attendance by both teachers and pupils, due to their increased feeling of ownership of the learning process.

#### Informing the budget:

As well as understanding the content of the budget, and the process of budget management, it is also important to understand what information influences the planning and budgeting process; asking for example: Where does the budget team get their information from, what methods do they use?

For example, at local level the school is likely to take stock of its student and teacher numbers, its infrastructure, text books and other learning materials, school dinners, etc. A school should also look at its development plans and commitments as well as its income sources. Pulling this information together, the SMC should develop an annual plan and budget – which reflects their commitments and expenditure priorities. However, there may be additional, relevant information that the school is not considering. For example, the number of out of school children locally and the costs of getting them into school, or the costs associated with achieving quality education. Section Five looks in detail at developing indicators for quality education, and starting on page 113 there is a section on analysing and producing statistics.



Dominic Sansoni / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

In 2004, ActionAid coordinated participatory action research in eight countries to look at the contribution to education expected from poor and marginalised families. The main tools used in the cost and mobilisation research were an **Income and Expenditure Tree**, produced to represent typical household income and expenditure in the village; and an **Income and Expenditure Calendar**, detailing in particular the range of educational costs, the quantity, and when payment was expected. In most areas groups of parents, youths, teachers, SMC members and government officials were asked to discuss the issues independently, looking at what might be considered reasonable costs and why; or what action they could take to change the present reality.

The research showed huge variability in costs within and between countries. For example, in Guatemala costs ranged from 40 to 900 Queztals in different areas of the country; while Bangladesh reported massively increasing costs as students move up the education system. A similar pattern was seen in Uganda, where secondary education costs were about five times that of primary schooling. The majority of countries found uniforms to be the most expensive item, while many countries also had significant expenditure on extra tuition fees. For example, in Uganda, Ghana, Mali, Haiti and Nigeria there was pressure on children to attend coaching classes before or after school – and the teachers frequently used these classes to supplement their incomes.

In addition to financial contributions, families were also expected to make a range of in-kind contributions – for example providing labour on the farms or within the school, arranging transport for school meals, etc. Although these costs were prohibitive in many areas (in some places poor families could be expected to contribute 50 per cent of their family income to educate one child); families often commented that they would be happy to contribute to the education of their child, as long as it was of good quality – seeing good quality education as a return on investment.

### Income analysis, user fees and parental costs:

As well as understanding how money is spent, it is important to look at where it comes from – who contributes to the cost of education. This could include parents and guardians, private sector and businesses, NGOs and faith groups, as well as the government and (international) donors. Depending on who you are, the cost contribution you make is likely to give you different levels of power and influence over education policy and the school budget (directly or indirectly – i.e. an international donor is unlikely to influence a particular school budget, but may influence the policy agenda and national budget which in turn influences a school budget; while a parent may have more direct local influence, but within the policy framework set from above). It is also interesting to look at the different types of contribution – for example, are there some aspects of education which the government always provides (e.g. head teachers' salary), and common costs passed onto parents (e.g. uniforms).

Although various countries now have free primary education policies, this is not necessarily the reality on the ground. Official user fees might have been abolished, but there are many hidden costs which parents are expected to contribute to, both financially and through in-kind donations. These vary greatly both within and between countries, and have significant impact in many places. Often the income generated through parental contributions and user fees is not included in the school budget, it is a hidden cost passed onto poor families and not accounted for in government expenditure. However, it is crucially important to quantify parental contributions, not least because the cost of education is one of the main factors keeping children from school – especially girls, orphans and vulnerable children. If the government is to achieve education for all, this hidden cost needs to be included, and national budgets need to show the real investments made in education. Moreover, these hidden costs often mean poor parents are paying twice for the education of their children. Once through general taxation and again directly to the school (see box overleaf).

Work in this area could focus on local lobbying and campaigning to abolish locally applied costs of education, and national level campaigning to increase investment on education, and persuade governments to abolish the costs of education passed onto parents. The starting point should be a clear principle that no child should be excluded from school on the basis of inability to pay.

## ACTIVITY

### ▶▶ Don't Pay Twice

Human Rights legislation means that education should be paid for by government, through revenue collection, and should be free on the point of use. Government collects taxes through a variety of means, through direct taxes (such as income, land, or company taxation) and indirect taxation (value added tax, VAT, on the sale of goods). Generally indirect tax, such as VAT is regressive, it impacts equally on anyone whoever buys a good no matter whether they are rich or poor, whereas indirect taxes are likely to be more progressive and redistributive as they are linked to an individual's or business' income or property. Many people are not aware that they are paying taxes and it is important to enable them to reflect on how much tax they are likely to be paying (and how many government services they are receiving in return). Awareness that they are paying will support people to demand the government fulfils its obligations on the right to education. Reflection questions include:

- In what ways do people contribute to the cost of public services? i.e. different types of taxes and user fees?
- How do we know what services we are paying for? E.g. do we pay for a specific service when we receive the service, or are taxes collected indirectly?
- Is tax redistributive? Who pays? Who benefits?
- Who makes the decisions about these charges, and how?

If the information is not available, it is worth discussing where the gaps in knowledge are, and why this might be.

It could be useful to develop an **expenditure map**, looking at where people spend money and what they spend it on. Analysis will then focus on whether the price of goods includes any VAT. For example, a bus fare may contribute to petrol taxes, road taxes as well as the driver's salary and income tax. Dependent on context people may pay land and income tax in addition to indirect tax. Once an accurate picture of the level of tax contributions has been developed the group can reflect on what they are receiving in return for these contributions. Perhaps developing a campaign against the additional user fees or hidden costs in education, along the lines of 'we will not pay twice for our education'. It is important to note that the aim of this exercise is not to stop people paying taxes, in fact further campaigning work might actually include a demand to expand the tax base (see national level).

### Procurement policies:

Beyond looking at income and expenditure flows it is also important to look at exactly where the money is being spent. Will the expenditure regenerate the local economy, or is it flowing out of the local area to national or international businesses. Schools use a variety of materials – for infrastructure, school meals, learning and teaching materials and transport. Building on the social audit process<sup>20</sup>, groups could look at where these materials are sourced from and the impact this has on the local economy. This audit will provide background information on which to base further discussion.

It would be useful to do a *Procurement Ranking Matrix* to look at the different materials used in the school, where they come from and how this influences the local economy. Each item is scored, for example on a scale: very bad, bad, neutral, good, and excellent.

A key issue is for school meals. Research in Guatemala<sup>21</sup> highlighted how school meals were provided directly from the ministry of education – and that parents were expected to arrange transport to collect the meals from the capital city. Not only was this an additional cost burden to the parents, but the meals themselves were always past their 'best before' date; suggesting that the school feeding programme was just a way for the government to dump food. If the school meals could be produced locally, using locally farmed produce, and employing local people to prepare it, this would contribute to the local economy as well as providing school children with a nutritious meal.

### Procurement Ranking Matrix

*The crosses show where the school materials come from, the score shows how good or bad this source is for the local community*

	village	town/ market	national capital	foreign/ imported
desks		X good		
seeds for garden	X good	X neutral		
books			X neutral	X bad
school meals	X excellent			X very bad
cement			X bad	

For more ideas about looking at how the school can contribute to local regeneration see the *Plugging the Leaks* handbook (available online at [www.pluggingtheleaks.org](http://www.pluggingtheleaks.org)).

<sup>20</sup> This involves looking at an organisation's accounts, matching records and receipts with actual evidence of the work. For example, members of a village may look at a government's development plan and compare the projects which took place in their village with the plan and reported figures.

<sup>21</sup> *Research and Mobilisation on the Cost of Education*, 2004, ActionAid, unpublished)

## Budget tracking

Budget tracking usually refers to monitoring expenditure. It can be looked at vertically (i.e. how does money flow through a system from national to district to local level), or horizontally (how are disbursements made at one point in the system, are they regular and spent as planned?). For either type of budget tracking, the focus is on whether the money is spent as detailed in the plan. If not why not? Where does it go? Budget tracking can also link to an evaluation of the impact of a particular budget, looking at whether expenditure had the intended impact, or focusing on the impact of different groups of the population. For example, were people in rural areas impacted in the same way as those in urban areas? How were boys and girls impacted? It is also essential to think through how you intend to use this analysis. Is it to build a relationship with the government? To raise public awareness? To mobilise communities on their rights to education? To expose corruption?



Gaith Smith / EyeLine / ActionAid

*Tracking through the system:* With increased decentralisation of education budgets, there are more and more countries where financial transfers are made from national level to the district, local or school level to give some level of local power and decision-making over school expenditure. However, this money does not always reach the school. Tracking through the system involves looking at where the money goes, and can be used to expose corruption or financial mismanagement. For the tracking process to work well it generally needs to involve actors at three levels.

1. At **national** level, engaging directly with government and policy makers, ensuring accurate up-to-date information about the levels of funding that should be flowing through the system, as well as information about when disbursements are made, and where the money is sent.
2. This can be followed up at **district** level, engaging with the district education office and asking whether the money arrived, how much arrived, how much is allocated to each school, and exploring whether this is consistent with the information gathered at national level.
3. At **school** level a similar process can take place; looking at whether the money has arrived, how much, and whether this is consistent with the information gathered at district level.

This work will depend on whether there is an open information policy, and you can access the relevant data. If this is not possible, a first stage will be to lobby the government to make budget information transparent and available.

Also important in this process is to consider whether the money arrives at the school in a timely fashion, at an appropriate point in the school year. Unfortunately, in many cases schools do not receive their funding until part way through the academic year.

**Tracking disbursements:** another form of tracking is focused directly on school expenditure (although similar processes can be used at other levels). This involves monitoring school expenditure against the annual plans, and ensuring that money is spent as planned, or that proper systems are followed to reallocate funding. This will involve a series of different activities (depending on who you are, and the levels of access and influence you have on the budget management process).

In many ways budget tracking is about building relationships, so that information is continually shared. A first stage could be to ensure that the school budget is publicly available (see **Uganda** example, page 102). This could be through displaying the budget in a public place and/or through holding general meetings to share the budget details. This might involve developing a system of regular reporting, for example quarterly meetings sharing budget expenditure. You may also decide it is important to access the school bank accounts to ensure that what is being reported on reflects what is actually happening. At these meetings there should be space for discussion, to challenge any unexpected expenditure and to discuss any changes to the original plan.

In addition to open meetings, a range of tracking tools could be used to ensure good record keeping and accountability. Using social audit processes (see example from **India** for details) can be a helpful way of tracking expenditure against plans – and also ensuring issues such as value for money are discussed. Such processes often lead into wider discussions such as procurement policies and pricing (discussed earlier).

Budget tracking should not be limited to actual expenditure. It is also important to consider the impact of the budget. For example, is quality education achieved through this budget? What extra expenditure might be needed? How does the budget impact on different groups? For this work you may collect statistical information or use personal testimonies of teachers, students

and other education stakeholders. Your analysis can then be used for campaigning and lobbying work at the local or national level.

Involvement in budget tracking should also contribute to strengthening the relationship between parents and the school, enhancing a feeling of community ownership and increasing accountability links in the local area. You may decide to track other educational inputs, such as teachers, textbooks, and school meals, which may not be included in the school budget but are crucial ingredients for education (see **Bangladesh** example, page 112).

#### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### BOLANGIR, INDIA

In October 2001, ActionAid and Collective Action for Drought Mitigation in Bolangir, **India**, organised a *social audit* in nine villages of Jharnipalli. The process started with a street play to inform people about their right to information concerning government services. Political support for the process from the District Collector forced government officials to open up their files, including full details of work orders and accounts. A team of volunteers reviewed these and then visited villages to verify whether reported work had taken place and whether local people had any evidence or suspicion of corruption. It was important to encourage villagers to participate without fear of recriminations. Key information was collected on clear charts and a sequence of presentations was agreed. On the day itself over 2,500 people gathered. For the first time local people were able to challenge government officials directly, exposing corruption and collusion. This led to the suspension of, and criminal proceedings against, the secretary of the local council.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### KENYA

The Elimu Yetu Coalition in Kenya has been involved in budget tracking activities for about five years. The coalition defines budget tracking as: *'the process of public expenditure monitoring, scrutiny and follow-up to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of expenditure'*.

The work began with research in the districts of Narok and Mwingi to understand where primary schools were getting their resources from, and the level of knowledge of district education budgets. Finding that parents were meeting recurrent costs, that they had no knowledge of the government budget, and that issues of transparency and accountability were at the mercy of individual head teachers and SMCs, the coalition decided to take this work further, building the capacity of citizens to enable them to monitor and evaluate the budget.

The coalition developed four modules, looking at the four stages of budgeting (see diagram, page 98). These tools were used with a range of stakeholders (district education officials, SMCs, parents, NGOs, CBOs, and school sponsors) to strengthen their understanding of the budget process, as well as their role in this process. The modules also included tools for tracking disbursement and utilisation of funds from national to school level. These modules have been developed into a training manual which is used by provincial teams across the country. The main impact of this work has been to build the relationship between the school and the parents at community level. Head teachers are now more accountable and the community representatives have been able to lobby for specific funding to help in school development projects. Links with the media have also been developed, and through this work and the community mobilisation, education has become prioritised in many of the regions.

In January 2003, a policy of free primary education was introduced across Kenya. With this policy came the idea of setting up school bank accounts. Money was transferred from the national government directly to the school to pay for all teaching and learning materials (teachers salaries are paid separately). This provided a new challenge for the schools, which now had to manage considerable budgets. Building on the earlier experience of budget tracking work, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) developed a capacity-building initiative to ensure that SMCs and the local community would be able to manage this budget.

The NCCCK ran a three-day training workshop for two facilitators from each division. These facilitators were community workers or members of CBOs with a minimum of eight years education. They had to be interested in community work, well-respected in the community and possess good communication skills. The training covered the budgeting process as well as discussing the free education policies, and values and principles for budget tracking. The facilitators were then responsible for training SMCs in their area and for informal support to parents (sharing information on child rights and the free primary education policy), as well as school monitoring and support visits. By the end of 2004, 990 SMC members had participated in the training, and communities were actively involved in monitoring free primary education in their area.

## Budget influencing

Depending on the context, the outcomes of the budget analysis and tracking processes and the focus of work, the range of actions may be very different. Action includes:

- Producing alternative budgets (influencing the formulation process);
- Producing and analysing statistics (to inform budget process and monitor impact);
- Influencing the budget cycle (to create more space for civil society participation).

### Producing alternative budgets:

The focus and process of this activity will depend on whether the group you are working with is formally involved in the budgeting process or not. Clearly, if you are working with the SMC, and budget management is part of their mandated role, this process will focus on ensuring that the budget allocation process is a 'good process'. That is, that it is based on reliable information, linked to annual plans and priorities, is predictable, time-bound and transparent. More complicated perhaps, is ensuring that the budget is pro-poor; that it contributes to achieving rights to, and rights in, education. This will involve linking budget production to good quality research on the numbers of children in and out of school; and the issues blocking children from accessing schooling as well as an understanding of the ingredients for quality education (see Sections One and Five). All this information should consider the different needs and contexts of different excluded groups (see Section Two). However, it through focusing on the budget in this way the group may also become aware of the short-falls in income. Key questions include: Is the money sufficient for quality education? If you had more money what would you spend it on? What are the relative costs of different education inputs? Which elements are needed for quality education? Action here might include lobbying the district education office or national government for increased allocation. It will also be important to look at issues which are constraining government expenditure on education (see IMF section, page 122).

If you are working with a group not directly involved in the budget management process (for example a mother's group, *Reflect* circle, PTA or student group), this work will also involve looking at strategies for influencing the formal budget process. If the relationship with the school is good, this could be through developing information and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the wider community is involved during the budget production process. If the relationship is not so positive it could be through using a range of advocacy tools, raising awareness of the budgeting process in the local community, and linking to other local bodies (local government, CBOs, the media) as appropriate. Here the pressure would be on the SMC and other decision-makers to open up the budgeting process.



## ACTIVITY

### ▶▶ Different people have different priorities

In a workshop in **Nigeria**, participants were divided into groups and asked to imagine they were a family, each taking on the role of different family members. They were then given a basic salary and a list of household items to budget for. The group needed to prioritise, and as a second stage the exercise was made harder; asking them to choose between funding their daughter's education or grandmother's treatment for tuberculosis.

This exercise is useful to help people understand how different perspectives impact on the budget, and how difficult decisions need to be made. This can be expanded to look at choices in a school budget. People can discuss from their perspective (teacher, village leader, mother, father, girl, etc.) thinking about the various groups and the different things they need (teachers accommodation, children books, girls' toilets, disabled children access, alternative learning materials, additional teacher training, HIV education, school meals, etc.) and then have a debate to produce the best school budget possible – deciding what is fair and what would make for the strongest budget.



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

## ACTIONAID BANGLADESH

ActionAid Bangladesh have been engaged in budget work for about five years, supporting 'school monitoring groups' to develop school plans and alternative budgets – and then building links with the government to meet the budgetary requirements. The school budget is viewed as including financial and non-financial inputs, such as teachers and textbooks which are not budgeted for at school level. In this way, communities are able to discuss the range of inputs to their school, which is important when looking at budgets in relation to quality education. In many places the school budget is very small, consisting mainly of funds raised from parents or guardians, and is spent on additional school inputs, such as security guards, school gardens and maintenance of buildings. So it can be limiting to understand the budget in purely financial terms.

The project was carried out with the support of 'local level budget analysts', who were trained by the project team on budget analysis, the links between school and national budgets and education policy. These analysts were able to develop a similar process at local level. Building on an analysis of the family budget (to illustrate how everyone budgets in their lives) the local level budget analysts worked with community members to examine school assets (quality of buildings, teachers, size of classes, number of contact hours, etc.). This was followed by a visioning exercise to enable stakeholders to describe their dream-school. Through comparing the current assets and the necessary inputs for their dream school the group was able to identify where the shortages were and develop plans to fill the gaps. From this, the school monitoring groups were able to prepare yearly plans for the school, and demand the required budget from the government.

The project has had differing levels of success. A clear benefit has been a revived school management committee and much greater parental involvement in the school. There are much stronger links between parents and teachers, and parents are more supportive of teachers, understanding their skills, knowledge and commitment to education. In addition there is much greater awareness of the links between paying taxes and the right to education as this quote illustrates:

*'We pay tax to the government; we also pay additional taxes by purchasing the daily necessities but the government does not care about our right to education,... We don't want much, but the government does not fulfil our basic requirement... the government must emphasise, facilitate and ensure primary education for all.'*

Stakeholders, Chakuria Primary School

However, an example from Chitmorom School illustrates the limitations of the approach. Here the need for two more teachers was identified, but government policy meant that these teachers could not be hired. The group also concluded that a new classroom was needed, but the same policy prevented its construction. Unfortunately, losing motivation the parents group abandoned their campaign for a new teacher and classroom. The focus of the work had been on local level action and the local government was just not able to meet the demands of the group. Those involved in the work commented on the need to link local to national advocacy: *'it is difficult to make policy changes through only local level advocacy initiatives; the community felt the need for a regional and national body to advocate the local demand'*. Clearly the project would have benefited from research and understanding of the national policy arena, before embarking on the school visioning process. This would have enabled ActionAid Bangladesh to support the group more actively, as well as help them target their action plans.

## A possible way forward?

As part of this initiative ActionAid Bangladesh produced a newsletter which highlighted the experiences of different school monitoring groups – and was distributed to all schools involved in the project. The newsletter served as a learning tool – to give people ideas and inspiration as to how to take their work forward, as well as to recognise and congratulate those doing innovative and exciting work.

In a different initiative, a few months after this intervention, ActionAid Bangladesh coordinated some research to understand the impact of the IMF policies on the achievement of the education MDGs (similar to the examples outlined below, page 126). This research showed how the national government of Bangladesh had been constrained from increasing its public expenditure due to loan conditions agreed with the IMF. This additional knowledge helps put the challenges of government policy faced in the Chitmorom experience in perspective. The government could not hire additional teachers or fund classroom construction because of the restrictions on public expenditure. This suggests new targets and focus for campaigning and advocacy work. ActionAid Bangladesh could use the newsletter as well as the links they have with community groups to further mobilise people, and involve them in the campaign to overcome the macro-economic conditions which are preventing the achievement of education for all.

(More explanation on the IMF follows below, page 122).

## Using and producing educational statistics:

Statistics have many uses in relation to the budget. They inform budget decision-making, as well as illustrating the impact of the budget. They also show the potential impact on a budget if circumstances change – for example if out-of-school children enter school. They can be used to support a point of view, or to highlight a particular context. They are a useful advocacy and campaigning tool.

*Producing statistics:* At the local level, participatory visuals are very useful tools for developing statistics (see box overleaf). However, before developing statistics it is important to consider:

- What statistics are important and relevant to the case being made about education?
- How can we collect this information?  
Do we need to talk to anyone else? Do we have the information here? Where else do we need to go to access the information?
- How can we measure what we are collecting? What indicators can we use? What data will be reliable? How much should we disaggregate our data?
- How will we present this information?  
Who are we presenting it to? What is the most useful form we can use to present it? What categories might we use?

*Using statistics:* Statistics produced locally can be used to show the reality of the situation and the need for further investment in education. They may also show the impact of the current education budget on the local community and to government inputs with parental inputs. They may be used to illustrate the advantage of a particular policy over any other policy. For example:

*‘If we invest in a girls’ sanitation block, we will get 50 more girls in school, but if we spend the money on sports materials we will not increase the number of girls in school’.*

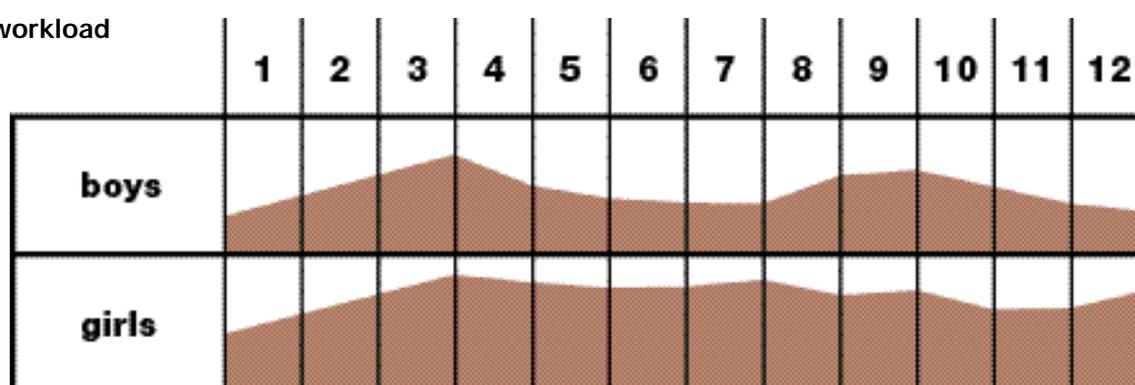
It is also worth using statistical data from

other sources; to see how they present the local reality, and to make comparisons with other communities. The implementing organisation can play a role here in helping people at the local level access statistical data. This information can be useful for lobbying and advocacy purposes as well as mobilising the local community. Pulling out the different levels of education investment and comparing this to data on educational achievement, or local demographic and poverty indicators, can be helpful in making the case for more local investment in education. Pictures or graphs can be used to illustrate the differences in budget allocations (for example, the

government is spending X per child in this district, but in that district the expenditure is Y). It is also important to explore what the data may be hiding. For example, it might show that in one area the teacher student ratio is 1:30 but further investigation reveals that only 50 per cent of children are in school. Such analysis could be used to mobilise the community to demand their right to education, as well as for wider advocacy with the government.

Statistics are also useful when tracking education budgets, and evaluating their impact (for more information on using statistics see national level).

**Children's workload calendar**



### ►► Using PRA visuals:

- An *Education Access Map* could be used to collect information relating to: number of houses in the area, the number of children in the local area – disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity or any relevant factor, and highlighting those in or out of school. The map could also be used to label schools and used to calculate distance, transport availability etc.;
- A *Children's Workload Calendar* could be used to collect statistical information on daily routines of children or school attendance – the effect, on attendance, of gender workloads, seasonal work, illness or weather patterns could be highlighted;
- A *School Equipment Table* might look at the availability of teaching and learning materials, classrooms, teachers, desks, sanitation facilities etc. and look at the ratio of equipment to numbers of children in school.



Clifford Mendel / Corbis / ActionPhoto

### **Influencing the budget cycle:**

As mentioned earlier, in some contexts the school budget may be a relatively secret process. There may be very few decisions made at school level – either because the budget is set nationally and there is little flexibility, or because there are very few funds available. Or decisions may be made by the head-teacher, with little consultation or involvement of staff, pupils or parents. Action here builds on the discussions and conclusions related to analysis of the budget process. This might include mapping out the budget cycle and identifying spaces where, the group believes they have a right to engage in the budget. This could include the right to present alternative budgets during the allocation process, to be informed when enactment will happen, and to have access to information to monitor expenditure and impact. The group will then need to think through who they need to influence to make this a reality, for example the school itself, the wider community, local government, district education office or even the national government. The ideas in **Section Four** on citizen participation will help in this action.

### **Linking national and local level work**

While the previous section has focused exclusively on local work around the school budget, links between local and national work should be made constantly. There are two main ways that the links can be made: through sharing national level information and analysis with the local level, and through using evidence generated at local level to support national campaigning and advocacy.

### **Translating national information for local work**

Those working at national level are able to access much more budget information than those working locally, through written materials; through meetings and contacts with government officials and representatives, civil society organisations, academics and media; and through international connections. This power and access to information brings with it responsibilities and opportunities. As seen in the previous example from **Bangladesh**, local level analysis and action can be constrained or badly targeted due to lack of information. How can a local group carry out budget tracking if they do not know how much money is supposed to arrive at their school? What demands can a group make on the school or local government if they do not know what rights are contained in the national education policy? How can people know which actions to pursue and organisations to target if they are unaware of who has the power and where the decisions are made?

National budget allocations have a direct impact on the local level, and national education policy determines the extent of local participation in resource allocation and management. People at the local level need to be aware of this information to contextualise their discussions. Moreover, they need to know when budget decisions are being made, and by whom, so that they can target their analysis and action in a timely and effective way. Organisations and coalitions working at the national level should continually reflect on what information could be useful locally, and how this information can be made accessible to local groups. By producing simplified versions of budget information or education policies national level groups can help deepen and strengthen the analysis and action at local level.

## Using local information for national work

These information flows are two-directional. Sharing local information at the national level is an important and empowering process. Discussions and analysis at the local level can illustrate the impact of a policy or budget; bringing life to what otherwise might be a theoretical argument. Compilations of alternative budgets from a range of schools can highlight local preferences for investment. Statistical evidence can demonstrate the true beneficiaries of a budget, and the impact on different groups of a particular spending plan.

Budget tracking procedures can show where money is disappearing from the system and local information can be used to quantify the investment needed to achieve education for all. What's more, local discussion and analysis can flag up new issues which may not have been considered at national level, suggesting new priorities for campaigning or additional research needs. This could be particularly important for issues such as procurement policies and regenerating local markets which may not traditionally be considered by education campaigning groups.

## Some common budget jargon

Specific terminology and jargon is often used to mystify and confuse, and this can easily prevent people from working with budgets. Common terms include:

- **Budget:** statement of expected income and expenditure over a specified period of time. The public budget is the income and expenditure of a government.
- **Balanced budget:** when the income and expenditure are equal.
- **Capital expenditure:** expenditure on infrastructure and materials which are invested in and will last beyond the budget period.
- **Deficit budget:** when the expenditure is greater than the income (a surplus budget is when income is greater than expenditure).
- **Budget heads:** the different items in a budget, for example teachers' salary, training, infrastructure.
- **Expenditure:** the amount of money allocated to specific items (or actually spent) in a budget.
- **Financial year:** the twelve months on which a budget is based, this varies from country to country – often 1st April – 31st March.
- **Needs-based budget:** A budget developed according to the different needs of different members of the population.
- **Recurrent expenditure:** regular expenditure, for example on teachers' salaries, school meals.
- **Redistributive:** To distribute expenditure in a budget differently from income – this is usually done to achieve greater social justice, i.e. more of the income of the budget might come from the rich, and more expenditure is targeted at the poor.
- **Regressive:** The poor pay proportionally more tax than the rich (a **progressive** tax is when the rich pay more than the poor).
- **Revenue:** the income – or money coming into a budget, a government budget will have revenue from taxes, services (that it charges for), investments, loans and grants/ aid.
- **Tax:** an amount of money charged on a particular item. Direct tax is sometimes called income tax, and is the tax charged on an individual's (or company's) income (salary). Indirect tax, or value-added tax is the tax on goods and services, it also includes import and export taxes.

# Work at the national level

Work at the national level mirrors work at the local, although the focus is inevitably on influencing, monitoring and analysing the national budget. As the different aspects of engaging with the budget have been covered extensively in the local level section, this section focuses on some of the specific issues you might face in engaging with the national budget, as well as expanding on how you can analyse and produce statistics.

## Budget analysis, tracking and influencing

National Budget documents are notoriously difficult to understand. The documents are often over 100 pages, full of numbers, symbols, cross-referencing and jargon. Just knowing where to start can be a complicated process.

An important first step is to decide whether you have the skills in your organisation, or whether to partner with another organisation or hire a consultant. In many countries there are academic or research organisations which specialise in budget analysis, and it may be more effective to partner with these organisations rather than develop expertise in-house. Even if you decide to link with budget experts to do the analysis work it is still important that you understand key budgeting processes and terminology, so that you feel confident to discuss budget analysis produced by others, and are able to use the analysis in your advocacy and influencing work.

### Expanding the tax base?

If education is to be free at the point of use this depends on adequate government revenue, which ultimately depends on an adequate tax base. Taxation is very complex and it is very difficult to run a campaign demanding an expansion of the tax base. However, it is important to consider ways that the base could be expanded. This should focus on progressive taxation systems, ensuring that the poor do not end up paying disproportionately more for their education. It is advisable to link up to public financing experts in order to think through the implications of different tax systems, what is a fair and redistributive system, how the system can be pro-poor and raise sufficient revenue etc. It will also be important to think through how to make a campaign on increasing government revenue through taxation, palatable to the majority of the population.

A good starting point in understanding the national budget is to consider how it affects each one of us directly. This will differ depending on our age, gender, education, geographical location etc. Through reflecting on these different aspects and filling in a form (like the one below) participants can reflect on the extent to which the budget affects them because of each aspect of who they are and what they do. Under each category participants could grade the level of impact and give examples. Reflection on the exercise as a whole should look at the extent to which each person is affected by the budget, what surprises there were, and what similarities and differences there were across the group.

	Age	Health	Gender status	Citizenship location	Geographical	Profession	values
Notes about who I am							
Level of impact of the public budget							
Example of impact							

Budget analysis can be broad-ranging or narrow in focus. It might include:

- **looking across the whole budget** at top-line expenditure per sector (comparing for example, education and health or defence spending);
- **looking at the detail** within a particular sector (how does expenditure on primary education compare to expenditure on secondary or tertiary?);
- **tracking year-on-year changes** to the budget (what is the relative priority given to education this year compared to last year?);
- **looking at particular groups** (what will be the impact of a particular budget head on girls' education?).

Decisions regarding the focus of your budget analysis will depend on a number of factors, such as the aim and time-scale of your work, your relationship with government and your access to information. Budget analysis can be used to influence budget formulation processes, to publicise the budget itself, or to evaluate budget impact.

*Acting on budget analysis:* In using the results of budget analysis or budget tracking work it is important to be clear about who are the powerful groups or individuals that influence a budget. Power is a relative concept, and someone might be powerful in one situation, but powerless (or at least feel unable to use their power) in another. As well as understanding who the powerful people are, it is important to reflect on what gives them power – as this will influence how you approach your budget advocacy work. For example, the government may be able to prioritise spending between the sectors, but may not believe they have the power to increase social spending (see the role of the IMF, page 123), therefore you may focus on pressurising them to allocate differently between sectors, and working with them on why and how they might renegotiate certain macro-economic policies with the IMF. Alternatively, the media has the power to raise public awareness on budgeting issues, which indirectly puts pressure on the government to act. You may find it useful to share your budget analysis findings with the media, in the form of a press briefing, or high profile event, to encourage them to cover your key points.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### MALAWI

Work in **Malawi** looked at annual trends in education sector expenditure. For example, although the actual money allocated for the education sector increased in 2002/3, deeper analysis showed that the percentage share of the budget had dropped. But just looking at the budget allocations is not enough. The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE), is engaged in a whole range of activities around the national budget. Through tracking actual expenditure on a monthly basis, the coalition is able to tell whether the government is fulfilling its commitment to the approved budget. This tracking is complemented by regular engagement with parliamentarians through the parliamentary committee on education. The committee is given feedback on the monitoring results and is also involved in developing the monitoring tools – to ensure that they have ownership of the results, and understand the methodology used. The budget tracking work also reached out to the local level to look at funding received in different districts. This work was crucial as it illustrated the funding inequalities between districts. Unfortunately, it has proved difficult to engage the media in this process, as they do not prioritise education issues. In the future the coalition is hoping to develop more sustained capacity building with the media, to enable them to provide in-depth analysis of the issues.

## Working with statistics

Statistics are a useful tool to give weight to your arguments and express key points clearly. They can also help in analysis, especially if you are comparing the impact of the same policy across regions, or the state of education in different places. They can help you develop a gendered analysis of the budget, or an analysis from the perspective of a particular group of people – for example, an ethnic or linguistic minority, pastoralists or people with a disability.

It can be very useful to access statistics produced by others (government, academics, donors, civil society groups) to aid in your analysis of an issue – or to support your analysis of budget allocations, implementation and impact. It is only through matching budget allocations to reliable demographic information that we can start to understand the levels of expenditure on education, and the potential impact of a budget.

► Denise Lievesley of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics recognises that countries have been known to manipulate statistics to give the appearance that they are closer to meeting internationally-agreed targets. One example of statistical manipulation relates to enrolment figures. These statistics are incredibly inaccurate indication of school attendance. They are compiled using registration at the beginning of the academic year and do not take actual attendance into consideration. The fact that many children repeat years means that the gross enrolment is frequently over 100 per cent. Another manipulation relates to national spending on primary education. Unless figures actually include the source of spending (e.g. government, donors, NGOs, parents) it is impossible to analyse real levels of expenditure on education.

However, it is important to recognise that statistics are notoriously unreliable. They may be presented as neutral but they are invariably highly political – they can hide as much as they show. When working with statistics produced by others you need to consider:

- Who compiled the statistics? What prejudices might the group have?
- What is being shown in the statistics and why were they compiled? This can solicit a purely descriptive answer, such as 'enrolment rates' or an analytical one, such as 'that enrolment rates are increasing'.
- How are the statistics relevant to what we have been discussing?
- What comparisons can be made?
- What categories have been chosen in the statistics?
- What has been left out?
- Who decided on the categories? How do the definitions impact on the figures collected?
- How could the information have been collected?
- What sorts of decisions were made in compiling the statistics? What assumptions were made?
- Are the statistics neutral? What do they highlight or obscure?
- How accurate are the statistics? Are there aspects that you would challenge?
- How could they be used by different parties? How could they be used for advocacy, monitoring, campaigning or alliance building?

Because of this unreliability it is often useful to produce your own statistics, which can be used to challenge the data produced by others, as well as further your understanding. Of course, any statistics you produce will be open to the same criticism. It is important to be open and transparent about the methodologies used and assumptions made, and to point out gaps in information – what you are not able to conclude from the information you have. It is also useful to access statistics over a long time period (over five years) as this will enable you to judge their accuracy more reliably.

## Challenging government statistics – using report cards:

In 2005, The Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, ASPBAE, produced a 'school report' analysing how 14 developing countries in the Asia Pacific were faring in their commitment to basic education for all. They used five key indicators, monitoring:

- a. Status of basic education;
- b. The state commitment to eliminate user fees and action on free education;
- c. The quality of inputs in primary classrooms (trained teachers and cost per pupil);
- d. The ability of the education system to promote gender equality;
- e. The levels of equality in educational attainments across different strata of society (overall equity).

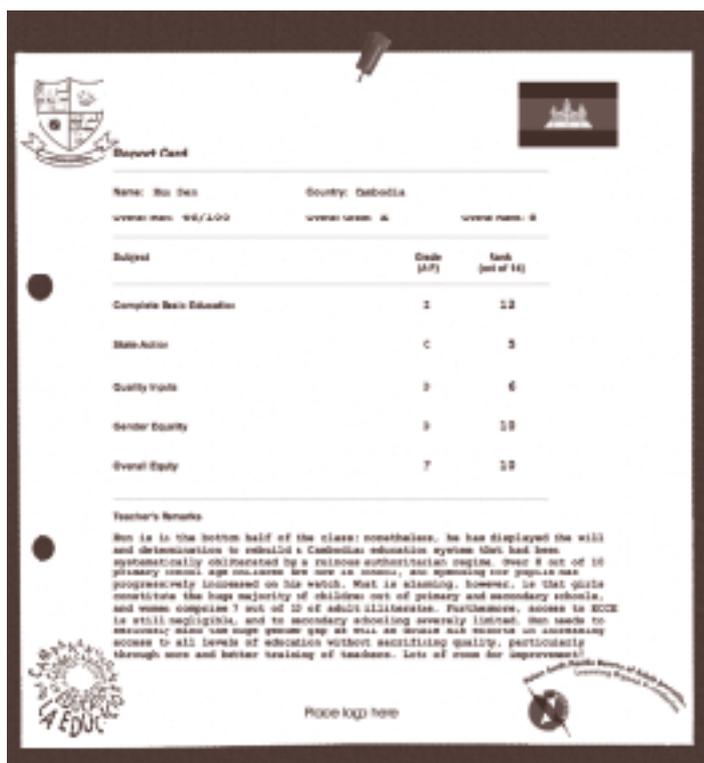
To compile the report ASPBAE used the latest available data from the EFA Global Monitoring Report published by UNESCO, as well as sourcing data from national government reports, academic research and international surveys, cross-checking this data where possible with civil society shadow reports, and using a range of assumptions (included in the report) to fill in data gaps.

The resulting report, 'Must do better' shows how 11 out of 14 countries are performing poorly and will not attain MDG goals in 2015 unless they invest now to radically transform the situation. The report has been shared widely through press releases and book launches and is available on the web.<sup>22</sup> It is an excellent example of how complex sets of data can be simplified and packaged to illustrate key messages clearly.

## Using statistics to support your arguments:

While recognising the potential problems of statistics, it is also important to recognise how useful they can be. In fact, comparing statistics produced for different purposes can bring new insights. This happened in work done by ActionAid, looking at the impact of wage bill caps<sup>23</sup> across 23 countries that have had education plans endorsed through the Fast Track Initiative (see IMF section for more information on this).

The table to the right lists the 23 countries and looks at the number of children out of school, the current teacher/pupil ratio, and the number of additional teachers needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education (i.e. the number of additional teachers needed if all children were in school, and the teacher/pupil ratio was 1:40, which is an internationally agreed minimum standard). This is then plotted against whether the country in question has a cap on its wage bill (as a result of its IMF loan agreement). Using available statistics clear comparisons can be made between the countries, as well as illustrating the impact of the wage bill cap across a number of countries. The table shows that there are 16,407,000 children (at least 7,926,000 of these are girls but some countries have not given sex disaggregated data) out of school across the 23 countries. At present 9 of these countries have a teacher/pupil ratio greater than 40 pupils per teacher. If all the out of school children were to go to school, and the 1:40 standard was to be met, 500,700 teachers would be required across the region, and this does not account for teacher attrition (which would double the number of new teachers needed). The IMF wage bill cap limits teacher recruitment to 268,900, suggesting a large shortfall in teachers. It is important to note that this national level data is likely to hide regional disparities within countries, which are likely to show a more extreme picture.



<sup>22</sup> [www.aspbae.org/SchoolReportCard.htm](http://www.aspbae.org/SchoolReportCard.htm)

<sup>23</sup> These are limits placed on the size of the public sector wage bills meaning that governments would be violating their loan conditions if they employ more teachers, as it would increase spending on the public sector wage bill.

Country	Have an IMF wage bill cap	Number of children out of school/girls '000	Pupil teacher ratio (2002/3)	Total number of new teachers needed (excl. cost of attrition)
Burkina Faso	Yes	1,398 (756)	45-54	53,000
Cameroon	No	-	57	22,700
Djibouti	Yes	74 (39)	34	-
Ethiopia	No	5,780 (3,126)	67	152,500
The Gambia	No	44 (23)	38	3,100
Ghana	Yes	1,323	34	25,400
Guinea	No	455 (272)	45	22,800
Guyana	Yes	-	26	-1,200
Honduras	Yes	132 (61)	-	-900
Kenya	Yes	2,030 (1,010)	34	41,600
Lesotho	No	47 (19)	47	-1,800
Madagascar	No	511 (254)	52	25,300
Mauritania	No	-	-	7,200
Moldova	No	56 (23)	19	-
Mongolia	No	50 (23)	31	-
Mozambique	Yes – (lifted '06)	1,117 (616)	55+	66,200
Nicaragua	Yes	124 (62)	35	-600
Niger	Yes	1,218 (668)	35-44	60,300
Senegal	Yes	507 (273)	45-54	25,100
Tajikistan	Yes	-	22	-
Timor-leste	Yes	-	51	-
Vietnam	No	544	25	-
Yemen	Yes	997 (701)	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13 (-1)</b>	<b>16,407 (7926)</b>	<b>9 clearly above benchmark</b>	<b>500,700 needed (268,900 cap)</b>

Source: EFA GMR 2006 & Tomasevski, 2005.

\* There are some discrepancies of figures. The UN Millennium Project has projected the 2010 teacher shortage in Ghana to be 134,694.

\*\* Tomasevski, Katarina's Right to Education <http://www.right-to-education.org/home/index.html> shows that although tuition fees have been removed, many of these countries do in fact still charge different costs for primary education.

Source on IMF caps: Fedelino et al Aid Scaling Up: Do Wage Bill Ceilings Stand in the Way, IMF Discussion Paper March 2006.

# Understanding international constraints on the national budget

The national budget is often compared to a pie – with different sections of the pie allocated to different activities and sectors. The total size of the pie depends on the revenue (i.e. the amount of money the government is able to collect through various taxes as well as income from services, grants or aid money and loans). It also depends on the government's macro-economic policy – that is the preferences and policies relating to inflation and government expenditure.

Each government will face different constraints, due to its national context (for example its ability to collect taxes) as well as the international arena and any agreements which it has signed.

This section focuses specifically on one external influence on the national budget, the IMF.

## Common jargon and acronyms

- **Caps:** In this context, these are limits placed on the PSWB (see below). The caps often explicitly limit the numbers of teachers a government is able to hire.
- **Fast Track Initiative (FTI):** A global partnership between donor and developing countries, providing a platform for donors from over 30 agencies and banks to coordinate their efforts. It supports countries to develop quality education plans, and then helps them raise the resources to fund them.
- **Fiscal policy:** This relates to the level of public expenditure – it includes how money is raised (generally through taxes and national and international borrowing) and levels of expenditure vs. income. Some believe that income and expenditure should be balanced, whereas others believe that you can spend more than your income (and develop a deficit) if there is good reason to do this (for example to invest more in education).
- **Gross domestic product (GDP):** This is the total value of goods and services produced in a country; it is used to measure the country's overall economic activity – a growth in GDP means that the country's economy is growing.
- **Inflation:** This relates to the increase in prices, hyper-inflation describes a context where prices are rising very very quickly; disinflation refers to a decrease in the level of inflation, whereas deflation describes a decrease in the level of prices.
- **International Monetary Fund (IMF):** Established in 1944 to encourage international cooperation in around monetary policy and practice. The IMF is charged with the ensuring the health of international macro-economic system, and it uses loans to help members balance their economy and hence stabilise the international system. This gives the IMF immense power in the developing world where it provides many loans.
- **Macro-economics:** This describes the behaviour of the whole (national) economy (whereas microeconomics focuses on individuals). Governments use monetary and fiscal policies to manage their economy.

## Understanding the influence of the IMF<sup>24</sup>

In almost every country education budgets are set in the Ministries of Finance, not in the Ministries of Education. It is the Ministry of Finance that determines total budget expenditure, and within this how much will go to education. In many countries both of these decisions are influenced by the macro-economic policy and preferences of the IMF. This influence is felt even if the country in question does not have a loan agreement, because of the power and influence of the IMF. But inevitably, the influence is much stronger if the country has signed a loan agreement – a PRGF or PSI (see common jargon box). If a government does not respect the policies agreed to in a loan, the IMF will stop loan disbursements, which sends a signal to donors, private creditors and foreign companies that the country is economically unstable. At least 21 countries have signed agreements which explicitly include caps on the public sector wage bill, and even countries without the explicit caps are constrained in their spending because of the other economic policies included in the loan arrangements.

**But why is this important?** Globally, it is estimated that to get all children into school, into classes with 40 or fewer pupils, by 2015 (as expressed in the MDGs) 18 million new teachers are needed.<sup>25</sup> But the caps agreed through the IMF loans are preventing these new teachers from being recruited.

- **Monetary policy:** This relates to the money supply, which is controlled through interest rates and via currency exchange rates. If a government wants to tackle issues of unemployment they are likely to expand the monetary supply, if a government wants to tackle inflation they will limit the supply (usually through increasing inflation rates).
- **Policy Support Instrument (PSI):** an arrangement agreed between the IMF and a national government that imposes the same macro-economic conditions as the PRGF but does not include a loan package. It is for countries that have moved on from the PRGF and no longer need loans from the IMF
- **Poverty Reduction and Growth facility (PRGF):** A loan from the IMF, given under certain conditions agreed with the Ministry of Finance and decided in line with the IMF economic framework.
- **Poverty Strategy Reduction Papers (PRSPs):** Papers prepared by the national government with participation of domestic stakeholders and external actors such as the IMF and World Bank. The PRSP describes the macroeconomic, structural and social policies as well as the external financing needs, over a time frame of several years.
- **Public Sector Wage Bill (PSWB):** This is the total wage (or salary) costs of all those employed by the government, for example teachers, medical staff, civil servants etc. Teachers are the largest single group on any public sector wage bill.
- **Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF):** A framework used by many governments to look at spending in over a three year period enabling governments to take a more holistic approach, with the hope that the framework will encourage investment, transparency and better planning and evaluation.
- **World Bank (WB):** Established at the same time as the IMF its objectives are to provide finance (loans and grants) and technical advice for development, economic growth and poverty reduction. It is lending about \$25 billion US a year to developing countries. They share a similar macro-economic view to that of the IMF.

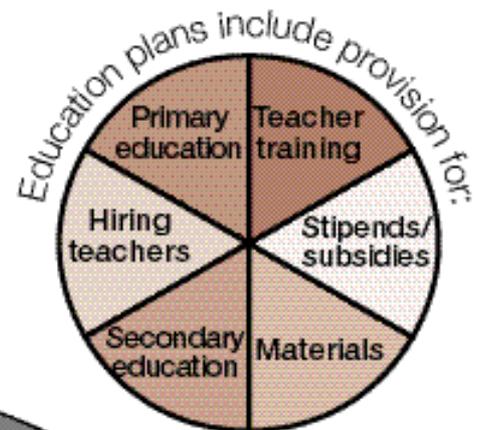
<sup>24</sup> This section is based on D. Archer, *Cancelling the Caps: Why the EFA movement must confront the wage bill caps now*, (ActionAid International, 2006).

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Teachers and Education Quality: Monitoring Global Needs for 2015*. (Montreal: UIS, 2006).

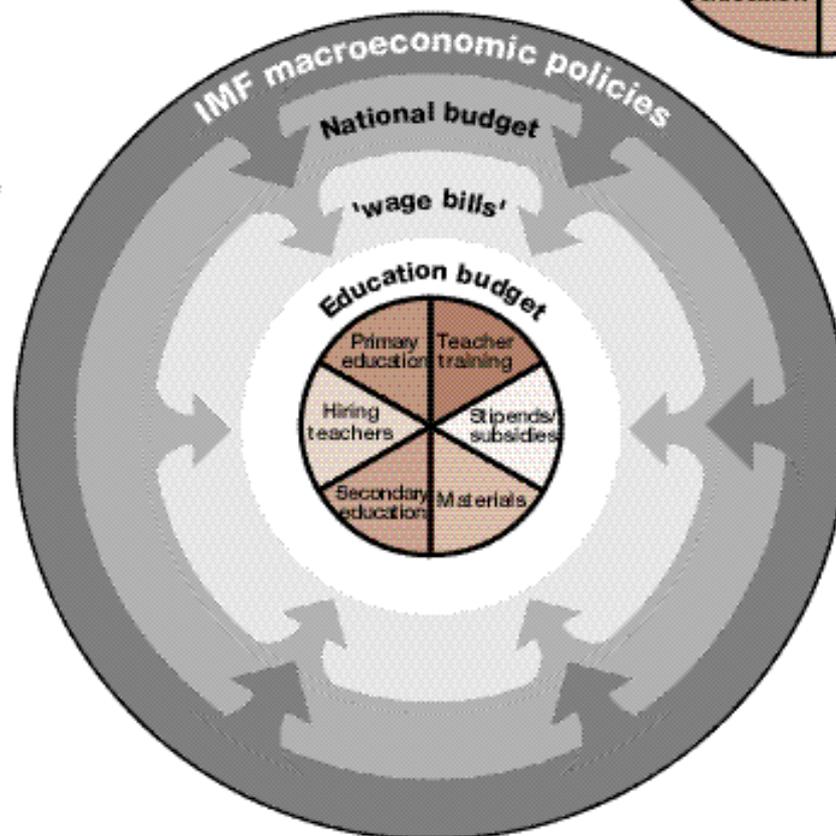
## Impact of the IMF macro-economic policies on the national budget

The IMF conditions have a direct impact on the national government, as shown by the following scenario:

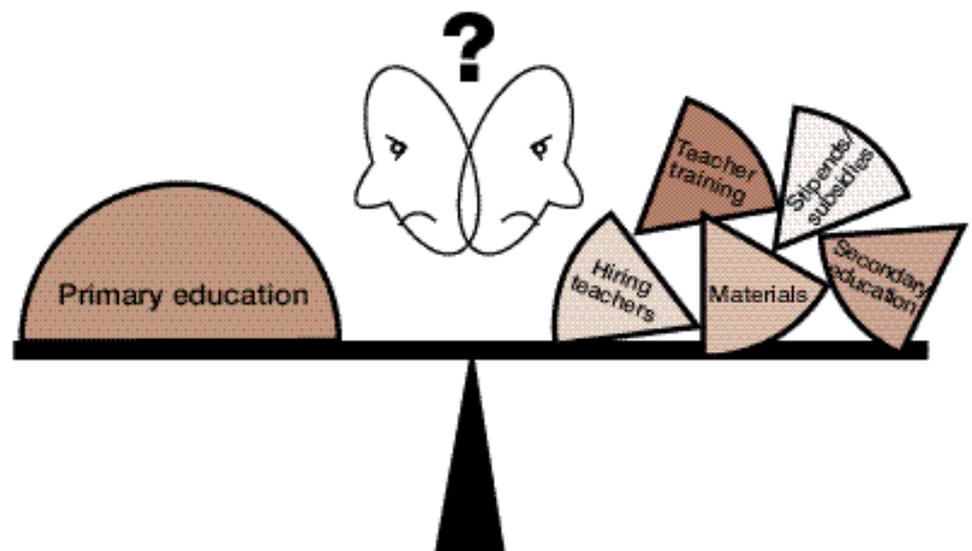
The Ministry of Education has lots of plans for education. In addition to general expenditure on primary education the ministry plans to invest in recruiting and training more teachers, developing education materials and increasing secondary education.



But the conditions agreed to within the IMF loan limit the overall size of the national budget. This means that government spending is reduced, the national budget is squeezed, which in turn influences how many teachers can be hired (wage bills) and squeezes the education budget.



The squeeze on the budget means the Ministry of Education does not have all the money it needs and has to make choices. If spending on primary education stays the same it will not be possible to hire enough teachers, or spend in other areas.



**IMF macro-economic policy:**

The IMF’s main goal is to ensure that countries maintain ‘macro-economic stability and soundness’. The IMF believes that low inflation (under 10 per cent and often under 5 per cent); low government deficit (2-3 per cent); prioritisation of debt repayments over other public expenditure; increasing privatisation and rapid trade liberalisation are the key to macro-economic stability. It sees a direct link between inflation and public sector pay. It worries that increasing expenditure on the public wage bill will lead to more people having more money to spend, and therefore to inflation. And as low inflation is central to the IMF’s beliefs it is not surprising that wage bill caps frequently appear in its loan agreements. The impact of this policy can be seen clearly in the example from Kenya.

▶ Many economists challenge the IMF’s macro-economic framework, specifically its belief in low single digit inflation and low deficit spending. While there is broad agreement that high inflation can be dangerous, and that it should remain below 20 per cent, there is less conclusive evidence about the ‘grey area’ of inflation – between 5-20 per cent. Many leading economists believe that moderate inflation rates, under 20 per cent, can enable national growth and do not destabilise countries or hurt long-term economic growth rates. Further, the quick reduction of inflation (and deficit spending) rates can do real harm, through limiting public spending and investment in the social sector. If a country is committed to progress towards the MDGs there is a strong case for the IMF to allow greater flexibility in inflation and deficit targets – at least for a few years

**Impact of IMF policy on teacher recruitment:**

In 1997, the Government of Kenya agreed with the IMF to impose a limit of 235,000 on the number of teachers that could be employed. In 2003, a new government came to power and primary education user fees were abolished, over 1.5 million more children enrolled in school. The IMF refused to lift the cap on teacher numbers, Kenya was (and still is) unable to recruit the additional 60,000 teachers it needs to support primary education across the country. Inevitably this has a severe impact on the quality of education, with classes averaging at 60 pupils per teacher.

Countries like Kenya have five choices in dealing with the problem of lack of school teachers.

1. They can do nothing and accept that the increase in enrolment means that classes now average 60 pupils per teacher.
2. They can limit enrolment, in direct contradiction to the EFA goals.
3. They can reduce teacher salaries, forcing teachers to take on supplementary jobs to earn a living wage.
4. They can change the standard teaching contract, and recruit contract teachers annually – paying them for just ten months work a year.
5. They can employ unqualified or under-qualified teachers, ‘para-professionals’, and pay them a fraction of the wage of a qualified teacher.<sup>26</sup>

Any of one of these measures has a direct impact on the quality of education received, as well as damaging the teaching profession as a whole.

Despite this reality, which clearly impacts on a country’s ability to meet its MDG targets, national governments and finance ministries often feel powerless to challenge the macro-economic measures included in loan agreements, and fear that challenging the IMF will lead to a withdrawal of other funding sources. There is little discussion of such macro-

<sup>26</sup> A. Marphatia and D. Archer, *Contradicting Commitments: How the achievement of Education for All is being undermined by the International Monetary Fund*, (ActionAid International, 2005), 20

economic conditions. They are rarely debated in the public arena, and in many countries are not even debated in parliament. In most cases, agreements are made between the IMF and the Ministry of Finance in closed meetings, with little space for national governments to negotiate. The Ministry of Education is not included in these discussions, and the conditionalities and resulting budgets are not linked to the national education plans and goals, despite their clear impact. A Ministry of Education official in Kenya comments:

*Education and health sectors are powerless when it comes to resource allocation and have to comply with the ceilings issued [by the Ministry of Finance]. The only time when the public is involved in the budgetary process is through MTEF public hearings of the various sectors and ministries...at no point are they consulted about the macro-economic framework. At the very least national Parliament should serve as a watchdog of the government, but they too are left out in the finer IMF – Government deliberations. The general feeling among the citizenry is that the Government decisions are subordinate to the IMF rules and directions and that the country is held captive by these decisions without much recourse.<sup>27</sup>*

### **Challenging the caps:**

In April 2006, as part of the Global Week of Action (see Section Four), civil society organisations in Kenya raised their voice to demand a stop to the IMF conditionalities, bringing the role of the IMF into the public view. Students, communities, teachers, and education coalitions, rallied to confront the government, which in the same breath, had both proclaimed primary education free and preventing hiring of additional teachers. Children, teachers and parents in seven districts created dossiers about the real situation of Kenya's schools, using poems, videos, essays, songs, traditional dances, open letters, official statistics and debates. At the official 'Back to School' day, district-level education officials, political figures and

local leaders were invited to visit a school and respond to the questions raised by the dossiers. Children and adults rallied around schools, markets and government offices, holding banners and posters. The extensive media coverage exposed the sad state of schools nationwide. Following these events was a national level 'hearing' with the Assistant Minister of Education. The forum focused on the need for more teachers and the constraints to hiring more teachers, including IMF conditionalities.

Kenya's GWA 2006 proved that linking the shortage of teachers to IMF policies is a powerful way to rally people behind these issues and demand for change.<sup>27</sup> A similar process was followed in Sierra Leone, where there are caps not only on teacher numbers, but also on the 'other benefits' to teachers, such as providing accommodation for teachers returning to their posts after the civil war. During the GWA, civil society activists in Sierra Leone not only engaged directly with Commonwealth Education Ministers Meeting (ActionAid Sierra Leone was able to attend the meeting and show a presentation on the negative impact of IMF policies on education); but also campaigned actively outside the conference. Members of the Education For All coalition wore t-shirts and displayed placards challenging the IMF and governments to take action to ensure that African countries in particular achieve the education MDG targets. The event was covered by a twenty-four hour TV channel and reported on the BBC Africa service and local radio stations.

However, it is not just civil society that can campaign to influence IMF policy, as is illustrated by the example of Mozambique. In April 2006, Mozambique became the first country ever to remove an IMF-imposed public sector wage bill cap. The government argued compellingly for the cap to be discontinued '*as it was introduced in a post-conflict situation when there were concerns regarding a loss of fiscal control through a ballooning of the wage bill, which is not the case anymore.*'<sup>28</sup> The Ministry of Education was particularly vocal, insisting that it be

<sup>27</sup> '2006 Report on Global Action Week' CCF-Kenya, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> 'Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies', Republic of Mozambique, 3 April 2006.

allowed to hire more teachers as the teacher-pupil ratio had risen from 1:61 in 1999 to 1:75 in 2006, following the abolition of user fees in 2004.<sup>16</sup> The government of Mozambique was actively supported by 18 donor agencies in-country who wrote to the IMF: 'We would recommend to the [Government of Mozambique] and the IMF that wage bill ceilings and, more broadly, the line ministries expenditures and hiring procedures, be the subject of more in-depth discussions and scrutiny. We would also welcome a more in-depth analysis of the...linkages between the wage bill ceilings, the fiscal framework and the new PARPA [PRSP] objectives as well as the MDG.'<sup>17</sup>

Under the joint pressure of the government and donors, the IMF conceded to remove the cap from its loan conditionality. Though this marks a step forward, the underlying macro-economic framework remains unchanged. It will still be impossible for the Government of Mozambique to hire and train all the

teachers needed, if it must also attain a strict 7 per cent inflation target and a 2 per cent fiscal deficit target. Removing the public sector wage bill is only the first step – but it is a hugely significant one that creates some space for movement towards achieving education goals. The next step will be continued pressure by civil society at the local and national levels, monitoring teacher recruitment and training and using this information to demand appropriate budget allocation to achieve rights to and in education.

**Linking local, national and international:**

These case studies illustrate how the complex issues of the IMF and macro-economics can be explored and understood at national level, and the importance of creating public debate around the impact of the IMF. To date, there have been few experiences of linking such debates to the local level. This is perhaps

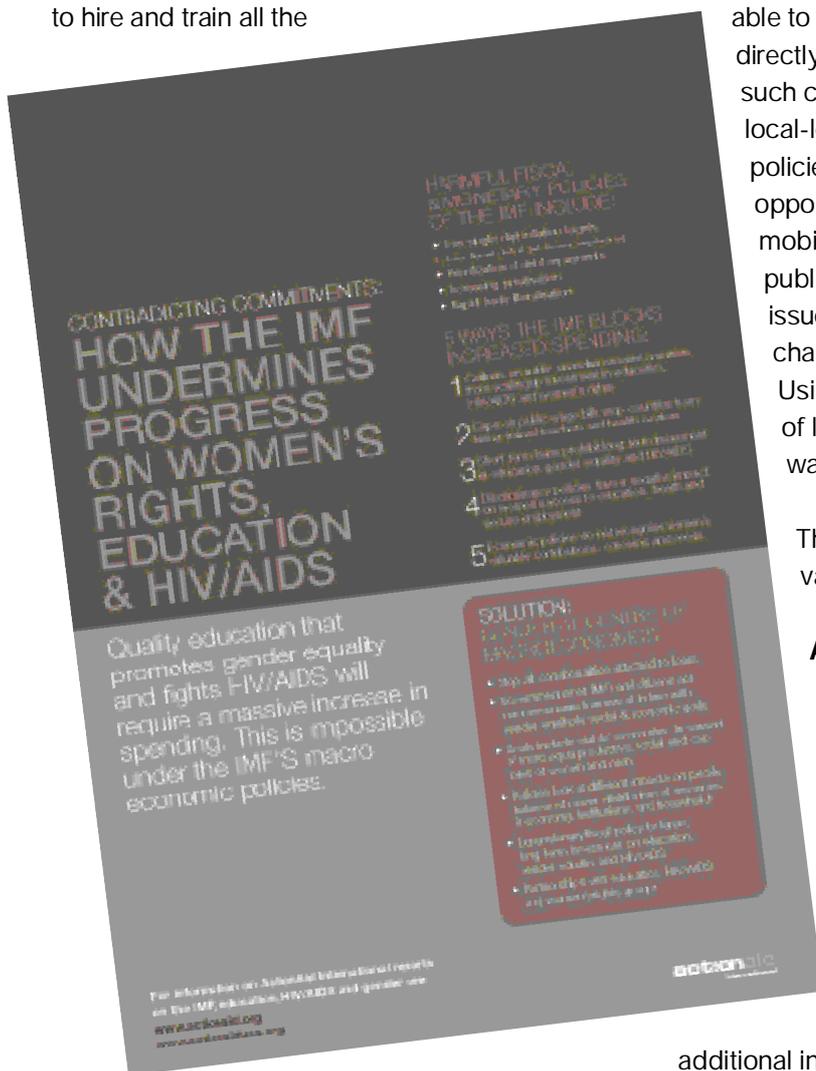
surprising, as the reality of not being able to hire additional teachers is felt directly at local level. The fact that such clear links can be made between local-level realities and international policies provides an excellent opportunity for coordinated mobilisation and advocacy. Creating public awareness and debate on the issues is one of the few ways to challenge the prevailing policies. Using concrete examples, stories of local realities, is an excellent way to raise public interest.

This suggests working on various levels simultaneously:

**At the local level:**

People need to be aware of the issues impacting on their efforts to transform education. An obvious starting point is to look at local school budgets, and explore people's ability to realise their dream school. As the earlier example from Bangladesh showed, it is important to introduce

additional information into the local



<sup>16</sup> 'Education Statistic Database' (EDUSTAT) and 'PEEC', Ministerio de Educacion y Cultura, 2006.  
<sup>17</sup> 'Joint Comments by the Programme Aid Partners on the Paper on the third PRGF-review for Mozambique', Programme Aid Partners, 14 December 2005.

analysis, so that people are able to plan and target their actions appropriately. This means ensuring that complex policy documents are translated into accessible formats, for example through posters, theatre, and songs etc. which communicate the impact of the policies clearly.

Equally important is for people at the local level to understand who the decision-makers are, and who they need to be targeting for their action. This should be shared through a participatory process of stakeholder analysis (see **Section One**), using interactive methods such as theatre for development. For example, sharing street plays which explain the impact of the macro-economic policies, and enabling local people to adapt and complement the plays with their own experiences is a useful tool. These plays could then be repeated at district, or even national level as a way of communicating the impact of policies to a wider audience. If you can build links with the media at this stage this is also a powerful way of spreading ideas and analysis.

The role of work at the local level, therefore, is to:

- Raise awareness of the impact of the IMF on their educational experiences;
- Promote local action and innovation;
- Collect stories and experiences which can give life to the impact of economic policies, and can be used in a range of campaigning strategies;
- Develop discussion and analysis on the trade-offs involved in accepting IMF loans.

#### **At the national level:**

Here there is a mixture between public awareness-raising and raising governmental awareness. As highlighted earlier, often it is only the ministries of finance and central bank officials who negotiate macro-economic policies, and so it can be powerful to raise the issues with other government officials and support them to engage with their ministries of finance. This might involve a capacity building element, as many people are not confident discussing economic policy. The capacity building should focus on exposing the contradictions between present spending policies and the strategies for achieving the MDGs.

## **ACTION**

➤ In addition to raising awareness of the influence of the IMF there are four other key actions that civil society should undertake at national level these can be described as the '4 Ss':

- **Scrutinise the budget:** It will be difficult to argue for greater spending on public education if people do not have confidence in the budget, if they think it is going to ghost teachers or public officials. Using budget tracking tools to ensure money is spent as allocated will help increase confidence, as well as expose inefficiencies. This could involve capacity building of parliamentarians and media around education budgets.
- **Share of the budget:** Delors demanded 6 per cent of GNP for education, and the FTI calls for 20 per cent of national budgets for education. These targets are missed by many countries, this needs to be exposed and campaigned against.
- **Size of the budget:** As explained above, the IMF macro-economic policies constrain the overall budget size. More flexible fiscal policy will enable expansion of the budget and therefore more resources which can be spent on education.
- **Sensitivity of the budget:** There is little consideration of the impact of the budget on different people, for example the gendered impact, or the impact on children with disabilities, pastoralists etc. Budget analysis tools should be developed to monitor and improve the sensitivity of the budget.

As well as creating debate within government it will be good to raise public awareness of the issues – as this will increase the pressure on government to respond. This could include organising a

## ▶▶ Understanding the impact of IMF policies on the achievement of education MDGs

While looking at official documents can give you part of the story it is also important to meet with a range of people who can share their experience of developing and implementing economic policy.

Important people to contact include:

- budget officials in the ministry of finance and ministry of planning and development (or equivalent);
- central bank officials;
- education ministry budget officials.

For a different perspective you might also talk to other education stakeholders including donors and civil society organisations.

Discussions should include:

- knowledge of IMF macro-economic policies, and level of agreement with them;
- level of willingness to deviate from these policies;
- the extent of IMF influence;
- constraints on the national and education budget;
- the space for public consultations on budget decisions.

Of course you will need to target the questions slightly differently depending who you are talking too. The questioning should not only help you understand the context, but may also challenge the different actors to think about their current role in relation to the IMF. For example, through speaking to the education budget officials you may raise their awareness of the lack of linkages they currently have to the IMF and challenge them to find out more about the IMF influence themselves.

*A full set of questionnaires is available from ActionAid's International Education Team.*

meeting of NGOs, academics and government officials to discuss the issues, or working with the media to encourage them to cover the issues on TV, radio and in the printed press. For both types of events it can be powerful to showcase local experiences to bring arguments to life. However, it is also useful to balance personal stories with more rigorous research which can provide strong evidence to contextualise a personal experience. Linking to work done at the local level on budget analysis and indicators of quality education (Section Five) can be particularly useful here.

It will also be important to pick up on the issue of trade offs. Asking, for example: If the government accepts the inflation rate targets what impact will this have on economic growth the national budget? Will it allow sufficient resources for education? What would the consequences be if the targets are not adhered to (might the IMF threaten to suspend aid and what impact will this have on other donors)? What reasons does the IMF give to justify the target? You might like to do additional research to explore the impact of the low inflation rates, linking with economists to draw on their expertise. If you have the space you could present alternative

policies to the government and support them to challenge the IMF on these policies.

**At the international level:**

The IMF has considerable power and influence which means that it is difficult to challenge its macro-economic policy, especially if you are a loan-receiving country, who is in need of the loan. It can also be difficult to understand the direct impact of the IMF if you look only at your country, as there are so many different forces at play it is hard to pinpoint the impact of one in particular. This means that it is helpful to look internationally when considering these issues. Both to pressurise the IMF at international level (through collections of national level experiences) and to share and strengthen each others analysis, through comparing situations. It also means putting pressure on national governments in the North – to question the IMF economic policy and ensure that their lending is not subscribing to the same conditionalities.<sup>29</sup>

Donors give a lot of money to education and through the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA pledged that *'no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources'*. This pledge led to the development of the Fast Track Initiative, which has to date distributed \$100 million in support of approved national education plans. This range of donors committed to education can be a powerful voice in calling for a cancellation of the caps and a loosening of the strict inflation and deficit spending policies. The IMF (and national ministries of finance) will listen to the collective voice of multiple donors, especially when supported by the World Bank. Work at the international level should encourage these donors to engage with the IMF, at national and international levels.

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<sup>29</sup> There are various ActionAid publications which go into much more detail on the issue of 'Contradicting Commitments' as well as how to 'Confront Contradictions'. These publications explain clearly the macro-economic policies and use case study material to demonstrate the impact of such policies. These publications and tools to understand the impact of the IMF in your context and to engage with Ministries of Finance and Central Banks are available from the International Education Team.

People are not aware of their right to education, and beyond this they are unaware of the right to participate, to monitor government and hold them to account, or to influence policy and practice. If the right to education is going to be secured for all, the relationship between government and its citizens needs to be transformed.

## Section Four



Kate Holt / EyeLine / ActionAid

## Citizen Participation in Education

# Contents

## Citizen Participation in Education

### ► Types of information that are useful for this section:

- **School management committees:** Legal status, role and function, existence of any guidelines or support – e.g. training.
- **Education coalitions:** Do they exist, who are the members, what are their role, focus, capacity, function? How to link with them?
- **Teachers' unions:** Do unions exist at national level, can you link with them, what issues are they working with?
- **Social movements and activists:** Are there any other movements working on education, who are the education activists (including media, academia), who are women's rights activists, what identity based movements exist? Etc.
- **Campaigning and advocacy experts:** Are there organisations who offer training in campaigning, mobilisation and advocacy skills, what other skills do you need?

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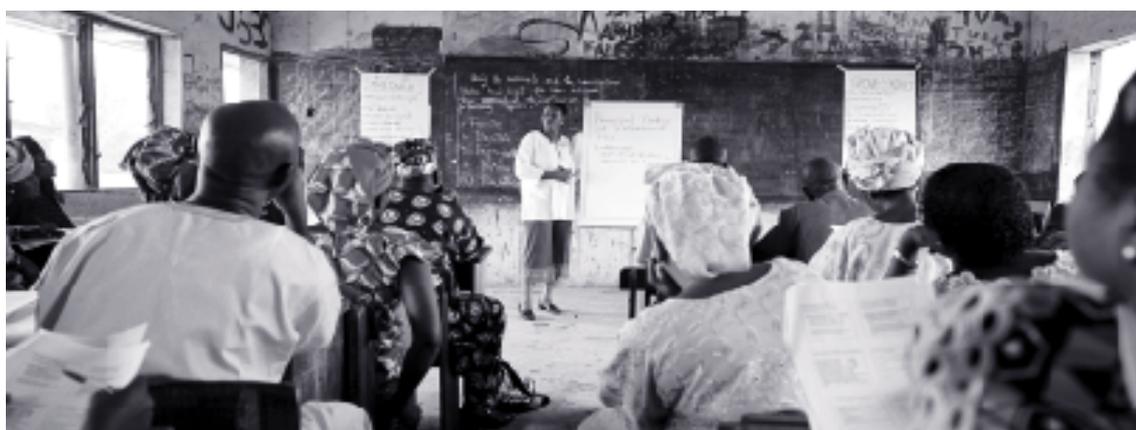
Human rights, including the right to education, are denied to many because of structural power relations which exclude many groups of people from engaging in civil life. In many places, citizen structures are weak or non-existent. There is no strong voice from civil society to counterbalance political decision-making. People are not aware of their right to education, and beyond this they are unaware of their right to participate, to monitor government and hold them to account, or to influence policy and practice. If the right to education is going to be secured for all, the relationship between government and its citizens needs to be transformed.

This involves working to transform power relations, and includes working with both the government and citizen groups. The government needs to be supported to develop open and transparent systems, which actively engage the poorest parts of the population. This transparent and accountable education system must have space for different perspectives to inform how education is conceived and delivered. And people need to be empowered, to have the confidence, skills and capacity to fill these spaces, and to be informed, no matter who they are, where they live or what their educational background. It is also important for civil society (organisations and individuals) to create its own independent spaces for analysis and engagement. Citizen participation is a crucial pre-requisite for all the other areas of work covered in this pack.

Strengthening civil society or citizen participation in education serves two major purposes. The impact it can have on the education system itself, enhancing education quality and delivery, and the wider impact of creating a stronger and more informed civil society, aware of its rights. Those who participate in education governance can use the skills gained in this area to transform power relations and secure other human rights.

Work in this area includes supporting and developing groups at the local level, providing a range of capacity-building opportunities so that they can become strong local organisations: representative; informed; democratic; accountable; and active. The key focus here is on school management committees (SMCs), although it is also important to involve other local groups who have a link, or potential link, to education. It is SMCs which can engage directly with schools and ensure that school policies and management are inclusive, empowering and appropriate.

However, citizen participation is also important at the district and national levels, to influence wider education policy and practice, and to ensure strong voice of poor and excluded people throughout the education system. Work at these levels focuses on developing deep and broad education coalitions (or strengthening those which are already in existence). This also involves linking with teachers' unions and other citizens groups – which may focus on different but related issues. And includes looking at how work at national level can link to and support local and district level work.



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

# Local level

This work focuses on the vision of an active and engaged community, which feels strong ownership of their local school, has positive relationships with teachers and other staff members, and an active interest in the education of its children. This active and collaborative relationship will contribute to enhancing the quality of schooling children receive, as well as ensuring that they are able to learn in a safe and secure environment.

The central focus is through the formal school management committee or whatever equivalent body is mandated for decision-making at school level. However, in some places it will be important to work with other groups. This might be because the SMC has no legally mandated power, or because it is undemocratic, non-representative and dominated by specific interest groups. Therefore, it is also important to consider other ways that citizens can organise and engage in education, through linking to a variety of different local groups, representing different sectors of the population, including children, women and local leaders.



## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### MALAWI

Local school governance is clearly important, as this example from Malawi illustrates: Before the work of the Nkhomano Centre for Development in Northern Malawi, community participation in school management was very limited. The first stage in transforming this was to train village headmen, traditional authorities and Ward Councillors. These groups were targeted as the power holders – the '*custodians of the dynamics of community-based initiatives*'. The training was wide-ranging and included issues of children's rights and gender awareness. It also looked at the roles and responsibilities of these actors in promoting school development and governance. The second stage was to train SMCs and PTAs on their roles, on education issues (such as child and teacher rights and welfare, school timetabling and action planning), and on how they could effectively participate in the management of their school. This was complemented with further training for pupil representatives and teachers on issues of rights and responsibilities. This was accompanied with an education campaign (led by NGOs in collaboration with parents, teachers, chiefs, pupils) to highlight the importance of education. A final element of the project was to set up a zone management committee (with government and civil society representatives) to oversee education operations in the area.

Previously, school management committees felt unable to challenge head teachers on resource management, and for the first time they are engaging directly, preventing the abuse of school equipment and resources. A tracking sheet is used to monitor school materials and facilitate regular stocktaking. There is also monitoring of teachers' behaviour – checking that they are attending and punctual as well as instigating disciplinary procedures for behaviour such as drunkenness, or sexual relations with pupils. The SMC also supports the design and implementation of the school development plans and this has led to increased enrolment, complemented by the creation of children's rights club in schools. With the SMC working alongside the school the quality of education has improved.

## School management committees

In nearly every country there is local provision for school management and decision-making. This body is usually called a *school management committee* or governing body. Here the language of school management committees (SMCs) is used to describe such bodies. The extent of their mandate and decision-making power varies from country to country (and sometimes within country) but they are the key to democratising education at the local level.

However, in many countries school management committees exist in name only. They may meet rarely, be little more than puppets of the head teacher, be unaware of their role and mandate, or lack access to information necessary to participate in school governance and decision-making. In many cases, a few people, often those who already wield power in the community, dominate the committee. Moreover, the SMC itself can become politicised, through direct

involvement of political leaders on the SMC, or through less direct political interference and influencing. This situation is made worse because of the social status of the head teacher. They might be the most educated person in the local area and held in high esteem, making it difficult for community members to challenge them or hold them to account. And the lack of SMC capacity can enable head teachers to further consolidate their position of dominance, creating a vicious cycle which further undermines SMCs.

Working with current committees to enable them to become representative, clear about their mandate, skilled and confident of their roles and able to function democratically is a key priority of a rights-based approach to education. An empowered SMC can enhance education quality at local level. If it is well grounded and representative it will enhance local ownership of education, making the right to, and rights in education a reality.

Levels of induction, training and support offered to SMCs differ greatly from country to

▶▶ The roles and responsibilities of school management committees and parent teacher associations differ greatly across national borders. Some countries have the legal provision for both institutions others only have one. In some places there may be no legal provision for any type of local school governance or management.

In general terms, **SMCs** have a role in school governance, in policy-making and budgetary allocations, they are usually a legal requirement, and have specific legislation guiding their make-up and function. They generally involve a range of people, including local community members, education officers, head teacher, parents and local government representatives. Many members will be formally elected. In some countries, children are also involved. They range from 3-15 members.

On the other hand **PTAs** tend to help with fundraising, run social events for parents and pupils, run clubs for extra-curricula activities and organise meetings to inform parents about education issues. In some countries (such as Kenya), PTAs have a legal status, but in many they are just a recommendation. They are a looser association of people interested in the school, and are not usually formally elected representatives. In many places other groups such as women's groups, church groups, village development committees and *Reflect* circles will play a similar role to that of the PTA – informally supporting local education initiatives. Ideally, there should be a relationship between the PTA and the SMC – with the PTA working to hold the SMC to account for its formal delivery functions, and the SMC working through the PTA to reach the wider community.

country. It should be the government that coordinates and provides such support, but in many places this simply is not happening. This section highlights a range of issues that should be discussed and included in any SMC capacity-building programme. It could be that the local organisation itself uses these ideas directly to train and support local SMCs, or that they are used indirectly as a basis for collaboration and negotiation with government to influence their capacity-building programmes. If they are used directly with SMCs it will be important to reflect on how to make this work sustainable, to influence the local government or district education office to take the programme forward. It will also be important to think through how wider advocacy and influencing work can help create more space for SMCs. So, in addition to building skills, attention needs to focus on ensuring that:

- There is sufficient legal mandate for SMCs;
- Key stakeholders are supportive of SMCs and enable them to participate effectively;
- SMCs are able to balance focus on their specific school with influencing wider debates on education policy (see 'Federating SMCs');
- SMCs have sufficient information, skills and links to fulfil their role and mandate.

### Understanding the mandate and role of the SMC:

As mentioned above, many SMCs are barely functioning. They may exist in name only, with two or three members of the local community meeting occasionally when asked to by the head teacher, and acting more as a school fundraising than governing body. They may have no access to school information or knowledge of their legal position or role. Even when the situation is not as dire as this, a common picture for SMCs around the world is limited participation and action, with a lack of skills and capacity to fulfil their role.

Understanding the mandate involves exploring where the SMC fits into the education system, looking at the powers it has and the limits to these powers. A first step is to access official documentation on SMCs. Depending on how the system is

Some of the functions an SMC may play:

- **Staff recruitment and management:** in many countries SMCs are responsible for selecting school heads and recruiting other teaching staff. There is debate as to whether this should be the SMC's role, or if they should play a more limited advisory role rather than direct management. This is especially important with regards to the appointment of non-professional teachers, which had become common practice in many areas and is clearly contradictory to a rights-based approach (see below for more on non-professional teachers).
- **Resources:** this includes non-personnel budget allocation, fundraising, planning and implementing specific school development initiatives.
- **Community links:** this takes a variety of forms, including awareness-raising on school activities, mobilising funds, and building relationships between teachers and the community
- **School environment:** this can involve choosing text books, looking at issues of pupil / teacher safety, some input into pedagogy / curriculum and extra-curricula activities, and monitoring school enrolment and retention.

designed, this might be available from the school itself, local government or the district education office. The official documentation should give information as to the make-up of the SMC as well as the functions it should play. In addition to understanding the legal role that the SMC should play, it will be important to analyse whether this role is appropriate and sufficient or if it should be changed at all – this could be through

## ACTIVITY

➤ An **Education System Diagram** can be used to explore the roles and relationships of an SMC. A systems diagram is a way of understanding how organisations and individuals link together, and the nature of their relationships (see example on page 32). The first stage is to map out the range of people and institutions that have a link to education; this includes the statutory bodies, NGOs, teachers, community members and school pupils.

Building on this mapping the group could look at where information flows well in the system, what types of power relations exist, where there are opportunities for influence by SMCs, where there are constraints, etc. Questions to help prompt discussion might include:

- What other groups of people influence our school management and decision-making? Who has most power?
- What decisions are made in education? Which of these can and do we make?
- Who do we get information from? Who do we give information to?
- Where does the school get money from?
- Who is involved in making school policy?
- Who decides what we do as an SMC? Do we have a legal role and responsibility?
- What is the relationship between the SMC and the wider community? Would we like anything to change? If so, how?
- How do we ensure that legal space is filled? Is the role we are given realistic? Do we have the skills to fulfil our role?
- Are we happy with the legal role, does it need to be changed?

Reflection on these questions could lead to specific action planning to change aspects of SMC functioning and practice.

redefining or expanding space. In a joint document including recommendations on various aspects of education, ActionAid International and Education International (the international federation of teachers' unions) recommend that school management committees should:

- Play a strong advisory role to head teachers and have clear links to district education authorities and school inspectorates. They should be empowered to register serious complaints against teachers (though not take disciplinary actions directly themselves).
- Have oversight of school budgets and be able to make recommendations about budget allocations (though not relating to salaries).
- Be active in strengthening relations with the local community, linking with PTAs and enabling parents to be involved in the life of the school, including mobilising parents to support teachers, and children, inside and outside the classroom.
- Be representative of all parents and actors in the local community (especially guaranteeing female participation), and have teachers' union representation.
- Be facilitated to develop district and national level platforms.

They also state that SMCs should not hire or fire teachers, or set salaries, as this should be the responsibility of national government.<sup>30</sup>

One outcome of a discussion on the role of the SMC could be identifying the need to access more information and training. This could include general education information (on education fees, timetables, policies, teacher:student ratios, etc.), as well as information relating to the school itself (school budget, enrolment, teacher qualifications). General information about government functioning, how to engage with government, open information policies, etc. may also be relevant here. See **Section Five** for more ideas on the sorts of information which would be useful.

<sup>30</sup> Education International and ActionAid International, 2006 (Draft) Parktonian Recommendations

Training might also focus on specific governance issues, such as budget management and organisational development, as well as on specific policy issues such as girls' education, and HIV and education.<sup>31</sup>

Other activities could be more outward focused, looking at how to extend or fill the SMC mandate. This could include lobbying government and other institutions to ensure that the SMC is able to operate effectively. It might also include linking to other SMCs locally, or up to district and national level to develop a wider movement. If there is no legal space for SMCs, local groups interested in education may come together to create demand for local school governance structures and systems (see Working with other groups, page 149).

### **Representation:**

Once an SMC is clear about the role it should be playing it will then be important to look at who is currently a member of the SMC, who they represent and whether there are any local groups which are not currently represented sufficiently. While there are is often legislation covering SMC make up and processes for selecting members (this is frequently a mixture between mandated positions which come with roles, such as education official and head teacher, and community members), this does not usually differentiate between different

## **EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE**

### **NEPAL**

Legislative changes to school governance models may be a necessary first step in including parents and community members in school management. However, community members are often not aware of their rights to participate, or do not have the confidence to participate. In Nepal, legislative changes in 2001 created more space for parents and communities to participate in the management of their local schools. Following this change, ActionAid worked with partner organisations to build the capacity of parents and communities to engage in school management. In addition, the chairs of the management committees of all the secondary and lower secondary schools of Saptari district were trained on their duties, rights and responsibilities. This involved 70 chairpersons, who were able to learn about education policies and how they are to be implemented at the school level.

groups existing in the community; thus representatives often include only relatively wealthy, male community members.

It is likely that two issues will need to be considered – firstly, who in the community should be represented in the committee; and secondly, how do we ensure regular attendance from official representatives (this could also give rise to discussions such as whether it is useful to have a meeting space without official representatives present, see below).

**Community representation:** This consists of looking at who is in the community, and then discussing whether and how to involve the diverse groups, with a particular focus on excluded groups. Categories will differ greatly from place to place, and are never ideal, but

## **EXAMPLES OF SMC MAKE UP**

In Bangladesh (1998) a typical SMC comprises three parents, a community leader and a teacher, while in Cambodia (1997) the SMC can include the cluster head, the village chief as honorary chair, head teachers of schools in the cluster, teacher representatives, PTA representatives, the head of the cluster technical committee and members of the clergy. *(Harvard; 2001).*

Local government officials are involved in Indonesia, Philippines, Ethiopia and Tanzania, amongst others. And in some countries (for example in Thailand, Ethiopia, South Africa, Tanzania, Argentina, Nicaragua and Peru) children will also be involved.

<sup>31</sup> Obondoh, Nandago and Otiende, 'Managing our schools today: A practical guide to participatory school governance' Pamoja, the Africa Reflect Network, 2005 provides a series of modules which can be used in training for school management committees. For copies contact Pamoja: pamoja@infocom.co.ug

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### KENYA

In Kenya, the school is viewed as an autonomous unit, each school has a budget, dependent on the number of pupils in the school, which is managed and administered by the SMC. The head teacher is responsible for day-to-day management of the school, but calls on the support of the DEO if there are staffing problems. The DEO is responsible for overseeing teaching quality in the zone.

The head teacher is the secretary of the SMC, which also consists of parent representatives and representatives from local businesses and CSOs. The frequency of SMC meetings varies from school to school, but each meeting is minuted, and the minutes are shared with the district education office. Through submitting minutes the SMC is able to withdraw cash to support the school running costs. The DEO meets directly with the SMC once a term, presides over the elections once a year, and offers a day training to newly elected SMC members. In this way the autonomy of the school is preserved, but support is available from the DEO as and when it is needed.

might include: gender, level of wealth, level of education, whether their children are in or out of school, position in the village, distance from school, occupation, religion, ethnicity, mother-tongue language and caste.

The SMC should not be closed to any group, and should actively ensure a balance of male and female representatives and representation from poorer segments of the community. However, it is also important to analyse whether the SMC is the most appropriate way for diverse groups to be involved. These decisions should be made based on an assessment of power dynamics in the community and the most appropriate

way to manage these. For example, it might be more empowering for the most marginalised groups to have their own space to discuss and analyse education issues, with an accountability structure which links them directly to the SMC, to ensure transparent and open information flows between the two groups. This is particularly important if there are many community members whose children are not in school; to look at why this might be, and ensure that SMC actions are not contributing to this exclusion.

*Official representation:* Most SMCs have members participating in official capacities –

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### MOZAMBIQUE

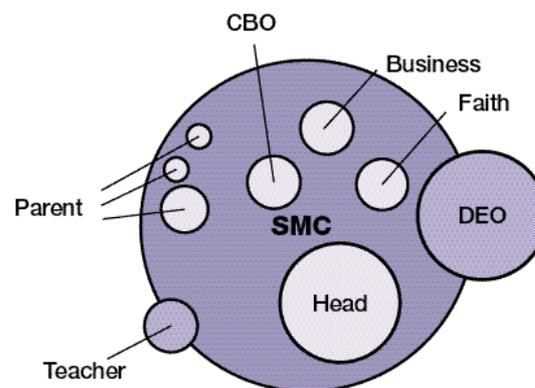
In Mozambique the law provides for the existence of a school council for every school, and while many schools have councils these are rarely operating democratically or with respect to the complex and important functions as laid out in the General Regulations for Basic Education Schools. Magariro, a national NGO, worked with local stakeholders to start a school council, and then develop an accountability process, to raise awareness of school governance and strengthen the performance of the school council. This process included monitoring annual plans and creating space for analysis and to report on progress. The school council reports to various different bodies (general assembly of the community; and executive committees on finance, gender, HIV/AIDS, etc.). Through this reporting system, links are built between the school council and other bodies, and the idea of accountability is developed. This has led to increased self-confidence among the members themselves as they are surer of their role and their ability to communicate to others. It has also resulted in a better use of resources as these are being scrutinised by more people. Moreover it has increased the levels of interaction between the school and the wider community, encouraging others to become involved in school activities.

including local education officials and other local government officers, head teachers and teachers' union members. Their presence is important to give the SMC its status, to ensure that relevant information is available to the SMC, and that decisions and recommended actions are taken seriously, that they have official backing. However, they can also be a constraining element – limiting the potential for open and democratic discussion in the SMC, because of unequal power relations. In addition, if the officials rarely turn up to meetings this can act as a block to decision-making, as the group may not be empowered, or feel empowered to move debates forward without official approval. Depending on the local context, you might want to set up a system where community SMC members have space for discussion before meetings with the wider group. Measures to increase official attendance could include monitoring their attendance and reporting this publicly, and to the relevant government official, on a quarterly basis. Another important issue is to ensure that any teacher on the SMC is a representative from the teachers' union, not just an individual teacher. This ensures that teachers' rights are represented more broadly.

### Functioning as a democratic group:

Bring any two people together and there is a power relationship. Unequal power relations within a group will affect a group's ability to work inclusively, or to value all voices equally. If the group is trying to enhance local school governance it is important that they provide a model of good governance that can be replicated. In addition, it is important that the traditionally quieter voices are heard as they are likely to bring in new and different perspectives. However, this does not mean that everyone should play the same role within a group – it can be helpful to assign specific roles and responsibilities, as this can make it easier for group members to hold each other to account.

It will be useful to do an explicit analysis of power relations in the group using a *Chapatti diagram*. This will be significant for both SMCs and community groups, where power relations outside the group will impact on how people relate to each other within the group.



A first stage is to decide what gives people power – and to identify certain categories which are important in the specific context. These might include gender, age, caste, educational background, literacy level and how an individual came to be part of the group (they might be elected or required to join as part of their job).

Group members should represent each individual with a circle. The size of the circle should relate to the amount of power that the individual has in this specific context. The reasons for this power may be represented by different colours. The circles should then be placed in relation to each other – with relative distance used to illustrate the connections between individuals. It might be useful to also include the school itself in this analysis – so the distance (physical or emotional) of individuals from the specific school can also be analysed.

A second stage of analysis could be to identify the different roles (chair, secretary, treasurer) or mandates (girls' education, teacher quality, increasing school accessibility) within the group. The power associated with each of these roles could be overlaid on the original diagram. If the roles have already been decided they might reinforce, or reduce an individual's power. If no roles have been decided, it might be useful to look at how specific designations could improve the current power balance. However, it is important to consider the skills needed to play the specific roles, and ensure that the person either has, or could develop, these skills, through specific training opportunities, for example on managing accounts for the treasurer. Roles may be job-shared, so that the different skills and perspectives are used across the group, and accountability mechanisms are inbuilt. This will

also contribute to building stronger relationships and trust across the group. Another option is to rotate the roles, in a way that provides some continuity for the group, but also supports the integration of new members into different positions of power.

▶ Every organisation has a lot to learn from a well-functioning group, based on the principles of equality. This local group might influence the way other local coalitions are organised, share information and take decisions.

## ACTIVITY

### ▶ Why have roles – and which roles to have?

All individuals have their strengths and weaknesses. Having a specific role enables an individual to play to their strength – and contributes to a group becoming more than just the sum of its parts. However, it is important to value all roles equally in order to ensure that no one is marginalised.

Which roles are important will depend on the local context, as well as legal requirements (in the case of SMCs). The following questions will help in deciding which roles to use:

- What is the aim of our group?
- What are the local issues around education?
- What roles are important to help us achieve this aim?
- What are the legally mandated roles we are supposed to have? Do we agree with these roles?
- Are there additional roles we would like to include?
- What skills do we have between us? What are we good at doing?
- What external support should we look for to help us achieve our aim?

## REFLECT & ANALYSE

▶ It can be very helpful to reflect on, and expose, current power relations as a basis for constructing a more positive dynamic. There are various tools which can be used to help a group function more democratically. These may involve monitoring contributions in meetings: using symbols to represent length of intervention, whether the intervention opened up or closed down debate, and perhaps classifying participants in terms of age, gender, education level, etc. A further exercise involves controlling contributions – with each group member being given three objects, and having to forfeit one each time they speak, or using an ‘empowered object’ that has to be held if you want to speak. Other useful tools are ones that promote reflection. For example, each participant is given a role to play, such as dominator, saboteur, bored, etc., and within the discussion they have to play this role. At the end people try to guess who was playing which role, and analyse the impact of the role on the group. This can be further explored using a series of listening exercises, to experience how it feels to be listened to, or ignored. Based on these exercises the group might develop a series of ground rules which guide how they will work together, and respect each other.

### Linking to other education stakeholders:

A school management committee needs to link with a range of different stakeholders, including school staff, local government and the district education office, and the wider community and other community groups. The reasons for linking to the different groups, as well as the power dynamics likely to arise, will differ depending on the context. This section looks at the three major groups that the SMC is likely to link with, and some of the issues which might arise.

### **Local government or district education office**

The relationship with the government is likely to be a formal one. In many countries the school management committee is expected to submit meeting minutes to the local government (LG) or district education office (DEO), who are also the body to approach if there are any problems in the school (with the infrastructure, learning materials or teachers) or if there are any specific ideas for school development. The LG/DEO may be the body that provides training to the SMC, and which distributes materials or funding for the school's operational costs. This relationship can be quite one-sided, with the LG/DEO making demands on the SMC, while not necessarily fulfilling its own roles and responsibilities.

This suggests three areas of work:

1. **Being clear about the expectations and accountabilities** the SMC has vis-à-vis the LG/DEO. Do they have to submit quarterly reports? Is there a zonal supervisor who should be visiting the school? What are the procedures if the SMC needs to make a complaint about a member of staff? Can the SMC expect training and support from the DEO? How can the SMC input into LG/DEO education policy setting? What information should be flowing from the LG/DEO to the SMC? etc.
2. **Rehearsing for reality:** if there are difficult power dynamics between the SMC and the government body it can be useful for SMC members to role play specific situations, before meeting with the LG/DEO. This can help to build confidence in communication, so that the SMC members are able to share any issues they want to raise.
3. **Developing advocacy and building relationships:** often the SMC is the body which understands the local context best, and knows what is needed to make education for all a reality. However, they may not have the power to bring about this transformation, which should be coordinated through the government. This means the relationship should go beyond just submitting reports to actually sharing innovative ideas and influencing education policy. This requires

targeted advocacy and relationship building – so that space is created to share ideas and the SMC is taken seriously. Activities might involve inviting the LG/DEO to specific committee meetings, presenting ideas for school development through a variety of media, or linking up with other SMCs or local education groups to strengthen advocacy potential (see below).

### **Head teacher and other teaching and non-teaching staff**

The relationship with the school staff is key to a successfully functioning SMC. While the committee is responsible for supporting the school to develop and providing strategic direction, this must be done in collaboration with teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure that there is ownership and that the school context is properly understood. A collaborative relationship with the school will strengthen education quality, aid understanding between the school and community, and should be beneficial for the wider community.

Key areas for work include:

- Ensuring that the **head teacher plays a positive role** with the SMC, is not domineering and shares relevant information with the committee. It is also important that the SMC recognise that the head teacher may not represent all the views of the other staff, and create opportunities for others to attend SMC meetings and access meeting minutes.
- Working together to **build positive relationships:** in addition to potential domination by the head teacher, relationship difficulties may occur because of distrust of the SMC motivation or functioning. It is important that open and transparent relations are built. One way to do this is to use role play, with SMC members playing the roles of school staff and school staff taking on SMC roles, in order to share their perceptions of each other. This enables groups to share worries and perceptions of each other in a



Kate Holt / EyeLine / ActionAid

relaxed and enjoyable environment; from this basis people can discuss how to build a collaborative relationship built on mutual respect and trust.

- **Developing systems** to ensure that the SMC is able to fulfil its function of managing the school. This includes preventing possible corruption, abuse of position or bad-practice in the school. It is also important that there are systems to support free flows of information between the SMC and the school, and that decisions and processes are open and transparent. The SMC might work with the school staff to develop a charter, stating what they will and will not do and developing guiding principles for their work.

As part of this work it is also important that SMCs link with teachers' unions (see page 151).

### **Community and community groups**

Schools are often a place of mystery, with community members feeling that they have no control over what goes on within the school walls. The SMC can play a transformatory role in developing school–community links and building ownership of the school across the community. Key here is for the local community to feel empowered and able to work effectively with the SMC. You may need to spend some time working with the local community so that they feel confident in their role. This involves:

- **Developing transparency and accountability systems:** to ensure that the SMC shares its meeting agendas (enabling the wider community to input into issues for discussion) as well as minutes and records of decision-making. This could be done through public notice boards, community meetings or through visits to other community groups. There should also be annual or biannual meetings where community members are able to actively participate, as well as opportunities for the community to elect their SMC representatives, and challenge them if they are not performing effectively.
- **Facilitating links between the school and community:** through encouraging parent-teacher events, and opportunities for parents to enter the school during the school day, to be involved in specific classes as appropriate. The SMC may also work with the school and community to look at extending the school usage – through becoming a resource centre for locally produced materials, information from local government, library books, newspapers etc. which could be accessed by the wider community; through supporting the documentation of local knowledge (see Section Five); or for adult learning processes, etc.
- **Involving the local community in strengthening education:** this involves looking at issues of enrolment and retention and working with local families to enable and encourage them to send their children to school, carrying out home visits when children drop out of school, or attend very irregularly, exploring the blockages and developing strategies to increase access. It may also involve initiating education campaigns and targeted advocacy, in collaboration with the school and the wider community, to pressurise government to invest in achieving education for all, or to introduce a more appropriate curriculum.

## Federating SMCs

A well functioning SMC is a key local organisation in terms of providing local links and generating local evidence for education campaigning at all levels. However, SMCs often exist in isolation, with little contact with other schools or groups focusing on education, and with few links with their peers in other parts of the district or country.

Federating SMCs can be useful on many levels:

- To provide space for peer exchange and support, to strengthen the functioning of SMCs and share innovations and experiences;
- To build a district-level forum with power and influence to link to the DEO and influence education policy, presenting a coordinated response from schools across the district
- To create a district-level body which can play an intermediary role between national coalitions and the grassroots, ensuring good information flows in both directions, and that local voices are heard nationally.

► Federations of SMCs or PTAs exist in many francophone West African countries. Unfortunately, these tend to be controlled by government, and are frequently used by the government for political purposes, rather than as spaces to strengthen civil society participation in education. The ideas suggested here are for federated SMCs controlled by the members themselves, and driven by their needs and aspirations. When creating a federation of SMCs, it may be useful to draw on the ideas and questions for developing an education coalition (see page 160).



Sophia Elaris / NB Pictures / ActionAid

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### KENYA

PTAs in Kenya currently have no legal backing, their roles are undefined and they have little impact in the management of education. Although parents and teachers are regarded as key stakeholders and implementers of government policies and programmes at the grassroots level, they are not consulted when crucial educational policies are being designed. However, they have the potential to be very powerful because of their grassroots knowledge.

The Kenya National Association of Parents (KNAP) was set up as a National PTA, with the specific objective of bringing together parents and teachers through their respective PTAs to have a voice in the design and formulation of educational policies at various levels. Over 3,600 PTAs in over 33 districts have joined KNAP. The main aim has been to come together and create a sustainable organisational structure through which local and national issues and concerns can be channelled. It is hoped that through KNAP, PTAs will strengthen their collective voice and influence policy.

## Working with children

Children are rarely included in decisions regarding their education. There are few channels to get their voices heard. However, there is lots of potential within school structures for children to exercise their rights, and be involved actively as ‘citizens’ in their school, experiencing democracy in action. This will not only strengthen their involvement in the school, but will also make it more likely that they will participate in other spaces and be active citizens in the future.

Here are three key ways to ensure that children actively participate in discussions about their education (and see **Section Five** for further ideas):

### Children’s rights clubs:

In many countries, teachers are supported to develop a range of clubs, with specific time created in the curriculum for these different sorts of learning activities. These might include sport, music and crafts clubs – or children’s rights clubs.

Key to a successful children’s rights club is having a good facilitator, or a teacher who is supportive of the process. It can be useful to link to teachers’ training colleges and ask to run specific sessions on children’s rights, and the running of children’s rights clubs. This might include discussions on the Convention of the Rights of the Child, as well as the use of some alternative participatory pedagogies (see **Section Five**).

In **Uganda**, volunteer teachers from the community were supported to go into secondary schools and develop School Knowledge Groups. These groups operated on a voluntary basis in secondary schools, with young people deciding whether to attend the groups during their lunch hour. The groups had two main functions. Firstly, they would discuss issues currently occurring in the school – sharing their experiences of being students as well as looking at any problems or good innovations which were occurring. Secondly, they would look at local and national newspapers and pick relevant

issues to discuss and debate within their groups. These might relate to children’s rights, new legislation, current affairs, international affairs, etc. The young people would discuss and analyse the issue from their perspectives, deciding to do more research on particular topics, sharing information with other pupils, or following a specific issue over the course of a week (or longer, in the case of the Ugandan general elections). Through accessing information and debating issues, those involved began to recognise that they had a right to an opinion on current issues, and that they could take action.

In **Ethiopia**, children’s rights clubs were established in primary schools. These clubs looked at issues of rights and responsibilities, and the children involved developed a set of laws or principles to guide their functioning. The members of the clubs played a role in encouraging other children in the school to act responsibly – looking at a range of issues from violence against girls, to wearing of school uniforms, to school and community development. The key was that the actions were child-led and the children were able to work as peer educators, communicating directly with their peers.

### Student councils:

A slightly different approach is to develop student councils which meet regularly and discuss a range of issues relating to school management and priorities. These councils may look at issues such as school environment and use of space, children’s involvement in rule making as well as discussing ideas for school development, special events and activity days, and dealing with issues as they arise in the school. In some places it can be useful to link the student council meeting to the SMC meeting, for example the student council meets prior to the SMC, but then is given space to report their discussions and conclusions to the SMC. If this happens it is important that accountability mechanisms are built in so that the SMC reports back what they did with the recommendations to the student council. Alternatively, the student council could report

## ACTIVITY

### ► Supporting children's reflection and action on their education:

One way to get children thinking about their education is to ask them to model their **Ideal School**, using locally available material – sticks, stones, mud, wood, cardboard, beans, etc. Children should be encouraged to discuss among themselves the following questions:

- What would I like my school to look like (physically – classroom, toilets, playground, sports facilities, etc.)?
- What would I want to have in my school (books, teachers, friends, etc.)?
- What lessons would I have?
- What should the classrooms look like? How big are they? How many pupils are there?
- What would happen in my ideal school?
- How is this school different from my current school?

Working in small groups, they could then create a model to show this ideal school. It might be a realistic model, or an impressionistic one. The children could then present their models to each other – and perhaps create a new model which is a mixture of the group work. Depending on the skills and interest of the children, they could write some accompanying notes to go with their model, or they could be invited to present their model to the SMC (or PTA, community group, or local government / DEO). They might prioritise the key steps needed to bring their school closer to the ideal.

A second activity could be to ask children to draw their **Rivers of School Experience**. Asking them to think back from when they first started school – and think about the following questions:

- How did I feel when I started school?
- Has that feeling changed over time? How?
- What key events (personal or for the whole community) have happened since I started school? How did they affect me?
- What is my favourite thing about school?
- What don't I like / didn't I like about school?
- What has made me unhappy/ frightened?
- Have I ever avoided going to school? Why?
- Has the school itself changed since I started? How?
- Has the school / class size grown or shrunk over time?
- How does school link to my life outside school?
- Where do I think / hope my river will flow...?

There is value to doing this exercise individually (either using locally found materials, or on paper), and then asking the children to share their rivers. This will enable them to look at whether there were common events that affected the whole school, and what type of events these were. From a discussion of this, and other issues which arise from the rivers the children should be able to come up with a list of reflections on the current state of their school, and recommendations of what they would like to see happen.

to the wider school assembly, sharing the nature of their discussions and involving the wider student body in decision-making. Student councils could follow a similar process to the SMCs in clarifying their roles, mandate and ways of functioning, as well as how they will relate to the diverse stakeholders.

### **Involving children in education campaigning and action:**

National and international celebration days can be a great way to publicise issues on education, providing a unifying call to action across the country. For example in **Ghana**, GNECC commemorated the International Child Rights Day in 2005 by organising a series of high profile campaigns activities across the country. The activities included a press conference aired by all major radio stations and carried by all major newspapers in the country. Children presented special messages to the President and the people of Ghana. By running so many different activities simultaneously, GNECC were able to achieve great media attention and public interest in education issues.

In 2005 in **Mozambique**, the nation's education coalition, MAGARIRO, focused on a range of activities involving children, including those out of school. The children marched in public places, carrying banners with various messages and singing songs about the problems of education:

*'This year we took part in a march alongside other children and we asked for more schools, school furniture, teachers, uniform and light meals for all the district's children, particularly at our school, for at our school there are some children sitting on the floor in class. These children will get their clothes dirty every day, and this is sad. To this date our requests have not been met, for this reason we would like to continue with the actions aimed at getting quality education for all that meets our needs, to have schools with good facilities where we can study and play properly.'*

Delfina Rufino Cossa, a Grade 4 pupil.

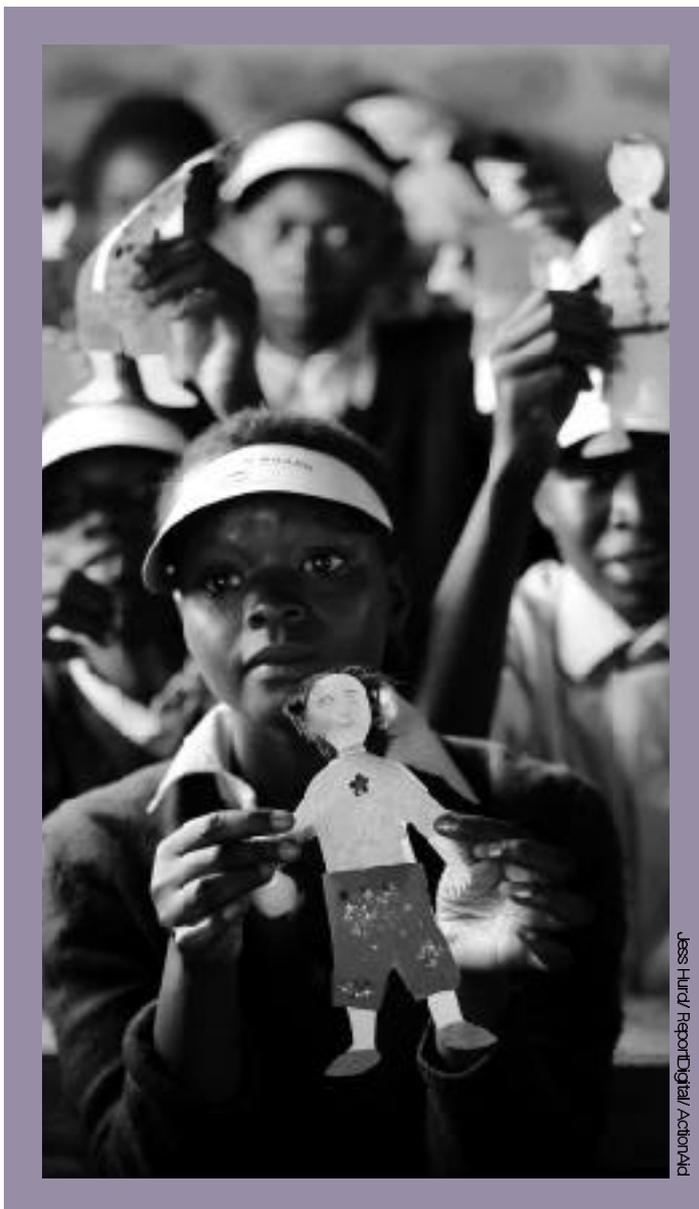


The Global Week of Action is an annual event coordinated by the Global Campaign for Education (a coalition which was formed in 2000 and now has membership in over 100 countries). During the Global Week of Action, which occurs each April, civil society organises various stakeholders from national to the grassroots level to campaign on the right to education for all people — old and young, rich and poor, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality and ability. In 2003, over two million people in 70 countries took part in a world record-breaking Biggest Lesson, which focused on girls' education. In 2004, the focus was on the world's Biggest Lobby, where again two million people lobbied heads of states, dignitaries and officials, with letters, debates and face-to-face meetings. In some countries, children took over the national legislature or parliament for the day, in others, MPs went back to school and were presented with evidence as to why children are not able to go to school. In 2005, the GCE mobilised an unprecedented five million people to put pressure on governments and the international community to Educate All to End Poverty. While in 2006, the focus was on Every Child Needs a Teacher. Children, campaigners, parents and teachers put together dossiers on the case for teachers, officials went back to school and were presented with these dossiers, and Big Hearings took place. Here children and campaigners took over court rooms, government or official buildings and invited education officials, celebrities and the media to mock trials where the case for teachers was presented<sup>21</sup>. The Global Weeks of Action are a great way to involve children in campaigning on their right to education, as the examples illustrate.

<sup>21</sup> More information on the GCE and the Global Week of Action is available at [www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org). The 2007 GWA focuses on *Education as a Human Right*.

Activities related to the 2005 Global Week of Action in Ethiopia were equally impressive. Some 5,000 children from 200 schools from across the country spoke to politicians and policy makers, urging them to address the issues keeping millions of children out of school. Campaigners marched through cities wearing t-shirts and carrying placards that read, 'Educate to End Poverty' and 'Please Send My Friend to School'. Children had face-to-face question and answer sessions with politicians in their regional capitals. Even the presidential palace in Addis Ababa opened its doors to the child campaigners. The GWA activities were aired on radio and television. To ensure maximum reach, flyers, posters, banners and other publications were distributed in six languages; Amharic, Oromifa, Somali, Afar, Tigrigna and English.

In 2006 in Brazil, vast numbers of children, teachers and campaigners discussed what an 'ideal teacher' would actually mean. Teachers in Brazil are among the worst paid in Latin America, the majority are women and they are shown little respect. The campaign focused on the slogan 'In education, we don't improvise, we invest'. During the GWA, campaigners got daily radio coverage, sharing teachers' stories. At the national 'Big Hearing' a lesson was given on why public spending on education needs to be increased. The President himself came to listen to the evidence. At the same time in the USA, the 'Big Hearing' was conducted at the US Congress, bringing young people from the USA together with former child labourers from India, Mexico and Columbia. The young people joined hands and gave facts and personal testimonies to the members of Congress on the need for all children to go to school. While in India, 20,000 children painted pictures of teachers, acted in street plays, debated and signed petitions, to raise awareness of the lack of teachers. Children put their case for teachers to policy makers and legal experts, with some of the most powerful evidence coming from children who had been denied an education.



Jess Hurd/ReportDigital/ActionAid

## Working with other groups

### Strengthening SMCs or creating alternative committees?

The decision either to work with the SMC or create alternative groups will depend on the local context, and should be made considering the potential of the SMC to become representative, democratic and accountable. The following experience from Bangladesh illustrates some of the advantages and disadvantages of creating alternative groups.

In Bangladesh the decision was made to form 'school planning committees' involving teachers, SMC members, guardians, PTA members and Union Parishad (local government) members, i.e. extending beyond the traditional SMC because:

*'After talking to the SMC members of Shibram School, I had a feeling that we are SMC members by name only. Most of us lack definite concept on our roles and responsibilities.'*

(SMC member in Bhola, Bangladesh).

The committees were supported to use a participatory process to develop their school plans – to develop a vision of their dream school and then plan how to reach the vision. As part of this process, the committees were also given the opportunity to visit other schools which were considered to provide good quality education. The planning process considered parental involvement as well as how to ensure the participation of other stakeholders. In addition, links were

### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## KARNATAKA, INDIA

In Karnataka, India, School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMC) were set up to challenge the domination of officials and higher castes in the village education committees. According to one primary school teacher, *'the VEC were not parents and were quite arrogant and were composed only of people who were powerful'*.

The SDMC consists of the nine elected members of the parents' council (three women, two members of the school committee, one from a minority background, and three others) as well as local Panchayat members, a teacher, health-worker, head teacher, school benefactors and two students. Members are trained by the Centre for the Child and the Law (CCL), with the support of the government of Karnataka. Law students have helped to develop by-laws (currently still under discussion) to gain legal recognition for the SDMC; and develop information dissemination systems to ensure state-level information was reaching the SDMC.

It was important to keep the state involved in the programme. However, a fine balance was needed – so that the groups could work with the state when it was being supportive and challenge it when it was not. Individual SDMCs were also linked to the SDMC coordination forum (which included NGO representatives and the SDMC presidents) this was important for connections at state levels and to provide a stronger voice. Various factions attempted to undermine the SDMCs, and CCL used the media to combat those attempting to politicise the committees. Continual work is being done to protect the space for the SDMCs to operate effectively.

There is still a range of issues facing the SDMCs, especially as training was only given to the president who was not necessarily democratically elected. However, there are also concrete impacts; improved local accountability, financial management, and parental involvement, as well as more active links with the state government. The relationship between the committees and the teachers has also improved; *'The teachers are calling the SDMC members to the school themselves.'*

developed with the local media who played a significant role in exposing corruption (for example publicising a common practice in Chittagong Hill Tracts of teachers employing substitutes to go and teach on their behalf).

The project has been largely successful in stimulating SMCs to fulfil their role, and in improving information flows between the school, parents and guardians. Communities are now playing a wider role in monitoring the school, and this has increased the punctuality of teachers as well as the quality of education in schools. However, the project was not without its difficulties. There was considerable tension between the school planning committees and the SMCs, and the project coordinators wonder whether it would have been better to work directly with the formal structure (i.e. the SMC) rather than create an alternative. Reflections on the challenges faced also suggest that there should have been more active links to the government, pressurising official bodies to increase fund allocations to schools, to overcome problems of lack of teachers, poor infrastructure, and electricity access. Because the links were not there the development plans ended up passing on more costs to parents, who could ill-afford additional contributions to their child's education. If the project had focused on

strengthening the SMCs directly, it may have had more access to and support from the government, and avoided passing on costs to parents.

### **Creating groups:**

It is not always possible to work with an SMC and if there is no other appropriate local group, a new group might need to be created. This group might represent a particular minority or excluded group (such as people with disabilities) or a cross-section of groups who are currently under-represented in community structures. This group might act as a watch-dog, monitoring the formal education structures and holding them to account, or it may be a discussion forum, exploring issues of education and looking at how to influence the formal system to respond to the group's needs. It will be useful to follow some of the exercises outlined above in relation to SMCs to decide on the group's position, role, process, etc. It will also be important to look at issues such as formal recognition for the group, and potential links and involvement of official personnel. If this is well negotiated at the beginning of a process, it is more likely that the group will be supported and taken seriously.



David San Millan / ActionAid

**Identifying other groups:**

Early on in the process of looking at local education issues it will be important to map out which groups exist locally, and what their connection to education is. This will involve the standard PTA and SMC, as well as mothers' groups, youth groups, village development committees, etc. It will be important to look at what connections the groups have with education currently, and whether and how they would like to extend these connections. It will also be important to look at how representative and democratic these groups are. Do they provide a positive alternative to working with the SMC? Or are they even more dominated by specific interests and powerful people? How are they linked to excluded and marginalised groups? Finally it will be important to understand the type of space occupied by the groups. Do they have a specific role and mandate? Do they wield any power locally? Do they have formal recognition? etc.

**Working with teachers' unions locally:**

Working with teachers' unions is key to transforming education. In the past teachers' concerns, especially those relating to their conditions of service, have been viewed separately from concerns about access to quality education. But teachers are the key ingredient for quality education. If they are well trained, supported and paid (and committed to education) they provide the best chance children have of accessing empowering transformatory education. Unfortunately, teachers are often poorly supported and isolated. They may not have access to the training or teaching equipment they need, they may have to deal with classes of 60 or more pupils, and may be excluded from any decision-making about school management or education policy. Building links with teachers and teachers' unions is therefore crucial to bring their voices, knowledge and experience into education management and governance. If they feel ownership and involvement in the system, they are also more likely to perform well and be accountable.

**EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE**

**ORISSA, INDIA**

In Orissa, India NGOs worked with the local teachers' union in the campaign to revitalise public primary schools. This involved a range of activities, including the active participation of NGOs in the celebration of 2005 World Teachers' Day. The day was marked by the release of a document called '*School Education in Orissa –the sacrificial lamb for fiscal reform in the state of Orissa*'. The publication of this serious policy paper was accompanied by a range of more accessible materials, shared among a wide range of audiences on the status of education in Orissa, present budgetary provisions and shortfalls. The partnership was instrumental in both the public mobilisation and putting pressure on government for more budgetary allocations to education.

Historically, there has been some tension between teachers and NGOs, not least because of the role of NGOs in promoting non-formal education and using unqualified, voluntary teachers. This practice contributes to undermining the teaching profession, as well as teachers' unions. It impacts on teachers' ability to organise around their conditions of service, or to demand appropriate training and salaries to be able to perform their job properly.

These bad conditions of service have impacted severely on teacher status and teaching quality. Unfortunately, there are many examples where teachers are not performing effectively. This might be because of need to take on a second job to be able to survive, or because they are expected to take on so many duties outside the school (teachers are frequently required to take on the roles of government officials, such as carrying out census; or may need to travel to the capital city to collect their salaries, etc.) because they

have not had access to good quality training or are not professional teachers or because they have little interest in the profession, no support and do not want to be posted in marginalised rural areas. This has often led NGOs (and parents and communities) to criticise teachers. This difficult history means that a lot of investment needs to be made to build a relationship of trust between NGOs and teachers' unions.

Working together is not simple, not only because of the historical tensions but also because NGOs and teachers' unions differ extensively in how they are structured and function. For example, while teachers' unions are accountable to their constitution and membership, NGOs refer to their strategy, action plan, funders and beneficiaries. However, if this relationship can be made to function huge gains can be made for quality education. Both groups share similar objectives and by working together can strengthen the case for quality education.

Calling a series of meetings to develop trust between local groups and local teachers may be an important starting point, looking at where there is interest in common and identifying concrete actions to collaborate on. This could involve meetings with local branches of teachers' unions and teacher training colleges to look at how training (initial or in-service) could integrate participatory and human rights-based education approaches, as well as looking at how para-teachers can be supported to become professional teachers (see **Section Five**).

Other initiatives involve linking teachers more systematically into the SMC and other local education bodies. Often only the head teacher is included in these decision-making fora, and other teaching staff are largely unrepresented. Establishing communication systems as well as opportunities to share in decision-making are needed to ensure the teachers' perspective is heard. Moreover, SMCs and teachers will be fighting for similar objectives; to improve the quality of education. By uniting, their voice can be strengthened.

A further local link is with the teachers' unions or teachers' forum which may exist at district level. These provide a good meeting space to exchange views and share experiences at a district level, and are likely to be structured in a way which enables links with the district education office or local government. This provides a framework by which to collaborate across schools, SMCs, or other local education groups beyond the village or neighbourhood level – perhaps by holding meetings on the same day and encouraging cross-representation at the meetings. Or working jointly on actions to approach the district government and influence education policy and investment. All relationships should be developed valuing the alternative perspectives, and looking at ways they can learn from each other.

There are also many ways to strengthen connections with teachers and teachers' unions nationally; these are covered in the national section below.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### PAKISTAN

In Pakistan unions are banned in some provinces of the country, teachers do not have a platform from which to raise their voices. To overcome this ActionAid Pakistan held teachers' assemblies across many regions of the country. These assemblies brought together teachers with other education stakeholders, to look at issues of teachers' rights and quality education. Discussions in the assemblies focused on a range of issues including the problem of para or non-professional teachers, how to integrate human rights education into the school curriculum and issues of child development. The assemblies have proved to be a very effective way of bringing together the range of education stakeholders to discuss key issues in education. For example in Sanghar Province over 100 people attended the assembly, including teachers, journalists, students, parents, NGOs and the Executive District Education Officer. The group openly criticised the government for the lack of investment in education, and particularly the lack of support to teachers. Following the assembly, the District Education Officer announced the establishment of a committee to monitor the local schools. This committee is to look at the conditions in schools, the state of the facilities as well as ghost schools (where the school does not exist but the teacher continues to be paid). The committee will report back to the district education officer himself. This example shows the power of uniting across a range of education stakeholders to influence local education provision.



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

# District level

Sometimes the gap between national level and local level is too big for effective links to be made, and it is important to focus on district level as an intermediary body. In addition, depending on the level of decentralisation, many decisions regarding education policy and resourcing may be made at district level. The government at this level is an important target for advocacy and collaboration.

Work at the district level has three elements:

1. As a **space for sharing** – to bring together people who are working on local education issues to share ideas and experiences, and to access information on district-level activities, policies and opportunities which could be linked to strengthen local work.
2. As a space for **lobbying and advocacy** – to link directly with district assemblies, DEOs or district government and work with them to improve education in the region. This could include sharing locally-generated research on the state of education, scaling up local initiatives, influencing budget allocations and tracking expenditure, and offering training opportunities to district government.
3. As a space for **influencing the national level** – as well as accessing information from the national level the district forum can be a space to compile local information and ideas which can then be used for national campaigning and advocacy work. Through meeting at district level, education groups may develop specific research initiatives to generate information for cross-regional comparisons, or examine the impact of particular policies across the district. This can then be used at national level, ensuring that local voices are heard.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### GHANA

In Ghana, District Education for All Teams (DEFAT) have been developed to lobby district assemblies on education issues, as well as influencing local opinion leaders and traditional rulers to abolish practices which exclude children, especially girls and disabled children, from their right to education. They aim to create awareness and canvass support for the EFA goals, track education resources, and to influence the planning and implementation of district education plans.

DEFATs have between 10-13 members and include NGOs, CBOs, student associations, trade unions, women's groups, media, traditional authorities, religious bodies, local council members and parent teacher associations. They have been trained on a number of issues, including using participatory approaches to map out children missing from education, interacting with the community, and lobbying and advocacy strategies. So far DEFAT members include only those who have received a high level of education, there are plans to transform this in the future, to encourage more participation from the community and non-literate groups.

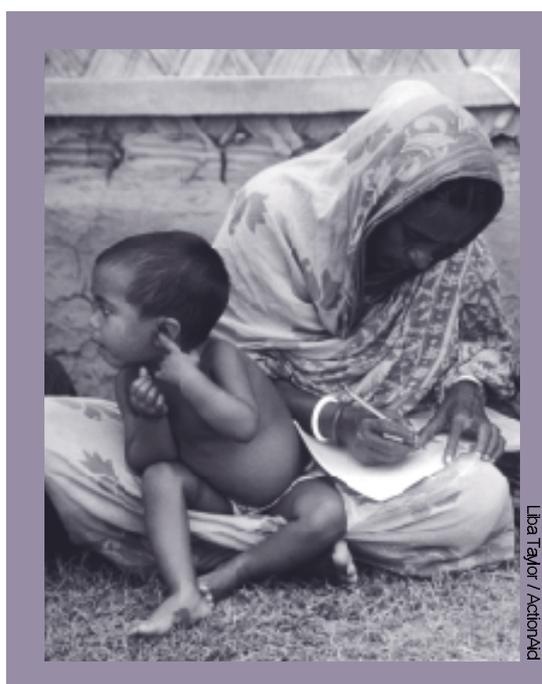
EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## NAGALAND, INDIA

In Nagaland, **India**, the Nagaland Communitisation of Public Institutions and Services Act was passed in March 2002. This act delegated powers and functions held by the state government to the local authorities. Village Education Committees (involving teachers, parents, and representatives from NGOs, faith groups and the village council) were given the power to manage the schools. To support this initiative, ActionAid India set up a state-level resource and learning centre to support the government to:

- Implement the communitisation process;
- Carry out research on elementary education, and develop interventions for inclusive education;
- Monitor and evaluate interventions;
- Develop guidelines on the role of communities, and raise awareness of the process at local level.

The centre also provided a five-day teacher training course, to encourage teachers to think through how to involve parents, as well as linking directly at community level to explore the role they could play in school infrastructure management, monitoring of education and participation in teaching-learning processes (see **Section Five**). Although there were some challenges (such as tensions between the pace of work of the state and the resource centre, which has made institutionalisation of the process difficult), there have been many successes – including a restoration of faith in the government schools, and active involvement of mothers and a liberation of teachers – who now see their role as active participants in education.



Lisa Taylor / ActionAid

# National level

Work at the national level involves collaboration across a range of different civil society organisations, which are campaigning for rights, including the right to education. This work is about linking to the government, influencing it to place education high on the political agenda, and supporting it with the skills and ideas to achieve education for all. It is also about monitoring government performance, and holding it to account, to ensure that the right to education is not undermined by mismanagement or bad decision-making.

Research, analysis and relationship building underpin much of this work. To be effective at campaigning and influencing work, those involved need to be clear about what they are asking for, and knowledgeable about the political climate and who they should be engaging with. There are many ways to influence the government – and direct collaboration and influence from within needs to be balanced with public awareness-raising and mobilisation, and influencing the range of civil society actors who will be able to increase the pressure on government. This might be through one-off events which attract media publicity, or through ongoing research and analysis, or through developing relationships of trust and information sharing. Those involved will need to decide which approach is most appropriate, given national culture, the political climate and specific opportunities.

The nature of work at this level requires collaboration across many different types of organisations. As such, the main focus of this sub-section is on developing education coalitions. This is followed with some brief ideas for lobbying, awareness raising and influencing; and then an exploration of two types of civil society actor who are not always involved in education coalitions; teachers' unions and social movements.

## Coalitions involving a range of organisations:

It can be very powerful to work with a cross section of different types of organisations. This can be useful in two ways. Firstly, it will increase the numbers of people working together on a particular issue, engendering collaboration rather than competition between different groups. Secondly, if a diverse group of people are raising the same issue they are more likely to be listened to. Having a cross-section of different interest groups can give more objective value to what is being said, and mean that those hearing the message are likely to be more convinced by its accurateness and legitimacy. These types of coalitions can unite unlikely allies and bridge essential gaps.

### EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

In **Mozambique**, 63 local, national and international NGOs, faith-based organisations and independent individuals working in education decided to come together in 1999 to form the Movement for Education for All (MEPT). Membership was also thrown open to the media, academic and research institutions. To engage with the education sector, the network drew up a work plan and made contacts with a number of organisations and institutions that are important players in education such as the teachers' union.

In **Malawi** collaboration was taken one step further, with the launching of the NGO-Government Alliance on Basic Education. However, civil society still preserves its own space, away from the government, through the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education.

In **Ghana**, GNECC includes the Ministry of Education, regional coalitions, policy makers; faith based organisations, the mass media and traditional leaders as well as NGOs.

## Education coalitions

A coalition is a group of individuals and organisations which decide to work together on a common issue or set of issues, '*working together enables members to speak with a stronger voice.*'<sup>32</sup> Coalitions serve an advocacy function, as well as providing space for sharing information. The organisations may be local, national or international; they may be NGOs, CBOs or other civil society groups such as teachers' unions, women's movements, PLWHA, etc. A coalition might also include academic institutions and the media, and in some cases the government, although this might change the nature of the coalition (as it will be much more difficult to criticise government actions). Coalitions of organisations working on education exist in different forms in many countries, as well as at regional and international levels.

When effective, coalitions bring together the skills, resources, energies, contacts and influence of their members. But when ineffective they can drain energy and resources, exacerbate institutional and personal rivalries and conflicts, and limit flexibility and initiative. Working with others is not always an easy process. Different organisations have different priorities and ways of working, as well as their own decision-making procedures and accountability structures. It is important to get the process right at the beginning as this will create the basis from which all other work can take place. This section explores the value of coalitions, and outlines some of the issues you will need to consider when working in coalitions.

**Why coalitions?** As stressed in the introduction, a human-rights approach requires a different way of working. Historically, the external context (especially funding and interest in maintaining a clear public profile) and internal prioritising have meant that NGOs have often worked in competition with each other, struggling to secure tenders and service-delivery contracts.

▶▶ In a recent review of education coalitions in 17 countries, commissioned by the Commonwealth Education Fund, it was found that coalitions are favoured by government and donors as well as civil society. In many contexts bilateral donors have stimulated the building of coalitions through their funding structures, while governments frequently find it easier to engage with one voice, and therefore would rather work with coalitions.

Unfortunately, this means that many coalitions are externally driven, with members of the coalitions having very mixed motivations for joining, which might relate to individual or organisational gain, rather than a shared vision and interest in collaborative working. Such externally motivated coalitions can be very weak, with members focusing on activities rather than targets, and with activities driven by funders rather than coalition members. In extreme cases, this can lead to coalitions carrying out a series of activities which are unconnected and not followed through – for example carrying out budget tracking without advocacy, or arranging meetings with policy makers with no clear agenda. The situation worsens when a coalition becomes a funding body, with the secretariat coordinating funding to be distributed among members. Here the dynamics of a coalition are distorted considerably, with the secretariat becoming accountable to funders, and managing the members, rather than responding to the members' needs and priorities. The coalition is no longer representative; it could lose its legitimacy and reason for being.

This picture is contrasted with internally-driven coalitions, which emerge because of a specific vision and purpose, and grow organically out of common interest, have clearly defined goals, do not have donors or INGOs as members (as their funding will subvert the purpose and agenda) and are accountable to their members.

*Tomlinson and Macpherson,  
'Driving the Bus' (2007).*

<sup>32</sup> K. Tomlinson and I. Macpherson, *Driving the Bus: the Journey of National Education Coalitions*, (London: Commonwealth Education Fund, 2007)

A human-rights approach implies that there is only one body who should be delivering the right to education, *the government*. This means that CSOs should focus on supporting (and in many cases pressurising) the government to do this. This is a common goal for all CSOs. As the objective is common, and the target identified, the advantage of working in coalition becomes clear. If CSOs can speak together and agree central

messages this will amplify the message, making it harder to ignore. Speaking with one voice means that the government only has to listen to one message – which reduces the possibility of confusion or for the government to have to choose who to listen to when.

**What makes a coalition work?** Questions of governance and democracy are key for coalitions, and in order for coalitions to function effectively there are various issues which will need to be decided by members. A key issue will be the focus and mandate of the coalition. Are people coming together for one specific issue, for example the rights of disabled children in primary school; or for a broader issue, such as the right to education for all? The coalition may develop a broad goal or vision, and various strategic goals or objectives within this, which will help in working towards this vision. It may have working groups which focus on specific areas.

Members also need to decide how the coalition will work. This includes issues of coordination, decision-making procedures, systems for information flows and accountability, as well as specific roles and responsibilities. This will need to be agreed by the members of the coalitions, as well as the organisations of which they are part. For example, what is the mandate given to individuals representing organisations? Are they able to make decisions in the coalition space or are they expected to pass every decision through their own management? If these elements are clear they will provide a good basis upon which the rest of the work can take place. As well as having good systems, a coalition needs to make sure that the majority of its meetings focus on outward looking (i.e. education debates) rather than internal issues, so that organisations can see the benefit of being part of the coalition, and the coalition does not just become another 'talkshop'.

**Common challenges:** While some coalitions work well many, unfortunately, do not. This is usually for a mixture of reasons, and power relations are often at the heart. If

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### NIGERIA

In Nigeria, prior to the 2000 UNESCO summit in Dakar, the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) was born. The process started through ActionAid Nigeria, in collaboration with a local NGO – Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) bringing together NGOs and CBOs working on education and advocacy across Nigeria. The main objective was to develop a strong united voice for the Dakar summit, and CSACEFA was represented at Dakar by a team of six. Given the important role played by civil society in Dakar, CSACEFA was inspired to continue and expand. The network has links across the country, and is led by a democratically-elected committee, with the day-to-day activities coordinated by a secretariat (originally based in ActionAid and now with its own office). The network has grown over the past five years and has national recognition. This means that representatives are invited to take part in government and World Bank meetings and initiatives, and the coalition is actively involved in education planning and monitoring. CSACEFA also benefits from links with the GCE and ANCEFA (the Africa Network Campaign on Education For All), having played a major role in its emergence. However, there have been some challenges, especially in terms of information flow and power relations, between the loosely-managed geographical zones and the more organised secretariat. There were also tensions with ActionAid's role; with some groups feeling that ActionAid was dominating and others feeling that ActionAid was not playing a strong enough role. There was a lack of a clear document from the outset which laid out the goal, vision and structure of the coalition, as well as policies for decision making and financial management. All this is now being addressed.



Education coalitions around the world have been involved in a range of activities including:

- Influencing government policy or discourse on key issues such as: the role of PTAs (The Gambia); partial or comprehensive removal of education charges (Tanzania, Nepal); inclusive education (Bangladesh, Uganda); and adult literacy (Uganda).
- Campaigning and lobbying to end gender discrimination in education, especially in Bangladesh, Pakistan, The Gambia, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia.
- Working with the media to influence public opinion (Ghana, Bangladesh); training for journalists (The Gambia); running imaginative events with film and football celebrities (Brazil).
- Engaging in cross-country research studies, on subjects such as the impact of cost-recovery or user fees.
- Influencing the development of national EFA action plans, other education policies or the education sector within Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.
- Preparing an annual 'Education Watch' report (e.g. the Campaign for Popular Education, CAMPE, in Bangladesh).
- Commissioning studies on sensitive issues, such as the political manipulation of adult literacy statistics in Brazil; or the financing of education in Pakistan, which investigated the reasons for the rise of private schools catering to low income households.
- Lobbying key donors and UN agencies, such as local missions of the World Bank, UNICEF, European Commission, USAID, etc.
- Building the capacity of parliamentary committees or creating parliamentary caucuses (as in Nigeria or Bangladesh).

some members feel marginalised within the coalition, either because their issues are not represented or because they feel excluded from decision-making processes, it is likely to cause disruption to the coalition. Other challenges occur if systems of decision-making and accountability are not transparent or adhered to. For example, the internal functioning may be undemocratic, and dominated by one or two individuals (or organisations). It might be that the same people always take the decisions in the coalition as well as representing it externally (they may be the ones that are always invited to government events, find it easier to get media coverage, have more funds, better access to information, etc.). Or there may be bad communication between the national secretariat and the members, with members having little say over coalition activities.

In addition to problems concerning the dynamics of a coalition, there can be

challenges when a coalition takes on a contentious issue, which perhaps not all members agree with. A position may be taken which does not have unanimous support, or a new issue is prioritised which some members feel is irrelevant. Coalitions may also grapple with questions about funding; who to take funding from, what should be funded, and who should manage the funding. This often relates to wider issues of power and control. Finally, it's easy for coalitions to become too obsessed with their own functioning and internal power relations, and lose sight of the bigger goal.

As well as these internal challenges to coalitions, there are external ones. For example, coalitions can be compromised through their relationship with government, which may become so close that the coalition is unable to question government actions. Relationships with other coalitions or organisations can also be difficult, especially if they are competing for the same funding.

## ACTIVITY

### **Areas to consider when forming a coalition:**

These common challenges suggest a series of issues which should be considered when forming a coalition. It is worth reflecting on previous experiences of coalition working, thinking about networks, coalitions or alliances you have been involved in and considering the forms they have taken, what works well and why? Specific areas to consider include:

- **What are your aims and objectives** – Why a coalition? Who are your members? What are you hoping to achieve, in the short, medium and long-term, through working together? How will you communicate and describe your coalition to others?
- **What different motivations and expectations exist among members** – Every organisation will come with its own perspective and motivations, it is important to be honest and open about these, to start to build collaboration and trust.
- **Communication** – How will you communicate? What about? How will you balance information flows so as to prevent information overload? Where will you get information from to feed into the coalition? Whose responsibility is this?
- **Coordination** – Will you have a secretariat or coordinating group? Will this position be permanent or rotating? What will be the power relationship between the coordinator (or group) and other members.
- **Structure and function** – How formal will your structure be? How will you incorporate different sorts of membership, for example, organisations and individuals, what about those working on different but related issues, is there a role for temporary and permanent membership? For example, you may have a core membership and shifting groups of allies for discrete projects and campaigns etc.
- **Day to day functioning** – How will you make decisions? Who is accountable to whom, and how? How often will you meet? How will you build a relationship of trust and respect? How will you value different people and skills in the coalition? How will you cope with integration of new members?
- **Roles, accountability and capacity** – how will you work together? What different roles will you have? How will you ensure your coalition has all the skills needed, where and how will you build capacity?
- **Evaluation or review processes** – What will you evaluate? How? Who are your stakeholders? How will you track your progress? How will you balance evaluation of the coalition as a whole, with specific events?
- **Links to the grassroots** – How to build effective relationships beyond the capital city? How will you overcome problems of communication (transport, technology, language)? How to ensure democratic processes and representation, and balance this with speed of decision making and action?
- **Power and gender dynamics** – How will you ensure positive power relations? Who speaks at meetings? which roles in the coalition are powerful? How will you avoid certain individuals or views dominating?
- **Relationship with government** – Should they be members of the coalition? What sort of members? How will this influence your advocacy efforts? Are there specific occasions to invite them to?
- **Funding** – Will members contribute to coalition financing? What needs to be funded? Will you take money from external funders?
- **What will you do when:**
  - Your organisation gets invited to a meeting – do you go as yourself or as a coalition representative.
  - All the coordinating group are men, based in the capital city.
  - You disagree on a specific issue, e.g. whether to go to a meeting with the WB representative or campaign against it happening.
  - You link to the local level, but they don't speak English.
  - Someone in the coalition has used the name without going through the sign-off procedure for a particular statement.

Many of these issues will need to be dealt with as they arise, but it is important to have clear procedures about how to make these difficult decisions.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### KENYA

Leadership roles need to be clear, as this example from Kenya illustrates. The Elimu Yetu Coalition (EYC) in Kenya is officially managed by an Executive Committee appointed by the General Assembly of all members. However, EYC is based within ActionAid Kenya, which has financial responsibility for the coalition, and, having played a role in its establishment, maintains an element of control. Additionally, the coordinator is the only staff member, responsible for engaging with 120 members. The last two years have seen three different coordinators, one of whom resigned after tensions with the executive committee, when it was felt he was answering more to ActionAid than to the executive committee. But the committee itself is described as weak, unable to manage a forthright coordinator.

These competing power agendas have impacted negatively on the coalition's operation and its image. In the absence of a coordinator the coalition came to a standstill, with members reporting that they were not attending meetings as they had not been called to them. With a new coordinator, EYC is taking steps to rectify these problems, including taking on additional staff and working towards independence from ActionAid.

*From Tomlinson and Macpherson, 'Driving the Bus', (2007).*

## Lobbying, awareness-raising and influencing

Whatever the specific objectives of a coalition, it is likely that members will be involved in a range of lobbying and influencing activities. While the target and focus will depend on the specific context, it is important to use a mixture of activities, to create pressure from many directions simultaneously. There may be specific moments when lobbying and advocacy are more intense (for example, during the budget allocation process) and other times where the focus is on mobilisation, awareness raising or research. At some points, activities may involve all coalition members, at other points one or two organisations will take a leadership role.

There are three key target groups for this work: the public, peers (e.g. NGOs, academics and the media) and the government, and there are many different ways of engaging these groups:

- **Public:** It is important for the public to be aware of their right to education and their right to participate, to hold their government to account to deliver quality education for all. This means that public need to be informed and empowered. It also means challenging the members of the public who are blocking education for all (for example, through demanding government spending elsewhere or opting out of public education), through offering strong evidence and encouraging public debate. The first half of this section looked at work at the grassroots, but this can be complemented by work at national level, working with the media; linking to a range of different organisations and groups and facilitating mass mobilisation.
- **Peers:** There are a range of civil society organisations, from NGOs, to activists, to social movements, trade unions, academics and the media, who have a role to play in achieving quality education for all. Engagement with these groups will focus on sharing experiences and research, building capacity (theirs and

yours) and facilitating discussions, perhaps encouraging them to join your coalitions and campaigns – on a temporary (i.e. due to their interest in a specific issue) or more formal basis. You could also aim to influence the way they are engaging with other stakeholders, or working on education.

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- **Government:** The government is legally and morally responsible for delivering the right to education. Lobbying and influencing work will focus on encouraging and pressurising the government to fulfil its duty. The strategy and process will vary, depending on the type of government and their commitment to education rights. However, it is likely to include some direct engagement – relationship building, sharing of experiences and research, invitations to see education processes at the grassroots as well as a range of advocacy and campaigning techniques – which in some contexts could involve confronting and challenging the government.
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Details about research and evidence building are discussed elsewhere in this pack (see **Section Five**), while building relationships with governments is explored in **Section One**. The examples shared below illustrate some other ways to raise awareness among and influence, the public, peers and government. They are techniques which could be used by a coalition, or by one organisation acting on their own.

### **Using mass mobilisation:**

Mass mobilisation is a way of putting pressure on the government from the outside, while also creating awareness of an issue among the general public. The Global Action Weeks described earlier ('Working with children', page 145) are good examples of mass mobilisation efforts.

In **Tanzania**, the national education coalition (TENMET) sought to create space for civil society to influence policy through mass mobilisation. During one such mass mobilisation, thousands of pupils marched from their villages to ward-level headquarters. Others, accompanied by teachers and parents, went to the parliament. They demanded that the government should take the responsibility

for ensuring access, retention and attainment of quality basic education for all. The message was delivered through the parliamentary social committee at national level but the same message was also taken to district executives. The whole process was captured by local and national print media and by national and private TV stations.

### **Working with the media:**

The involvement of media in campaigning is a great tool for raising public awareness as well as influencing policy decision-makers. There are a range of different ways to involve the media, through inviting them to your events, or to see the reality at the grassroots, or through providing press releases with key campaign messages. You could organise a capacity-building workshop to share the reality of education in your context, looking at the role they could play in campaigning for education rights, and also to help those working in the media to critique the role they might be playing in perpetuating violation of rights – this could be through the way they report issues, the language they use, etc.

In **Nigeria**, the CHILDREN project conducted a public opinion poll (POP) within a community to enable students, parents and other community members to air their views on the poor infrastructure in public schools in the area. Following the refusal of the head teacher to be interviewed or to allow the poor structures in the school filmed, the CHILDREN project moved from street to street interviewing people about their views on the school and what they thought could be done to improve the situation. It conducted interviews with teachers, students, market men and women, artisans, passers-by and traditional leaders. It also enlisted the cooperation of some state and local government officials, who would only contribute to the programme when assured of their anonymity. This POP was aired on the television programme, 'Future Focus'. The programme drew wide participation from viewers who responded through telephone calls and text messages. One concrete impact of this work was the government construction of a new classroom block in the school within three weeks of airing the programme. The state

government also moved in to complete abandoned building projects and renovate all the dilapidated buildings in the school.

**Using round-table discussions:**

Round table is a term often used for a group discussion, especially in high-level meetings or conferences. Using the term ‘round table’ can give a discussion a higher status, which can be useful for advocacy and lobbying purposes. Outcomes of the discussion are more likely to be picked up in the media, or listened to by government; and people are more likely to attend an event which is seen to have higher credibility.

Discussions can involve a range of different actors, either from civil society organisations, or representing a variety of sectors. Choices about who to invite will depend on the focus of the discussion, as well as the context and timing. It is usual to limit round table discussions to 20-30 participants, to enable each person to contribute effectively. Discussions should be documented and followed up with a dissemination plan – to share the results of the discussion more widely.

In Ghana, ActionAid International Ghana supported the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) to organise a round table in 2005 at the end of which it issued a communiqué calling on the government to intensify its effort to make education really free. This influenced the government’s White Paper on the Education Review Committee Report as well as the introduction of ‘capitation grants’ to schools.

**Using academic conferences:**

In many countries, academia has a powerful role to play in influencing the government. The esteem in which academic research is held means that universities and researchers are often given space and listened to in a way that eludes NGOs and activists. Conferences might last a day or longer, and could involve a range of academics from different national institutions, or even from beyond the national borders. A conference can also be a useful opportunity to build understanding between academics and civil society activists, and to

explore ways that the two groups can collaborate together.

In Pakistan, ActionAid International organised a national workshop in November 2005 with eminent educationists, academics and intellectuals. The overall objective of the conference was to challenge neo-liberal social and economic reforms, which resulted in the privatisation of education and exclusion of poor children. The conference focused on the degree to which neo-liberal reforms are changing the educational system; on the World Bank sponsored higher education reforms, which controversially trigger privatisation of higher education. The critical questions identified in the conference formed the basis for further research and policy debate.

These national advocacy strategies can be complemented by work at the international level, see page 166.

➤ In April 2006, senior representatives from Education International (the global federation of teachers’ unions) and ActionAid International met for three days to look at key issues in education. Based on a commitment to quality public education for all, the representatives developed recommendations across seven areas in education: macro-economics and the IMF, para-teachers, education and HIV, school-level governance, violence against girls in schools, privatisation, and building a code of ethics. These recommendations, known as the Parktonian Recommendations, are now being used at national level to enable NGOs and teachers’ unions to work together. For example, in Malawi, ActionAid and the teachers’ union have developed a national strategy for joint working. The political ownership at international level has helped create the space and motivation for collaboration at national and local levels. However, it is still important that the recommendations are discussed and reviewed at national and local levels, to ensure that they are appropriate given the specific context and culture.

## Working with teachers' unions

Teachers' unions have the potential to be a powerful force in transforming education and achieving education for all. They represent a large group of education stakeholders, are generally well-organised and have good links with the government, suggesting that they have both legitimacy and voice.

Discussions in the local level section highlighted the historical tensions between teachers' unions and NGOs. However, if these can be overcome there will be a stronger voice for the right to quality education. Education coalitions can benefit from their involvement with teachers because they will bring a new perspective, a powerful voice and good local links. Teachers' unions can benefit from their links with education coalitions because they bring a cross-section of different education stakeholders, have expertise in advocacy and campaigning, and are working to transform the education system more broadly, to create a situation where teachers are able to teach. They can also benefit as the partnership may help transform their image in society. Teachers' unions are frequently seen as self-interested and always on strike. This constructive engagement can change their

profile emphasising their real commitment to quality education.

Taking a human rights-based approach forces the issue of engaging with teachers' unions. Not only are the fundamental interests (that of a commitment to quality public education for all) shared, but also if the groups are not able to collaborate there is a danger that the actions of civil society groups might undermine the rights of teachers (or vice-versa). Government may listen to one body over the other, implicitly denying the other its right to speak and be heard on education issues. And either group may push for a policy which negatively impacts other education stakeholders, through lack of knowledge of their position or perspective.

As mentioned earlier, the 2006 Global Week of Action focused their campaign on *Every Child Needs a Teacher*. This was a key rallying call for teachers and other civil society actors to work together on an issue which was clearly important to all education stakeholders. In order to build strong links with teachers' unions it is important to develop inclusive positions, which have broad appeal, so that each group can work from their own perspective.

One key issue is that of para-teachers which is reviewed in Section Five, page 211.



A recent meeting brought together the key political leaders (presidents, secretary generals, women's coordinators) from the main teachers' unions in Ghana, Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia with ActionAid staff to look at strengthening teachers' unions in Anglophone West Africa. A key focus of the meeting was to look at the role teachers' organisations can play in eliminating corruption, as well as building the advocacy and campaign skills of teachers' organisations. This meeting led to concrete planning about how ActionAid and teachers' unions could work together at national and sub-regional level on research, policy analysis, capacity building and advocacy, to pressurise the government to achieve EFA.

This regional meeting was a good ice-breaker, the first step in collaboration, which will inevitably evolve differently at national level as each country has its own context and history.

Following the meeting, concrete steps have been taken to work together at national level. For example, in **Nigeria** ActionAid provided a one-week training workshop for over 100 teachers' union officials from across the 36 states. The teachers' unions contributed 80 per cent of the funding, while ActionAid International Nigeria contributed the technical capacity. The workshop participants are currently putting their learning into practice, and the intention is to run a second workshop next year, focusing on influencing education policy.

## Working with social movements

As well as collaboration with education stakeholders, it is also important to link to other civil society activists. Education rights cannot be dealt with in isolation. The reasons some groups are denied their right to education are complex and have to do with wider issues of structural inequalities. Linking to social movements can help deepen your understanding of the wider social issues, and how they impact on education, as well as accessing a wider potential audience and links to power structures, enabling social movements to integrate education issues into their work. This is particularly the case with identity-based movements who will be able to speak with legitimacy and mandate on issues affecting their particular group.

As always, it is important that this relationship is developed with mutual trust and respect, and that good mechanisms are put into place to ensure information flows and accountability. Specific social movements may be particularly relevant at particular times – for example linking with women’s movements might support your work on girls’ education; linking with HIV coalitions, could extend your understanding of how education and HIV inter-relate; and linking with movements for economic justice could be crucial in your work on budget analysis and budget tracking. A further benefit of linking to social movements is to create a general space for learning and reflection as to what makes movements work, and use this to strengthen your own work.

### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## BRAZIL

Social movements can also play a useful monitoring role for education coalitions, ensuring that positions and priorities reflect the realities of the most poor and marginalised. For example, the National Campaign for Education in Brazil was started up by urban-based groups and was very strong in Rio and Sao Paulo but had few rural links. In contrast the Landless Peoples’ Movement (MST) was concerned with rural education, especially for their membership who had occupied abandoned land. In 2003/4 MST joined the education campaign and this led to new issues being put on the agenda.



Stuart Freeman/Network/ActionAid

# Linking regionally and internationally

As well as national level coalitions it is also important to link regionally and internationally. This can help inspire those working at the national level – to feel part of something bigger, more dynamic and exciting, while also offering an opportunity to raise the profile of education, through coordinated action. Moreover, linking across borders helps bring out the common issues which impact on education around the world, as well as increasing the pressure on international and bilateral actors.

The Global Campaign for Education is a

coalition of a range of civil society actors, including teachers' unions, NGOs specialising on education and those focusing on children's rights. Its small secretariat focuses on lobbying and advocacy work; organising the annual Global Week of Action; as well as coordinating research on a range of issues in education, such as HIV and education, adult literacy, and teacher training. Every year the GCE links with millions of people around the world for the Global Week of Action, where everyone, from children to teachers to government ministers, is encouraged to campaign for education for all.

Regional bodies such as ANCEFA (Africa) ASPBAE (Asia) and CEEAL (Latin America) are also useful reference points for education campaigning, ensuring that countries across a region are able to speak with a collective voice on issues which impact them.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### INDIA, PAKISTAN and BANGLADESH

In addition to traditional lobbying techniques, such as meetings with individual parliamentarians, the Commonwealth Education Fund coordinators across **India, Pakistan and Bangladesh**, along with India's National Coalition on Education, decided to organise a regional conference, bringing together parliamentarians from the three countries to encourage parliamentarians to discuss education issues.

The two-day conference was attended by 17 parliamentarians and 100 members of civil society. Discussions focused on the common challenges facing education across the three countries, experiences (from the civil society perspective) of engaging with legislators on education initiatives, and the different ways civil society supports the right to education. The role of civil society in researching and informing parliamentarians and political parties was highlighted, touching on issues such as how civil society should try and influence party manifestos, but in order to do this they should ensure that their demands are backed up by rigorously researched information – such as the results of budget analysis. A final session brought in 50 students from schools across Delhi to interact with the parliamentarians, asking challenging questions on a range of issues, including the relative priorities of education and defence in the national budget; the role of children in policy formulation and the position of women in India.

The conference had been organised to raise parliamentarians' interest in education, and a surprise result was the decision by the parliamentarians to form a 'South Asian Parliamentarians Forum for Education' (SAPFE), inviting parliamentarians from Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan to join them, with Bangladesh hosting the secretariat. Unfortunately the Bangladeshi government was dissolved immediately following the meeting but there is hope that the forum will be revived in the future and implement a range of activities to move education up the political agenda, while recognising the need to tackle the wider issues of gender equality, minority rights, child labour and disadvantaged communities if education is to become a reality for all.

## Mobilisation in the northern hemisphere

Advocacy and campaigning in the southern hemisphere can be complemented by action in the Global North. This serves two major purposes. Firstly, to influence northern governments and raise awareness among the general public in the North of key development issues. Through encouraging the involvement and activism of the general public in the North it is hoped that northern donors will be pressurised to increase their aid budgets, or spend their money differently. Secondly, this international exposure and action will put pressure on governments in the Global South, encouraging them to reflect on their current spending plans and priorities.

The Global Week of Action is a good example of coordinated action which takes place across the globe. For example, the Irish Coalition for GCE actively participated in the *'Send My Friend to School'* campaign. Primary Schools and youth clubs explored the exclusion of children, particularly girls, from school and made cut-out 'friends' to be sent to the G8 Summit. A public awareness-raising event at the General Post Office in Dublin to post the 'Irish Friends to the G8' was a huge success. Secondary school students engaged with the issue through the Civic, Social and Political curriculum and invited local politicians 'back to school'. In one school, the Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr. Lenihan, signed a pledge to ensure that the Irish Government meets its commitment to increase Overseas Development Aid to 0.7 per cent of GNP and to increase its spending on education accordingly.

It can also be important to make links between domestic education issues in the North and international education policies. In early 2005, ActionAid International USA, in partnership with the ActionAid International Education Team and Just Associates (JASS), began an initiative designed to shape and inform future education advocacy. The initial phase of the project focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the possible intersections between international education policies and US domestic education issues and politics, identifying advocacy gaps and opportunities and starting to build relationships with potential partners. Background research was complemented with open-ended consultations with over 40 informants from NGOs, community groups, think tanks, advocacy networks, and funders. The second phase of the project was a round table discussion, enabling the range of informants to analyse the issues further and think through the challenges and opportunities of building a solidarity initiative.<sup>33</sup>



Onyssa Panousiadiou / Impact / ActionAid

<sup>33</sup> See M. Reilly and A. Marphatia, *Forging a Global Movement: New Education Rights Strategies for the United States and the World*, (Washington DC: ActionAid and Just Associates, 2006). Available online: [http://www.justassociates.org/publications\\_files/Forging%20A%20Global%20Movement.pdf](http://www.justassociates.org/publications_files/Forging%20A%20Global%20Movement.pdf)



Chryssi Panousiadou / Impact / ActionAid

The right to education is often reduced to the right to schooling, with emphasis placed on getting children into classrooms, and little attention focused on what actually happens when they get there. This is not enough ... It is necessary to think beyond schooling as a neutral process and look at how education can be empowering; building confidence and skills so that children can use what they have learnt, and ensuring that their human rights are respected while in the school vicinity.

## Section Five



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

## Rights In Education

# Contents

## Rights In Education

Types of information that are useful for this section:

- **National curricula:** What is taught in schools, how are decisions made, how to influence the national curricula.
- **Education materials:** How are these produced, who is involved, is there any bias within learning and teaching materials, what education publishers exist?
- **Official data:** What data is currently collected, what information is available on – education materials, process and management. National and local information on issues related to education such as levels of HIV, violence against women, issues of security and emergencies.
- **Teacher training colleges:** How are teachers trained, how is their curriculum determined, what space is there for local linking and influence – who to link to.
- **Non-professional teachers:** Levels of trained teachers, government policies using or supporting para-teachers.

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The right to education is often reduced to the right to schooling, with emphasis placed on getting children into classrooms, and little attention focused on what actually happens when they get there. This is not enough. The right to education is meaningless if children's rights are violated within schools. If there are over 100 children in a classroom with one poorly-trained teacher and not enough desks or learning materials, learning is unlikely to take place. If the school environment is unsafe, and the learning materials irrelevant or reinforcing cultural stereotypes, learning is undermined and the right to education is not realised. It is necessary to think beyond schooling as a neutral process and look at how education can be empowering; building confidence and skills so that children can use what they have learnt, and ensuring that their human rights are respected while in the school vicinity.

Rights in education are therefore central to the right to education. In **Section One**, the framework of the '4 As' was introduced, see page 24. Of these 4 As issues of *acceptability* and *adaptability* need to be considered here, in relation to education quality, and rights in education. This section is therefore divided into two parts, the first deals with developing indicators for quality education, and using those indicators for planning, campaigning and monitoring purposes. The second looks directly at rights in education, and key aspects which need to be considered to make these rights a reality. We focus on the links between HIV and education. However, a range of other issues are also touched upon, from creating safe schools, to looking at how local knowledge can be brought into the formal school system, and how the rights of teachers can also be respected. For those interested in rights, rather than data collection processes you may wish to skip the first section.

Ultimately, rights in education depend on the government, on its ability to allocate sufficient resources to education, to invest properly in teacher training and support programmes, and to give political leadership to ensure that

education respects, protects and fulfils the rights of the child. There are various ways that civil society organisations and local groups can contribute to realising this right, both through continually pressurising government to fulfil its duty, and through some direct interventions linking to the school and teacher training colleges. However, links need to be made with government early on in any process. It is only through this relationship that initiatives can be scaled-up and sustained, benefiting all children. Local work therefore focuses on experimenting, developing ideas, and gaining support from schools, teachers and local education authorities to mainstream these ideas. Work at the national level seeks to publicise alternative approaches, and to influence the government to take on and integrate these ideas into their national programmes. Because of this direct link there is no split between the two levels in this section – the local and the national are dealt with together.



Liba Taylor / ActionAid

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# Statistics and indicators of quality education

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If children are not receiving quality education then their rights in education are being violated. Therefore, an important starting point when considering rights in education is to explore what quality education means, and how it might be measured? This section focuses on four specific areas that need to be considered in relation to quality education: education materials, education pedagogy and process, education access, and education management.

The methodologies identified here to collect statistical information will be useful in many other parts of the pack, developing an evidence base for campaigning and influencing work.

## What is quality education?

The 'ingredients' of quality education will differ from place to place, depending on the local context and vision for education. A good starting point would be to discuss what quality education means for people in the area; looking specifically at the last of the 4As. This could link to the ideas of acceptability and adaptability discussed in **Section One** (see page 27), or could focus exclusively on the concept of quality.

As a first step, groups could use a visioning exercise to imagine what an educated person should look like. This involves using an *Educated Person Body Map*. The group should discuss what an educated person has, and what they are doing. It is likely that many of the suggestions will focus on the economic benefits of education. To extend the discussion you could ask questions such as:

- What local knowledge should this educated person have?
- What skills will this person have?
- How will they relate to other people, outside your local area?
- What will the person be able to do with their skills and knowledge?
- How will their education benefit them, and your community?

Taking the exercise one step further, the group could look at how the person came to be educated, what was available in school to provide them with this education, how did they learn, what created a positive learning environment, etc.

Drawing on this exercise the group could draw out specific indicators of quality education, focusing on the areas of education materials, education pedagogy and process, education access, and education management. These could be developed into a survey or



questionnaire, and used to evaluate education in the local area. The table on page 174 gives some suggestions of key data it would be useful to collect to help evaluate the quality of education. The table focuses on data collection at the school level, but could also be used to evaluate district or national education plans.

## DATA COLLECTION

### » Data collection

The indicators in the table below are not just useful in evaluating existing programmes and situations. They can also be used to inform programme design, to work with government to develop the structure and systems to ensure quality education for all, or as a way of involving teachers and other education staff in discussing and analysing their role in providing quality education.

However, they are general indicators, and you will need to adapt and prioritise them, and develop further indicators to explore specific issues more deeply, depending on the focus of your work, as well as where you are collecting the information from. You should start by reflecting on why you are collecting the information:

- Clarifying the aim of the work;
- Deciding your target audience;
- Identifying specific messages or areas of interest;
- Thinking through how you will use the data, will you present it as evidence, use examples for discussion, track changes over time?

Further reflection on the following questions will help you decide any additional data to collect:

- What are the key issues in this debate?
- What education-specific information will be useful to collect?
- What other information will give us insight into the issue? (For example, you may need to collect general population data, information on adult literacy, levels participation in public affairs etc., to shed light on the issue you are looking at).

It can also be useful to think through a range of minimum standards that you could measure the indicators against. For example there is an internationally recognised minimum of the need for at least one teacher for 40 pupils in order to ensure quality education. You might decide other standards, such as each class should have its own classroom, each student their own desk, exercise book and writing materials. In generating minimum standards you should look to official education policy information, and link this to a reflection at local level as to what appropriate standards might be.

This process should enable you to identify specific information to collect, and decide methodologies for collection, analysis, compilation and dissemination.

Area of Interest	Indicator	Ways of collecting indicator	Ways of presenting data
Education materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No. of classrooms</li> <li>■ Class size and student/teacher ratio</li> <li>■ Teacher attendance</li> <li>■ No. of grades (e.g. is there multi-grade teaching)</li> <li>■ No. of children per desk</li> <li>■ No. of children per textbook</li> <li>■ Sanitation facilities (for boys and girls)</li> <li>■ Quality of school building (is it well built, rainproof, safe, etc.)</li> </ul>	Collecting school data from head teacher, interviews with children and teachers, observation, school records – often held at school level and from the DEO office.	This is mainly statistical information and so could be presented as numbers, or scored – for example giving the quality of the school building 5 out of 10. If scoring is used a standard will need to be decided – it could be compiled as a report card. (see page 120 <b>Section Three</b> , ASPBAE report card)
Education process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Level of teacher training</li> <li>■ Curriculum content (is it appropriate, relevant, does it reinforce a particular view of society, or is it open-ended, etc.)</li> <li>■ Learning processes used and quantity of time spent on different learning processes</li> <li>■ Feedback given to children</li> <li>■ Contact hours</li> <li>■ Parent-teacher evenings</li> <li>■ In-service training? Does it exist?</li> <li>■ Is there a school inspection function?</li> <li>■ Level of support from the DEO, etc.</li> <li>■ Is the curriculum flexible, can it be adapted at local level?</li> <li>■ Are local knowledge and skills used and valued in the school?</li> <li>■ How is learning examined?</li> <li>■ What are the success rates in examinations?</li> </ul>	Questionnaires, reviewing textbooks and exercise books, observation of classroom teaching.	This kind of data is more subjective and it would be helpful to use a mixture of ranking exercises and quotes and descriptions of certain processes to support any points being made. There will be some quantitative data which can be collected, such as frequency of school visits by the DEO, so this should be included.
Education access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No. of children/no. of children in school (sex-disaggregated)</li> <li>■ Retention rates/completion rates (comparison across different grades- sex-disaggregated)</li> <li>■ Transition rates – and access to secondary schooling</li> <li>■ Availability of transport</li> <li>■ School feeding programmes</li> <li>■ Costs of education (see <b>Section Three</b> for more details on this)</li> <li>■ Language of instruction</li> <li>■ Flexibility of school time table</li> </ul>	Some of this data will be available through the school records; others will require the involvement of the wider community. You might produce a survey and use this as a basis for door-to-door investigation, or you could use a PRA tool, such as a map or matrix to generate the data. Education access is contextual, there will be a wide range of reasons	This should be expressed in a range of ways – with statistics illustrating the basic situation. If you developed a survey or used PRA to collect information on access this information can also be expressed statistically, with more qualitative information illustrating specific points, such as why children are not able to access school. You could also share copies of the PRA tools

&gt;&gt;

Area of Interest	Indicator	Ways of collecting indicator	Ways of presenting data
	<i>More indicators may be developed drawing on the exercise discussed in Section One, page 24 – Concentric Circles diagram.</i>	why children are not able to access school. It will be important to leave some of your questions open ended.	to support your argument.
Education management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Existence and functioning of SMC</li> <li>■ Support and training for SMC, legal role of SMC</li> <li>■ School and community links</li> <li>■ External support – e.g. links to DEO, provincial or state level</li> <li>■ Availability of school records</li> <li>■ Availability of budget information</li> <li>■ School councils, involvement of children and teachers</li> <li>■ Level of transparency and accountability, clear processes</li> <li>■ Existence of school reports</li> </ul>	Observation, questionnaires, interviews with key education stakeholders, SMC minutes, DEO data on school.	These indicators could be compiled as a report, with illustrations of the management process, as well as some quantitative data, demonstrating the regularity of meetings, etc. A lot of the questions will depend on who you speak to, so it will be useful in any report to show the range of perspectives.

## Changes in education quality

It can be useful to track quality information over a specific time period, particularly if you wish to monitor the impact of a specific policy. Most of the indicators described above can be collected over time, and can be used to understand specific aspects of education.

However, in any given time period there are likely to be many changes occurring which could impact on education generally, or on a specific aspect of education. It is therefore important to be realistic about what you can and cannot monitor, and not to over-claim the impact of a particular policy you are monitoring, especially if you are only looking at a limited number of factors.

### ➤➤ Using other types of research

Using a mixture of research methods and formats can often provide a more compelling case, and speak to a wider audience, for example, in other parts of the pack you will find ideas about using stories to illustrate points and as a way of generating evidence. For example, in **Section One** the idea of oral testimonies and street theatre is discussed. These can be used to complement the more quantitative statistical information described here, bringing some of the numbers you produce to life.

For example, a new policy might change the timing of the school day and you may wish to look at the impact of the change in timetable on girls' education. For this you might collect statistics on enrolment, retention, achievement in education, etc. And they may show a drop, suggesting that the policy has negatively impacted girls' education. However, it might be that the area where you are working experienced a drought and the impact of this led to reduced attendance and performance in school. Or that a new school opened up nearby and so many pupils switched school. This shows why it is crucially important to be aware of the wider context when tracking changes in education quality.

## What to consider in indicator selection?

Indicators give evidence that something exists, or has changed over time. They may be evaluative and measure inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts, or they may illustrate what is happening at a particular point of time. It is also possible to collect process indicators which may look at the quality of a particular event, who was involved, the extent of decision-making power, etc. Indicators should be relatively easy to collect, relevant, well-defined and measurable and give insight into a specific issue.

There are many different issues to consider, for example, if your research is taking place over a six-month period, there is no point deciding to track changes in a particular cohort of students as they move through primary school. Similarly, it may not be helpful to collect information about the level of teacher training if you are interested in girls' education (although it could be useful to look at the content of training and whether there is any focus on girls' education or gender).

It is important to think through how you will collect the information – whether you have the time and resources to do so (if, for example, you want to get information from 1,000 households this will take some time) and whether the information is collectible. This is particularly the case with historical information, which might not have been recorded. You also need to consider how your presence influences data collection, for example, if you are interested in understanding classroom dynamics you will need to consider how your presence might impact on the process.

## Collecting data

There is a range of different ways to collect information. Here are some of the common methodologies that could be used at local or national level, and compiled by local groups themselves or by implementing organisations:

■ **Using PRA:** PRA tools are a good way to start discussion and analysis on issues, and to record data. They are particularly useful when working with community groups.

**Maps** can be used to look at the school in the community context. Where is the school located in relation to where different groups of people live in the community? Who is in and who is out of school? How many children of school age are there in the local area? What are the transport links? **Matrices** can be used to illustrate enrolment, retention and transition rates, as well as ratios – teachers: students, student: textbooks, etc. **Rivers** can be used to track changes in the local education context over time, looking at why these changes occurred, drawing out trends as well as obstacles and opportunities for education (see diagram below). When using PRA, it is important that the discussion is captured as well as the outcome, as the process of producing the tool is important in shedding light on an issue.

■ **Using report cards:** Report cards are a simple way of assessing quality across a range of issues and can be produced individually or through group discussion. Using the concept of a school report, where children are given grades across a list of subjects, report cards can cover issues of teacher quality, education materials, gender equality, access issues, etc. Information might be collected through group discussion, interviews and analysis of written materials. The grades can be given along with extended remarks, explaining why the grades were allocated, or highlighting specific points (see example, page 120).

■ **Using surveys:** Surveys are one of the best ways to collect statistical information, which is useful if you are planning to compare information across a wide area. By asking a number of people the exact same questions you can produce data which is relatively easy to compare, and to draw observations and conclusions. The surveys could be produced by the local group or at a district or national level, and might cover a whole range of education issues or focus specifically on one aspect –

such as educational access. It is important that the questions are straight-forward and unambiguous. And to consider how you intend to compile the information, and what analytical methods you will use, as this influences the types of questions you will ask.

- Using focus group discussions:** Enabling a group of people to discuss an issue together can often give deeper insights than a one-on-one discussion, or a survey. This is because the group can share views and develop ideas and conclusions together, challenging each other on opinions that are appear badly informed or are simply wrong. However, it is important to be aware of power dynamics in focus group discussions, if there are particularly dominant voices they could influence the opinions of others and impose their view. It can be helpful to run a series of focus group discussions with different peer groups, and use methodologies which enable everyone to speak and be heard (again PRA tools maybe useful here).

- Using observation and informal discussion:** Informal discussion and observation are great for getting a feel and understanding of views and perspectives, although they are highly subjective – both in what you notice and what people say to you. It can be useful to spend some time informally before using some of the more rigorous methods, as it could guide your questioning and focus. Informal discussion can also be useful in providing stories and experiences, which will illustrate points highlighted in your data collection.

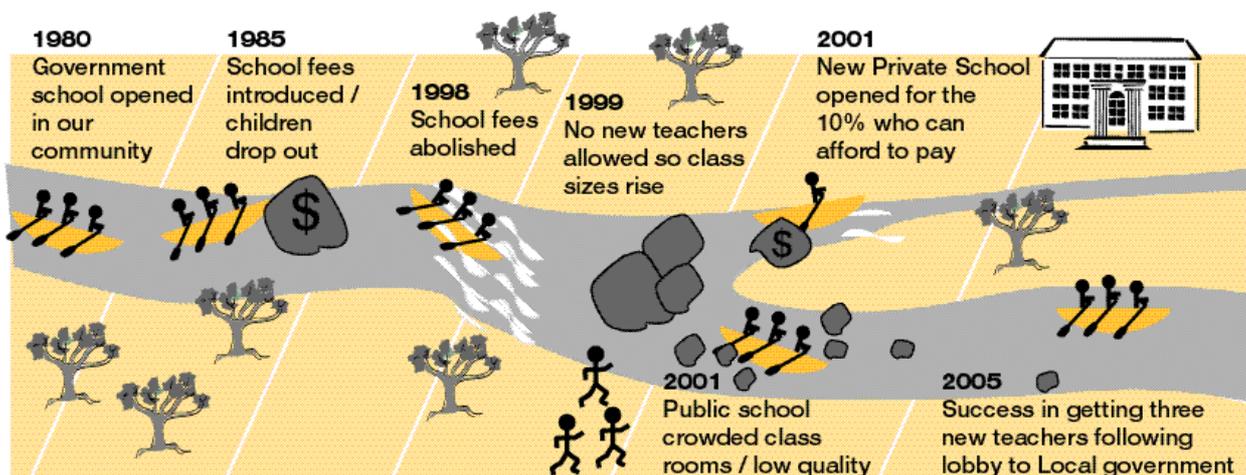
## Analysing data

Raw data is relatively meaningless, you will need to spend some time reviewing the information you have collected and collating it into a useful format.

Your starting point for data analysis will be to ask what the data shows, reflecting on whether it answers the questions you developed when planning the data collection, and mapping the results back to the original questions you asked. You should then ask:

- Does the data show what we expected it to show? How does it differ? Why might this be? Is there other information we should be looking for to check our assumptions and conclusions?
- In what ways could we use this data? Does it tell us anything about other areas of education which we weren't specifically looking for?

If you worked with with a range of people at the data collection stage, it may be useful to work with them to analyse data from their different perspectives. This serves two purposes, to enhance understanding about how perspective influences how you 'read' information, and to ensure that you have considered the range of issues which your data could show.



## Compiling data

How you compile the data will depend on your audience and what you are trying to show. If you are planning to use the data in a meeting with government officials or elected representatives (or other policy makers and funders) you will need to make the data 'speak their language'. This often means expressing the data as statistical information, using tables, graphs and charts. In some contexts, a written brief may help, in others a flipchart or an overhead projector presentation will be sufficient, or it might be more appropriate to use a power-point presentation, or even a video.

Alternatively if you are using the data to increase awareness and interest in education issues or to encourage debate, you might express the data in poster format or through dramatisation. It is very important to be clear about your key points and conclusions, not to overload people with background information and to be concise.

## Developing monitoring systems

School supervision and monitoring is necessary to ensure good education quality. In most countries the local government or DEO is expected to play a monitoring role for schools in its area. Unfortunately, this is not always very effective, as the offices may be overstretched and transport difficult. For example, the zonal coordinator in Samburu, Kenya, commented that she had been given a motorbike by the DEO in order to facilitate her movements. But women in Samburu do not ride on motorbikes – if she were to turn up to a community on the bike they would not take her seriously.

Therefore, there is often a need for alternative systems of monitoring, which are valued and supported by the DEOs office. The SMC can play an important role in this – using indicators developed to measure quality education (see table, page 174) and tracking their own school performance against these indicators. The SMC could monitor education

quality over time and report on this regularly to the DEO or local government, who have the responsibility to act on the results of the monitoring. This might include action on a range of issues, including teacher capacity building, instituting financial management systems, reviewing the curriculum, etc.

### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## UGANDA

Breaking away from the usual tradition of adults doing things on behalf of children, the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), in partnership with other local NGOs and with the support of CEF and Save the Children, organised primary school children to monitor the implementation of the Ugandan universal primary education programme. The aim of the project was two-fold: to enable children to claim their right to participate in reviewing the UPE programme; and to make recommendations to make the programme more relevant, better focused and result oriented. Activities and processes in a total of 72 schools nationwide were monitored by children.

The monitoring was done through school visits, observations and interviews. The children shared their findings and recommendations with stakeholders in a planning workshop held in Kampala in June 2005. Issues included school meals, UPE funds, time management by teachers and pupils, readiness to teach by teachers, teacher-pupil relationship, curriculum, school attendance and school facilities. Speaking during the forum, Mr. Nyombi Tembo, Minister of State for Primary Education, said, *'Children's participation in the primary education arena should be institutionalised. This would help to highlight issues affecting children on a regular basis'*.

## Using data for future planning

In Section Three the importance of information for budget allocation was highlighted. The indicators identified here are crucially important in ensuring that education systems are well planned and funded. For example, if quality education requires teachers trained for three years, and teaching in classes of 40 or less, this needs to be funded. If linguistic minorities need textbooks in their own language this also has cost implications, as does revising textbooks if they are culturally stereotyped and reinforcing of prejudice and discrimination.

There are various ways the data could be used: to show the additional investment needed to achieve quality education; to argue for investment in specific aspects of education; or to support design of a system which respects rights in education. This might also include planning in response to changes in circumstances. For

example, what additional capacity is needed to respond to the impact of HIV and AIDS.

Using data in this way will require relationship building, advocacy and campaigning work at school, local and national levels (and even internationally, for targeting UNESCO or bi- and multi-lateral donors), influencing the range of education stakeholders to integrate these indicators into their planning and evaluation systems. It might also be useful to 'cost' these different indicators, suggesting what the financial implication of rights in education might be. This will involve accessing a range of different information, in some cases you will be able to use current products to estimate costs, in others you may need to look at a range of different data to develop a suggested price, based on what you consider to be realistic and fair. The impact of this policy-influencing work could then be monitored using the same indicators and approaches as discussed above.

### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## BRAZIL

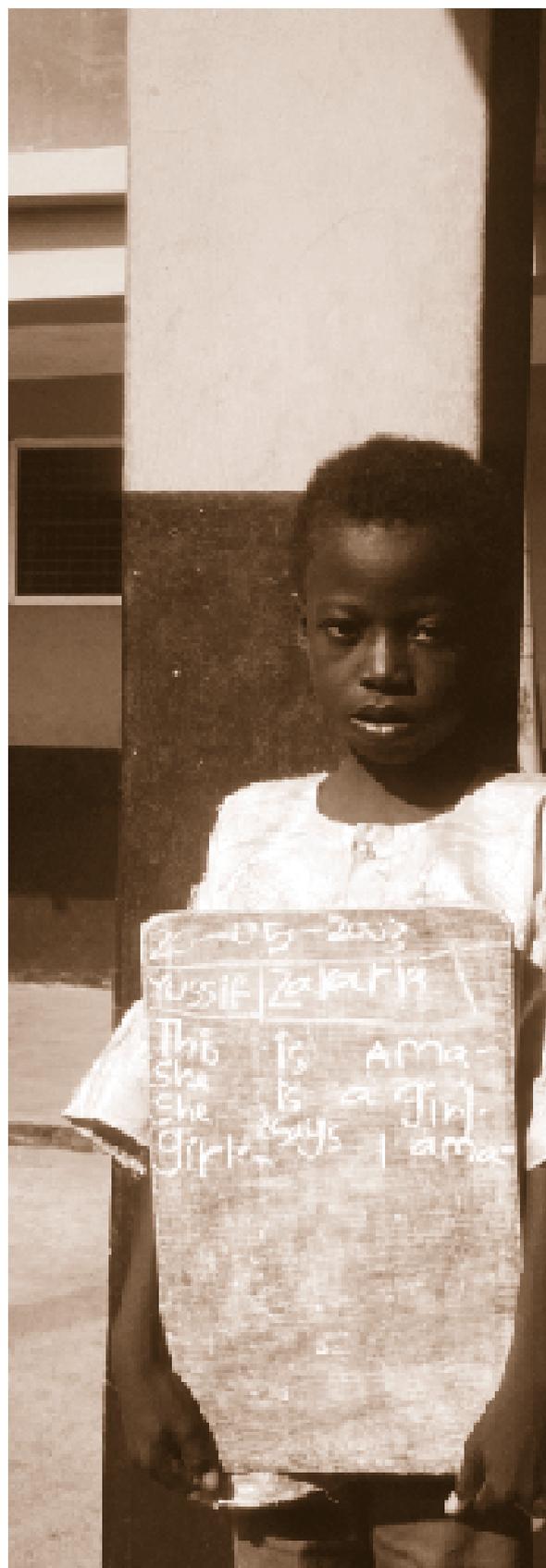
### The cost of quality education

The Brazilian Constitution recognises the right to education, and guarantees certain minimum quality standards. Moreover, since 2001 legislation regarding the financing of education has referred to 'Quality Cost per student', a term which suggests the minimum investment needed per child per year in order to achieve quality education. However, while the term is included in legislation the government has never explored or quantified the quality cost. The National Campaign for the Right to education therefore coordinated a series of workshops and debates to define and quantify the quality cost per student. National and local NGOs, teachers' unions, education councils, social movements, academics and municipal secretaries of education discussed their understanding of quality education, drawing on a framework provided by the Campaign. This framework drew on three fundamental components: inputs (infrastructure, education professionals, access to school, democratic governance); equity (gender, ethnic and racial disparities, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and age) and; cross cutting dimensions (including environmental and aesthetic considerations).

Following agreement on the concept of quality education the Campaign facilitated a process to cost the key elements for the different stages of Basic Education (early childhood, primary and secondary education), looking also at the different groups of people involved in the stages of education (for example adult learners, special needs, rural education). Based on the discussions of quality actors are now able to demand for further investment in education at all levels. More specifically, during the recent process of approval of the new financing legislation for basic education the campaign raised quality cost per student in formal parliament sessions, and demanded further financial support from the federal government

# Putting rights in education into practice

➤ This sub-section deals with a series of issues that could be considered under the rights in education banner. It is not comprehensive, but it gives a flavour of the range of issues which might be relevant, as well as some of the strategies which could be used to challenge rights in education. It is important to note that work on rights in education is supported by a range of international conventions, such as The Convention on the Rights of the Child, The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (web addresses given, page 48). For example, article 10 (c) of CEDAW refers explicitly to the elimination of stereotyped gender roles in textbooks and school programmes, and 10 (h) mentions the need for health and family planning information. In the CRC, article 24.2 (e) refers to the need for appropriate measures to ensure parents and children have access to basic health and nutrition information and 24.2(f) mentions family planning education. In addition, Article 13.2 (e) of the ICESCR recognises that the 'material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved'. These pieces of international law can be used to guide your research work and support your advocacy and influencing efforts on rights and education.



Stuart Freedman / ActionAid

# HIV and education

The impact of HIV and AIDS on education, especially in Africa, is huge. There is the direct impact of the pandemic on teachers, children and their family, which can have a severe effect on the quality of education offered as well as children's ability to access schooling. But there is also the impact education can have on the pandemic. Just completing primary education can reduce an individual's vulnerability to HIV, while good quality HIV education can raise awareness regarding prevention and care, as well as equipping young people with the skills and confidence to protect themselves against the virus.

However, the impact of HIV education depends on how it is taught in school, where it is located in the school curriculum and what types of learning pedagogy are used. It is also important to recognise that HIV education cannot achieve everything. HIV is a highly gendered disease whose spread is facilitated by unequal power relations, poverty and vulnerability. While HIV education can make an individual more aware of the risks they face, and more able to negotiate safe sex there is need for a wider societal change if poor and marginalised people (especially women) are to be able to assert their sexual and reproductive health rights.<sup>34</sup>

While the benefits of school-based sexual reproductive health education in the fight against HIV are widely recognised, many countries and communities struggle with HIV education. An ActionAid study in Kenya and India<sup>35</sup> asked:

## ▶▶ Girl power:

- Schools and teachers are the most trusted source for young people to learn about HIV, and school attendance ensures greater understanding of prevention messages. It also strengthens girls' control, confidence and negotiating abilities to decide if to have sex, and when they do, whether to use a condom.
- Peer group solidarity within school strengthens girls' social networks and creates more responsible attitudes to sexual behaviour, safer sex and HIV.
- Conversely, girls who drop out of school are more likely to enter into adult sexual networks, where older partners with more experience and power dictate the 'rules' of sexual engagement.
- Poverty and vulnerability to HIV are closely linked. More educated women have better economic and social prospects and consequently have more choices.

Conclusions from J. Hargreaves and T Boler, *Girl Power: The impact of girls' education on HIV and sexual behaviour*, (London: ActionAid, 2006).

- What is the parental and community demand for school-based HIV education?
- What role do schools have in teaching young people about HIV?
- How is HIV education being taught in the classroom?
- What obstacles are there to the delivery of school-based HIV education?

It found that while teachers in both areas believed that they had a responsibility to teach young people about HIV and AIDS their efforts are undermined by:

- perceived parental disapproval;
- religious barriers (particularly in Kenya);
- underlying attitudes that HIV only happens to 'them' and not 'us';
- social and cultural restraints in discussing HIV, sexual relations and power inequalities;
- the wider crisis in education, including huge classes, packed curricula and a lack of training opportunities and learning materials.
- large numbers of out-of-school children who will not be reached by school-based HIV education.

<sup>34</sup> Note issues of orphans and vulnerable children in relation to education access are considered in Section Two.

<sup>35</sup> See T. Boler, *The Sound of Silence: Difficulties in communicating on HIV/AIDS in schools, experiences from India and Kenya*, (London: ActionAid, 2003).

This often leads to 'selective teaching' which can mean HIV is not discussed at all, or that it is tackled from a scientific perspective, without reference to sex or sexual relationships.

In a further study by the GCE,<sup>36</sup> it was found that only two out of 18 countries reviewed had developed coherent education-sector HIV and AIDS strategies. In many countries the perception was that HIV curricula were 'donor-driven' with a lack of investment in teacher training, learning materials or a proper integration of HIV into the broader national curriculum. Also, many of these countries suffer from teacher shortages and overloaded curricula, meaning that HIV modules are often ignored.

Transforming HIV education cannot be done by looking at one part of the education system in isolation, issues of teacher training, curricula, education financing and education policy need to be considered collectively, along with issues which impact on education – such as local culture, gender relations and poverty.

While civil society groups could not be involved in HIV education directly, they should work with key education stakeholders to ensure that appropriate teaching materials and pedagogy are developed; that teachers have the necessary capacity and that the local community can deal with and respond to HIV education. This involves building positive relationships with government and involvement in advocacy and influencing work, to encourage government to take a more integrated and empowering approach to HIV education. Key stakeholders who need to be involved in strengthening HIV education are:

- **the government** – for investment in HIV and education, to develop teacher training courses and appropriate HIV curricula (locating it clearly within the curriculum), and responding to national and local cultural needs in designing and delivering HIV education);
- **the teachers** – to build their confidence and capacity to discuss HIV and related cultural, social, sexual and gender issues;
- **the local community** – to support HIV education in schools, and challenge the wider contexts, especially local traditions and gender relations which increase vulnerability to HIV;
- **the students** – to increase their knowledge about prevention, care, support and treatment, and their ability to protect themselves against the virus.

#### **HIV education – pedagogy:**

There is much debate about the best way to teach HIV, and where to locate it in the curriculum. While HIV is a virus, and there are scientific facts which can be learnt about the disease, learning these facts will do little to prevent the spread of the disease. The social dimension of the virus needs to be understood, as do the range of ways to protect oneself against contracting HIV. However, it is also well-known that knowledge of how to prevent HIV is not enough to ensure that people change their sexual behaviour. There are complex power and gender relations which mean that many women are not able to choose when to have sex, or protect themselves against sexually-transmitted diseases. In addition there are a range of cultural and social issues which affect men and women and make behaviour change very difficult. The following are key methodologies to be used in HIV education. Local groups, national NGOs and education coalitions could campaign to integrate these ways of teaching and learning into HIV curricula, and teacher training:

<sup>36</sup> T. Boler and A. Jellema, *Deadly Inertia: A cross-country study of educational responses to HIV/AIDS*, (London: ActionAid, 2005).

- **Life-skills:** The recognition that information does not lead to behaviour transformation has led many people to invest in a life-skills agenda. This is based on the assumption that if people learn certain skills, such as assertiveness or communication, they are then more able to apply what they learn about HIV and reduce their vulnerability to it. But life-skills themselves need to be developed with recognition of context, of the '*mutability of sexual identity, behaviour and meanings, which vary considerably from culture to culture as well as over time*'.<sup>37</sup>

Such an approach suggests a flexible HIV curriculum which can be adapted as it is implemented at local level. However, it also suggests the need for a curriculum which strengthens children's and young people's ability to assert their sexual and reproductive rights, including the ability to negotiate safe sex. This behaviour cannot be taught and learnt, through memorising facts and figures, it needs a participatory approach, which supports students to reflect on their current experiences (sexual and social), to share and analyse these, and look at how they might behave differently next time.

- **Peer education:** Talking about sex is difficult, but it can help if young people are encouraged to talk with their peers, people who have had similar life experiences and have similar contexts and expectations. Peer education can take place within the formal school setting, for example, as lunchtime clubs, or on a one-to-one basis with peer mentors.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### ETHIOPIA

Work in **Ethiopia** has focused on establishing HIV clubs, run by volunteer students who take a role in coordinating and mobilising students against the epidemic. The club members are given initial and ongoing training on HIV, as well as on leadership and peer-counselling skills. In addition, mini-media centres have been established as a way of disseminating information to support the work of the clubs. During the flag raising ceremony, songs about HIV are sung as a way of raising awareness across the student body. The initiative also uses competition to engage children in discussing HIV, rewarding those who get the most answers right. The drama club has developed plays through which the 'what' and 'how' of the epidemic is illustrated to students and parents at public gatherings. The school clubs also promote awareness-raising activities around the local community, distributing posters, brochures and leaflets (collected from government and other NGOs), and erecting tents and using microphones on the pavements of main streets, to share ideas with passers-by.

Through this work they have also been looking at the 'danger spots' in the community, encouraging chat shops, video shops and bars to move away from the school area. The clubs have networked with women's associations, health institutions and CSOs working against the epidemic. Although the struggle still continues and behaviour change is a slow process, the clubs have raised awareness of HIV, and how to prevent it. They have also started to challenge the stigma, and a large number of students have developed positive attitudes towards people with HIV. The club members themselves have developed new confidence, leadership and communication skills, as well as a sense of group spirit, mutual understanding and tolerance.

<sup>37</sup> Boler, T and Aggleton, P: *Life skills education for HIV Prevention: a critical analysis* (London, Save the Children and ActionAid International, 2005)

## »» Abstinence education

Abstinence education promotes a delay in sexual intercourse until marriage, and assumes that within marriage husbands and wives will be completely faithful to each other. It stands in contrast to comprehensive education strategies, which aim to give young people information and skills to make choices about when to have sexual relations, and with whom. While most advocates of comprehensive HIV education concur with the aim of delaying sexual activity, they argue that the link to marriage is based on specific religious beliefs. They point out that abstinence campaigns often use misinformation, and can be dangerous in the long run, as the guilt promoted through the campaigns can stop teenagers seeking the support they need. In addition, abstinence-only education violates a series of human rights:

- The right to the highest attainable standard of health;
- The right to life;
- The right to seek and impart information of all kinds;
- The right to non-discrimination;
- The right to freedom of speech.

In recent years, abstinence education has received considerable funding, especially from the USA through the \$15 billion PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) fund. This has negatively impacted on various aspects of the response to HIV, not least undermining the language of rights, withdrawing condoms and other reproductive health services and threatening the sovereignty of national governments to promote the type of HIV education they choose. The discourse of narrow morality is not only an abuse of young people's rights, but current research shows is also likely to lead to poorer sexual health outcomes. For example, research in Uganda<sup>38</sup> has shown that while they followed the ABC process of education (Abstinence, Be faithful, use a Condom) prevalence rates fell. But the recent move to abstinence-only education has actually led to an increase of infection rates.

**Participatory methodologies:** As suggested above, behaviour change is not something that can be learnt. Rather it is something that needs to be reflected on, analysed and recreated through active decision-making of those involved. This suggests the need for participatory approaches, which can support young people through a structured analysis and action planning process.

One such participatory approach is called STAR<sup>39</sup>. It is a human-rights approach that facilitates and supports the active participation of people and communities, affected by HIV and AIDS in the fight against the virus itself, as well as its social and economic impacts. STAR addresses issues of HIV from a perspective of

gender, power relations, communication, rights and development. It uses a range of different participatory tools, including PRA graphics, theatre for development tools and behaviour-change tools. Although experience with STAR has mainly been with adolescent and adult groups, there are some examples of how the approach has been adapted for use in school, in Mozambique and Ghana.

STAR enables people to reflect on their attitudes and behaviour within the safety of their peer groups, questioning the reasons for their behaviour, and looking at the power dynamics that influence it. It recognises that cultural, social and economic realities distort behaviour change interventions designed and

<sup>38</sup> Beatrice Were, *Positive Nation*, London 2006

<sup>39</sup> For more information on STAR see the 'STAR implementation guide', forthcoming in 2007, available from Pamoja: pamoja@infocom.co.ug

## REFLECT & ANALYSE

### ►► Examples of tools for reflection on behaviour

**Mime the lie** involves miming an action, for example washing some clothes, and when you are asked what you are doing stating that you are doing something completely different, for example cooking dinner. This continues around the group. At the end of the exercise the group discusses the difference between what we say we are doing, and what we actually do, and thinks of examples of when this happens in everyday life. Reflecting on why we might do this is a first step to behaviour change.

**Fixed position** enables people to reflect on their own prejudice; looking at an issue from their own perspective, and then re-examining it from different perspectives, therefore challenging participants on the assumptions they make.

**Testing the water** is a tool for testing behaviour in different situations; looking at the impact the behaviour might have, so that people can take active decisions about how they would like to behave. Using the analogy of getting into cold water participants reflect on whether they are more likely to run and jump in (plunger), get in slowly (wader), dip their toe in and decide whether to get in (tester) or stand, contemplating the surrounding considering what to do next (delayer)? Participants then collectively reflect on the good and bad things about each type of behaviour, and individually think about what sort of person they are generally, or what circumstances lead to them changing their behaviour. More general discussion can look at what sort of conflict arise when people with different types of behaviour interact, and why people might adopt different approaches.

These tools are all detailed A. Welbourn: *Stepping Stones: a training package on HIV/AIDS, communication and relationship skills* (Strategies for Hope Training Series No. 1, Oxford: 1995).

implemented from outside. These realities can prevent people from changing their behaviour even when they have the information and intention to do so. However, by locating HIV within the wider picture, and encouraging people to explore issues of gender, poverty, development and rights, STAR supports individuals and groups to transform their behaviour. This happens through linking individual and group learning, reflection, analysis and action to wider processes of change, occurring at every level. Through this in-depth analysis, participants are able to develop strategies for influencing the local and wider context so that they are more able to carry through personal behaviour change.

Starting from personal reflection, the STAR process takes a specific issue, such as sexual and reproductive health, or orphans and

vulnerable children, or stigma and discrimination, and uses a series of participatory tools to enable peer groups to reflect on their personal experiences, knowledge, questions and relationship to the issue in question. Following individual reflection and peer group discussion, participants are supported to explore the links between the issue and vulnerability to HIV. This is taken further by exploring the wider context, looking at what other issues might be relevant or related, and the impact of context on specific behaviour and choice. Groups are then support in planning for action, building on the analysis and discussion, and accessing additional information to help focus the action more strategically. A final stage is to reflect on learning acquired during the reflection and analysis process and from the action itself. This enables groups to identify possible future topics, or further information and action on the topic in question.

### **HIV and teacher training:**

If teachers are to provide good quality HIV education, and be able to discuss issues of sexual reproductive health effectively they need to be well supported and have their capacity built. If a teacher is under-confident about their ability to deal with the complex issues associated with HIV they are likely to

avoid tackling it, leaving children mal-informed and without the skills they need to prevent the further spread of the pandemic. This suggests that HIV education should be integrated into teacher training, at all levels.

It is important to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to explore how HIV education can be integrated into teacher training (see example, page 210). Drawing on some of the methodologies described above, civil society groups (those interested in education, and those focused on HIV) should work with the government to develop teacher-training modules which can be introduced into the training curriculum. It might be that you pilot the curriculum in one or two colleges and draw lessons from this experience before scaling up the work across the country. The modules should draw on any local experiences and support a participatory approach to HIV education, exploring issues of gender, power, communication and sexual and reproductive health rights. The training should enable teachers to talk confidently about sex and HIV, be aware of how their own lessons and behaviour might be reinforcing negative gender stereotypes, and understand how to integrate sessions on HIV and gender into their teaching plans. It will also be important to support teachers in their first year of teaching HIV. This can be done by encouraging peer support between teachers in school, as well as through supervision visits which can be used to discuss any challenges. It will be important to work with the local government or district education office, to ensure that they are able to provide appropriate support.

### **HIV and teachers:**

In 1999 alone, 860,000 African children lost a teacher to AIDS, at a time when there was only about one teacher for every 59 students. In Uganda, the International Labour Organization estimates that more than 50 per cent of all teachers are living with HIV. Tanzania loses 100 primary school teachers every month to AIDS. The impact of HIV on teachers is clear, and yet to-date there has been little emphasis on how to deal with the impact of HIV on teachers, and how to support teachers living with HIV.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### KENYA

KENEPOTE, the Kenya Network of HIV-Positive Teachers, was established in 2003. By September 2005, it had over 1,500 members, and support groups in 16 districts, with representatives in all eight Kenyan provinces.

HIV-positive teachers face denial, shame, stigma and discrimination. In some cases they are stripped of their duties, or transferred to different schools against their wishes. They might be ridiculed by students, fellow teachers and parents, denied time-off work to attend clinics, and given heavy work loads which force them to resign prematurely. All of these actions are an abuse of teachers' rights.

KENEPOTE aspires to create an environment where teachers with HIV are free from stigma and discrimination, and have access to information, education, care and treatment. It builds the capacity of its members to take part in advocacy for the rights of HIV-positive teachers, as well as giving them psychosocial support and skills. It also gives support to orphans and vulnerable children.

Through its media and outreach work, including TV and radio interviews, and relationship building with employers and teachers' unions KENEPOTE has been able to raise awareness of the human-rights violations occurring, and mobilise people across the country. Recently four radio broadcasts have featured stories where teachers have disclosed their status, and been supported by the school. The stories have been followed by a live call-in show, where a guest speaker answers questions from the listening audience. The radio shows were produced following a two-day workshop which brought together journalists and KENEPOTE member teachers.

Work in this area, at the **local** level includes:

- Ensuring that schools have knowledge of national policies on HIV-positive teachers; and have developed their own policies if appropriate.
- Engaging with SMCs to ensure that there are appropriate support structures for teachers that are HIV-positive, so that they are able to disclose their status, access voluntary counselling and testing services and be supported in the community. This could include wider community education and discussion on HIV, stigma and discrimination.
- Ensuring that systems are in place to cope with absenteeism and teacher mortality – this could include temporary measures, such as multi-grade teaching, with advocacy and lobbying at local level to get additional teaching support.
- Gather information about the impact of HIV on education, as well as the way HIV-positive teachers are viewed by the local population and school which can be used to further understanding of the issues, and for wider advocacy and campaigning.

Work at **national** level includes:

- Advocacy with government to ensure that legislation is passed to protect the rights of teachers.
- Linking to HIV coalitions, and supporting the development of positive teachers' networks such as the one in Kenya (see box).
- Work with teachers' unions to help them secure a fair deal for HIV-positive teachers.
- Advocacy with government to provide appropriate treatment and care to HIV-positive teachers.
- Collation of local level research and translation of this into policy positioning and recommendations.

It could also be important to look at education budgets and expenditure on HIV education and HIV-positive teachers as a way of understanding how committed a government is to tackling the issues.

### **HIV and the wider community:**

If children are to be able to use their skills and knowledge acquired through HIV education, and teachers are to have their rights respected, there is a need for wider education work, involving the whole community. While this may not be the main focus of your work on rights in education, it is important to consider how the community members, especially traditional leaders and parents, can be involved in supporting HIV education. This could be through involving them in a STAR process or using adaptations of the teacher-training modules to involve the wider community. The SMC could play a central role in this.

Another powerful technique is Memory Work, originally developed in NACWOLA in Uganda and now used across Africa. Centring on the 'Memory Book' the process works with a wide range of community members, supporting them to produce Memory Books which detail family information, knowledge and experiences and act as a basis to enable parents and guardians to discuss HIV with their children.<sup>40</sup> The work has had significant impact on communication in the family as well as decreasing stigma and discrimination in the wider community.

▶ Policies promoted by the IMF (see **Section Three**, page 122) such as cost-sharing, and caps on public sector spending impact directly on a government's ability to confront HIV problems. For example, user fees are particularly problematic for orphans and vulnerable children, who may have no financial means to meet these costs. The caps on public sector wage bill give rise to serious problems as governments try and deal with the impact of HIV-positive teachers. These teachers may be off sick for considerable amounts of time, and yet the government is not able to bring in substitute teachers as this would increase the wage bill. This means governments are left with the choice of abusing teachers rights, through denying them sick-pay, or accepting a reduction in teachers and therefore a lower quality of education for children.

<sup>40</sup> see [www.healthlink.org.uk](http://www.healthlink.org.uk) for more information.

# Violence against girls in school

Another key issue in rights in education concerns violence against girls (VAG). VAG is a lived reality for many girls around the world. The violence is not only a direct infringement of girls' rights (for example it is in direct contravention to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW), it also plays a role in denying girls the right to education. It is one of the major causes of drop-out among girls. And *'the stakes are now higher than ever, as gender inequality and violence exacerbate vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. In many countries, the HIV and AIDS prevalence rate is high in younger women. Challenging violence in this context can really be a matter or saving lives'*.<sup>41</sup> Violence includes rape, sexual harassment, intimidation, teasing and threats. It may occur on the way to school or within the school itself, and is perpetuated by teachers and fellow students.

Statistics about the prevalence of VAG are hard to find, it remains under-reported and largely unaddressed, both because of the difficulty of researching the issue, but also because of the widespread cultural acceptance of it. However, work by the Human Rights Watch (HRW) indicates prevalence of VAG in most South African schools, and research by Community Information Empowerment and Transparency revealed that one in three girls in South Africa experiences sexual harassment, of whom only 36 per cent report it.

HRW research suggests that girls who experience VAG become physically and emotionally traumatised, and can often suffer from low self-esteem, anger, depression, anxiety, guilt and hopelessness. This all has a negative impact on their education. What's more, girls who report VAG often experience secondary victimisation by teachers and parents. Schools are complicit in violence as

**EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE**

## MALAWI

A story workshop in Malawi was conducted over a six-week period, bringing together policy makers, teachers, parents and girls to discuss experiences about VAG. Three types of violence were identified:

- Violence, including sexual violence, from teachers;
- Violence from parents not valuing girls' education, placing household chores above schoolwork;
- Violence from fellow students in school and on the way to and from school.

The discussions led to a number of key messages aimed at different audiences:

- **To girls:** no matter what, stay in school and report the wrongdoings of teachers.
- **To parents:** being supportive is key, girls should collaborate with the PTA to educate their parents to play this role.
- **To other students:** violence from you cannot be tolerated, and girls should support each other to prevent it, reporting any violence to teachers.
- **To parents, teachers and policy makers:** do not let girls down, become the proud parents of well-educated daughters and the proud teachers of a safe and secure classroom. Do it for yourself, your children, your students and for Malawi.

they fail to discipline perpetrators, denying abuse and fostering an authoritarian culture. This is reinforced by the patriarchal power relations which dominate in society, enabling the physical, sexual and psychological violence, which women experience throughout their life in private and public to continue.

<sup>41</sup> Sustainable Strategies to End Violence Against Girls in Schools, Conference Report OSISA and ActionAid International, 2006.

As noted in **Section Two**, issues which impact on girls' ability to access schooling cannot be tackled in isolation. There is a need to be aware of how discrimination operates at national and local levels and work holistically on these issues. This means involving men and women, boys and girls to tackle violence against girls in schools.

Work to combat VAG has three main objectives:

1. To make **government accountable for violence against girls at school and in society**;
2. To **raise consciousness** on violence against girls and support girls to recognise, report, cope and combat abuse, and claim their right to education free of violence;
3. To **encourage fundamental reform** to education systems to make schools safer places for girls – places where they are treated equally and where gender prejudices and norms are challenged.

### What to do at local level:

A good first step is to look at where violence occurs and work to make the school a physically safe environment. This could include working with young people to **map out** the danger spots, analyse why they are dangerous, and develop strategies to minimise risk. Another initiative is to **raise awareness** about violence in the community and generate critical debate. In many places this has led to involving a range of stakeholders, including local leaders, lawyers and the police, as well as parents, teachers and children. This helps to ensure that where violence does occur girls are encouraged to **report the violence**, that this reporting is acted on, and that **appropriate support** is offered. This could include looking at how to link with the DEO to remove teachers who abuse their power. It is also important to create spaces for girls to come together, to share experiences and build confidence to individually and collectively resist violence and claim their rights – for example through school-based **girl's clubs**. Further work could include developing **charters** summarising the right of girls to an education free from



In early 2004 ActionAid International conducted research on violence against girls in schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Vietnam. The research showed that the violence faced in and around schools was a significant factor in forcing girls out of the education system. Examples that were highlighted included:

- Sexual harassment in the school environment by education staff, teachers and boys.
- Girls being employed as child labour, bearing the main burden of housework and taking on the role of caring for younger siblings, impacting girls' performance and attendance in schools, and resulting in physical and mental fatigue, absenteeism and poor performance.
- Corporal punishment and public shaming by school authorities and teachers, which perpetuates the cycle of absenteeism, low self-esteem and violence at home and in schools.
- Patriarchal practices, cultures and traditional hindrances, such as early marriages.
- Poverty leading to vulnerability to trafficking and transactional sex, especially with older men.
- Limits to the mobility of girls and fear of violence on the route to school which makes it impossible for girls even to reach schools.
- The exclusion of girls who are married (even where they have been forced into early marriages against their will).
- The exclusion of girls who are pregnant.

violence (see example from Tanzania below), and displaying these as posters in the local area; a further action involves linking to local teacher training colleges to integrate training and learning material on VAG.

## GIRLS CHARTER AGAINST VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

For me, the level of violence in schools is the key indicator of quality and a key factor in determining whether girls like me go to school.



I should not have to pay to go to school and any costs that stop me from being able to participate equally should be removed. I should have access to free education up until the age of 18.



My teachers and other adults in the school should treat me the same as boys. They should respect me, have the same high expectations and hear my voice equally with the voice of boys (even if I don't shout as loud).



If I am touched in a bad way, harassed or abused I need to be able to complain confidentially (either to an adult counselor who I trust or through a free phone line).



I respect my teachers BUT if one abuses me they must be punished, taken to court and never allowed to teach again in any other school.



I should have separate toilet facilities that are clean and safe and I should be protected when I use them.



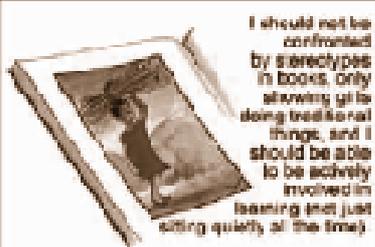
My teachers should be trained to stop discrimination, prejudice and bullying and to challenge these things whenever they see happening.



I should be able to get to and from school safely (and it should be the school's responsibility to ensure this)



I should not be confronted by stereotypes in books, only allowing girls to do traditional things, and I should be able to be actively involved in learning (not just sitting quietly at the time).



My parents should not be allowed to take me out of school for early marriage. I need to learn about sex so that I am less likely to get pregnant when I am young - but if I do get pregnant schools should not automatically throw me out (or should have to arrange for me to be able to carry on learning somehow).



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## ▶▶ Tackling Violence Against Girls at the Local Level

Tackling violence against girls involves work in two key areas – within the school and with the wider community. This involves the following key aspects:

### Within the school

- Create a school environment that recognises and protects the rights of the children – through training on child rights for teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) and institution of regulations to prevent violence.
- Support School Councils (SCs), and girls’ and boys’ groups to take a strong position on the prevention and condemnation of violence against girls in education. These groups should combat violence in school, and participate in decision-making processes at local, district and provincial level government.
- Create space and climate in schools where girls can report violence and claim their rights (to end the impunity to perpetrators, instead supporting the survivors of violence).
- Introduce life skills teaching for children in schools to build their capacity to protect themselves from abuse as well as to better cope with abuse.
- Develop teachers’ capacity to detect signs of abuse and provide support to survivors of sexual abuse.
- Introduce human rights education in school curricula to enable children to recognise and report signs and cases of abuse, and to strengthen girls’ capacity to exercise their rights.
- Support girls to organise and record their experiences and demands in Girls’ Education Charters.

### Within the Community

- Raise public concern and awareness on violence against girls as a structural barrier to girl’s education.
- Build capacity of communities, health officials, the police and other professionals to effectively respond to abuse, including prevention, detection, and support in the event of abuse.
- Advocate for change of attitudes, practices within the community to condemn violence against girls.
- Support CSOs and grassroots groups to campaign against sexual violence, rape, early marriages, and to ensure perpetrators of violence are prosecuted.
- Encourage CSOs to demand for funding for girls’ education, and popularise anti-violence policies inside and outside the schools.
- Support the establishment of community based monitoring systems to involve communities monitoring levels of violence and other factors impacting on girls access to and completion of education.

### What to do at national level:

Discussing VAG is often difficult, many societies will not recognise the issue, or even belittle and condone violence. Therefore a key element of work at the national level is to open up debate on the issues and work to ensure that there are laws and policies in place that condemn and criminalise violence against girls. The first target is to get education coalitions to take this issue seriously, and think through a range of actions which will increase knowledge, awareness and interest in the issue. This will include events such as the international '16 days of activism against gender violence', linking with diverse women's organisations and raising public awareness; and initiating research to show the **impact of VAG on girls' education**, through collecting quantitative information or personal testimonies, which could be used as test cases (see **Section One**) to prosecute those who perpetuate VAG. It will also be important to work with government on legislative issues, drawing on the 'Model Policy' to develop national policies preventing VAG (see box overleaf). Work at this level could also include developing further teacher training and materials on VAG for use in schools.

As the Model Policy shows, different stakeholders have key responsibilities in ending VAG. It will be key to target any action at the range of different stakeholders, working with them to develop the awareness, skills and capacity to play their roles, as well as accountability mechanisms to ensure obligations are completed. This will include a mixture of collaboration and capacity building, as well as strategies for publicly exposing those who allow VAG to continue.



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

## Model Policy on the Prevention, Management and Elimination of Violence against Girls in Schools

The policy, developed by a group of education policy experts, civil society activists, teachers' unions and women's rights activists is designed to help Southern African Development Community governments (although it can be drawn on more broadly) develop an integrated policy on VAG. It can be adapted and used at national level to develop suitable national policies.

By linking to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and CEDAW, the policy is located within the international rights obligations agreed to by national governments. It aims to *'engender respect for girls' rights to and in education in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Education For All goals'*.

The policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of diverse stakeholders in five key areas: prevention; reporting and identification; dealing with perpetrators; assisting survivors and capacity building. For example:

- **Government and ministries:** will ensure legislation is consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; legislate, provide and enforce the right to compulsory and free basic education; ensure curriculum and learning materials are gender sensitive and do not depict gender stereotypes; outlaw practices which prevent girls from accessing education; provide policy guidelines for all schools to develop policies against VAG, integrate training on VAG for all teachers, develop coordination mechanisms between schools and other government bodies, make VAG a chargeable offence and provide enforcement mechanisms. They will also collect sex-disaggregated information on violence in schools on a regular basis, and use various media to raise awareness of the issues and the need to eradicate VAG, and provide resources to schools to facilitate re-entry of pregnant and violated girls.
- **Schools and institutions:** will develop school or institution specific policy, subject to approval by the Ministry of Education and framed in a language understood by all local stakeholders; use a participatory process (involving learners, teachers and parents) to develop a code of conduct to define VAG and protect girls against VAG; ensure penalties for VAG; create reporting procedures for VAG; and provide medical, psychosocial and other support for survivors of violence.

The policy also describes the roles of school management committees, teachers and teachers' unions. 'Making the Grade' full policy available from: [www.actionaid.org/323/education.html](http://www.actionaid.org/323/education.html)

# Making schools safe

There are a range of different areas covered by the concept safe. Firstly, there is the school building itself. Is the building stable? Is it appropriate for the local environment? Is it flood resistant? Will it remain standing in an

earthquake? Secondly, there are issues of individual safety in school, building on the violence against girls work as described earlier. Here, issues will also include violence against boys and between boys, as well as issues of corporal punishment, which exists in many places. For example, in **South Africa**, a group of young people decided to challenge the existence of corporal punishment in their school, and involved the school governing body, the student council

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### MALAWI

Malawi has a history of extreme climate-related events, and over the last few years these have been occurring more regularly. Many areas are drought prone and there are frequent food shortages, and these disasters inevitably impact on education. For example, the school is often used as a shelter to accommodate people displaced by floods, or families are temporarily relocated and pupils are not re-enrolled on returning. Learning in schools also suffers due to prolonged absenteeism by students who are displaced or are forced to work in order to help their families with basic needs.

ActionAid Malawi is working with pupils, parents and teachers, school management committees and local institutions, including village development committees and area civil protection committees (responsible for emergencies and disaster response and mitigation) involving them in a participatory approach to explore vulnerability, and enabling them to plan to reduce their risk to disaster. Through making the most of the potential of schools to help communities be involved in disaster risk reduction, the project focuses on making schools safer. Strategies for disaster preparedness and mitigation are embedded in the school curriculum. The project's ultimate aim is to influence national policy and ensure the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (UN plan aimed at reducing casualties and damage caused by natural disasters) within education processes.

The communities of Thangadzi and Kaombe have started implementing action plans developed during their participatory vulnerability analysis (PVA). The river Thangadzi causes a lot of flooding and regularly disrupts schooling. As an action point from the PVA, the river is to be desilted and trees are being planted along the riverbanks to control the flooding. A survey of the river has been conducted and works will begin soon with the participation of the community and with the District Assembly providing technical support.

Work at the local level is complemented by work at the national level, which aims to build stronger voices to advocate for policies that address issues of disaster risk preparedness in the education system. To gather support for this work, ActionAid has held several consultative meetings with the Ministries of Agriculture, Food Security and Education as well as the Department of Disaster Preparedness.



Glendon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

## Extending the school

School-community links are important as they increase local ownership of education, as well as the quality of that education. If parents and the community feel that they can input into the education of their child they are more likely to ensure that their child goes to school, and hold the school accountable to deliver education of good quality. Section Four described various ways to involve parents and community members in school governance and management. Here the focus is on direct community involvement in the education process.

Education is often seen as top-down, with expert knowledge brought into the school from outside the community. However, there is a wealth of local knowledge which not only adds value to the learning process, but is often more appropriate and relevant to the pupils. Through drawing on local knowledge and skills, the education process can become directly relevant, helping young people make the link between what they learn in school and how they might apply it in their daily lives. Moreover, by valuing community-based knowledge, the distance between the school and the community is narrowed. This enables community ownership of the school and strengthens the school's role in local development processes. The use of local knowledge is also important in challenging discriminatory stereotypes which reinforce the position of people living in poverty.

Teaching is a highly skilled profession and it is important to recognise this. However, this does not mean that teachers cannot, or should not, benefit from the alternative skills and knowledge located in community members – be they parents, local leaders, business people, community-based organisations, artisans, etc. Different people could be brought into the classroom within specific lessons (for example to share local history), or special events can be organised with the explicit aim of bringing in local knowledge.

and other students in their campaign to abolish caning. Thirdly, it's important to look at the school as a whole and whether it is safe from attacks from outsiders, who might steal teaching and learning equipment, or vandalise school buildings and create fear among teachers and pupils alike.

In Samburu, Kenya, many of the local schools had to be closed during the drought season as bandits attacked schools across the area. Action was needed to ensure that the school was well-protected and able to function. Making schools safe, involves looking at individual schools and ensuring that the environment, policies and layout of the school mean that it is a safe place for all those present. However, it can also mean linking up to district education offices, or national ministries of education to ensure appropriate resourcing for safe schools, and challenging policies which undermine the rights of the child – such as corporal punishment in schools.

## ACTIVITY

### ▶▶ Identifying local knowledge

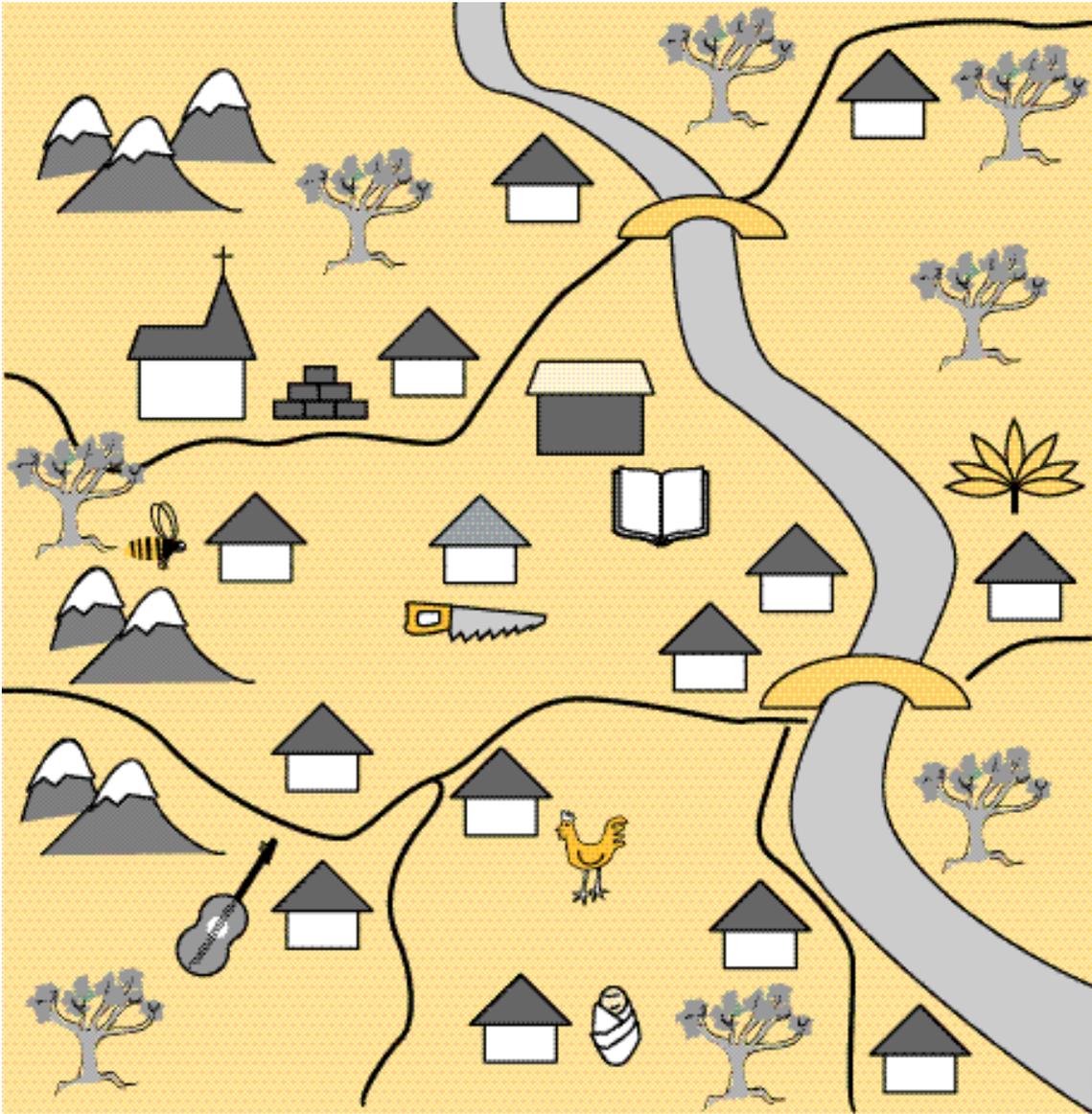
As part of this process it is important to reflect on the reliability of the local knowledge – just because knowledge is passed down through generations, this does not mean that the knowledge is accurate. A good starting point is to start with a **human resources map**. This involves plotting the different types of people who live or work in the local area and the different types of skills and knowledge they have. Building on this you could be to use a **knowledge matrix**. Here different types of knowledge could be listed along one axis, and criteria to judge the value of that knowledge could be plotted along the other axis – this might include issues such as whether the information reliable, useful, trustworthy, relevant etc. as well as if it has negative attributes such as based on prejudice or gossip. It will be important to discuss how to make these judgements, to develop an understanding of why one piece of information is considered useful and reliable while another is not. This matrix could then be expanded into a **knowledge and curriculum matrix** – looking at where the knowledge (or skills) could be usefully integrated. Here a list of subjects (e.g. mathematics, geography, history, civic education, science, language, art etc.) could be listed on one axis, with the types of knowledge and skills on the other. By mapping the knowledge against the curriculum the group could identify where and how to use the local knowledge in the school day. It might be that some skills or knowledge do not have a direct fit with the curriculum, here you might decide to develop a special day to bring in a range of different local skills and ideas.

Obviously, it will also be important to look at people's availability and interest to take part in the initiative.

It is important that teachers are involved in organising this link, so that it builds on their expertise and contributes to learning plans (as well as enhancing their links with parents and other community members). However, it could be the SMC that coordinates the initiative as a way of strengthening their links with the wider community.

In some places the school may not be able to make decisions about using local knowledge without the support of the DEO. This could involve calling a meeting with the DEO and getting their support for the idea, or involving them directly in planning the event, which could enhance their ownership and mean that they are more likely to support the initiative in other communities. It could also be important to link to teacher training colleges so that ideas of this nature are integrated into their training experiences. Through linking at national level, arguments could be made to create space in the national curriculum for similar ideas. It will be important to document the process and impact of local work to provide evidence to support your advocacy work at district and national levels.

Skills and knowledge present in the local community



**KEY:**



Builder



Herbalist



Tradition birth attendant



Expert hen rearer



School teacher



Carpenter



Musician



Bee Keeper



Catechist

# Locally-produced materials

Building on the idea of using local knowledge, it is also important to consider whether and how this knowledge can be documented and used within the classroom at local, district and national levels.

## Local level work:

Documentation does not just mean writing down information. There is a range of ways to share information, and it could be that oral histories are recorded (on a tape) or performed, or even turned into a song or dance. The choice of methodologies for documenting local knowledge will depend on the group and the skills they have.

Alternatively, the process of documentation could take place through the children who could document parental involvement in the classroom – through keeping notes in their exercise books, taking photos or adapting what they heard into a script for a play, etc.

▶▶ In many countries the textbooks used in schools are printed centrally in capital cities with no space for locally-relevant information. They often contain completely inappropriate material for rural life. This may be exacerbated by the materials being printed in a national language rather than the local language.

This signals the importance of producing materials locally – which serve the purpose of:

- Valuing local knowledge;
- Making learning more relevant and appropriate;
- Increasing the materials available in local languages;
- Challenging the idea that everything learnt in school must be external or expert knowledge.

▶▶ Although it is important to use local knowledge and locally-developed materials within schools, this should be balanced with an emphasis on the importance of external knowledge also. It is important not to romanticise what is known at community level. If education is to be transformative, there is a role for new information in the community, to extend understanding of the local situation and the wider context, and to build skills and confidence to take up employment and engage with (and challenge) institutions outside the community.

It is also important to be aware of the impact of bringing certain pieces of knowledge and culture into the classroom. Firstly, bringing knowledge into the classroom might be a way of privileging specific pieces of knowledge and could, without careful management, cause problems in the community. Secondly, a piece of knowledge might only be seen as valid because it is taught in school – and this could undermine other ways of teaching and learning.

Documenting oral testimonies (see page 28) is a powerful way of bringing peoples experiences into the classroom. This could start with a local group using the River tool (see diagram, page 177) to share their individual or community history. Then working with literate group members, or teachers, the river could be translated into words – developed into a story which could be read and discussed within the classroom. It could be powerful for a local organisation to bring together a collection of local stories into a publication for the classroom.

Another way of using local knowledge is to show that there are many different ways of doing something. This might be particularly relevant for numeracy. For example, there are many different ways that a space can be measured, and local methods may differ considerably from those taught in school. By comparing traditional and formal methods the traditional can be valued, and the formal methods, understood more deeply (as it will have a context) which makes it easier to engage with (or to ignore if it doesn't add any value!).

Local knowledge may also be systematically documented across the community. Children, teachers or others interested in education could identify a range of subjects which they wish to see recorded, and assign relevant people or groups to carry this out. The groups may be put together according to daily routine, particular skills, or knowledge groups. Alternatively, materials could be produced targeting specific elements of local identity to challenge discrimination and prejudice. Adults could be asked to document information that they believe is particularly important for their children to know.

**Working at the national level:**

If locally-produced materials are to be used at a district or national level it will be important to link up with publishers who could publish and distribute your material. It will also be important to link to teacher resource centres, the DEO or Ministry of Education, to gain their support to use these materials within the national curriculum. You may also work with the government and publishing houses to look at creating policies to stimulate the development of education material at the local level; through funding the process, creating space in the curriculum and building the skills of teachers to facilitate the process of documenting such knowledge.



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

# Analysing text books

Text books are the main education input given to teachers to help them develop their lesson plans and teaching structure. Unfortunately texts books are of varying quality. In some countries they may be very old and out-dated, they could be imported from the west, or developed in the capital city with little awareness or interest of the issues facing rural communities. Or, as ActionAid Pakistan found textbooks might portray a particular interpretation of events – privileging certain groups of the population and presenting an outdated stereotyped picture of a nation. ActionAid Pakistan engaged in teacher training and the production of teaching materials to challenge this reality. The training package (on gender, peace and human rights) was initially piloted with community teachers, and is now being discussed by the coordinator of curriculum reform. Given the recent domination of right-wing parties, and the religious lobby this step is particularly impressive.

Key to developing this link with the Ministry of Education was the dissemination of history books for children, developed as part of a project called 'History – the Peoples' Perspective', which focuses on the role and contribution of ordinary men and women in making history. Created for different levels of readers, these books attempt to make history an interesting subject, creating real links with the readers' lives and enabling them to locate their identities in the historical perspective. History is reclaimed as the common heritage of ordinary people.

The production and distribution of knowledge in Pakistan is deeply interwoven with the politics of power. Educational systems in Pakistan have promoted the dominant ideologies of particular ruling classes and their governments. Recent changes in curricula and textbooks reflect a rise in nationalism and fundamentalism. This has meant that children are taught one view of who they are what they should believe, suggesting that other beliefs are held by the enemy. This leads to hatred and violence.

Since 1962, history ceased to be taught as an independent subject at schools in Pakistan.

## QUESTION & ANALYSE

### ▶▶ Analysing textbooks

Analysing textbooks and producing alternatives can be a powerful way to ensure that different groups have their rights respected within the education system. It can be useful to analyse textbooks from different perspectives, asking for example:

- How does this textbook portray: men, women, children, minority groups, rural dwellers, etc. (whichever categories are important from your perspective)?
- How does this portrayal impact on position in society? Is it opening options or limiting them?
- How might this group want be portrayed? What might people want to know about the group?

The questions could also be asked from the personal perspective – asking how the portrayal impacts our position, and what do we want others to know about us? It can be useful to link this exercise to work on documenting local knowledge and producing learning materials.

Whatever historical material Pakistani textbooks contain, it fails to create any interest and understanding among students of historical processes. Most of the history serves the interests of the ruling elite, glorifies militarisation, warriors and monarchs. It ignores the contribution of the common people, workers and peasants in the development and progress of the country. ActionAid Pakistan worked with a renowned historian to write the books, focusing on three strands of history – the history of civilisation, South Asian history and culture, and European History, and written for different age-groups of readers. The history focuses specifically on disempowered and disadvantaged groups, ordinary men and women, farmers, workers and artisans whose history is rarely told.

In 2006, the three volumes on the history of civilisation were launched in four cities and gained extensive media coverage. They also received a very good response from educationalists, academics and NGOs, donors, school and colleges. Through letter writing and face-to-face contact with the Minister of Education, ActionAid Pakistan was able to gain the minister's promise that the history books would be acquired for the libraries of all the schools run by the Federal Education Directorate. Moreover, history is just in the process of being introduced as a compulsory subject, so the books can be put to immediate practical use!



Mark Phillips / ActionAid

# School curriculum

Having national standards for education is clearly important. Children across the country should be given the same opportunities to access information on a range of subjects which are useful in their present and potential future lives. However, it is important to balance a nationally-driven curriculum with space to reflect local needs and knowledge. If this does not happen it is likely that the curriculum will be dominated by the needs and realities of those living in the capital city, denying rural populations the right to preserve their knowledge, or learn about their immediate environment.

Work in this area could include linking to the national or district governments to look at where space is available, or could be made available, in the national curriculum, and developing guidelines to support the appropriate use of this space. This might include minimum standards for inclusion in the curriculum, an idea of appropriate pedagogies, as well as suggestions on how to identify and generate local curriculum.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### KENYA

In 1996 in **Kenya** basic education was in crisis, there were disparities in access and participation, escalating costs of education and a rigid and overburdened curriculum. At this time, the government set out to transform education, through the development of an Education and Training Master Plan 1997-2010. The plan was to be produced through an open and inclusive consultative process, lasting four months, which provided an opportunity for education activists to engage with and influence the government. The government created an education steering committee, chaired by the Minister of Education with representation from government policy makers, donors, private schools and NGOs. The National Council of NGOs took this opportunity to consult with a range of voluntary sector actors to identify issues that the plan should prioritise and resolve. The NGO consultation took a month, and involved a series of meetings, interviews and focus group discussions, the conclusions from the discussions formed a position paper which was discussed at an open workshop – attended by NGOs, private schools and the national press. There were worries about involving the press as no joint declaration had been decided prior to the meeting, however it was necessary to involve them to influence the parallel discussions taking place in the government. The workshop generated a memorandum of recommendations, which included among other things the need to reduce the number of examinable subjects at primary level from 11 to four. This was balanced with statements highlighting the need for local flexibility of time and content, and a commitment to gender equity. The government integrated the reduction of examinable subjects into the master plan. Key to this success was the coordination across the range of NGOs and the fact that there was a space created by government for NGOs to share their views on education. Also important was the media, which played a critical role in shaping public opinion.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### UK

Developed in the UK, *Get Global!* encourages students to reflect on the meaning of global citizenship, and become **informed, skilled, motivated and political** through dynamic learning processes. It enables them to develop the confidence to move from thinking about issues to planning and participating in action, and reflecting on their learning. It was specifically designed to fit into the national curriculum and throughout its development process regular meetings took place with the staff from the Department for Education and Skills, specifically with the head of qualifications and assessment. The main philosophy behind the pack is a belief that citizenship can not be taught focusing purely on content, that the process is equally, if not more, important. If children are not given the opportunity to be active citizens during their lessons how can they translate what they learn in the classroom to behaviour in the 'outside' world?

The pack follows a six step process:

- Get asking questions;
- Get an issue;
- Get more information;
- Get planning;
- Get active;
- Get thinking about it.

One example is a class of 14/15 year old students in a school in Caerphilly, who chose to find out more about a Waste Transfer Station to be sited in a disused factory across the way from their school. They decided to choose this issue as it would affect many people who live, work and visit the area, and being so close to school it would have an affect on their environment and possibly their education. They invited people, for and against the development, to talk to their class. This included their local Community Councillor, a member of the Public Services Department of Caerphilly, their Member of the European Parliament, and a Member of the National Parliament.

Having gathered information on the issue from various sources, they wrote letters to their elected representatives. They have asked to speak at a meeting of the Planning Committee where the application for this development will be heard, and a group of pupils will be attending the meeting to report back to the rest of the class. A student, Ben Williams comments: *'In line with Agenda 21, we want to look at securing our community today so that future generations living in the area will not have to put up with a planning decision that will be detrimental to the local environment'*.

See [www.getglobal.org.uk](http://www.getglobal.org.uk) for more details.

# Human rights education

It is important for people to be aware of their human rights, and for children to be aware of The Rights of the Child (CRC). However, it is not enough just to tell people that they have rights. Children (and adults) also need to be empowered to secure these rights. This can mean involvement in a range of actions to challenge those who are denying others their rights.

Human rights education (HRE) consists of two areas of work. Firstly, transforming the context of education by including space for HRE in the curriculum, to raise awareness of human rights. Secondly, transforming the process of education by developing the pedagogy and skills to deliver education in a way that

respects human rights, and builds student's capacity to secure their human rights. Many of the other ideas in this pack will be helpful here. For example, the process of research and advocacy for policies to combat violence against girls in schools could be adapted to look at more general human rights in schools. Arguments might be made for space on the curriculum for human rights education, as well as systems and structures to share experiences, to report human rights violations and support survivors of these violations. In addition, some of the education pedagogies discussed in the HIV and education section or the school curriculum section above also could be useful here.

As with other work in this section it will be important to target key education stakeholders to get support for this work, as well as building the capacity of the key people responsible for education delivery. Therefore, work in this area will include linking

Amnesty International have produced a publication, *Siniko* (a word meaning 'tomorrow's business' in some west-African languages), for teachers and educators in Africa who want to introduce human rights into their teaching. The pack focuses on teaching people about their rights, as well as how to respect and protect their rights. It highlights the need for participatory methodologies (role play, photographs, newspapers, cartoons, debates, video documentaries etc.), to involve students fully in their own learning.

The pack is divided into six parts:

1. What are human rights, and what is understood by human rights education?
2. Useful teaching methods, ideas for designing teaching activities and how they can be incorporated into the curriculum, information about evaluation.
3. Example activities for older and younger children which can be adapted for specific circumstances and context.
4. A continuation of Chapter Three.
5. Full or simplified texts of selected human-rights documents.
6. Ideas for networking, organising workshops and lists of useful resources.

The pack aims to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for a world free of human rights violations. It suggests that human rights should be part of all educational activities, but also recognises the need to use a variety of tactics to integrate human rights into teaching and learning.

The manual is available from:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engAFR010031999?open&of=eng-326>

to teacher training colleges to integrate ideas of HRE education, as well as lobbying and advocacy with government departments to gain their support for the process.

There are various materials which can be used within HRE, such as the range of declarations and conventions on human rights. It is also important to look at where to integrate HRE, for example, HRE can be integrated into teaching of history. This could involve looking at how human rights have been abused in different points in time, such as during war, slavery and colonisation, as well as more recently during apartheid in South Africa, genocide in Rwanda, etc.<sup>42</sup> This may be counter-balanced by studying figures who have fought for human rights, such as Nelson Mandela. However, HRE can also be integrated into other areas of the curriculum, looking at the present day context and considering how issues such as geography, gender, ethnicity, tradition impact on ability to access and enjoy human rights.



Michèle Scutis / NIB Pictures / ActionAid

<sup>42</sup> See Siniko: *Towards a Human Rights Culture in Africa, A manual for teaching Human Rights*, Amnesty International for more ideas.

# Peace education



Unfortunately, many children miss out on education, or receive an inadequate education, because of conflict. This could be ongoing conflict, which will impact on a child's ability to access education, or a post-conflict context, where children have recently suffered the trauma of conflict, loss and potentially witnessed great violence making learning very difficult. In addition, schools may be a place where both 'sides' of a conflict meet, as children from warring communities may attend the same school.

Education has a powerful role to play in enabling children to deal with their trauma, but this is dependent on well-trained teachers, and space given to trauma counselling within the school timetable. In addition to teacher training, it is also important to create space for peer support and exchange; enabling the young people to share their experiences, reach collective analysis and plan how to move on together.

Education can also play a role in exploring the roots of the conflict, challenging rumour and bad information, and moving towards resolution. This could be through studying the historical origins of the conflict, or looking at ideas of culture, traditions and prejudice.

It may also be important to involve the SMC and other local groups in this process of peace-building, so that the wider community is able to offer its support for any school-based initiative.

▶▶ Extra-curricula activities such as sport and music have often been used to create a team spirit and understanding between different community groups involved in conflict. A project in Israel and Palestine brings together children from both sides of the border to play football, using the trust and relationships built through playing the game to enable young people to get to know each other, break down stereotypes and prejudice and see each other as fellow humans. Similar strategies have been used in Northern Ireland to bring together Protestants and Catholics.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### UGANDA

There are over one million internally displaced people in **Uganda**, mainly in the North, as a result of many years of conflict. Some children have been abducted to fight. Others have been forced to leave their homes owing to fighting, and still others find themselves orphaned by the war. Until recently there was no recognition of the impact of this displacement on education. And yet the education system clearly needs to adapt to cope with the needs of these children, who are likely to suffer psychological trauma, may have scarce support structures, have received few educational opportunities in the past and have difficulties in accessing and remaining in education.

Two different initiatives in Uganda have explored this issue. Firstly, FENU organised workshops across eight districts affected by the war, bringing together different NGOs, government offices and district education officials. In these workshops the scale and nature of the challenges were clearly mapped out. Case studies of children who had lost out on education were collected and shared. It was decided that these should be used by the eight District School Inspectors to raise awareness at a national level. The officials presented the evidence to the Education minister, showing that existing systems were too rigid to respond to the new challenges and that the universal primary education Capitation Grants needed to be made more flexible. As an immediate result the EU and UNICEF channelled emergency funding into setting up temporary shelters for the education of displaced children and FENU was asked to undertake a more detailed study by the Ministry of Education and the Education Funding Group (made up of bilateral / multi-lateral donors).

A second initiative, implemented by ActionAid Uganda focused on the specific context in Masindi. In 2003 alone, more than 9000 displaced children enrolled in primary schools in Masindi. District education authorities, schools and teachers were overwhelmed by the influx of children. ActionAid Uganda facilitated three meetings between the District Education Department and local leaders to explore the issue of displaced children, this drew on data which had been collected on displaced children in Masindi schools. In addition to this local advocacy work ActionAid Uganda trained 40 teachers in psychosocial support to enable them to provide guidance and counselling to the children to ease the trauma of conflict.

# Teachers

It is crucially important to work on teachers' rights in education, both in and of themselves, and also because if a teachers' rights are being respected they are more likely to deliver education which respects and strengthens children's abilities to secure their rights. Teachers' rights can be violated in a range of ways. For example, they may be poorly or irregularly paid, have few employment rights and little choice over where they are posted, they may suffer from harassment from other staff members or the local community, or they may have little training, materials and support to deliver quality education. This section looks at two key issues affecting the rights of teachers: teacher training; and the rise of non-professional teachers. These issues not only impact on teachers but also influence the quality of education children receive.

## Working with teacher training colleges

Whilst teacher training is clearly a government responsibility, NGOs can play an important role in supplementing the teacher training curriculum – introducing new ideas and methods, such as work on gender, minority groups or learner-centred pedagogies and to help colleges adjust to new realities, for example the impact of HIV and AIDS. This involves drawing on many of the issues touched on above building links with teacher training colleges as part of the work in the different areas. In addition it is important to look at teaching pedagogy. There are a range of different pedagogical ideas which could be integrated into teacher training courses.

There are three main target groups in this work: the Ministry of Education (or equivalent policy makers in education); the teacher trainers; and the the teachers themselves. These three groups have different roles to play in transforming the teacher training content and experience. For example, the Ministry of Education can make fundamental

changes to the training curriculum and methods. Teacher trainers may also have the flexibility to adapt and experiment with training pedagogy, although in some places they will be more constrained by official policy. Alternatively, the push for change could come from teachers themselves (or teachers' unions), who could be a strong force for challenging the training approaches followed by different colleges.

The first step is to build strong relationships with the teacher training college and/or the local government or DEO (depending on how training works in your context). You, or a local group that you are supporting, may negotiate with the government to provide the training directly, within a pre-determined teacher training course. Or you or the group might discuss training content and process with the relevant teacher trainers, supporting them in a process to transform teachers' educational experience. Whoever is doing the work would need to agree with the centre and the DEO to run sessions on specific issues, or on using alternative pedagogies. It will be important to look at how the experience will be monitored, evaluated and documented, so that learning at the local level can feed into wider campaigning and influencing work to transform teacher training across the country.

Education can be oppressive, or liberating. It can reinforce wider societal patterns of exclusion and discrimination, or it can empower people, giving them the skills and the confidence to challenge the systems and structures that keep them in poverty. Unfortunately, in many contexts schooling is something that is 'done' to people. They are taught to learn by rote and not to question authority, to accept supposedly expert knowledge and not to value their own. By simply changing the dynamics in the classroom, education can become a completely different process.

However, many people have had little experience of alternative approaches to education, and may believe that there is only one way to learn – this is likely to be informed by their own school experiences. This means

that the first step may be to reflect on different ways of learning, and from this build to look at different ways to teach (see box).

## ACTIVITY

▶▶ A good starting point is for those involved to reflect on something that they learnt. This exercise is important as it introduces the idea that there are many different ways to learn something, and what works well for one person may not be so positive for someone else. Learning in school might follow a particular process, but this does not need to be the case.

The exercise could begin with people working individually, identifying something important that they have learnt (in a non-school context – this might for example include: carrying water, swimming, singing etc.) and then think through how they learnt. The group could then share reflections on this, identifying what conditions made it easier to learn, what supported the process, whether there were any particular obstacles which needed to be overcome etc. Drawing on this the group could suggest a series of conditions relating to what makes learning possible.

This learning process could be compared to how learning takes place in school. Discussion could include how the different ways of learning, or being taught, worked. How did it impact what you felt about what you were learning? What was positive (or negative) about the experience? How confident do you feel to use the learning? Did it the experience help you learn something else – or inspire you to learn something else?

In Karnataka, India a concept called **Joyful Learning** (*Nali Kali*) has been developed. This process dispenses with textbooks, and instead uses learning resource cards, developed by the teachers themselves. The teachers become facilitators and work with children according to their individual pace (or in groups according to their ability). The learning is activity-based. There is great flexibility in the learning process, and it is recognised that children can learn from each other. The learning activities are split into cycles: readiness activities (songs, stories, pictures); instruction activities (sorting, writing, arranging words or symbols); reinforcement activities (matching pictures with words, find missing words); and finally evaluation activities. Each of these stages may be done alone, in a group, or with the teacher.

The impact of the approach on student learning and retention is recognised at all levels. One district education officer commented, *'It's having a positive impact – there's a response within private schools and people are moving across to the government schools'*. And according to one of the teachers, *'the students love learning and there is regular attendance'*. However, there are still challenges, not least because the training has yet to be integrated into teacher training colleges. Teachers involved have to commit to a 12-day training workshop, as well as monthly meetings, on top of their other teaching duties. While the government is supportive of the learning approach, there are still issues concerning funding, and the level of support needed for the process. This illustrates the need to do further advocacy work to ensure that the Joyful Learning process is properly integrated into teacher training, and not seen as an alternative optional process.

In addition to integrating alternative pedagogies into teacher training processes, it is important to look at issues of in-service teacher training, and teacher support. Education theories and practice change, as does the external reality, and if teachers are not supported to continually update their knowledge and skills it is likely that the education they deliver will soon become out-

dated (failing the 'adaptability criteria' mentioned in Section One, page 24). Local groups could work with the district education office to develop appropriate in-service training courses, which could cover a range of issues, including many of the areas

outlined earlier in this section. In-service training is also useful as it brings teachers together, giving them the opportunity to share experiences and ideas. This peer support can be further formalised through pairing up teachers, or developing systems of mentors.

## EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

### GHANA

In Ghana, *Theatre for a Change* uses participatory methodologies to work with trainee teachers (through pre-service teacher training) to explore and challenge underlying power and gender relations. Targeting trainee teachers was a deliberate strategy as *Theatre for a Change* hoped that they would be more open to trying these new methods. The learning process is intensive and sustained – all first and second year students take part in weekly sessions – each about two hours long. Trainees are then assessed at the end of the year and graded on their achievement. In total, over 4,200 teachers have now been trained and the Ghanaian Ministry of Education will slowly be taking over the coordination so that the expertise and responsibility lie clearly within the Ministry.

Using a range of participatory activities, the participants experience how power dynamics vary depending on what learning methods are used. For example, many times in school the teacher is the only active person, they control the classroom and pupils remaining passive. Participatory methods and child-centred approaches require a shift in these power relations, and the *Theatre For a Change* trainees are encouraged to realise that handing over power does not mean losing power.

The training has been developed based on the assumption that gender relations influence vulnerability to HIV, and achieving gender equality is key in preventing the spread of the pandemic. However, challenging gender and power relations is not a skill that can be simply learnt, rather it needs to be experienced through practice, through the use of participatory methods and theatre. The participants are supported to develop critical self-awareness, they practise new roles and ways of behaving. Participation is taken to mean experiencing and the motto is *80 percent action, 20 percent talking!* For many of the young trainee teachers, this is the first time they have been encouraged to develop their own opinions – having been through a conventional education system, they have learnt not to speak out of turn. It can therefore come as a bit of a surprise when they are told in *Theatre for a Change* '*Let's be loud! Let's hear your voice!*'

Using exercises to look at how power manifests itself in movement, space and voice participants are continually encouraged to reflect on how they feel, what they notice, what this means for balance within a relationship and how this relates to teaching and learning in the classroom. Following an exercise about maintaining eye contact, one male trainee recalled, '*Before Theatre for a Change's programme, I hardly maintained eye contact during conversation with people. And now? Of course, I've improved massively on the maintenance of eye contact, which has enhanced my confidence and communicating skills. I was able to maintain eye contact with my father for considerable moments without any ill feeling for the first time. Yes for the first time!*'

Based on an article by L. Stackpool-Moore and T. Boler, '*Let's be loud! Let's hear your voice!*'

## EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

In **The Gambia**, the teachers' union established summer extra-mural classes a service to some of its members who are unqualified teachers. The classes have two dimensions firstly, to enable unqualified teachers to develop the necessary academic skills so that they can enter teacher training colleges, and secondly, to support Arabic Islamic teachers in acquiring basic English and Arithmetic skills, so that they are able to deliver the curriculum, which is written in English. The courses are run over three years, and is recognised by the Government as contributing to the professional standing of teachers. Following the course participants are able to take the entrance exam to enter a teacher training college. Over 850 teachers have benefited from the programme so far. Using diverse teaching methods, such as discussions, visiting lecturers, practical work, information technology and field trips, the course covers nine key subjects - English, Mathematics, Geography, History, General Science, Home Science, General/ Professional Studies and Information Technology.

An initiative in **Uganda** also supported the in-service training of non-qualified teachers. This involved primary school teachers, and used a distance teacher training model. The training process included residential workshops, fortnightly seminar sessions and classroom teaching supervision. The project was implemented by ActionAid Uganda, in collaboration with the Mubende District Government. This mandate was crucial for future recognition and employment of teachers trained by the project. It was also important that Kyambogo University, as the nationally recognised teacher training institution, recognised the certification. At the end of the three-year training process the teachers that were trained through this distance education model sat the same exam as those in teacher training colleges across the country. The success of the initiative depended on an effective student support system, as well as the good collaboration between the government and ActionAid Uganda.

## Documenting and challenging the use of non-professional teachers

Non-professional teachers threaten the quality of the teaching profession, as well as undermining a child's ability to secure their right to education. Non-professional teachers are often invisible. They may be hired by the local community, or a local NGO or faith-based organisation, and be expected to teach with as little as two-weeks training. Increasingly governments are using non-professional teachers on a large scale, this is particularly the case in West Africa and India, as a response to the public sector wage bill caps (see **Section Three**). These teachers may be called para-teachers, local teachers or contract teachers.

Work in this area includes mapping who the teachers are locally – are they qualified, what levels of qualification do they have? Also it is important to look at levels of ongoing training and support offered to teachers. The research could be done by school management committees, and compiled at district level to give a true picture of the numbers and make-up of teachers across the region.

However, challenging non-professional teaching staff does not mean removing them from their teaching position. There are large shortfalls in teaching staff all over the world, just removing non-professional teachers would not solve this problem. Therefore, the non-professional teachers need to be supported to become professional. This includes working with the district education office and local training colleges to develop appropriate forms of teacher training, which can support non-professional teaching staff to develop their skills and knowledge, while continuing in their jobs. It also includes lobbying and campaigning at district and national level to ensure that the teachers are remunerated appropriately. However, this on-the-job training should be seen as a temporary measure working with the specific cohort of unqualified teachers, and not a permanent solution.

In some contexts, it can also be important to look at how local people can become trained

teachers. Often education is not valued in the local community, or children do not stay in school because of the lack of role models from the local community or their specific identity group or because teachers do not speak their local language. Looking at how to recruit more female and ethnic minority teachers into the school system is important for encouraging

young people (and their parents) to invest in their education. Local people could access training in a similar way to the non-professional teachers, and should be supported to learn while staying in the local community, rather than forced to travel to training colleges on the other side of the country which is particularly difficult for women because of society prejudice..

## ➤➤ Extract from the Parktonian Recommendations

The spread of non-professional teachers is happening at an alarming rate, promoted by the World Bank and backed up by distorted research. Employing non-professionals is being seen as a low cost and permanent solution – yet this is having a devastating impact on quality and equity in education. Education International and ActionAid International recommend:

- There should be no more recruitment of non-professional teachers. It is a violation of children's right to quality education and leads to discrimination against poor children.
- Government should be the employers of all teachers in the public education system, with salaries set through national processes of collective bargaining.
- Governments should undertake workforce planning from now to 2015 to determine the number of teachers needed year on year to get all children into school in acceptable class sizes (and a practice of ten-year comprehensive demographic-based education planning should always be maintained). Governments should then invest in significantly expanding teacher training facilities to ensure that sufficient numbers of professional teachers are trained.
- In situations of unexpected or rapid expansion (e.g. following abolition of user fees), governments should first bring into the workforce any unemployed trained teachers or retired professional teachers – and seek to attract back into frontline teaching any trained teachers who are otherwise employed. If there is a remaining gap then, in consultation with teacher unions, emergency measures may be taken to bring in a temporary new cadre – who should be given accelerated opportunities for full professionalisation within a maximum of five years. Emergency measures may also be needed in situations of conflict but there should be explicit plans for time-bound transition agreed from the start.
- Clear agreements should be established on the minimum standards for pre-service teacher training, with reference to ILO and UNESCO standards. There is a need improve the quality of present teacher training provision and to develop regulatory mechanisms to ensure all facilities deliver quality training.
- National teacher unions should actively encourage existing non-professional teachers to become members.
- Existing non-professional teachers should be integrated into the professional workforce. They should be given access to quality distance education courses, backed up with face-to face formal courses in vacations and school-level mentoring and support, leading to public examinations which must be achieved within a maximum five-year time frame.
- There should be an end to single-teacher schools. Progress should be made rapidly towards having one teacher per grade, at least one classroom per grade, adequate sanitation facilities, and a balance of female and male teachers.
- All teachers should have access to good quality professional development courses and ongoing training.

*These positions should be taken forward vigorously by ActionAid International and Education International, advocating them to NGOs, national coalitions and governments, and challenging the World Bank directly over their support for non-professionals.*

## Section Six

This section looks at the different ways in which civil society can engage in early childhood development (ECCE), secondary education and adult literacy. It looks in particular detail at adult literacy as a catalyst for strengthening civil society and securing a wide range of human rights.



Jack Picone / ActionAid

## Advancing a Full EFA Agenda

# Contents

## Advancing a Full EFA Agenda

### ► Types of information that are useful for this section:

- **Legal information:** Dakar framework for action, constitutional provision and national legislation on different aspects of education (early childhood, secondary and adult).
- **Official data:** national reports, global monitoring reports, EFA reports - on the different aspects of education, statistics such as adult literacy figures, rates of transition to secondary school, numbers of children accessing early childhood care and education etc.
- **Information on provision:** who are the main service providers, are there national guidelines or minimum standards for provision.
- **Resources:** government and donor (and other private) expenditure on the different aspects of education .
- **Reflect materials:** *Reflect* publications, network contacts, training opportunities.

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While the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All was broad-reaching in its agenda, focusing across the education spectrum from early childhood care and education, to primary and secondary education, and adult learning, the Millennium Development Goals on education reduced this focus to universal primary schooling (and gender equality), diverting attention from other important education goals.

There are many studies that highlight the importance of early childhood development (ECCE), secondary education and investment in adult literacy. Not least because of the huge impact investment in these areas has on gender equality and women's rights. For example, women are nearly always the primary carers for young children and providing early childhood care can free up their time and expand their choices. Moreover, the impact of secondary education on women's ability to have control of their personal life (for example, to choose when to have sexual relations and with whom), as well as unlock economic, social and political resources, is widely evidenced.<sup>43</sup>

▶ The **Dakar Framework for Action** is a collective commitment to action between funding countries and recipient countries, based on the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) and supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It recognises that *'all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.'* And that education is the key to sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries.

Based on this, the collective (governments, organisations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the forum, in Dakar, Senegal, April 2000) committed to the following six goals:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

See: [http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed\\_for\\_all/dakfram\\_eng.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/dakfram_eng.shtml)

<sup>43</sup> See for example, Stromquist (2005), Brown (1990)

Adult literacy has also been shown to have a significant impact on women's self-confidence and empowerment.

In addition to these direct benefits to women, there are also various studies that show how women's educational achievement impacts on poverty and achievement of the wider family, with each extra year of education for mothers associated with a significant decline in infant mortality, improved child-health,<sup>44</sup> and improvements in children's school attendance and achievement. So investment in women's education is important both as a right in itself, and for wider development goals.

At present, there is severe under investment in these three areas of work, and a lack of political will at international and national levels to prioritise these areas. This has an impact on the way that you might work in these areas. Although work on secondary education will mirror much of what is contained in the rest of this pack, the role of civil society in relation to ECCE and adult literacy differs slightly. The main focus should still be on pressuring the government to fulfil its responsibilities to deliver education across the whole EFA spectrum. However, in some cases there is also a role for supporting service delivery, to meet the need that is not being addressed by government, and is unlikely to be tackled in the next 10 years.

There is particular value in supporting adult literacy programmes, as they can be powerful means to empower people, raising their awareness and building their skills to secure their rights – thus catalysing wider change. In fact, the skills and confidence developed through adult learning will provide a strong basis for the citizen action mentioned throughout this pack. However, any support to service delivery should be seen as a temporary intervention, and used as a way of building evidence of the impact of these education interventions, as well as learning on methodology and other programming issues.



This section looks at the different ways in which civil society can engage in ECCE, secondary education and adult literacy. It looks in particular detail at adult literacy, drawing on international benchmarks developed in 2005, and exploring how these can be used to design, implement and evaluate adult literacy programmes, as well as expanding on the use of *Reflect*, an example of an adult learning and social change programme which fills many of the benchmark criteria.

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<sup>44</sup> See for example, Caldwell (1979), Sandiford (1995), Burchfield (2002), Robinson Pant (2005)

# Early childhood care and education

Definitions of early childhood care and education vary, but generally ECCE is seen as a holistic approach to *'support children's survival, growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene, and cognitive, social, physical and emotion development – from birth to entry into primary school.'*<sup>45</sup> ECCE covers a range of interventions, from parenting programmes, to community-based childcare and formal pre-primary education (which is of specific interest here). Two age groups are targeted, the under 3s, and age 3 to school entrance (5-8 depending on the context). ECCE has multiple benefits, both for the children themselves and, indirectly, for the family members (generally mothers and sisters) who carry the main childcare responsibilities. Moreover, ECCE is a right, as recognised in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that early childhood education should be linked to the rights of children to develop their personalities, talents and mental and physical abilities. The *2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report: Strong Foundations: Early childhood care and education* focuses specifically on ECCE. The contents of this section draw heavily on that report.

Early childhood is a time of fast development and good ECCE can lay the foundation for later learning. However, poor nutrition and disadvantage can have an equally dramatic impact at this point. A child who suffers from poor care and social exclusion is likely to suffer development difficulties which are hard to address in later life.<sup>46</sup> The years 0-8 have great potential – to develop strong foundations for learning, or internalise

oppression and disadvantage. Unfortunately, ECCE provision is very patchy, and those most likely to benefit from it are the least likely to be enrolled.

As well as the immediate benefit to the children, ECCE has been shown to improve access to and progress in primary school. For example, in Nepal 95 per cent of children who attended an early childhood programme went on to attend primary school, while only 75 per cent of those who did not attend the programme went on to primary school. Moreover, participants in the pre-school programme had significantly higher marks in the end of first year exams.

There is also an economic argument for ECCE, as returns to ECCE investments are generally higher than those to other education interventions, and are reaped over a longer period. In all cases, the impact of ECCE is stronger for children from poor families than for more advantaged children. In fact, recent research shows that ECCE can compensate for disadvantage, regardless of underlying factors such as poverty, gender, ethnicity, caste or religion.<sup>47</sup> It can reduce gender inequality, as girls are more likely to complete primary school, and ECCE tends to have a larger impact on girls' health. Work in **Scotland**<sup>48</sup> also highlights how ECCE can be a crucial time for challenging stereotyping and discrimination among children. Stereotyped views are often inadvertently propagated in the home, but formal education programmes can counter-balance this. This is particularly important for children from excluded groups, who are likely to face a range of discriminatory practices. Education for the pre-primary age can focus on embracing diversity, and challenge traditional power relationships. In addition, education at this age can be a powerful way of building links with parents, who are more likely to be involved with very young children, developing the idea of partnership between parents, children and teachers, which can be further built on at primary school level.

<sup>45</sup> UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, Strong Foundations: Early childhood care and education*, (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2006)

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p.22

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, p.25

<sup>48</sup> *Equal Opportunities Commission: An Equal Start: Promoting Equal Opportunities in the Early Years* (Glasgow: Equal Opportunities Commission) accessed 27.02.07 [www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=14804](http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=14804)

Currently, almost half the world has no formal programmes for children under three. Although enrolment in pre-primary education has tripled since 1970, coverage remains very low in most of the developing world. The staff are likely to have minimal education and training and are often poorly remunerated. Governments give low priority to pre-primary spending, and the broad mix of public and private donors make it difficult to calculate the total national expenditure. ECCE is not a priority for most donor agencies. Although the arguments for ECCE are strong, investment in this area is limited. The GMR comments that more than half of donors spend less than two per cent of what they do on primary education on ECCE. If ECCE is to be transformed there is a need for high-level political support as well as national and local level planning. There is also a need to develop national policies on ECCE and integrate these into the education system.

Activities in this section, and the section on secondary education can be viewed interchangeably, as the process of work is very similar in both areas, and just needs to be adapted to context. This means that you may wish to read through both sections before deciding how you might work in these areas.

## ▶ Global Monitoring Report (GMR) recommendations

**What works:** Inclusive programmes that combine nutrition, health, care and education, build on traditional child care practices, are run in mother tongue, challenge gender stereotypes, respect diversity and focus on the needs of the child, work best. This requires low child to staff ratios, adequate materials and smooth transition to primary school.

**What needs to be done:** In addition to high-level political support and developing national policies (which are properly resourced, monitored and reported on) a lead ministry or agency needs to be identified, along with an interagency coordinating mechanism, which has decision-making power. Quality standards should be developed, covering public and private provision. Staff should be properly trained and remunerated. There should be increased and better-targeted public funding of ECCE, with particular attention on poor children, those living in rural areas and those with disabilities. ECCE should be included in government resource documents (e.g. national budgets, PRSPs) and donors should also pay more attention, and give more funding to ECCE.



Gideon Mwangi/Corbis / ActionAid

## Work at the local level

It will be important to make the case for investment in ECCE, using evidence of the local context and experiences to influence education stakeholders – including the local community, district education officials and the local government. It will also be important to build links with the media, ensuring that you balance public awareness-raising, with compiling concrete evidence to inform government policy development.

### Mapping ECCE:

A first step is to understand what ECCE provision there is currently, so that you are able to decide where to focus your campaigning and influencing work. It may be that the current provision is insufficient in terms of how many people are able to access it; or that the costs are prohibitive; or that it is limited in its focus and of poor quality. One way to frame the mapping is to draw on the standards presented in the 4 A's (see **Section One, page 24**) assessing the availability (free and sufficient places, trained teachers), adaptability (in terms of local context and changing society), accessibility (system is non-discriminatory) and acceptability (relevant content – the holistic approach as suggested above) of ECCE in your area.

An alternative is to follow the approach used in the section on secondary education below, mapping the numbers of children accessing ECCE, as well as the challenges faced by children in accessing it.

For either route it will be important to look at who is providing the ECCE, especially whether it is state-funded or privately-provided (which it is in many places), as inevitably this affects influencing strategies. As well as understanding the current context, it is important to be clear about what you want from ECCE provision. What is your understanding of what ECCE should include? How should it be provided? Who should provide it? What are the criteria for ECCE staff? How much training should they receive? What should they be paid (defined in relation to primary school teachers perhaps)?

What should ECCE focus on? What should the content and process of learning be? This mapping and visioning work could be done in collaboration with local groups. You could involve parents, ECCE staff and primary school teachers to debate these issues and develop a vision for ECCE in the area.

### Providing ECCE:

Many civil society organisations will be directly involved in delivering ECCE. This could be through training support or through actual funding and implementation of ECCE. While this intervention should be seen as a temporary measure, it is also important to recognise and use the learning gathered through this experience. You may have significant expertise in this area and have developed a range of innovative methodologies. Based on this experience you can develop links with the local government or district education office to encourage them to take the initiative forward.

### Documenting ECCE:

Often it is the NGO sector that has the most experience in ECCE provision and it will be important to document this experience to feed into wider plans and ECCE initiatives. Documentation should focus specifically on methodologies or approaches used within ECCE, as well as challenges and lessons learnt which could inform future practice. It will also be important to document the impact of ECCE as this will help make the case for further investment in this area (see below). Depending on the audience, you could document this information in different formats including publications, posters and press briefings.

## Work at national level

All these different interventions are a way of gathering evidence and experience to influence ECCE provision. This could be focused on raising public awareness on the importance of ECCE, or pressuring government to focus on the issues and allocate budget to ECCE. The influencing strategies discussed elsewhere in this pack are relevant here and you could initiate any of the following activities:

- **Publicise the right to ECCE** drawing on the terminology included in the Convention of the Rights of the Child and referring to Dakar commitments.
- **Disseminate information** on the value of ECCE, using individual case studies or more quantitative information that illustrates the impact of ECCE. This might include increased success rates of primary schooling, health and infant mortality information, and information linked to women's empowerment (for example livelihood indicators and household relations).
- **Link to media providers** to get coverage for ECCE. This could involve video or radio footage illustrating the current situation of ECCE, interviews with teachers, parents, children, or showing positive models of ECCE provision and looking at how these could be scaled-up and supported within government provision.
- **Carry out budget analysis**, looking at national funding to ECCE and how this is translated at the local level. Are there regional disparities? How does ECCE provision compare to secondary and tertiary provision? Are the same priorities reflected in policy documents?
- **Convene workshops**, conferences and roundtable discussions on the value of ECCE. These should link to education stakeholders across the spectrum, including government officials and representatives, academics, NGOs, unions, etc.
- **Produce learning and training materials and courses**, drawing on the experience in non-formal ECCE, developing training courses and linking with publishers to produce learning and teaching materials which can be used in government ECCE provision.
- **Produce summaries of the GMR**, comparing the suggestions made with the current national context, highlighting the data available in your country and looking at what needs to be done to transform the context, who needs to be involved, etc.
- **Engage with national EFA committees**, ensuring that they are reporting on ECCE, and that these reports are disseminated appropriately.
- **Produce alternative EFA reports**, if you feel that your country's EFA reports are inaccurate. You could produce shadow reports (or use report cards, see **Section Four**) highlighting the real situation of ECCE, launching the report nationally as well as sharing internationally.

All of these actions could be used for secondary education also.

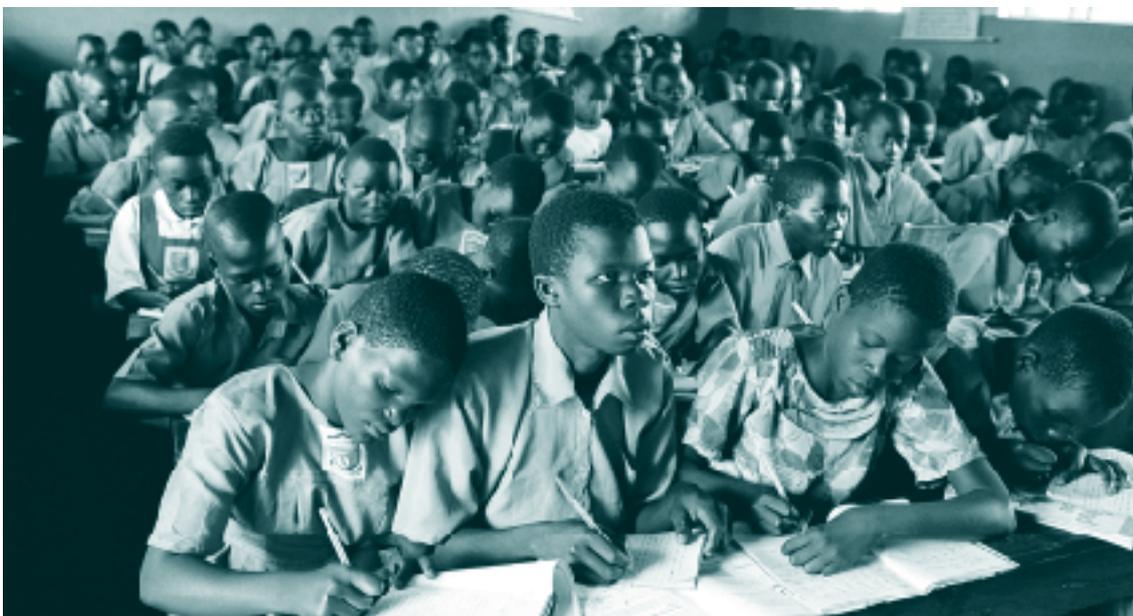
# Secondary education

Everyone has a right to nine years basic education, and yet secondary schooling is unavailable in many parts of the world. What's more, the recent expansion of primary schooling in many countries has led to greater access problems for secondary school, creating (or exacerbating) a bottleneck effect.

The major issues which limit the transition from primary to secondary school are the lack of availability and the high costs associated with secondary education. These include direct education costs (user fees) as well as the costs of transport and board and lodging, incurred because of the distances involved. For those living in rural areas, the nearest secondary school could be anything from 5-100km away. Transition rates at a national level vary from less than 30 per cent in 26 countries around the world, to over 95 per cent in OECD countries. In many countries (specifically in Sub-Saharan African and Asia), the disparities which favour boys' education are further accentuated in secondary education.<sup>49</sup> Difficulties in accessing secondary school also hinder the achievement of universal primary education because they reduce the incentive to complete primary school.<sup>50</sup>

And yet, as highlighted in the introduction, secondary education can have an incredible impact, especially on girls. For example, in a systematic review of over 600 pieces of research on girls' education, sexual behaviour and HIV, a recent piece of research by ActionAid found,

*Girls who complete secondary school are up to five times less likely to contract HIV than girls with no education... [showing] that secondary education provides African girls with the power to make sexual choices that prevent HIV infection.*<sup>51</sup>



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

<sup>49</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=24147&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24147&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) accessed 31st Oct. 2006

<sup>50</sup> GMR 2007, highlights pg. 2

<sup>51</sup> J. Hargreaves and T. Boler, *Girl Power: The impact of girls' education on HIV and sexual behaviour*, (London: ActionAid, 2006).

## Analysis of secondary provision at the local level

As government has a responsibility to provide secondary education, work at the local level will involve mapping education in your area, and exploring to what extent the right is being fulfilled or violated. This will involve drawing on many of the processes outlined in the other sections of this pack, looking at the the right to education, resourcing issues, and rights in education, to ensure that secondary provision is protecting the rights of children and teachers in school. Evidence collected at this level can then be used for local level advocacy (with the wider community, encouraging them to send their children to school; and with the local government or district education office, to ensure appropriate investment and support for secondary education) and for national level mobilisation and campaigning (to pressure government to fulfil its responsibility in education, and encourage other civil society actors to advocate for secondary education).

As a basis for planning specific actions it will be important to understand what is happening in terms of access to secondary schooling in your local area as a basis for planning any specific action. One way to do this would be to work with the local community or primary school management committee to understand what happens to primary school leavers in your area. It will be important to look at disaggregated data to understand what is happening with different excluded groups (see **Section Two**), as the picture is likely to vary substantially. The district education office should have official statistics regarding transition rates, but it will be important to complement these with community-level analysis, as official statistics can often mask local differences. Using a survey you could focus on final year primary school children and first year secondary school children – those in and out of school.

It will be important to ask primary school children:

- if they intend to go to secondary school;
- where the school is;
- any challenges they envisage in the transition.

For those in secondary school, the focus should be on how they were able to make the transition, and the challenges they are currently facing in remaining in school. Those that did not make the transition should be asked for reasons for this. Again, it's important to ensure that data is disaggregated into categories. It will also be important to make comparisons across locations – to see how transition varies accordingly.

Based on the results of this mapping, the local group or organisation could develop an advocacy plan to increase access to secondary education, targeting the district or national government. This might include greater funding for students (or bursary schemes for specific excluded groups), a new school, or investment in transport systems.

However, work on secondary education is not just about transition (or retention). Issues of education quality and school management apply at this level also and many of the exercises discussed earlier are applicable here. For example, you could look at issues of pedagogy, teacher training, curriculum, monitoring school budgets, and parental involvement in schools.

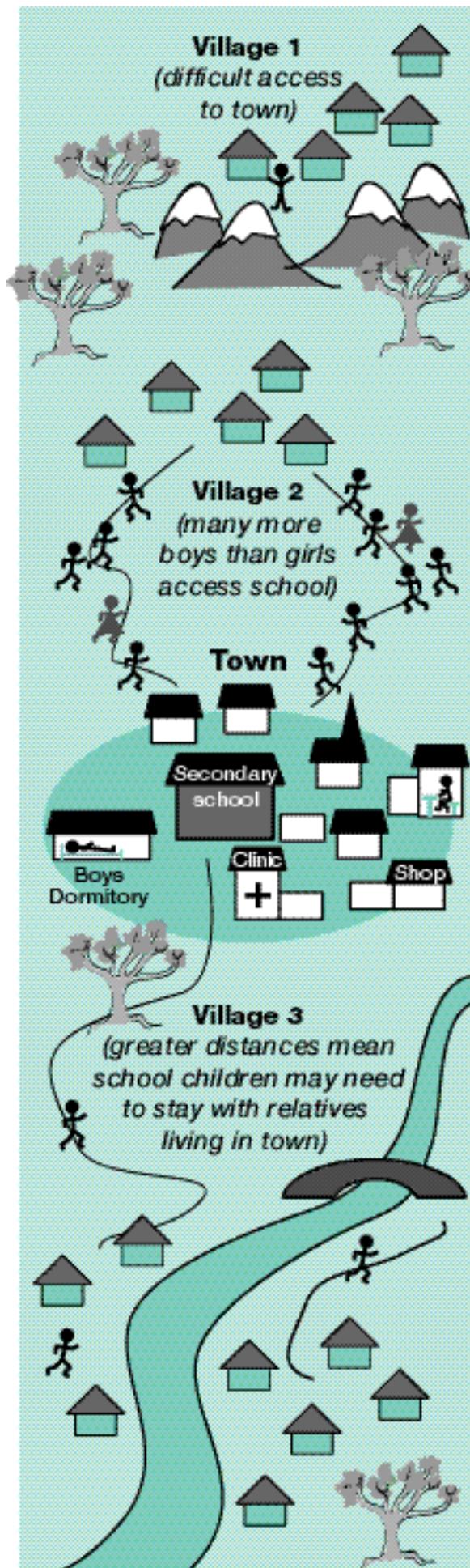
## PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

### ► Challenges in accessing secondary education

Participatory tools can help to understand the local picture, as well as mobilising people to campaign for greater secondary education access. A **Secondary School Map** could be used to plot out the secondary schools in the area, adding detail such as: which primary schools feed which secondary school; who attends which school; how they get to school; if they leave the local community to go to school. It is important to ensure that different people are categorised appropriately, for example using different symbols for boys and girls, etc.

This could be complemented by a **School Costs Matrix** which looks at the different costs associated with different school grades – for example looking at lower primary, upper primary, lower and upper secondary (and tertiary if appropriate). Discussion could focus on new costs which get introduced through the years, if and why costs increased, how the costs are met, and by whom.

A third activity is a **Secondary School Tree**. This could be a healthy tree, looking at the factors that enable children to go to secondary school and the advantages associated with schooling. Or it could be a diseased tree, which explores the factors which prevent children accessing secondary education, and the impact of this. The group could focus on how to move from the unhealthy to the healthy tree. This could include reference to the map or the matrix, developing specific strategies to overcome some of the challenges of secondary education. When thinking through how to address the challenges it will be important to identify who is responsible for implementing the solution, and to develop strategies for involving the key stakeholders, holding them to account.



# Adult literacy

Government investment in adult literacy has been low in recent years, in part because of the narrowing of the EFA agenda, but also because of the claim that many adult literacy programmes have been unsuccessful, with low literacy achievement signalling poor rates of return on investment.

This failure to invest in adult literacy is a violation of human rights which is impacting hundreds of millions of people around the world. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates that 781<sup>52</sup> million adults live without basic literacy skills, of which two-thirds are women.<sup>53</sup> Denial of literacy, therefore, is not just a human rights violation but an indicator of gender inequality. Failure to tackle illiteracy:

- Helps to perpetuate gender inequality (literacy increases women's participation in both the private and public spheres);
- Undermines the health and education of children (more literate parents raise healthier and more literate children);
- Holds back development and economic growth in the world's poorest countries (there are clear connections between literacy levels in a country and economic growth<sup>54</sup>, literacy can be described as the fertilizer needed for development and democracy to take root and grow);
- Perpetuates the spread of HIV (the more education a woman has the more control she has over her body, literacy programmes can improve people's access to information and strengthen their ability to respond to HIV).<sup>55</sup>

This suggests an urgent need to tackle the issue of adult illiteracy. There is a need for strong leadership and political will if the EFA goals are to be met. The case needs to be made to support adult literacy as a right in itself, as well as a force for democracy and social change. And governments and the international community must be shown that adult literacy can succeed if programmes are well designed. This section looks at two key elements in doing this. First, the International Benchmarks for Adult Literacy are considered, looking at how they can be used to design, monitor or campaign for investment in adult literacy. Secondly, the core elements of *Reflect*, a widely-used approach for adult learning and social change is explored. These sections are linked through looking at the benchmarks in relation to *Reflect*, drawing on some recent research conducted in Tanzania and Vietnam.

## ▶▶ Adult literacy and Adult learning

The benchmarks take an expanded view of adult literacy, including a range of skills and knowledge which may more commonly be considered as part of a broader goal of adult learning. It is important that wider adult education initiatives are not forgotten through exclusive focus on adult literacy. Any comprehensive adult education programme should include a range of learning opportunities balancing practical literacy learning with continuing education programmes.

<sup>52</sup> This is based on countries' self-reporting; others estimate that the figure could be as much as double this.

<sup>53</sup> [www.uis.unesco.org/ev\\_en.php?ID=6704\\_201&ID2=DO\\_TOPIC](http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev_en.php?ID=6704_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC) accessed 27th October 2006.

<sup>54</sup> See for example, Bashir and Darrat (1994), Naudé (2004), Cameron (2005)

<sup>55</sup> See the *STAR action research pilot project, 2004-2006* and *STAR guidelines*

## Adult literacy benchmarks

In 2005, ActionAid and the Global Campaign for Education conducted a wide-reaching survey on adult literacy programmes around the world, and from this developed 12 policy benchmarks which can be used to design and assess literacy programmes.<sup>56</sup> The study drew from 67 successful literacy programmes in 35 countries, focusing on common features which could be simplified into benchmarks or guidelines for policy makers. While there has been widespread support for the benchmarks in theory, there have been fewer attempts to apply them in practice.

The benchmarks can be used in a variety of ways. They provide the basis for governments to design and resource adult literacy programmes in line with their EFA commitments. However, they can also be used to guide the practical and methodological aspects of any literacy programme, to ensure that it is well designed, managed and implemented, that facilitators are properly trained and supported, and that the literacy learning process is effective. In addition, the benchmarks could be used within a training process to enable facilitators to explore their role and understanding of literacy and to reflect on many of the issues involved.

Different users of the benchmarks will be interested in different issues. For example, a policy maker may focus on the macro-level issues of designing, financing and governing a programme; while at local level the concern will be on what the benchmarks mean for practice, how they impact on facilitator recruitment, training and support, what pedagogies should be used, etc. Civil society actors may use the benchmarks to hold government to account or the benchmarks could be used to guide particular pieces of research or advocacy work. A high level workshop on adult literacy, held in Nigeria in February 2007 recommended that countries use the benchmarks as a starting point for national dialogue on adult literacy. Part of this process would be to contextualise the benchmarks, so that each country develops national benchmarks derived from the international ones.

### ▶▶ Different uses of a review

- A review may be carried out in collaboration with the government for internal learning – you could compile a brief report with recommendations and strategies for moving forward.
- It might be an independent process – you could facilitate a discussion forum with those involved in the programme based on your review findings, to clarify and extend the analysis.
- You may wish to publicise the lack of investment in adult education locating this in relation to the right to education. You could develop press briefings, or a workshop or conference, to share the results of the review.
- You could use the review as a basis for your engagement with adult learning, exploring where the weak-points in the programme are and how could you collaborate with the government to overcome these.

These different uses suggest different levels of collaboration with the government to conduct the review and discuss the findings – some will be more confrontational than others.

In planning your work with the benchmarks you will need to reflect on why you are using them, how you will use them, what information you hope to collect and what processes you will use to do this. You should consider who your audience is, what you are trying to communicate with them, how you will collate the information, and the format you will use to make it accessible.

Here we present the twelve benchmarks, giving a brief explanation for each one, and then some key questions which you could ask when working with the benchmark. These questions will need to be adapted depending on your focus, but can be used for design, review or advocacy. Some further methodological hints for using the benchmarks in any of these areas are given below.

<sup>56</sup> Published as 'Writing the wrongs' – Global Campaign for Education, November 2005 available from GCE website, [www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)

1. *Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.*

While focusing on the traditional 3 'R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) it is important to continually make links between abstract learning and 'real life' practice. For example, learners might be supported to bring in issues that they have experienced and discuss these within the group. Facilitators should use official documents, newspapers and leaflets to give the learning direct relevance. This linking will impact on programme design, delivery and learning, and therefore it is important that all those involved share similar views of literacy.

*Questions include:*

- Why do learners join programmes? What do they hope to learn?
- Are reading, writing and numeracy skills all given due attention?
- Are the learning materials related to real life contexts?
- What outcomes of learning are identified by literacy learners and others involved in the programme?
- When asked to explain 'why adult literacy' is important, what does the student, teacher or programme coordinator say?
- Is there any reference to wider education indicators – such as HIV, empowerment, income generation, gender equality, poverty reduction, social and political change in programme material?

2. *Literacy should be seen as a continuous process that requires sustained learning and application. There are no magic lines to cross from illiteracy into literacy. All policies and programmes should be defined to encourage sustained participation and celebrate progressive achievement rather than focusing on one-off provision with a single end point.*

This means that literacy programmes need to ensure that their assessment methods recognise a step-by-step approach, it also suggests that a one-year project approach, so popular with funders, and with

governments running mass literacy campaigns, are unlikely to be successful in terms of long-term sustainable literacy. Programmes should run for at least two or three years – moving from basic literacy to further learning.

*Questions include:*

- What is the time-scale of the programme? And what constraints are there on the time frame?
- Is there post-literacy provision, and what does this consist of?
- How is learning recognised throughout the programme? In what ways can learner's celebrate their progress?
- How does the programme deal with different skill levels? How are new participants integrated into the programme?

3. *Governments have the lead responsibility in meeting the right to adult literacy and in providing leadership, policy frameworks, an enabling environment and resources.*

*They should:*

- *ensure cooperation across all relevant ministries and links to all relevant development programmes,*
- *work in systematic collaboration with experienced civil society organisations,*
- *ensure links between all these agencies, especially at the local level, and*
- *ensure relevance to the issues in learners' lives by promoting the decentralisation of budgets and of decision-making over curriculum, methods and materials.*

The main thrust of this benchmark is to locate the funding and provision of adult literacy with the government, while at the same time recognising the role that a range of actors can play: with providing methodology and materials, learning from experience, evaluation, training and also content specific information – to enable the literacy programme to deliver on citizenship, livelihood, health and gender equality. It also emphasises the importance of local input and adaptation of curriculum and learning materials, to achieve local relevance.

*Questions include:*

- Who designs, manages, and implements the programme? How are different people involved? Where does the power lie and what are the power dynamics?
- Who is funding the work? Is there allocation for adult literacy in the government budget? Which ministry?
- Does adult literacy have its own department, with its own budget?
- Are there links with different ministries such as gender, agriculture and employment? What is the nature of the collaboration?
- How are CSOs involved in programme design and delivery?
- How are donor agencies or international organisations involved in programme financing, design and delivery?
- Who is responsible for methodology, training and evaluation?
- How much flexibility is there at local level? What agendas are set at local level?
- Are participants themselves involved in any aspect of programme design or delivery?

4. *It is important to invest in ongoing feedback and evaluation mechanisms, data systematisation and strategic research. The focus of evaluations should be on the practical application of what has been learnt and the impact on active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality.* Evaluation should not only enable the individual learner, or group of learners to monitor and reflect on their own performance and achievements, but should also benefit the programme as a whole, there needs to be good systems to feed back learning into practice.

*Questions include:*

- What types of evaluation are being carried out (external, peer, self-evaluation, etc.)?
- How are the results disseminated – fed back into the programme and shared more widely?
- What does the evaluation focus on – inputs; outcomes or impacts? How are other communication skills measured?
- How is literacy learning measured? E.g. are indicators developed to track citizenship, livelihood and gender equality measures?
- What do different stakeholders – learners, facilitators, coordinators – say they have

learnt from being part of the programme? Does this meet their expectations? And how have they put this learning into practice?

5. *To retain facilitators it is important that they should be paid at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all hours worked (including time for training, preparation and follow-up).* Facilitators are key in any literacy programme, and the issue of attracting and retaining good quality facilitators is clearly crucial for the success of any programme. Facilitator pay is not just about the wage they receive but about wider motivation. Benefit can be integrated into the programme in the form of accredited training, access to further education, recognition and status in the community, etc.

*Questions include:*

- Are the facilitators paid? How does their pay compare to that of a primary school teacher?
  - Is the actual payment equivalent to that stated in policy documents? Are facilitators clear about their rights?
  - How do facilitators receive their pay? (e.g. do they have to walk long distances to the main town each month?) Is it regular and guaranteed?
  - Is there any other systematic form of benefits integrated into the programme? What does this consist of?
  - What is the turnover of facilitators in the programme, why do they leave?
  - What is the level of motivation of facilitators, what motivates them?
6. *Facilitators should be local people who receive substantial initial training and regular refresher training, as well as having ongoing opportunities for exchanges with other facilitators. Governments should put in place a framework for the professional development of the adult literacy sector, including for trainers/supervisors – with full opportunities for facilitators across the country to access this (e.g. through distance education).*

In designing a structured training and support programme, it is important to consider the key qualities needed to be a good facilitator, identifying which qualities are innate and which can be developed through training, and ensuring that those recruited into the programme have, or are able to develop these qualities. Professional development should include a series of key stages which facilitators can aim for to strengthen their professional profile and career opportunities. It will also be important to consider the trainers themselves, the qualities they need and the career development opportunities.

*Questions include:*

- Who are the facilitators? Where do they come from? What languages do they speak and how do they differ from the group in terms of age, gender, educational level? What qualities do they have? What is the process of facilitator selection?
- What training do facilitators receive? What is the time frame, contents, approach?
- How is the training divided between initial training and follow-up support or refresher training?
- What ways are there for recognising facilitator skills and achievement?
- Do facilitators have the opportunity to meet their peers? What form do these meetings take? What is discussed? Is there a link between points raised in the meeting and facilitator training? What? How?
- Who decides what facilitator development involves? What are the power dynamics in this process?

**7. *There should be a ratio of at least one facilitator to 30 learners and at least one trainer/supervisor to 15 learner groups (1 to 10 in remote areas), ensuring a minimum of one support visit per month. Programmes should have timetables that flexibly respond to the daily lives of learners but which provide for regular and sustained contact (e.g. twice a week for at least two years).*** Programme timing and location decisions will depend on participants' lifestyles, and this will need to be negotiated if participants have very different daily routines. The length of education provision and the level of support

given to participants and facilitators is important. Quality literacy learning takes time, especially if this learning is to link to wider change.

*Questions include:*

- Who are the named staff involved in the literacy project. Are supervisors and trainers the same person? Do they come from the government, CSOs, schools, colleges, the community? What are the planned and budgeted numbers of staff, facilitators and learners?
- What are the levels of accessibility to communities involved? Are there good transport links? How often do supervisors or trainers visit the groups, what happens in these group visits? Do remote groups receive the same amount of visits as more accessible programmes?
- What is the length of literacy programme? And the frequency of meetings? How is this decided, and by whom?
- What is the enrolment rate, and retention rate of learners (by gender and age), has there been analysis of what impacts these rates have?

**8. *In multi-lingual contexts it is important at all stages that learners should be given an active choice about the language in which they learn. Active efforts should be made to encourage and sustain bilingual learning.***

National or official languages (or even international languages) are often the language of power; they enable people to access official information and debates, and as such are often desired by the learners. However, local languages bring with them local culture and knowledge; they need to be valued and preserved. What's more literacy learning is easier through mother tongue. Decisions about language are highly political, and have far reaching impact, they can lead to further marginalisation or to empowerment.

*Questions include:*

- What language(s) are spoken by participants in the learning group? Which are used within the learning group? Did all

learners have a choice about the languages they learn in?

- What languages are known by the facilitator and supervisor or trainer? What language is used in the learning materials?
- Are official documents translated for use in the learning group? How are the authentic documents used?
- What language is used for assessment and evaluation?
- How are different communication skills viewed?
- What are the motivations for learners joining the programme? Do they refer to the language of instruction? For example, are their main interests to learn to read and write, or to learn the dominant local or national language?

**9. A wide range of participatory methods should be used in the learning process to ensure active engagement of learners and relevance to their lives. These same participatory methods and processes should be used at all levels of training of trainers and facilitators.**

Using participatory approaches will enable participants to be active in their learning process. This serves two functions – to ensure the content of learning is appropriate and relevant to their lives, and to develop skills of participation, or active citizenship, which can be applied in other areas of life.

*Questions include:*

- Is critical discussion encouraged in the learning space?
- Are pictures, posters, photos or maps, calendars and matrices, etc. used to stimulate discussion?
- Are learners actively involved in producing learning materials – or analysing their local context?
- Are videos, television, radio used?
- How is local knowledge used and valued in the process, and are local resources – including gossip, local news, proverbs, theatre and song used?
- What approaches are used within the training courses?
- What approaches are used in programme reviews and evaluations?

**10. Governments should take responsibility for stimulating the market for production and**

*distribution of a wide variety of materials suitable for new readers, for example by working with publishers or newspaper producers. They should balance this with funding for the local production of materials, especially by learners, facilitators and trainers.*

It literacy skills are to be used and retained, learners need to have opportunities to use them in their daily lives. This suggests that literacy programmes need to consider the current environment and levels of access to literacy materials, and the government needs to take responsibility for enhancing these if need be.

*Questions include:*

- Is there a literate environment, do people have access to newspapers, official publications, books, magazines and other documents as well as paper and pens?
- Do people have a way of using their literacy; is there a clearly understood need for literacy?
- Is there a strategy for increasing access to materials at the local level? How does this balance national and locally produced materials? Do government subsidies exist to enhance learners' access to newspapers and other informative materials?
- Is public information routinely displayed – are there notice boards, open information policies, etc.? How is this integrated into the learning process?

**11. A good quality literacy programme that respects all these benchmarks is likely to cost between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year for at least three years (two years initial learning + ensuring further learning opportunities are available for all)**

In addition to this direct cost figure (to cover facilitator training, support and pay, learning materials, supervision visits, etc.) there is also an indirect cost to consider – of developing a literate environment, this could involve linking to publishers and creating dissemination systems to ensure good access to information.

*Questions include:*

- What is the budgeted cost per learner, and what items does this budget cover? Is the money spent as budgeted?
- Is the programme able to meet quality standards – given the level of funding it receives?
- Are there additional requirements learners, facilitators, coordinators have that are not currently met within the programme budget? What, and at what cost?

*12. Governments should dedicate at least three per cent of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes as conceived in these benchmarks. Where governments deliver on this, international donors should fill any remaining resource gaps (e.g. through including adult literacy in the Fast Track Initiative).*

The actual amount dedicated to adult literacy depends on context, and it is also important to recognise that no government currently has an account for 'adult literacy' exclusively; budgets are always housed within broader adult or non-formal education frameworks. If adult literacy is to be taken seriously support for this needs to come from the highest level (including through the fast track initiative), and money is a good indicator as to whether something really is a priority.

*Questions include:*

- Is the government funding the programme? What percentage of GDP is spent on education? What percentage of the education budget is invested in adult education? Does this percentage equal \$50–\$100 per learner, per year? What percentage of the adult education budget goes to adult literacy initiatives (as opposed to vocational training or formal equivalency courses)?
- Is there a viable plan to strengthen the literacy programme? Are the international community aware of the plan? Are they contributing to it? How does this compare to aid to primary education?
- How is the adult literacy plan integrated with other national plans (such as the Education Sector Plan, MDG, PRSP)? How could it be linked more strongly?
- What proportion of non-governmental (including NGO, CSO, international and bilateral organisations) project support goes to adult literacy?
- How do other ministries contribute to the costs of adult literacy learning? How does this compare to their wider spending?

▶ It can be useful to use participatory tools (mentioned throughout this pack) to analyse the benchmarks and identify key issues and questions the benchmarks give rise to. For example: a **tree** could be used to explore what is understood by literacy (benchmarks 1 and 2), with the roots showing the key ingredients of literacy, the trunk as the process and the fruit as the outcomes. A **chappati** diagram could be used to look at the different organisations and relationships involved in governing literacy (benchmark 3), while a **body map** and **river** might help to explore the characteristics of a perfect facilitator and their journey from initial recruitment through training and ongoing support (benchmarks 5 and 6). To explore the literate environment (benchmark 10) a **map** could be used, looking at the local area, where people are able to use literacy and what sorts of interventions might be useful to increase the literate environment.



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**Using the benchmarks locally:**

The focus at the local level is likely be on practical issues, ensuring that learners are receiving high quality, empowering, adult literacy programmes.

■ **Programme design:** The benchmarks can be useful in thinking through how to design an adult literacy programme. Local organisations might draw on Benchmark 1 to help clarify their definition of literacy and the aims and objectives of their programme. This could involve direct discussion with learners, ensuring that the understanding is shared and that there is ownership of the programme. The content of the literacy programme will be further decided through discussions, with learners, about the language of instruction (Benchmark 8); the use of participatory methods and a range of different materials (Benchmark 9) and evaluation mechanisms (Benchmarks 2 and 4). This content and pedagogy will need to be complemented by a focus on the programme organisation, questioning how facilitators will be recruited, trained and retained, as well as logistical issues about facilitator learner ratios, times and length of classes, etc. (Benchmarks 5, 6 and 7). Through adapting and applying the questions above local groups can think through the diverse aspects needed to inform their programme. Finally, it will also be important to consider government support and funding to the programme, lobbying the DEO if this is not readily available (Benchmarks 11 and 12).

■ **Programme evaluation:** The benchmarks can be used at the local level to monitor and evaluate programmes. The benchmarks are minimum standards by which to judge programmes. Reviewers could use different formats to report on the programmes such as report cards discussed in Section Three. Methods for the review itself include:

- *Reviews of programme documents:* Including programme planning and budget documents (does the planning and budgeting reflect the criteria laid out in the benchmarks above); learning

materials (do these facilitate participatory, learner-centred learning, are they relevant and appropriate); training reports (are similar methods used in training and the learning groups, what skills and capacities are developed); evaluation plans and results (what is assessed, how, how does assessment feed back into the programme), etc.

- *Interviews:* Going through some of the questions explored above with programme coordinators, trainers, facilitators and programme participants; focusing for example on understandings of literacy, motivations for learning, learning outcomes, challenges and successes of the programme.
- *Observation and discussion:* With the learning groups themselves, as well as the interaction between the learning groups and the wider community, local government, literacy provider, etc. Are they demonstrating the wider range of skills built through literacy? What are the gender and power dynamics? How are the training sessions conducted? What is learnt?

■ **Local campaigning and advocacy:** The third way of using the benchmarks locally is to ensure that there is sufficient investment from the government in adult literacy. Campaigning work will include building relationships with government as well as mobilising the wider community to demand their right to education. The benchmarks might be used to frame research questions, such as looking at the levels of illiteracy locally, as well as potential learners motivations and expectations from literacy programmes. This could be done using some of the participatory methodologies used in *Reflect* (see below), building momentum and interest for adult literacy. The benchmarks can also be used directly, for example looking at the finances needed to implement the programme locally, as well as the levels of government support needed for programme materials, training and support.

## Using the benchmarks nationally:

At a national level the benchmarks will be used to ensure that government is fulfilling its EFA commitment to adult education. This includes showing the political will and leadership needed to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in adult literacy by 2015, ensuring that the literacy programme is of good quality, and that adult learners leave the programme with the skills and knowledge they need to be active participants in society.

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- **Programme design:** The focus at this level is to provide the systems and mechanisms to ensure that the local level is able to deliver quality education. This means planning national level literacy programmes, in collaboration with a range of actors, which are flexible and adaptable at local level (Benchmark 3); having the necessary budget (Benchmarks 11 and 12) to cover the range of criteria needed for any successful literacy programme (i.e. good quality facilitators, relevant and appropriate quality learning materials and processes, and a literate environment); as well as being well monitored and evaluated (Benchmark 4). It also means developing the systems and structures which will support these programmes. For example, clarifying who the literacy trainers are, how programmes should be coordinated, and having a range of minimum standards which are nationally agreed to (produced in collaboration with a range of civil society and government actors) and can be used as guidelines for local programme development. The plans should be clearly laid out and available to all, so that they can be used locally to support programme design, and monitoring or advocacy if need be.
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- **Programme evaluation:** This will focus on evaluating the system and structures provided to achieve the EFA commitment, as well as the design, implementation and outputs of the programme itself. The methodology will be similar to local level work, but the focus of questions, and those involved in the process will differ:
    - **Review of programme documentation:** This will include a review of the initial strategy and action plan, as well as information disseminated to other actors (civil society,

donors, other government ministries, local level bodies, etc.), programme guidelines, curriculum and learning processes, evaluations, terms of references and outcomes, etc. Are the benchmarks considered in programme design? How are the different standards interpreted and applied? Is government funding and support available? Was sufficient guidance given to the programme implementers?

- **Review of other documentation:** The choice of documentation would depend on the programme aims and objectives. It may include a review of literacy and poverty data, for example. How have literacy indicators changed over time? How has GDP (per capita disaggregated for specific areas) changed? How have gender-related data (employment, women's empowerment, health, etc.) changed overtime? How have other ministries planned for or supported adult literacy?
- **Interviews and focus group discussions:** These will take place at national and local levels exploring the level of partnership and participation of different actors in programme design, delivery and evaluation; the level of shared goals and expectations of the programme; knowledge of the literacy benchmarks; challenges and successes of the programme; and the priority placed on adult literacy at different levels, etc.

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- **Advocacy:** This could be to raise awareness of the benchmarks, and may include workshops with government officials to discuss the benchmarks, and think through how they might put them into practice. It will also include wider campaigning and mobilising with the media and public, to demand government investment in adult literacy based on the EFA commitments. This could also include looking to the international level, drawing on experiences from overseas of using the benchmarks, insisting that governments report on their achievement against Goal 4, or producing shadow reports, as well as linking to Ministers of Finance and donors to raise their awareness and interest in adult education as a right in itself.
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## ▶▶ Practical Example: Using the Adult Literacy Benchmarks

Over 60 participants from 24 countries gathered in Abuja, Nigeria from 12th-16th February 2007. Participants included Ministers of Education, Permanent Secretaries, Directors and Managers of National Literacy Programmes, United Nations officials, donors and leading civil society organisations. Following three days discussion and analysis on the state of adult literacy, using the benchmarks to frame their analysis, they produced a call to action to encourage national governments and civil society actors to renew their commitment and investment on adult literacy.

*National, state and local governments as well as civil society actors were asked to:*

- 1. Understand the scale of the literacy challenge and ensure programmes recognise and respond to demand.** Present literacy statistics are unreliable and often significantly underestimate the scale of the problem. National adult literacy surveys are needed to build comprehensive new evidence on the number and profile of people facing literacy challenges, recognising literacy as a continuum with no magic line to cross from illiteracy to literacy.
- 2. Collate national dossiers on the benefits of literacy.** There is considerable international evidence on political, social, economic, cultural and personal benefits that come from adult literacy. However, new research and new evaluations are urgently needed at a national level on the multiple impacts of adult literacy.
- 3. Renew national dialogue on literacy policies and practices by using the International Benchmarks** developed by the Global Campaign for Education and ActionAid International with support from UNESCO / the EFA Global Monitoring Report in 2006. These should be used to stimulate debate with all stakeholders but should be nationalised and contextualised in each country to reflect diverse contexts / realities.
- 4. Ensure that all stakeholders from all relevant sectors at local and national level engage in a new national debate** on the pivotal role of adult literacy for achieving development goals. This includes Ministries of Finance, Education and other line ministries, parliamentarians, civil society actors, national education coalitions and the media.
- 5. Include adult literacy in education sector plans, especially those submitted to the Fast Track Initiative (FTI).** FTI donors will support the full Education For All sector if national governments put forward comprehensive plans. Pressures from in-country donors to reduce the focus of education plans to just primary or formal schooling must be resisted as there is a clear inter-dependency in the EFA goals.
- 6. Recognise adult literacy as the 'invisible glue' presently missing from national plans** seeking to address the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or Education For All (EFA) goals, as well as from Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and national development strategies, and take action to redress this, within the plans themselves as well as any reviews – which should examine the impact of failing to address adult literacy.
- 7. Act on the understanding that effective adult literacy programmes require a significant increase in funding and sustained investment** from core government budgets – but that the costs of illiteracy are much higher.

## Networking on adult literacy

In campaigning on adult literacy it is important to work in collaboration with other civil society activists. Where education coalitions exist it will be important to discuss the benchmarks within the coalition. It might be that the coalition has thematic sub-sections and that one of these focuses on adult learning. If not you might consider forming such a group to push forward work in this area. Alternatively, there may exist a separate adult literacy coalition who could take this work forward. If so it could be worth considering how the two coalitions work together.

Beyond engagement with the adult literacy benchmarks, adult literacy networks are likely to focus on two main elements – sharing methodology ideas, and campaigning for government commitment to adult literacy. These two issues are distinct, and different people may be involved in different elements of the networking.

An example of methodology sharing can be seen in *Reflect* networks, considered in the following section.



### EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

## UGANDA

The Ugandan Adult Education Network (UGAADEN) is a network of organisations and individuals involved in adult learning in Uganda. The main activity of UGAADEN is lobbying and advocacy. The network came about following the realisation that there was no policy in the country on adult learning. Even a programme on adult education run by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development was run without a policy framework. The network, also sought to correct a misconception in the country which equated adult education with adult literacy.

UGAADEN have been working to put together a policy on adult education, working in collaboration with a range of different stakeholders, and drawing on available literature on adult learning. The policy was submitted to the relevant government department. The government later initiated forums to further discuss the proposal from UGAADEN. Unfortunately, the policy is still not in place, but the network has been engaging with government to see to the release of the policy.

# Reflect

*Reflect* is an innovative approach to adult learning and social change that fuses the educational theories of Paulo Freire with the practical participatory methodologies (especially visualisations) used in a wide variety of development initiatives. Key to the *Reflect* approach is creating a space where people feel comfortable to meet and discuss issues relevant to them and their lives. *Reflect* aims to improve the meaningful participation of people in decisions that affect their lives, through strengthening their ability to communicate. Based on nine core elements (see box overleaf) *Reflect* encourages participants to develop and act on power awareness, recognising that power dynamics impact on learning, communication and wider citizen participation.

Originally developed through pilot projects in Bangladesh, El Salvador and Uganda, *Reflect* is now used by over 500 organisations in more than 70 countries, in each case adapted to the local context. It was awarded UN Literacy Prizes in 2003 and 2005, for the way in which it has revolutionised adult learning.



Michael Armandia / Network / ActionAid

The *facilitator* is key to *Reflect*. Usually someone from the local community, the *facilitator* is trained in facilitation skills, participatory approaches, power analysis and adult learning, and is then supported to work with a group guiding the learning process, but not directing it. The participants set their own agenda, identify their own issues, prepare their own learning materials and act on their analysis. The *facilitator* acts as a catalyst and, drawing on the range of participatory tools and techniques, ensures appropriate conditions for reflecting, sharing, learning, and acting. These tools enable participants to communicate their knowledge, experience and feelings without being restricted by literacy barriers, while at the same time developing literacy and other communication skills.

The construction of graphics (e.g. maps, calendars and diagrams) involves discussion on a key issue in the learners' lives, generating vocabulary that is relevant and practical. Graphics are constructed, by the group, on the floor using locally available materials, and discussion and analysis is encouraged throughout the process. It is important to create the graphic on the large scale, so that everyone can actively contribute, and clearly see what is going on. It is also important to use moveable materials so that things can be changed as the discussion evolves. Gradually, written words or numbers are introduced in the place of symbols, and the graphic is transferred from the ground to large sheets of paper. In some cases participants will copy the graphic into their own books or paper. This enables them to strengthen their literacy skills, while also keeping a record of the discussion, which may be revisited at a later date.

## **Reflect core elements**

The following principles have been developed over time, drawing on the roots of *Reflect* as well as practical experiences of working with the approach:

- **Power and Voice:** *Reflect* aims to strengthen people's capacity to communicate by whatever means are most relevant to them. Although part of the process may be about learning new communication skills (e.g. literacy), the focus is on using these in meaningful ways. It is through focusing on the practical use that real learning takes place.
- **Political Process:** Achieving social change and greater social justice is a fundamentally political process. *Reflect* is not a neutral approach. It seeks to help people in the struggle to assert their rights, challenge injustice and change their position in society. As such it requires us to explicitly align ourselves, and work with the poorest and most marginalised.
- **Democratic Space:** A democratic space – one in which everyone's voice is given equal weight – is created in *Reflect*. This needs to be actively constructed, as it does not naturally exist. It is counter-cultural, challenging the power relationships and stratification that have created inequality.
- **An intensive and extensive process:** The intensity of contact on an ongoing basis is crucial for a process that seeks to achieve social or political change. Groups usually meet at least once a week for two years or longer.
- **Grounded in existing knowledge:** *Reflect* begins with respecting and valuing people's existing knowledge and experiences. However this does not mean accepting opinions or prejudices without challenge. Participants are also enabled to access new information and ideas from new sources. But they have control over this process and *Reflect* builds confidence in their own starting point, so that they can be critical and selective.
- **Linking reflection and action:** There is a continual cycle of reflection and action in *Reflect*. It is not about reflection for the purpose of change, and action linked to reflection, as pure activism rapidly loses direction.
- **Using participatory tools:** A wide range of participatory tools are used to help create an open, democratic environment in which everyone is able to contribute. These tools help provide a structure for the process, they include visuals (calendars, diagrams, maps, etc...) and other methods and processes, such as, theatre, dance, video or photography.
- **Power awareness:** All participatory tools can be distorted, manipulated or used in exploitative ways if they are not linked to an awareness of power relationships. Within *Reflect*, multiple dimensions of power and stratification are always considered, and inequitable power relationships challenged. This includes a structural analysis to ensure that issues are not dealt with at a superficial level.
- **Coherence and self-organisation:** the same principles and processes that apply to the participants also apply to us, within our own institutions and even our personal lives, whether we are facilitators, trainers or programme coordinators. All involved are expected to reflect on their own attitudes, behaviours and experiences. Where possible, groups are self-managed and facilitators come from the community rather than being dependent on outsiders.

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### BURUNDI

In Burundi *Reflect* has played an important role in rebuilding trust and social relationships through creating space for communication and joint learning. *Reflect* was first introduced by ActionAid in Ruyigi province, to promote peace and strengthen the role of women in peace-building. There are now 89 circles there.

All the circles have two facilitators, one Hutu and one Tutsi, and all have participants from both communities, creating ongoing opportunities for interaction and dialogue. The circles have become places for both young and old, Hutu and Tutsi, to meet, reconcile and forgive. *Reflect* circles use discussion and graphics to identify obstacles to peace, which have included petty conflict, insecurity, displacement due to rebel attacks, rumours and mistrust. They have been able to challenge stereotypes, dispel myths and reconstruct a shared history and purpose. Communities have become linked in solidarity against the political instability in the region, identifying themselves as 'poor people' with a common interest, rather than as Hutu or Tutsi. This has made it possible to build trust as the foundation of a sustainable peace locally, even where violence and instability continue elsewhere.

Literacy has also been an important part of the programme, as one participant said:

*'It is important that we have learned to read and write. It means that we have been able to write letters. We have written letters to some of our community who are still in Tanzania asking them to come back. We want to encourage them to come home. We encourage them to come home by our personal testimonies of peace and by telling them about Reflect. We write and tell them that they should not listen to the rumours and radio propaganda, life really has changed here. Three people came back last week because of the letters we were able to write.'*

Juvenal Ndikumagenge (24)

Another key part of the programme has been the development of the community newsletter *Ejo*. *Ejo* correspondents are drawn from *Reflect* circles, and the newsletter is read and discussed during circle sessions. The current distribution is 60,000, reaching as far as the refugee camps in Tanzania and other provinces.



Stuart Freedman / ActionAid

The accumulated discussion, reflection and analysis of each issue leads learners to identify actions that they can take (individually or as a group) to improve their situation. These actions involve the practical use of oral and written language, as well as numeracy skills. Often participants will decide they need to access further information in order to deepen their analysis, thus strengthening their communication skills further.

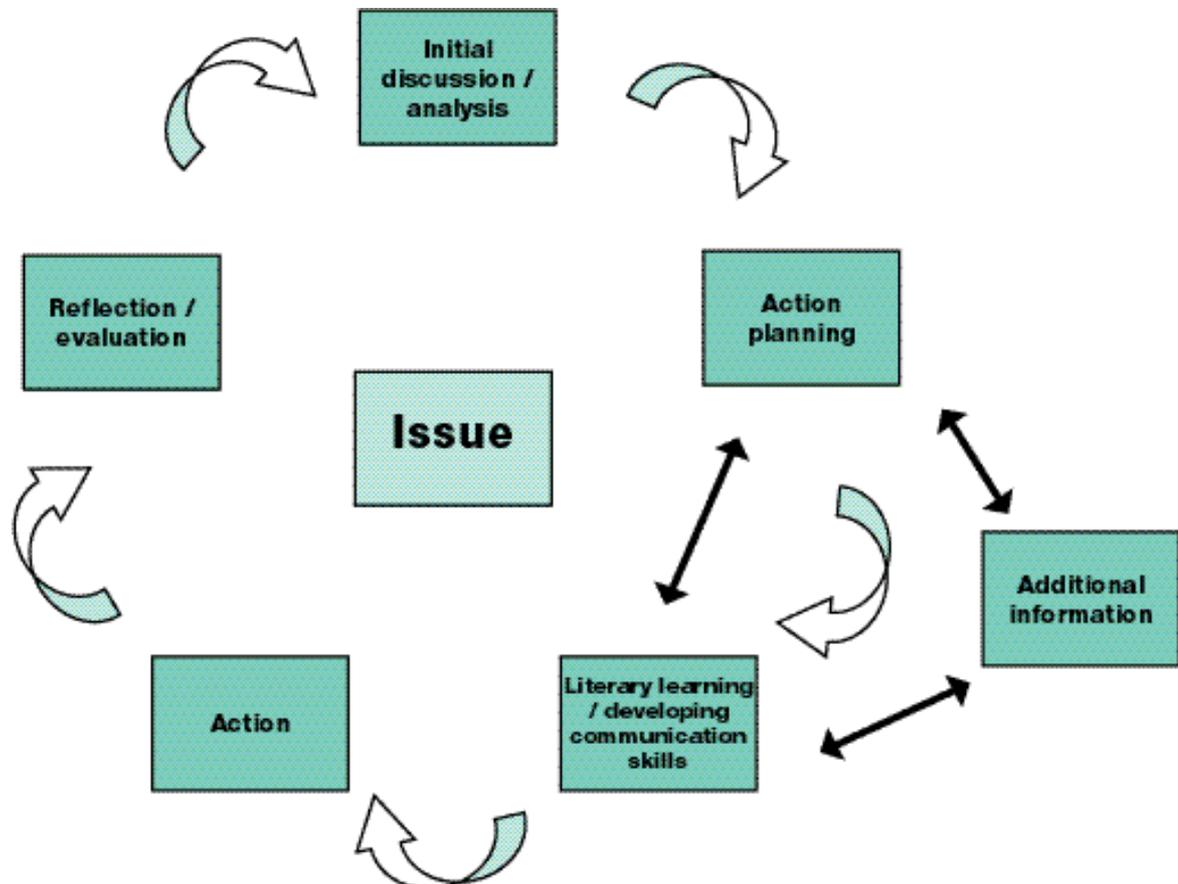
This process enables adults to be active in their learning, ensuring that it is relevant and empowering. Participants strengthen and develop a range of communication skills, so that they have the confidence, information and capacity to access their rights and transform power relationships.

The *Reflect* approach is used in a wide variety of ways by different organisations, including:

- challenging cast discrimination in Nepal;
- opposing violence against women in Peru;
- strengthening local democracy in South Africa;
- developing literacy skills in Uganda;
- teaching English as a second Language to refugees and long-term immigrants in the UK and Canada;
- people-centred local planning in India;
- listening to street children in Pakistan;
- mobilisation for human rights in Nigeria;
- deepening cultural identity in the Basque Country.

Many more details about these projects and others can be found on the *Reflect* website: [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org).

This section outlines briefly the four communication skills developed through *Reflect* processes, before exploring how *Reflect* can be used to achieve adult literacy, to act as a catalyst for citizen action and support the EFA process.



## **Reflect – Literacy, numeracy, oracy and visuals:**

In 2003, *Communication and Power*<sup>57</sup> was published. This pack brings together 10 years of *Reflect* experience, using practical examples to illustrate activities in four key communication skills: literacy (the written word); numeracy (numbers); oracy (oral communication); and visuals (visual communication). These four elements form the basis of *Reflect* practice, but the way each skill is interpreted is also central to understanding the *Reflect* approach:

**The written word:** *Reflect* challenges the way that learning to read and write is often conceived as the essence of education, and seeks to redress the balance between the written word and other forms of communication. However, it also recognises the power of literacy. Enabling people to demystify the written word, access and use it for their own purposes can be a key ingredient of a wider struggle for social and economic justice.

*Reflect* helps people deal with the links between the practice of literacy and the practice of power. It focuses on meaningful literacy, which is integrated into a process of analysis and action. The teaching of literacy starts with the basic building blocks (building from names, using letters and syllables as well as whole texts), but moves quickly to analysing a range of printed material and official documents and enabling participants to produce their own texts. In this way, literacy becomes a way of promoting justice and equity, asserting rights and securing entitlements, valuing knowledge and enriching identity, accessing information and strengthening voice. The different methodologies link literacy learning directly to identity, local reality and development needs. They also ensure that participants are able to document their local knowledge, (through using a range of genre) access and analyse the local and national media, create a literacy environment and use literacy directly in holding local institutions to account.



Kate Holt / EyeLine / ActionAid

<sup>57</sup> D. Archer and K. Newman, *Communication and Power: Resource materials for Reflect practitioners*, (London: CIRAC, 2003). Available online: [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org)

## ACTIVITY

### ►► What is literacy? Where and how is it useful?

It is important for *Reflect* participants to think through the meanings and functions of literacy at the start of a *Reflect* process, asking questions such as:

- What is writing? Is it as simple as learning the alphabet?
- What are the alternatives to the written word? Are these other forms of communication valued as much as writing?
- How is literacy linked to power and status? Who gains from this?
- Why do you want to learn to read and write? How will you use it?
- How do you feel when others know you can or cannot read or write?
- What have you done before in situations where literacy is needed?

Building on this, participants could use a **Literacy Map** showing the physical locations where literacy is used – such as the market, town, official buildings, home etc. and look at the different relationships involved. For example, sometimes literacy might be a barrier, at others it might be seen as a positive resource for the group. Alternatively, a **Literacy Matrix** could be used to look at the uses of literacy in different spheres of life (private, commercial, social, political, etc.) and the types of power associated with literacy in these different spheres. Using a **Literacy Role Play**, the group could explore how the use of the written word makes them feel in each situation, as well as exploring how they react to the range of different contexts.

In **Lesotho**, *Reflect* practitioners developed a game to promote reflection on literacy. A game board is made with five different symbols or shapes, and five sets of cards correspond to these symbols. The different piles of cards show situations where people may use literacy – official, work, social, personal, and a fifth, chosen directly by the participants, depending on their experience. Each card is different, and shows a specific situation or event where literacy is used. Each player has a counter, throws a dice and moves around the board. When they land on a symbol they pick up a card from the relevant pile. They then discuss the communication skills they need in that situation and how they might feel and cope in the situation. The game itself develops literacy skills, through matching symbols and decoding images. The cards could include words as well as symbols to extend this practice further.

(See *Communication and Power*, W001, W002, W03)

#### Literacy Matrix

Place	Home	Community	Market	Government
Power				
Information		X		X
Money	X	X	X	X
Social Power		X		X
Reading/ understanding Political systems	X	X		X

## EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE

### BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, *Reflect* circles are being organised with sex workers in the Tangail Kandapara brothel. Here the women are denied many rights and their children are effectively treated as non-citizens by the Bangladeshi state,

*‘Even where we have encouraged our children to go to school and the administration has been sensitised to accept them, the children later drop out due to the kind of treatment they get from the teachers and the other children in the school.’*

In every area of life these women struggle to access their basic rights. As one woman put it,

*‘How do you talk of rights for some of us who do not have any right at all in the community? We, the inhabitants of Bania Shanta brothel, cannot even freely move outside the brothel. It is an irony that general people collect donations from us to build mosques, but after our death the same people don’t allow us in their graveyard. We have been left with no option but to let go our death-bodies in to the nearby water.’*

Participants highlight various ways that *Reflect* has helped them. They mention that they have acquired reading and writing skills, and that this has boosted their bargaining and negotiation power with the brothel owners and the customers. Their numeracy skills have helped them calculate what goes to them after the brothel owner or pimps have taken their cut. This has helped them to bargain for more pay in order to get a reasonable balance, particularly where they have prior direct contact with the customer. They have also been able to carry out some community actions. One that they were really proud of was the acquisition of land to be used as their burial ground. This marked a real achievement for the women.

for their own purposes can be a key ingredient of a wider struggle for social and economic justice.

*Reflect* helps people deal with the links between the practice of literacy and the practice of power. It focuses on meaningful literacy, which is integrated into a process of analysis and action. The teaching of literacy starts with the basic building blocks (building from names, using letters and syllables as well as whole texts), but moves quickly to analysing a range of printed material and official documents and enabling participants to produce their own texts. In this way, literacy becomes a way of promoting justice and equity, asserting rights and securing entitlements, valuing knowledge and enriching identity, accessing information and strengthening voice. The different methodologies link literacy learning directly to identity, local reality and development needs. They also ensure that participants are able to document their local knowledge, (through using a range of genre) access and analyse the local and national media, create a literate environment and use literacy directly in holding local institutions to account.

**Numbers:** *Reflect* recognises that numeracy is often sidelined in learning processes, and challenges the way it is often introduced, as an abstract process, reduced to basic arithmetic. In *Reflect*, numeracy is understood more broadly, it spans written, oral and mental processes, and is about solving problems, analysing issues and expressing information clearly and concisely. In fact, many of the participatory visuals used in *Reflect* are intrinsically mathematical – in the way they use space and symbols to represent reality. Like literacy, numeracy includes the critical reading of existing texts, as well as the active construction of alternatives, which may be used to challenge traditional understandings of mathematics.

Maths is always introduced in context (and meaningful numbers are used, starting for example with dates or birth, house or identity card number, using money, etc.), with calculations used to solve real problems.

## ACTIVITY

### ► Numbers and everyday life

A good starting point will be for participants to think through where they use numbers and mathematics. This is likely to differ depending on daily routines, and it can be useful to divide into peer groups (for example, younger men, younger women, older men, and older women). In these groups participants could begin by reflecting on their daily routines, perhaps constructing a *Daily Routine Calendar*, or *Numeracy Map*. Based on this, groups could discuss:

- Where (or when) money is used?
- Where weights or quantities are calculated?
- Where times or distances are estimated?

And start to develop their own definitions of mathematics. Further discussion should focus on:

- What is mathematics, and where and when do we use it?
- Why is mathematics important to us? What types of mathematics are important to us?
- How do we feel when we use mathematics?
- Are there times when we have had problems or felt disempowered because of mathematics? Or conversely, times when we have felt empowered?
- What tools do we use locally to help with calculations?
- What documents do we come across with numbers on?
- What are the traditional (and modern) systems for measurements, are the equivalences known?

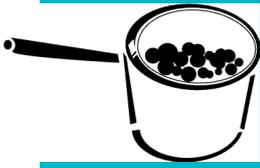
As part of this discussion, participants could also share their oral calculation processes, as this helps build people's confidence in their own mathematical skills, showing that there are many ways to do the same calculation and challenging the power of formal mathematics. These calculations should be shared in context – for example when farming, cooking, and travelling to town, etc. If people are supported to share these oral skills, and write down the calculation process, the mathematics itself can be 'generalised' and applied to new, empowering contexts.

Participants in a *Reflect* group in **South Africa** are involved in a small bread-making business. By generalising their baking experience they were able to calculate the amount of money spent per child in school. Participants talked through the steps they go through to calculate the cost of each loaf they produce. They used photocopied money (counting out the cost of each ingredient, one by one, and then recounting the total pile) to find the production cost of a batch of bread. By sharing the money equally between the number of loaves in each batch they arrived at a cost per loaf. Participants then used this experience to calculate the amount spent on each child in their local school – i.e. the total budget divided by the number of pupils. They could then compare this calculation to the government figures on expenditure per child, as a basis for further analysis and action.

(See *Communication and Power*, N001, N002, N003, N004, N005, N006)

## Cooking –

## quantities / timing



Mathematics is used often in everyday life, for example when cooking and at the market

## Market / shops –

## how much to buy, ratios/budgeting



Participants are supported to discover, use and strengthen the mathematical skills they already possess. This means working with oral and mental mathematical processes, as well as supporting participants to learn to read and write numbers and functions. To enable participants to understand the power of numbers, and look beyond the calculations to what the numbers are actually saying, the use of calculators is encouraged.

Finally, the power of mathematics to build bridges between the local and national levels is recognised, enabling people to place their reality in the wider context through analysing budgets, statistics and prices. This also involves supporting organisations accessing external information, and at times repackaging the information in a user-friendly format. Generally a four-stage process is followed: participants develop a visual, using numeracy in the construction and/or analysis; analyse an external text; place their local analysis in the wider context; and identify ways in which numeracy may contribute to wider action to advance their interests.



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

## ACTIVITY

### ▶▶ Using oral communication

Role play can be an effective tool to analyse issues and rehearse new situations. Participants might re-enact a real incident, examining power dynamics and pivotal moments of conflict, and identifying how they might behave differently next time, or what additional information might be useful to transform the situation. Or participants could simulate or rehearse a situation, showing what normally happens, or what they would like to happen, in a particular situation. This can help to test strategies and refine arguments. Finally, participants can switch roles – men become women, teachers become parents, literate become illiterate, etc. This can help to understand others' reactions and behaviour, see other points of view and identify points of leverage for changing relationships.

These role plays can be developed into pieces of theatre and shown to wider audiences, to communicate specific ideas. For example, *Reflect* participants in Uganda developed a powerful piece of theatre on the theme of family neglect, which they performed in front of government and NGO officials. Through the stories of members of a family, the play captured a range of interconnected issues, including prostitution, alcoholism, domestic violence, school drop-out, early marriage and petty crime. At the end of the performance, the audience discussed the issues raised and the role their institutions could play in addressing the problems. Song, music and dance can be used in similar ways.

(See *Communication and Power*, S001, S003, S004, S005)

**Spoken word:** Listening and speaking are clearly important in daily communication, but they are rarely conceived as an integral part of any learning process. People's ability to speak out in the public and private domain can have a dramatic effect on power relationships. Freire placed dialogue at the centre of the learning process. However, creating a space where everyone can contribute, and is listened to equally, is never simple. *Reflect* looks at various ways to do this within the circle, as well as considering different aspects of speech and power which impact on everyday life. This includes exploring the hierarchy of *language* where those that speak the dominant or official language are likely to have more access to positions of social, economic or political influence, as well as how *dialect* (some ways of speaking are taken more seriously than others), *discourse* (do you have specialised language, know technical terms, etc.), *voice* (strong, clear and unfaltering voices are more likely to be listened to) and *range* (do you have access to communication media, such as microphones, radios or telephones, to extend the reach of your voice) all influence the ability to get our voices heard in different contexts. However, *Reflect* also cautions on the temptation to teach people to speak 'properly' which would be patronising and damaging, leading to a devaluation of local language forms and culture. Instead, participants are encouraged to take pride in local and traditional communication forms, and share these more widely, challenging the dominant powers.

The activities in this section focus on using oral communication to analyse and share experience, ways to analyse and learn alternative languages, and to use oral communication to analyse the policies and processes of decision-makers (for example, through citizens' juries), holding them to account.

**Images:** In *Reflect*, the term 'images' is used to cover visual, audio-visual and non-verbal communication. Images are central to *Reflect*. The maps, calendars, matrices and diagrams used in *Reflect* are one form of visuals, but photographs, posters, cartoons and picture stories are also important images. These can be used to stimulate analysis (based on the Freirean idea of codifications), or to communicate the outcomes of discussion with a wider audience.

Images are also used in *Reflect* to stimulate the process of literacy learning, or as a support for action. For example, the materials produced within a *Reflect* group can be used

as a powerful communication tool. Film, video and television are very powerful media of communication and critical analysis of these types of communication plays an important role in *Reflect*, while also being used by participants themselves to communication discussions and actions from their group. Body language is the most fundamental form of human communication – complex messages are communicated by our posture, gesture and facial expression – and silence can be used very powerfully. This way of communicating needs to be analysed, to invert sub-conscious processes and challenge the perpetuation of oppression and unequal power dynamics.

## ▶▶ Using images

Different participatory visuals (maps, matrices, calendars, trees, etc.) have been mentioned throughout this pack, and can be used in a range of ways for analysis and action. Posters, drawings and logos are also important. For example, in Bolangir, **India** picture booklets were produced about the rights of migrant workers. In **Uganda**, *Reflect* participants produced their own children's books with strong visual images and words in their mother tongue, reproducing these on silk-screen printers.

**Photos** have the ability to grab attention and get messages across quickly. For example, participants use photos to document their everyday life experiences. These could be exhibited either to share their particular experience or world view, or as a way of collecting evidence for campaigning. Alternatively, the groups could discuss photos taken by others – thinking about who took them, why, and what were they trying to show – challenging the statement that the camera never lies. Similar work could be done to analyse **television** – looking at the types of lifestyles and stereotypes shared through soap operas for example, or how television advertising influences us.

Involvement in a **participatory video** process can help illustrate the power and range of decisions made in any television broadcast, enabling participants to view any programme more critically. Participatory video or video documentaries can be very powerful for communicating local reality to wider audiences, and can be used as an advocacy tool with policy makers. In **Bangladesh**, ActionAid and Worldview trained four communities in participatory video production. The communities were encouraged to make a film on a subject of their own choosing. One group chose to document the crisis in local schools. They secretly filmed the teacher arriving late day-after-day, while the children sat around aimlessly. Finally they confronted the teacher on camera, forcing him to change his behaviour. Word spread to neighbouring villages and soon all teachers were arriving on time, worried that otherwise they would be caught on camera and would lose their jobs.

(See *Communication and Power*, I006, I010, I011, I012)

### **Reflect and education rights:**

This brief discussion of *Reflect* skills illustrates not only how the approach to adult learning develops communication skills, but also how these skills can be used directly to challenge oppression and powerlessness, to organise and advocate and facilitate social change. The approach provides a powerful basis for much of the other work contained in this pack. *Reflect* tools and techniques support community organisation, for analysis and action at personal, community, local, district and national levels. *Reflect* supports those at local level to value their own knowledge and experiences, analyse local reality and identify strategic actions, while practitioners at the national (or international) levels are expected to play a supportive and strengthening role, ensuring that relevant information is accessible and understandable, building relationships and creating space for voices to be heard at local and national levels. This structure is very similar to that suggested in this pack.

The relevance of *Reflect* to the five other sections can be seen clearly, for example:

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■ **Reflect and the right to education:** *Reflect* will help here in developing the skills to understand and campaign for the right to education, especially to develop evidence and oral testimonies to illustrate rights abuses, as well as having a strong group which can support any individual whose experience is used as a test case.

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■ **Reflect and excluded groups:** *Reflect* is a key tool for organising with excluded groups, building an analysis of their experience and context, identifying their needs and aspirations and communicating their perspectives. The reflection-action cycle provides the basis for long-term organising with such groups.

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■ **Reflect and financing education:** This involves direct skill development, for example using *Reflect* methodologies for budget tracking and analysis, or to produce and analyse statistics, as well as broader systems development to ensure good information flows between schools and local groups. Here *Reflect* enables participants to read and understand official documentation as well as actively propose alternatives.

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■ **Reflect and citizen participation:** *Reflect* can be used explicitly within a capacity-building programme for SMCs, or by the committees directly as part of their day to day functioning. For example, *Reflect* approaches could be used to develop a communication system which would ensure that SMCs have access to relevant and up-to-date information about national education policies, as well as having the skills and confidence to analyse and design school budgets. Alternatively, a *Reflect* group could act as a counter-balance to an unrepresentative or undemocratic SMC – discussing education issues and ensuring that the SMC is acting accountably, and that information flows freely between the school and the wider community<sup>58</sup>. In addition, *Reflect* approaches can be used by coalitions and networks at national level to facilitate networking processes, reviews and help in action planning.

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■ **Reflect and rights in education:** *Reflect* can be adapted for use in schools, showing a more learner-centred, participatory pedagogy, and also for teacher training. *Reflect* can also contribute to wider analysis needed to support rights in education. For example, through supporting gender and power analysis which underlie much of the discrimination in education.

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<sup>58</sup> The Africa *Reflect* Network, Pamoja, has done a lot of work linking *Reflect* to school management and governance (email: pamoja@infocom.co.ug)

## **Reflect networking:**

*Reflect* emphasises the importance of networking at various levels, to link for learning and exchange, as well as for solidarity and to extend voice. The systematic approach to networking at local, regional, national and international levels employed by *Reflect* practitioners, provides a positive example for how to ensure good links between local and national work. *Reflect* networks exist nationally in many countries, and there are also four regional networks (Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe) and an international network (CIRAC – the Circle of International *Reflect*-Action and Communication). CIRAC is a space:

- to spread and strengthen *Reflect*, through coordinating research, documentation and dissemination of information on *Reflect*;
- for connecting people to learn, share and consolidate best practice on *Reflect*;
- for dialogue on practical issues, problems and possible solutions, to speak collectively and influence national governments and international actors on a range of issues;
- for solidarity, with a vision of freedom and social justice, to work together to address regional and global issues of social, political and economic concern.

The International Network is run democratically with a small coordinating team, made up of regional representatives, and a rotating secretariat, hosted by each region in turn. It is able to function effectively because of the strength of the regional networks, which in turn function based on national networks and local *Reflect* practice. For more details and contacts on international and regional networks, see:

**CIRAC**, [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org);

**Pamoja Africa network**, [www.pamojareflect.org](http://www.pamojareflect.org);

and the **Latin American *Reflect* network**, [www.reflect-accionla.org](http://www.reflect-accionla.org).



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

## Linking *Reflect* and the Adult Literacy Benchmarks

As can be seen from the brief discussion on *Reflect*, many of the methodological aspects of the benchmarks can be met through the *Reflect* approach to adult learning. *Reflect* shares the broad definition of literacy, emphasises the need for literacy to be meaningful, to link to real life, to have on-going and self-evaluation systems, and for a literate environment to be created, where participants can practice their skills and strengthen them further through accessing relevant and useful information. Many of the more logistical benchmarks are also met through *Reflect*, such as group size and facilitator support and training.

▶ As well as exploring the links between *Reflect* practice and the adult literacy benchmarks, it is important to consider how *Reflect* itself can be used to enable people to engage with the benchmarks. This could be through *Reflect* groups evaluating and reflecting on their process and progress, using *Reflect* tools to review the benchmarks in their context, as a way of putting the Abuja call to action (see page 233) into practice. Equally, CSOs or community groups could use *Reflect* tools and techniques to design a literacy programme. They could look at issues such as who should provide the resources, how facilitators will be trained and supported, and how the programme will be evaluated. They could also build strategies to campaign and lobby for further investment in adult learning.

Currently, *Reflect* is implemented by a wide range of civil society organisations, although there are various countries where government has also supported *Reflect* programmes. For example in Nigeria, the government started looking at *Reflect* in 1996, and since then has funded and implemented *Reflect* work across many states. A member of staff of NMEC (the National Mass Education Commission) explains how contact with *Reflect* has

impacted on their understanding of literacy:

*My first reaction was "what is all this – how can you get adults to do this" As time went by, I realised it was a useful method to liberate people from all sorts of constraints – from illiteracy, from political constraints and ethnic conflicts, religious difficulties and bigotry. If we continue with *Reflect*, Nigeria will definitely change. *Reflect* is a relevant methodology to achieve our mandate to make Nigerians literate as soon as possible. *Reflect* has an edge, particularly in the areas of participation, learning and retention, and the way it involves rural communities... The *Reflect* circle revolves around the community – they see it as their own rather than belonging to the government.*<sup>59</sup>

Many other governments have also supported *Reflect* work – for example Peru, Ghana, Tanzania and Vietnam. This suggests a key action for *Reflect* practitioners is to lobby for governments to support *Reflect* further, integrating the approach into their adult literacy programmes. However, it is also important to be aware of the dynamics involved in government-implemented *Reflect* programmes. It is much harder for groups to criticise the government, and hold it accountable if their programme is run by the government.

### Using the benchmarks in Tanzania and Vietnam:

Research in Tanzania and Vietnam focused on whether the 12 benchmarks were applicable and desirable in these two countries. Using a three-stage methodology – involving desk research, interviews with a range of education practitioners and field visits (which included focus group discussions with participants as well as discussion with local government and ActionAid programme staff), the researcher explored the value and relevance of each of the 12 benchmarks, as well as how literacy policy translates to practice at the local level. In both countries, the governments have embraced the *Reflect* approach within their adult literacy programme, and as such the research also explored the compatibility of *Reflect* with the benchmarks.

<sup>59</sup> K. Newman, *Reflect, rights and governance: Insights from Nigeria and South Africa*, (London: ActionAid, 2004)

## Notes from the researcher as a guide for a focus group discussion with literacy learners in Tanzania

### 1. Motivation and literacy outcomes

- Went round the circle asking names, reasons for joining the group and the most important ‘thing’ they’d learnt since joining;
- Follow-up on responses and focus on literacy learning outcomes (in relation to other outcomes);
- What have been the key successes of the group (including other impacts of learning at individual, family, community and wider levels)?

### 2. Learning group descriptors

- When was the group established;
- Numbers/gender ratios (including drop-outs and new members);
- Ages;
- Initial and current levels of literacy;
- How regularly do they meet? Duration? What proportion of the time is spent on literacy and other activities? What other activities?

### 3. Teaching and learning

- Language (What is the learning language? Was there a choice? Who does this exclude?);
- Inequalities/power-relations within the group (e.g. gender relations);
- Challenges regarding diversity of group (e.g. accommodating both old and young learners, learners with disabilities or bad eyesight).

### 4. The literate environment

- What has learning to read or write enabled you to do which you couldn’t before?
- What written materials are available in your village?
- How far is the nearest library or resource centre?
- If there was a library in your village what would you like to read?
- How does the postal system operate?

### 5. Challenges

A chance to voice the key problems and frustrations faced by the learning groups and to look collaboratively at possible solutions.

*Jude Fransman, 2006.*

The study found that while in theory, in both countries, there was an overwhelming agreement with the benchmarks, in practice there were shortfalls. For example, in Tanzania areas such as the pay of facilitators, a culture of evaluation and the development of a literate environment fell seriously short of the benchmarks. While in Vietnam, areas such as the professionalisation of adult literacy facilitators, a culture of needs-assessment based evaluation, use of participatory learning methods and the development of a literate environment were unlikely to be met in the foreseeable future.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the research identified significant gaps between rhetoric, at the national (and sub-national) level and practice (at local level) in both countries. It noted further tensions caused by the shift away from service delivery to a rights-based approach.

However, the study highlights the achievements of the *Reflect* approach, as one which goes further than most in targeting the most excluded groups. The way *Reflect* is introduced into the community (through community-based needs assessments) means that supporting organisations can get accurate information about the level of illiteracy and the real learning priorities of the most excluded. Also, as the circles are community-based and relatively low-cost, they can be based in more remote locations, reaching people who otherwise might not be met. They also help to mobilise participants to launch community-development initiatives and in this way knowledge is spread far further than the participants alone.

The researcher also comments how *Reflect* is one of the few adult literacy initiatives which invest in developing professionalised facilitators, and that it can improve the governance of adult literacy through its promotion of collaborative decision-making. It also contributes to developing a literate environment, based on locally-produced resources – for example posters, notice boards and *Reflect* newsletters. But she also notes that key challenges remain. These relate especially to facilitator skill, and the difficulties of balancing literacy with the wider empowerment components of *Reflect*.

While these challenges exist, the study remains positive about adult literacy provision in both contexts, as well as the relevance of the benchmarks themselves.

Studies such as these can be used to influence government and CSO attitude and behaviour towards adult literacy, to hold government to account for their investment in adult learning, and provide insights into how to design, implement and manage adult literacy programmes.



The study challenges the benchmarks themselves, commenting that they need to be strengthened in a number of ways:

- Greater effort should be made to tie them into the EFA agenda since this is the priority of most education sectors and the bulk of budgetary support from bi- and multilateral donors is channelled through EFA activities.
- They need to be prioritised. Otherwise they remain as a wish-list, making it easier for governments to ignore the more difficult ones.
- More attention should be given to gendered strategies in literacy policy and practice. For example, looking at the impact of same-sex learner groups, or the gender of a facilitator.
- There should be a far greater emphasis on the development of a sustainable literate environment, serving children, youth and adults. This involves looking at language, book publishing, media and information policies.

<sup>60</sup> J. Fransman, *Reading between the lines: A comparative study of policy and practice in Tanzania and Vietnam in the light of the International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy*. (London: ActionAid, 2007)

## Annex

The resources included on the next page are not comprehensive, however, they give some idea of where you can access additional material to that referenced throughout the pack



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## Information on Advocacy

- M. Lloyd Laney, J. Scobie and A. Fraser: *The How and Why of Advocacy* (London: Bond, 2005) <http://www.bond.org.uk/word/guidance/2.1howwhyadvocacy.doc>
- S. Sprechmann and E. Pelton: *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines: Promoting Policy Change* (USA: CARE 2001) [www.care.org/getinvolved/advocacy/tools.asp](http://www.care.org/getinvolved/advocacy/tools.asp)
- D. Start and I. Hovland: *Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers* (London: ODI, 2004) [www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/Tools\\_handbook\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Publications/Documents/Tools_handbook_final_web.pdf)
- L. Tweedie, *Simple Toolkit for Advocacy Research Techniques* (London: VSO 2005) [http://www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/resources\\_latest.php](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/resources/resources_latest.php)

## Information on Participatory and Rights Based Approaches

- D. Archer and S. Cottingham, *The Reflect Mother Manual* (London: ActionAid, 1996)
- D. Archer and K. Newman, *Communication and Power: Resource materials for Reflect practitioners* (London: CIRAC, 2003). [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org)
- J. Pretty et al, *Participatory Learning and Action, A Trainer's Guide* (London, IIED, 1995)
- L. Veneklasen with Valerie Miller, *A New Weave of Power, People and Politics* (London: Practical Action, republished 2007) <http://www.justassociates.org/ActionGuide.htm>
- A. Welbourn, *Stepping Stones: A training package on HIV/AIDS, communication and relationship skills, Strategies for Hope Training Series: No. 1* (London: ActionAid, 1995)

## Selected websites

- ActionAid International (for many of the ActionAid Publications mentioned in this pack, especially those relating to HIV and Education, Violence Against Girls in School, Adult Literacy, research on the IMF) [www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)
- Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education [www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)
- ELDIS: The gateway to development information (useful information and resources on a range of development issues, from education, to HIV to gender etc.) [www.eldis.org](http://www.eldis.org)
- Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives (information on analysing and developing budgets from a gender perspective) <http://www.idrc.ca/gender-budgets>
- International Budget Project (country level contacts and a wide range of resources on budget advocacy, analysis and tracking) [www.internationalbudget.org](http://www.internationalbudget.org)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (through which you can access all international covenants and conventions on Human Rights) <http://www.ohchr.org>
- Participatory learning and action (range of materials on participation, including the publication PLA Notes) [http://www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla\\_notes/index.html](http://www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla_notes/index.html)
- Participation.net (a space for sharing on development, citizenship, governance and rights) <http://www.pnet.ids.ac.uk/about.htm>
- Reflect Networks (information and resources on Reflect and STAR) CIRAC: [www.reflect-action.org](http://www.reflect-action.org); Pamoja: [www.pamojareflect.org](http://www.pamojareflect.org) and the Latin American Reflect Network [www.reflect-accionla.org](http://www.reflect-accionla.org)
- The Commonwealth Education Fund (information on the work of Education Coalitions across 17 commonwealth countries) [www.commonwealtheducationfund.org](http://www.commonwealtheducationfund.org)
- The Global Campaign for Education (a range of resources and details of the Global Week of Action) [www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)
- The Right to Education Project (a public access human rights resource, with extensive information on Human Rights Obligations in Education, and national level data regarding the status of free education law and practice) [www.right-to-education.org](http://www.right-to-education.org)
- UNESCO (statistical data on education, Global Monitoring Review and a range of research on education) [www.unesco.org/education](http://www.unesco.org/education)

The Global Campaign for Education is a coalition of NGOs and trade unions working in over 100 countries for the right to free, good quality education for all. GCE is a member of the UN Girls' Education Initiative, the Global Call to Action Against Poverty and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.

GCE members are:

#### Regional and International Members:

ActionAid International  
ANCEFA  
ASPBAE  
CAMFED  
CARE  
CEAAL  
Education International  
FAPE  
FAWE  
Fe y Alegria  
Global March Against Child Labour  
Ibis  
Inclusion International  
Latin America GCE Coalition  
NedAid  
OEB/CEDEAO  
Oxfam International  
Plan International  
Public Services International  
REPEM  
Save the Children Alliance  
SightSavers International  
VSO  
World Alliance of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts  
World Vision International

#### National Civil Society Coalitions:

Bangladesh: CAMPE  
Brazil: CDE  
Burkina Faso: CCEB  
Cameroon: Cameroon EFA Network  
Canada: Canadian GCE Alliance  
El Salvador: CIAZO  
France: Solidarite-Laique  
Gabon: SENA  
Gambia: GEFA  
Germany: Oxfam  
Ghana: GNECC  
India: NCE  
Indonesia: E-Net for Justice  
Ireland: Irish GCE Coalition  
Japan: JNNE  
Kenya: Elimu Yetu Coalition  
Lesotho: LEFA  
Liberia: ALPO  
Malawi: CSCQBE  
Mali: ASSAFE  
Mozambique: MEPT  
Nigeria: CSACEFA  
Pakistan: EFA Network  
Philippines: E-Net  
Sierra Leone: EFA Network  
South Africa: GCE-SA  
Spain: Spanish GCE Coalition  
Sweden: Swedish EFA Forum  
Tanzania: TEN/MET  
Togo: CNT/CME  
Uganda: FENU  
UK: GCE-UK  
Zambia: ZANEC

## Global Campaign For Education

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[www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR  
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[www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)