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## Children´s Rights in Education

Experiences from 16 countries in Global South during 18 years as researchers and teachers

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2021

*Document Version:*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Wickenberg, P., Rasmusson, B., & Leo, U. (Eds.) (2021). *Children´s Rights in Education: Experiences from 16 countries in Global South during 18 years as researchers and teachers*. (Research Report in Sociology of Law; Vol. 2021, No. 1). Sociology of Law, Lund University.

*Total number of authors:*

3

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# *Children's Rights in Education*

*Experiences from 16 countries in Global South during  
18 years as researchers and teachers*

*Per Wickenberg, Bodil Rasmusson & Ulf Leo (eds.)*

Research Report in Sociology of Law 2021:1





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SOCIOLOGY OF LAW  
LUND UNIVERSITY

För en komplett förteckning över bokutgivningen vid  
Rättssociologiska institutionen, Lunds universitet,  
se slutet av boken

*Sociology of Law Research Report 2021:1*

*Copyright* The Authors 2021

*Cover picture* Gunnar Menander

*Grafisk design* Infografen/Desktop

*Typesetting* Jonas Palm

*Production* Media-Tryck

*Print* Media-Tryck, Lund University, Lund, Sweden 2021

ISBN 978-91-7267-435-6 (Tryck)

ISBN 978-91-7267-437-0 (PDF)

ISSN 1404-1030

*Publishing and distribution*

Media-Tryck

Lund University

Box 117

SE-221 00 Lund, Sweden

E-post [bookorder@service.lu.se](mailto:bookorder@service.lu.se) • [www.mediatryck.lu.se](http://www.mediatryck.lu.se)



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# Preface

The aim of this report book in Sociology of Law, and Child Rights Institute, Lund University, is to gather, sum up and report, in a summarizing overview in an introduction followed by three concluding articles, our main experiences as researchers and teachers after 2016.

Two of the articles, “Mentor’s reflections” and “Looking back and looking forward”, have been published in Bodil Rasmusson, Lena Andersson, Agneta W Flinck, Ulf Leo and Per Wickenberg (eds.) *Realising Child Rights in Education* (2016), Lund University.

That year, 2016, the English version of the Sida-funded international training program, Child Rights, Classroom and School Management, was finished. However, there was a lot of continued work to come with Children’s Rights at Lund University after that.

This report could be viewed as an interesting example of how to achieve spin-off effects through strategies for sustainability and dissemination of knowledge and experiences from international cooperation on implementation of children’s rights.

Lund, February 2021

*Per Wickenberg, Bodil Rasmusson & Ulf Leo*





# Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in November 1989. Since then, 196 countries have ratified it, including every member of the United Nations except the USA. By agreeing to undertake the obligations of the CRC, national governments are obliged to develop and undertake all actions and policies to ensure the best interests of the child. Article 4 also mentions that this should be the case in the framework of international cooperation as well. As part of Sweden's bilateral development Sida (Sweden's Government Agency for Development Cooperation) offers International Training Programs (ITPs). The overall aim is to contribute to capacity development and processes of change in developing countries.

One of those ITPs was "Child Rights, Classroom and School Management", run during 13 years, 2003-2016. It was aiming at implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in schools and education and targeted English as well as French and Spanish speaking participants. These ITPs were run by Departments at Lund University in cooperation with Lund University Commissioned Education, LUCE.

## *Child Rights Institute @ Lund University*

In the end of the Sida training program, during 2015-2016, we started to build and organize the Child Rights Institute at Lund University (CRi @ LU) - a multidisciplinary and network-based organisation focusing on child rights. The Child Rights Institute has an overarching aim, with a point of departure in child rights, to create and exchange research based knowledge within the field and further multidisciplinary science. Furthermore, the network works towards illuminating and supporting children's rights and children's living conditions in society through research, education, and cooperation with practitioners and the surrounding community – in national and international contexts.

*CRi @ LU has two main roles and functions:*

- Research
- Education in Child Rights

An important task is cooperation in order to promote and support research, recognising and visualising the child's perspective in different contexts – family, health, social processes – and bringing together that perspective with our knowledge of child development in order to promote the well-being of children. The Institute will also work to develop education in the field of child rights - nationally as well as internationally. The Institute are now working with internet online-based courses (see below). Education may also include Minor Field Studies (MFS), initiatives for teacher and student exchange, master's courses focusing on children and child rights, and supporting contact between research, education and practice.

The Institute aims to encourage teachers and researchers from Lund University's different faculties to participate. Currently there are 50 researchers from seven faculties active at the Institute: Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Law, Faculties of Humanities & Theology, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering (LTH), and School of Economics and Management. The ambition for the Institute is to encourage multidisciplinary activities, based in social science perspectives. At the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Sociology of Law Department together with the School of Social Work are both prominent actors within the Child Rights Institute. <sup>1</sup>

### *STINT-project*

In October, 12 – 13, a conference “Researching Children's Perspectives when Norms and Values are in conflict” was arranged by CRI@LU.<sup>2</sup> This exchange between Lund University and Muhammadiyah University Surakarta, Indonesia, could be realised thanks to funding from STINT (The Swedish Foundation for Cooperation in Research and Higher Education).

### *The conference was introduced as follows:*

Taking children's perspective and acknowledging children's rights is easy to agree upon. But scholars tend to put different meanings into the understanding of the concepts. In contexts where norms and values are in conflict, different interpretations become more obvious. Working with international comparisons and cooperation highlights the importance of having a clear understanding of central concepts as “children's perspective”. What does it mean in the specific contexts? How do researchers work to achieve the children's perspective?

### *Global Child Rights Online*

When the training program was at the end the Child Rights Institute together with Lund University Commissioned Education applied at Sida for a web based, online project with the aim to save and use most of the experiences from the training program. After discussions with Sida they approved our suggestion and we started to build the online platform in cooperation and partnership with 16 (later 17) of

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1 Read more about Child Rights Institute at <https://www.sam.lu.se/en/child-rights-institute>  
2 [file:///C:/Users/Bodil/AppData/Local/Temp/wp2016\\_2.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Bodil/AppData/Local/Temp/wp2016_2.pdf)

the most active countries and English speaking networks in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Colombia). We planned and organised seminars and workshops at Lund University for a week in May 2017.

The platform was constructed and built with the following parts or units: 16 Country Pages run by the participants in respective country; Programme - Online Training Programme based on the same education ideas as on campus but applied for online work; Discussions; Archive with all publications and project reports for all the years 2003-2016 and also continued after 2016; Collaborate with e-mail addresses to all 650 participants - or Change Agents - in the Sida Training Program 2003-2016. At last, there is a unit called About: Here you can read more about Global CRC Online and the ITP on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management and the national networks. You can also get familiar with the host of the platform Child Rights Institute at Lund University and learn more about CRC in Sweden.

13 national webpages (see below) on this *globalcrconline platform* were launched with and by the national CRC-networks in spring 2018 by these countries: India, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Colombia, Egypt, Zambia and Indonesia. The online platform is introduced in this way on the front web page:

**Do you meet children in your profession?** Then you are in the right place! The Child Rights Institute at Lund University together with 16 national networks as partners welcome people from different organisations, from all over the world! In line with the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030, the aim of this networking and learning portal is to provide professionals with a useful platform where experiences can be shared, knowledge enhanced and results disseminated - all in the best interest of the child. Join us in our mission to train new change agents as well as to initiate research collaborations and new networks onwards.

During the ITP, we published 13 report books on more than 200 concrete projects by more than 650 participants in the ITP-program, the “change agents”, on enforcing and supporting children’s rights in local schools and education areas on different levels in society. Besides these report books we have written many articles on this international and national policy field (see the Archive on this web-based platform “Global Child Rights Online”).<sup>3</sup>

### *Statistics on visitors on the platform*

On the statistical web page on Google Analytics, it is easy to find what kind of country visitors, when and how long and which parts of the on the platform they are visiting. We have seen that there are online visitors from countries outside the Sida international training program. Example of over late 90 days could be these:

Users: 599 and new users: 554. Example of new countries are UK, USA, Argentina, Nigeria, China, Australia, Colombia, Russia, Canada, and Sweden. Top visitors for 90 days in November-December-January 2020-21 are from Argentina, South Africa, UK and China.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.globalcrconline.org/>

### *Facebook-group Global Network for CRC Change Agents (started 2016)*

This is a network group of 285 change agents or participants from the Sida program 2003-2016 and quite active but active individually and in time periods. In fact, this social media is the media that is most convenient and simple to use by most of the change agents. On average five or six new contributions on this website every month - and not including the likes and comments of that contributions. Furthermore, we can notice that the different country networks are using this social media with photos and texts and e.g. calling for new books and/or webinars on CRC in Schools during the corona pandemics during 2020.

### *International Studies on Enactment of Children's Rights in Education*

During the *third Impact and Dissemination Seminar* in Pnom Penh in Cambodia in February 2016, we organised a special research seminar with 50 of the 170 participating change agents on their interest of making own research on CRC in Schools and Education. We found that there was a clear interest on doing and publishing their own research. During fall 2018, we started through Child Rights Institute to ask for contributions. We started with an e-mail to all change agents on call for papers, which ended up in abstracts on the planned content. The process went on steadily and we were the editors and readers of the chapters or papers. After roughly one year, 2019, the first book was ready containing 15 chapters from 10 different countries and 30 researchers from non-western countries. The title is "International Studies on Enactment of Children's Rights in Education 30 researchers from non-western countries", Research Report in Sociology of Law 2019:3, Department of Sociology of Law, Lund University, 300 pages.

### *Perspektiv på Barnkonventionen - Perspectives on The Convention on the Rights of the Child*

Next book the same year by Child Rights Institute, CRi, at Lund University was an anthology in Swedish with the title "Perspektiv på Barnkonventionen. Forsknings, teori och praktik" (Perspectives on The Convention on the Rights of the Child. Research, theory and practice), Lina Ponnert & Anna Sonander (red), Studentlitteratur, Lund 2019. 500 pages. There were 21 different authors from different disciplines at the university. This book is also to be used in teaching at the universities and in education at large.

### *Barnens och barnets bästa - möjligheter och utmaningar (Best interest of Children and Best interest of the Child - Possibilities and Challenges)*

This Research Project in Child Rights Institute with Anna Sonander and Lina Ponnert funded by Stiftelsen Justa Gardi and started in 2018. The overarching aim is described in this way: "to explore and to analyze the principle of the best interest of the child in practice, with a focus on the tensions that may be found when the single

child's best and a group of children will be seen/studied". To be reported in spring 2021 but was slightly delayed due to the corona pandemic.

#### *Nordic Network on Child Participation*

During the research seminars at Child Rights Institute during 2019 and forward, we were connected to Danish and later Norwegian researchers and university teachers on Children's Rights. We invited these Nordic researchers to our seminars and they invited us in Lund to their workshops and seminars. When going to visit Trondheim in a Nord-Plus conference in April 2020, the corona pandemic interrupted this. During fall, 2020 there were some online seminars on Child Rights and Participation. In 2021, the seminars were focusing a common research application and a new application on Nord-Plus on teaching-education.

#### *Webinars in Kerala, India, during the corona pandemic in 2020*

Contacts were still working well with the network in India after establishment of the CRC online platform and research book projects in 2019. When the corona pandemic forced school in Kerala to close the network in Kerala organized different webinars during 2020 on Child Rights and Schools - with active participation by older students. We as mentors in the Sida program were invited to give lectures and to start their webinars making keynotes online.

#### *Seminars on Child Rights at Lund University*

During spring 2020, the Child Rights Institute was invited to take part in different seminars on our international experiences during 15 years at the Pufendorf Institute, Lund University, organised by researchers at the Faculty of Medicine.

#### *Seminars on Child Rights at the Region of Skane*

During spring 2020, the Child Rights Institute was invited to take part in different webinars on Child Rights and on the theme of Child Sexual Abuse and Violence on Children. This was from the start meant to be seminars in Lund and Malmö at the university hospital but due to the corona pandemic, it was transferred to be webinars. These webinars were possible to do in this way with the economic support from The Justa Gardi Stiftelse - again. The webinars were very well done and appreciated by the audience.

#### *The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Children's Rights and Global Health, RÅSE01*

During spring 2020, Child Rights Institute was invited to bid on a new university course, a so called SAS course (a Special Area Studies) involving other European universities within the project EUGLOH - a program financed by EU aiming at

strengthen the strategic partnership between the universities in Europe. Child Rights Institute and Sociology of Law won this competition and this course was to be given as an online course in 2020-2021. The course started in November 2020 and ended in January 2021. 30 students from four European universities applied and were accepted: Université Paris-Saclay, France; Ludwig Maximilian's University in Munich, Germany; University of Porto, Portugal; and University of Szeged, Hungary. Eleven of the 12 active students were finally examined and passing in January 2021, most of them with a high pass. This course will most possible be continued as a regular course in fall 2021.

# Children's participation as one pathway to protection: Lessons from the Global South

*Per Wickenberg, Bodil Rasmusson and Ulf Leo*

## Introduction

Since the beginning of 2003 we have been involved in an international training program for educators called 'Child Rights, Classroom and School Management' as researchers, teachers and mentors. This chapter builds on our longstanding experience with this program at Lund University, which has been funded by Sida. Sida is a government agency working on behalf of the Swedish parliament and government to reduce poverty in the world. In cooperation with others, Sida contributes to implementing Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGU in Swedish).<sup>4</sup> For this project, we visited over 25 countries and gained profound insights into change processes at different administrative levels of these countries' education systems. These experiences from similar projects in various countries and continents help put international children's rights developments into a broader perspective.

When we visited a school where we implemented one of our projects in Kabul, Afghanistan in 2008, we talked with the students of the newly created school council. The local team of educators in Afghanistan had started a project to establish student councils, and the students provided what we think is a good example of children's own understanding and meaning of participation expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They appeared as independ-

<sup>4</sup> For further information about the training program, see: <http://www.globalcrconline.org>.



ent actors in supporting a peer at school who was not being cared for and treated well by one of the parents. Some of the student council members intervened by visiting the family in the home and explaining the rights of the child. Changes in attitude and parenting by that parent were later observed by students and the principal at the school. In this case children's agency and participation became a pathway to change, protection and justice.

The CRC, a human rights legal document adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 1989, has had a major impact on children's rights, policies and legislation in many countries around the world.<sup>5</sup>

*According to Sida, the overarching objective of this training program was:*

To improve participating countries' capacity to offer and ensure everyone's right to relevant and quality education, an education that is safe and secure, inclusive, student-centered, democratic, and problem-solving, and that creates opportunities for all, regardless of background, to participate in community life as active citizens (www.sida.se/itp, Sida 2010).

The goal was to develop program participants' competency when initiating change processes based on the CRC in their own countries. Sida provided funding for the training program, but they did not fund any of the change processes or projects implemented in connection with the program. During the 15 years with this CRC training program for professionals in the education system on different levels (Leo et.al., 2014, pp.141-42), we have trained more than 650 school leaders from about 25 countries in the Global South<sup>6</sup> using English as the language of instruction. Each country team consists of three people for every group of 30 participants or 'change agents.' Recruitment of participants was based on geographical proximity among participants to facilitate networking between teams of participants. The teams were chosen in an application process.

The program consists of four weeks of training in Lund. During this time the teams develop their own project plans with the support of their instructors to be implemented upon returning home. Six months later, the 30 participants convene for ten days in one of the participating Sida countries. The main point of this meeting is to hold seminars and discuss developments in the school projects in these ten countries under the motto 'Give and Gain.' After a further six months, the teachers visit their teams on site to observe and analyze the progress and to support writing their final report as part of their school project.

The aim of this chapter is to present some interpretations and applications of the concept of participation in educators' work for change in schools, classrooms and teacher training universities in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The chapter's second aim is to reflect on children's participation as a key to change. We depart from the following questions: why is children's participation so successful

5 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> (accessed on 2019-07-19).

6 The same CRC training program is also given in Spanish and in French and another 200 educational school leaders from about additional 15 countries in the Global South have also been trained by now.

in initiating change? Why did many of the 25 countries' CRC projects (169 out of more than 250) focus on participation?

We mainly focus on children's participation because in most of the school projects initiated as a result of the program participation is an important condition to create sustainable protective environments for children. When taking a holistic view of children's rights according to the CRC, it is not enough to view the protection of children as merely founded in adults' charity and benevolence. The example from Afghanistan is one of many similar stories found in local schools and countries we worked in across the world. The mobilizing power of children has been identified as a decisive force and support in change initiatives for children's rights.

At the heart of this chapter is the discussion of some brief examples of changes implemented in some of 'our' participating countries since 2003. The training program is primarily based on 'participation' as one of the three key CRC perspectives— the 3P's: participation, protection and provision. In the final reflections and discussion, we address how some problems and action patterns in 'participation processes' could be interpreted and discussed in areas where children and students can exert a degree of influence on their daily lives in schools.

## The three Ps as defined and used in the CRC

The starting point for the training program was the three P's (Qvortrup 1993; Verhellen 2000). Together, they reflect the main contents of the articles of the CRC.

They can be explained as follows:

- Participation: The child's right to participate e.g. in providing information and expressing his or her views, as well as participating in decisions in matters that
- affect the child (UN CRC Articles 12-17).
- Protection: The child's right to be protected from physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, and all forms of exploitation (UN CRC Articles 19, 20, 32-36).
- Provision: The child's right to get their basic needs fulfilled, e.g. access to food, health-care, education, and social welfare (UN CRC Articles 6, 24, 26, 27:1, 28-29, 31).

These three perspectives were broadly employed as key concepts in our training program in Lund and in the change processes in the participating countries. They were used as a method to identify areas in need of change, as pedagogical tools used in training programs for children, parents, teachers and decision-makers, and as a tool to analyze the results of the change process. This has resulted in the program participants and the children and adults involved in the local school projects to develop a mutual language for discussing and implementing children's rights. This has proven to be one of the program's main success factors, as we shall discuss below. In practice, most of the schools' change projects focused on helping children develop their capacity for participation and influence, as laid out in Articles 12 and 13. This also

happens to be the same point that dominates international research on the CRC (for example, Kirby, Perpetua & Woodhead, Martin 2003; Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie & Vandeveldt 2009; Percy-Smith & Thomas 2010; Manger & Novak, 2012).

As mentors, we were responsible for the teams in different countries and the follow-up visits there. After 15 years and over 250 completed Child Rights projects, we noticed that the most widespread practice is 'participation.' We found that of all the school projects, 169 CRC projects are connected to Articles 12 and 13 in the CRC without participants using the formal wording of 'participation.' Over the years, we repeatedly observed the same pattern. It indicates that children's participation is seen as the most pressing and challenging issue to address in the field of education because the participants have chosen this focus based on an analysis of their needs.

The following section discusses the change processes implemented in some of the participating countries since 2003, based in the three perspectives of the CRC but with a focus on participation. This discussion is based on materials retrieved from the participants' project reports on comprehensive national survey studies carried out in each country. We also draw on the authors' and instructors' experiences and observations during the course of their recurrent visits (see: Rasmusson et.al. 2016; Leo et. al. 2014; Wickenberg et.al. 2009) <sup>7</sup> and an external evaluation commissioned by Sida (Ljungman et.al., 2016).

## Zambia

Zambia, a landlocked country in the south of Africa, has about 17 million inhabitants. Between 2003 and 2018 there were 13 teams and 40 change agents in Zambia, most of them coming from two of Zambia's ten provinces— Copperbelt and Lusaka. All teams focused on students' participation with a similar approach (Rasmusson et. al. 2016, p. 175-185). In 2003, the first team from Zambia wrote a manual on student councils based on their field trips to schools in Lund. The manual was documented in a report with the title "Implementation of Article 12 of The United Nations Convention on The Rights of The Child in Schools."<sup>8</sup> The manual called "Tool Kit on Development of School Councils" developed into a very useful tool for subsequent national teams, who have continued to introduce, implement and develop student democracy.

The manual has been used to support the establishment of new student councils in schools participating in the project and by regional instructors. For several years now, all secondary schools, upper secondary schools and (in many cases) primary schools in the Copperbelt province have organized student councils. Student councils have also been established at the district level to allow students in different school districts to share their experiences. Initially, the change processes faced obstacles.

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7 All the CRC reports and the three mentioned books are easy to find and free download from the Archive and Country Pages on the CRC-platform run by Child Rights Institute, Lund University: [www.globalcrconline.org](http://www.globalcrconline.org)

8 <http://www.globalcrconline.org/country/zambia/197>

Vandalism, fights, aggressive behavior, student protests, and worn-down and dirty school environments used to be common. Children's rights, democratic elections held by student council members and influence in various school matters were novel concepts that proved crucial as keys to change. Bodil Rasmusson, the mentor for Zambia, had many personal contacts in follow-up visits with the different teams during 2006 and 2018 in meetings with the Minister of Education and the Permanent Secretary. In these visits she heard students repeatedly providing accounts of the changes that have taken place in their school culture. The students' accounts indicate that the learning environment has benefited; the students and school management have developed good relationships, and students perform better academically. Today, the Department of General Education in Zambia views the province as a national role model for student participation in developments in the education sector.

## South Africa

There were ten teams and 30 change agents in South Africa between 2005 and 2018. Most projects have been implemented in Free State, one of the nine provinces in South Africa with about three million inhabitants, the third largest in the country (Rasmusson et al. 2016, pp. 129-137). All schools involved are situated in very poor areas with profound social problems. Many children and parents who are involved in the projects live in shacks or informal settlements in areas with high unemployment, drug abuse, and crime. Focal points of the projects vary but all include ingredients of the three Ps: Provision, Protection, and Participation. The change initiative, thoroughly supported by the Ministry of Education and the Directorate of Values in Education, has paid attention to problems that were well known but hidden or neglected. Some of these issues involve children living without parents or guardians, orphans, children with physical disabilities, children who face teen pregnancy and experience corporal punishment, sexual abuse and substance use.

Children were involved as important providers of information about the problems by contributing their experiences and suggestions for solutions in multiple ways. Their performances through theater, drawings, dancing, and poems during "Children's Days" were a commonly used methods to convey children's views on necessary changes to a broader audience. One example of such activities is found in a report entitled "Raising awareness about the impact of drug abuse in schools and the role of school-based youth clubs in reducing the problem."<sup>9</sup> Children have been seen and heard in new ways, educated on the importance of their rights and have come to understand the importance of knowing their rights. Their participation has increased, and important basic needs have been provided for. Corporal punishment has ended, and children feel safe when they report about abuse to their principals (Rasmusson et.al. 2016, pp. 129-137).

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9 <http://www.globalcrconline.org/country/south-africa/152>.

## Malawi

Malawi is a land-locked country in the east of Africa with about 18 million inhabitants. The country had 13 teams and 35 participants in the program between 2005 and 2018 with teams in districts like Salima, Zomba, Blantyre, Mchinji and educational zones such as Njewa and Kalolo (Rasmusson et.al. 2016, p. 99-106). The biggest challenge for the participants from Malawi was to raise awareness about why children's participation is important. They worked with stakeholders such as head teachers, teachers, parents, local and traditional leaders and local associations such as School Management Committees, Mother Groups, and Parent-Teacher Associations. The strategy to start with one school in an educational zone to create a positive example was successful, and last year's teams were invited and welcome to other educational zones. One important actor besides all the individuals employed by the Ministry of Education has been the Malawian Human Rights Commission (MHRC), which has had participants in five teams. MHRC is a well-respected authority and the staff have been involved in training in the field, which made it possible to target specific groups that were included in the projects.

According to the Malawian participants in the project, there was a problem among teachers and principals in the school districts who thought that children should not participate in decision making because this would lead to bad behavior. With this perception as a point of departure, the teams conducted numerous meetings and designed courses specifically to train principals and teachers. The efforts to change the attitudes in the villages with projects aiming at reducing dropout rates due to early pregnancy and child labor have been equally important. We have seen that the introduction of class and school councils gives children an important arena for participation. This has spread in the educational zones and in the districts. The National Network in Malawi has been able to become a registered organization with a legal status. This gives the members the chance to obtain funding for future projects led by the network and to simplify cooperation with established NGOs in the country.

## Egypt

Egypt is located in the North East of Africa, by the Mediterranean Sea, with more than 90 million inhabitants. The eight teams in Egypt have run projects in the cities of Cairo, Mansoura, and Port Said based on applications from the teams. The most common activities are training workshops and seminars for teachers in public schools on the CRC with a special focus on empowering children, enforcing children's right to participation and increasing it at schools. The introduction of school councils and positive discipline are methods of teaching appropriate behavior. Most group consisted of members who worked as teacher trainers in a department of education, which this has resulted in the introduction of CRC-related issues in pre-service and in-service teacher training (Rasmusson et al. 2016, pp. 57-73). One of the achievements of the network are the forming and registering of a Community Development

Association (NGO) for children's rights named "Blossoms" (or Bara3em in Arabic). Bara3em is offering training and activities to children and they involve parents and teachers as stakeholders. Through this growing entity, the network can unify all efforts in the field of the CRC and arrange regular activities and programs under its umbrella. One example is to arrange an annual conference for teachers and researchers, "Towards a Child-Friendly School", together with the University of Port Said, supported by national and local authorities. A postgraduate diploma entitled "Child Educators" at the faculty of education started as a result of a conference (Rasmusson et al. 2016, pp. 57-73).

## **Colombia**

Colombia is a diverse multicultural country in South America with more than 50 million inhabitants. Most of the development projects, conducted by the 36 participants in the 13 teams, are in the large capital city of Bogotá, with a few projects in Cali. Civil conflict in Colombia, which has continued since the mid-1960s, has resulted in internal displacement with many internal refugees migrating from rural areas to the large cities (Rasmusson et.al. 2016, p. 47-55). This has led to huge challenges related to coexistence of different social groups in the local communities and schools. A common denominator of the projects in Colombia is to teach children to promote lasting peace, foster peaceful coexistence and practice conflict resolution through children's participation. A so-called mega school, a school with more than 4000 students from kindergarten to grade 11, is often at the center of a project. The principals of these schools have been running most projects together with teacher trainers from the universities. As a result, many concrete methods and training materials have been developed and are being used in the project schools and school districts, all with the aim to foster co-existence, celebrate a diversity of cultural heritage and teach different methods of conflict resolution.

## **Indonesia**

Indonesia has about 260 million inhabitants and is the biggest Muslim country in the world. In total 14 teams and 39 change agents participated in the training program from 2003 to 2018 (Rasmusson et al., 2016, pp. 83-96). The projects focused on Central Java, one of the most populated islands in Indonesia. With the implementation of the CRC, learning and teaching have been dominated by participants from teacher training institutions such as University PGRI (UPGRIS), Semarang and Muhammadiyah University (UMS), Surakarta. Most of the change projects have been directed towards the development of child-friendly teaching models and schools in cooperation between universities and local schools with the ambition to develop students' participation and improve student-teacher relationships.

After some teams piloted different ideas on protection and participation, group 11, from Semarang, started developing and implementing a child rights-based approach through a Child-Friendly Teaching Model (CFTM) in cooperation with lecturers at UPGRIS and local schools. The following three teams pursued the same track and initiated what they called a Child-Friendly School Model. These ideas were integrated into the core business of the University of PGRI, Semarang (UPGRIS), by adding the CRC as part of the compulsory materials used by teacher trainees. The models were applied and spread to many schools in Magelang Regency. A Center for Community and Women's Empowerment and Child Protection is now working on research and further development and dissemination of these experiences (Rasmusson et al., 2016, p. 95).

The child rights-based approach and concept of the child-friendly school remained interesting themes for the subsequent teams from Muhammadiyah University and the participating local schools.<sup>10</sup> With the help of children and teachers, lecturers at the university developed new methods for facilitating changes in student-teacher relationships in classrooms and for establishing school councils and empowerment in disaster risk reduction. Students were invited to participate in developing democracy in the classroom, for example, by agreeing on common rules for the democratic process in school and through activities initiated via new teaching methods, for example, cooperative, authentic, participatory and realistic learning. Teaching practices have changed as a result of student participation. Participation has helped create an open atmosphere, and student-teacher relationships have developed in a more democratic and interactive direction. Children, who usually keep quiet in relation to adults, have developed a voice in a culture that Indonesian people call a 'silent culture' (Rasmusson & Svensson 2016). These experiences have been disseminated with the help of two international conferences on Child-Friendly Education in 2016 and 2018, arranged by the recently established Center for Child Rights Studies at Muhammadiyah University, Surakarta.

## India

Between 2003 and 2018 the program worked with 11 teams and 33 change agents in the educational area from Kerala, and each team completed a CRC project. Out of 11 change projects, seven were clearly focused on 'participation' at different educational levels at classroom, schools and teacher training institutions (here called DIET, District Institute for Education and Training). Kerala, the state in the very south-western part of India with some 40 million inhabitants, has 14 districts with one teacher training institution, DIET, in each district.

One of the interesting examples of participation by students in Kerala is from group 6 in 2007. The project was entitled "Enabling Children to Become Decision Makers through Participation. Child Friendly Schools – PPTA and School Parliaments."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Muhammadiyah is one of the largest Muslim organizations in the country.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.globalcrconline.org/country/india/107>



This team selected Goghale Nagar School with 176 students in grades 5, 6 and 7 for their project. The three authors and change agents were the headmaster of this school, an education officer in SSA in Wayanad district and the principal of the DIET in Kozhikode, a neighboring district.<sup>12</sup> Before this school had a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) but the students had no role at all in decision making. The parents and teachers made decisions for the students. Afterwards this team established what they called a Pupil Parents Teacher Association (PPTA). The aim of this CRC project was to train the students as decision-makers. The team involved the local villagers and the teachers, parents and students. Area groups were formed in ten different localities and a teacher was tasked with leading each area group and informed the parents about the CRC projects that had been implemented in the school. In each group there were about 20 students. They formed area committees, met monthly, reviewed the progress of the activities and planned activities (Leo et al. 2014, pp. 65-71; Rasmusson & Svensson 2016; Rasmusson et al. 2016, pp. 75-81).

These examples of activities were started and tested in schools while considering the opinions of the students, including a policy for a plastic-free environment, distribution of mid-day meals, school parliament orientations, selection of class representatives, formation of school parliaments and monthly meetings of this school parliament. School parliaments helped the students gain knowledge on the formal parliamentary system of the nation and experience in implementing the rights and responsibilities of children and citizens. All these activities were combined with planting trees at school and in their own plots at home, maintaining a diary, reading a diary every day in class, drawing pictures and writing poems and stories. Furthermore, the children's ideas and suggestions about nature camps, swimming practice and puppetry workshops were implemented and involved parents and teachers (Leo et al. 2014, pp. 65-71; Rasmusson & Svensson 2016; Rasmusson et al. 2016, pp. 75-81).

The project was evaluated by students, parents and teachers after two years. They concluded that the project was pretty successful in involving students in the forms of decision making (Leo et al. 2014, pp. 65-71; Rasmusson & Svensson 2016; Rasmusson et al. 2016, pp. 75-81). They decided to continue this approach of involving students in decision making in different issues that are relevant to children at different levels in school. This type of participation in decision making were continued in more or less similar ways by the following six teams in other groups over the years in the other districts in Kerala state.<sup>13</sup> They all developed ways to establish class councils, school councils, and school parliaments in their schools and districts. The students were actively involved in these changes, and the evaluations showed that they liked these participatory ways to influence their everyday lives (Wickenberg et al., 2019, pp. 71-88).

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12 This team continued the project on the CRC in schools and education in Kerala that was started by two change agents in 2005 who also applied for the training program – in group 3 and batch 4, both working in SSA, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – “Education for All.” This is a national program for the universalization of education in all the states in India.

13 <http://www.globalcrconline.org/country/india/107>.



## Viet Nam

Viet Nam had 13 teams of 38 change agents during the training program. Nine of these 13 CRC projects were with a clear focus on participation. Viet Nam, located in southeast Asia, has about 90 million inhabitants in a rather small area. Viet Nam was the second country in the world and the first Asian country to ratify the CRC. The first Vietnamese team in group 2 (2004) had a clear focus on children's right to participation and respect in a school setting. They introduced school councils and elections by the students in their CRC project in a rural school north of Hanoi. After some training, the project was strongly supported by the school's headmaster and teachers. Parents were invited after some time and then became active in supporting the students.

Like Kerala, Viet Nam has a lot of experiences in examples of CRC school projects on participation involving students, teachers, and headmasters. The projects are focused on participation in teaching and learning in classes and schools in various locations. Some of the locations are in big cities such as Hanoi and Saigon but there were also projects in small towns and villages in the countryside, such as Buôn Ma Thuột in Central Highlands, and Cong Chinh Commune in the northern parts of Viet Nam. The projects have worked towards creating child-friendly environments, class councils, classroom rules, school councils, school parliaments with students, parents and teachers. Through communication and feedback, students took active part in discussions and decisions on the school board. The projects worked on including students with special needs through participation (Rasmusson et al., 2016, pp. 166-172).

## China

In China the first group of selected applicants (or change agents) for this Sida training program was from Inner Mongolia. This is an autonomous region in China with about 26 million inhabitants. Between 2003 and 2018 the training program had 13 teams and 38 change agents from the education area of Inner Mongolia: four teacher training universities in Hohhot, Tongliao, Chifeng and Hulunbuir and from the education department in the capital Hohhot. Nine out of 13 CRC change projects were focused on participation. In the first group, the Inner Mongolian team from the Education department in the region focused on training headmasters on the CRC in the county of Kulun Banner and used the UNICEF concept of 'Child-Friendly Schools' discussed above. The first three teams worked with training on participation as a methodology for school teachers to begin implementing the CRC. Team four in group 10 developed participation by students in classroom activities. From team 11 and onwards the teachers at the teacher training universities in Inner Mongolia were recruited for the Sida program and training of the CRC. That was possible from a language perspective because teachers were taught English at these four teacher training universities. Participation was developed further and translated

into Chinese and Mongolian. Teaching material and curricula with a CRC perspective were produced for other teachers. Children's participation was a focus of teacher training (Wickenberg et al. 2019, pp. 161-176). The Education department actively supported the changes, and a research institution on the CRC was established at Inner Mongolian Normal University (IMNU) – the main teacher training university in Inner Mongolia.

During 2013, group 19 in the Chinese team at IMNU worked towards creating a concrete pilot study, which was called 'Implementing Participatory Approach to Enhance Students' Participation in English classes.' This study was used at No. 19 Middle School, an upper secondary school, in Hohhot (Rasmusson et al., 2016, pp. 38-44; Wickenberg et al., 2019, pp. 279-301). The teacher trainers had then been prepared sufficiently for this step, and the development was strongly supported by the leaders at the three universities. Subsequently there were developments of CRC material and teacher training in some of the involved schools. In group 20 in 2014 the teams worked on developing a concrete and new 'manual of a rights-based participatory approach for English teaching and learning at teacher training universities' in Inner Mongolia Hohhot (Rasmusson et al., 2016, pp. 38-44; Wickenberg et al., 2019, pp. 279-301). In group 21 the team developed and translated a Chinese version of this manual from the previous team. This step completed a rather long, complex yet interesting journey on implementing the CRC in some parts of the education area in Inner Mongolia in China.

## Summary and reflections

The aim of the present chapter was to present a plurality of interpretations and applications of the concept of participation in initiatives for change in schools, classrooms and teacher training universities in many different countries, and to analyze why participation has emerged as a key issue in the projects. What have we experienced and learned through concrete examples from this training program on the implementation and use of the CRC and participation by students in the education system in these nine countries we just discussed?

### *Participation is a concept with many meanings and applications in practice*

The change initiatives resulting from the 'Child Rights, Classroom and School Management' program have taken place in countries with different national policies, economic, social and political conditions, cultures, religions and traditions. Through our work with the program we have learned the importance of being aware of differences in interpretations of the CRC and the concept of participation based on national and local conditions. One example concerns different views on children's rights to participation in relation to their responsibilities in school, the family and community. The CRC lays out the government's responsibilities towards children, but it does not mention children's responsibilities. However, in an African context

this standpoint is not immediately accepted. As an example, the Department of Education in South Africa introduced the concept of the responsibilities of the child and issued national guidelines for developing children's sense of responsibilities as well as their rights. This development has its roots in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), which was established by the Organization of African Unity, the regional forum of African governments (Danwood, 2002; Shier, 2018). The content of the charter is very much in accordance with the CRC but one of the significant disparities is stated in Article 31. This article embraces the view that family members are mutually dependent on one another –children and adults have rights and responsibilities. Children should be responsible not only for their families and society but also “preserve and strengthen African cultural values in his [sic] relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral well-being of society” (Article 31).

What is common independently of national and local context, are strong motivations for applying children's right to participation in schools. The change initiatives take place in countries with many different social problems, poor quality in education and school performance, low attendance rates and urgent needs for change. The project reports reveal important reasons for encouraging children's participation in society (Leo et al., 2014, pp. 141-156). Developing children's capacity to participate and influence is assumed to contribute to the child's personal development, skills and competencies and strengthen and empower their self-esteem. Based on many of the project reports and our own observations at the local level it is evident that children should be given the space they need to exercise their rights and express their opinions on democratic values, both at school and in their community. Many different methods and techniques have been used to achieve these ambitions. Children's rights to participation and the view of children as competent actors, expressed in the CRC, are experienced as eye-openers by educators, parents and children. These values are understood as something new and promising in relation to the traditional education and upbringing of children. The projects discussed in this chapter contain several examples of how to promote participation through class and student councils or parliaments. Establishing and developing student councils and school parliaments in schools and at the municipal or regional level is another way of creating opportunities for children to participate, both in formal as well as informal decision-making processes. Peer support and student mentors are other examples of avenues created by adults to help children support each other in exercising their rights. The participation ladder, developed by Roger Hart (Hart, 1992), is commonly used as an analysis tool. Children have a right to be involved in classroom and education matters and contribute opinions and knowledge in general school matters, but they also have the right to be given the chance to learn and exercise leadership.

One of the main project goals has been to erase the distance between school management, teachers and students to develop school democracy. These efforts are often, broadly speaking, related to the creation of 'Child-Friendly Schools,' which is a wide-ranging, global concept developed and implemented by UNICEF (2009) in a number of countries. New methods for promoting change in student-teacher rela-

tionships and in school settings have been developed with the help of this concept as a source of inspiration. Children's right to express themselves freely is demonstrated through various school activities and events in the communities under the banner 'Children's Rights Days.' They give children the opportunity to participate in activities that allow them to express themselves through drawing, music or dancing. During our visits to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, we have often been invited to drama performances in which children portray ongoing problems that pertain to the CRC. In doing so, they have been able to address and problematize, for example, alcohol abuse and domestic violence, sexual abuse and unfair teachers. Subjects that were previously taboo have been brought to the fore for discussion. This has led to the creation of new platforms for debates on important social issues from which children had been excluded.

## Conclusions

Several national reports that demonstrate a growing awareness of the CRC, not only among children, but also among teachers and parents. People's opinions, norms, and attitudes have gradually changed from seeing children as objects to seeing them as subjects (Wickenberg et al., 2019). When views on children have changed, when children have been given a voice and listened to, remarkable changes have taken place. Follow-up meetings and evaluations show that these changes resulted in reduced stress among teachers and students, which in turn resulted in a calmer, improved learning environment. This increased student participation and can be related to improved well-being among children, less abuse, children performing better at school as a result of being afforded equal opportunities, and improved school attendance among those students that for various reasons choose not to attend. Allowing children to participate in decision-making processes has proved to be one way of creating protection, which resulted in a safer school environment that dealt with discrimination, marginalization, violence and bullying (Leo et al., 2014; Rasmusson et al., 2016).

Are these changes sustainable? Networking and exchanges between change agents nationally and globally has turned out to be very important to ensure sustainability and dissemination of positive results. After some years in the Sida training program with new groups and teams, the change agents in each country established a national CRC network in education. The national teams were offered opportunities to meet and exchange knowledge and experiences through three global conferences in Bangkok and Phnom Penh. In this way the CRC and different methods of implementation of participation were institutionalized, to varying degrees, for example, at teacher training institutions, ministries of education and district and province management. There are currently several ongoing activities in the education systems at an international level that promote the implementation of the child's rights. These activities work to ensure that the CRC is implemented in practice. However, our research also shows that international studies that specifically examine the child's

rights in schools and the education system are few and far between (Urinbojev, Wickenberg & Leo, 2016). There is a great need for future research and follow-up studies of ongoing activities to ensure that implementations of the CRC are based on a scientific approach resting on knowledge and theories of methods and implementation, and children's rights.

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# Mentors' reflections

*Bodil Rasmusson, Lena Andersson, Agneta W Flinck, Ulf Leo and Per Wickenberg.*

## Introduction

In this chapter we as mentors and teachers in the programme reflect on the participating countries' change work. The starting point for the mentors' reflections is based on personal experiences documented in our mentor reports, written over the years when visiting the different participating teams in their home countries. During these 13 years of work (2003-2016) in the Child Rights Convention(CRC) programme with 21 batches in training, the mentors have made 211 field visits and 21 progress workshops in as many countries; including school visits – that makes 250-300 field visits and a lot of experiences from change work in education from countries all over the world. 16 countries are active in the end of this programme (see appendix III for full list of participants).

The reflections presented in this chapter have been conducted country by country based on the following aspects:

*Background* – some facts in short about the countries, number of teams and change agents; how relevant and functioning country strategies were found and how recruitment of participants took place in accordance with identified strategies for each country.

*Change processes* – initiated by the change agents and teams – change processes that contributed to the implementation and realization of CRC in practice.

*Changes in policies* – new policy, regulations and approaches that ultimately lead to a change in policies and establishing and consolidating new norms connected to CRC.

*Sustainability* – in the future CRC work in the country.

(See appendix V “Chain of Results for ITP Child Rights, Classroom and School Management”)

This is not always a complete picture of what has happened in relation to implementation of the CRC in the respective countries. The reflections sometimes covers



the country as a whole and sometimes only a small part of a big country, depending on the size of the country and on how many teams have participated in the programme.

## Reflections country by country

### Cambodia

#### *Background*

Cambodia has a population of 16 million, 90 % of them are of Khmer origin, speaking the Khmer language. The population is fairly homogeneous, other ethnic groups being Vietnamese (5%) and Chinese (1%). The demographics of the country are very much affected by the civil war and later genocide in the 70's, 80's and 90's. 50 % of the population is under 22 years old. The education system in present day Cambodia traces its roots back to the primary school system introduced under the French colonial rule.

Children's rights in Cambodia are legal rights endorsed by laws and in response to them the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). They have made strong commitment to protect and promote the rights of children as: Education for All National Plan 2003-2015, Strategic Plan 2009-2013, Child Friendly Schools Master Plan 2007-2011 and Master Plan on Education for Children with Disabilities 2009.

Cambodia had its first team in 2010 (batch 12) and in total 7 teams and 21 change agents have participated in the program. The first teams chose to focus their projects in the area of teacher training and geographically projects in this area has covered the teacher training centres in the provinces of Stung Treng, Kampong Thom and the Municipality of Phnom Penh. Next a number of batches chose to concentrate on preschool education. Change projects for preschools have been implemented in the provinces of Battambang, Takeo and at the Early Childhood Education Department. The last batch focused on the sector for Primary Education, but due to the closing of the programme, the projects have only reached the Municipality of Phnom Penh.

From the beginning in 2010 the projects have been running both at national level and at regional level. Eight change agents have been selected from different departments in the MoEYS, two of them hold leading positions as directors for Early Childhood Education Department and Primary Education Department. They have contributed in a most valuable ways in making policy changes formally and legally. Eleven change agents are involved at the regional level at teacher training centres; two of them hold leading positions as deans of Teacher Training Centres in Stung Treng

and Kampong Thom. Very few change agents come from a local level. Altogether the change projects have reached five provinces out of 24 plus the Municipality of Phnom Penh and included four departments of MoEYS (Curriculum Develop Department, Early Childhood Education Department, Primary Education Department and Teacher Training Department).

### *Change processes*

The change processes have focused on increased participation for children and teacher trainees to act as proactive and present citizens in communities and at schools. A key issue has been to facilitate and develop democratic norms in classrooms. New examples of ownership within student councils can be seen at the teacher training centres where the trainees have managed to raise their living standard by building new kitchens, repairing dormitories, growing vegetable gardens and start to run the councils by themselves together with link teachers. At primary school level the students have introduced their own clubs based on their own interests. Increased self-esteem and better results for the students have led to positive and sustainable democratic processes.

The Home-Based Programme is one of the successful Early Childhood Education services in Cambodia. It is run by the mothers in the villages. The change agents have managed to set up a new agenda including the fathers in leadership positions by stressing article 12 and 18 in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The fathers welcome the training and it focused on learning how to listen to children, how to support them and involve them in learning activities. The new concept *core parent* stands for a father or a mother with knowledge of CRC. Another successful preschool project developed preschool teachers' knowledge in practicing the new Preschool Curriculum, integrating the 3Ps in general and *participation* in particular. The new curriculum encouraged children to participate in activities and to make decisions on their own. The change agents have also been closely involved when MoEYS conducted a Consultative Workshop on Preschool Curriculum Revision. The workshop invited all relevant stakeholders for a three day workshop in Phnom Penh. The Minister of Education opened it and key-note speaker was the Director for UNICEF.

### *Changes in policies*

The change agents of Cambodia have succeeded in renewing policies and regulations related to CRC. At the Teacher Training Department a monitoring tool has been renewed and is used for monitoring the performance of teaching practice of teacher trainees in application schools. It assesses to what extent the trainees apply CRC in the classroom and it encourage trainees to focus on CRC. At the Curriculum Develop Department a draft of Curriculum Guideline for primary education has been written, piloted and adopted as the National Curriculum Guideline in 2015. The guideline stresses the core values, based on the CRC. At the Early Childhood Education Department a new manual called *Parental Education Manual* and a new guideline;

*Guideline for Home Based Programme* have been developed and implemented all over Cambodia. As a result of the last preschool project a Preschool Resource Centre will be built in Battambang province. The target preschool will be a key school to other early childhood program in the province and will hold monthly meetings, trainings, and monitoring activities. The function of the centre is to implement teaching and learning activities and to support technical assistant to other Community Preschools, Home based Education/ Parental Education Program and other Preschools.

### *Sustainability*

The change agents are well known to the Ministries and to the Embassy of Sweden. During the Impact Dissemination Seminar 2016 in Phnom Penh the Swedish ambassador invited them to present their work in front of stakeholders and NGO's such as: Child Fund, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, UNICEF, Unesco, Save the Children, Care Cambodia, KAPE, NEP, USAID and representatives from Lund University and Sida. The national network of the Cambodian change agents is stable and the change agents meet regularly, and use Whats App for easy communication online. They established their network in 2013 when five batches had undertaken the training programme. The leading positions of some of the change agents are a guarantee for new developments in the field of CRC within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Many of their change works are supported by UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank and Save the Children.

## **China**

### *Background*

China has 38 participants – or change agents – in 13 batches and teams in this international training programme (ITP) on children's rights in Education. 23 out of these change agents are female. In the first three batches and teams in China there was at least one participant in each team from central, national level in Beijing. After finishing batch 5 there was a strategic discussion with the director at the Education Department in Hohhot in Inner Mongolia (IM). He has since batch 1 been training primary school principals on CRC in Tongliao city and surrounding communes in Kulun Banner (county) in the eastern and agricultural parts of Inner Mongolia. Over the 13 years he is a real key change agent in Inner Mongolia.

We talked about how and where to recruit the future teams and concluded that it was most suitable and sustainable for the future to focus on schools and education institutions only in Inner Mongolia. China as such was too big and difficult to handle with large education organisations as MOE, Ministry of Education, or UNICEF in Beijing. The forthcoming 33 change agents were then recruited from the education sector in Inner Mongolia.

China is a very large country and today with 1,4 billion inhabitants – the world's most populous state and the world's second largest state by land area. It exercises jurisdiction over 22 provinces, five autonomous regions. Inner Mongolia is one of these five autonomous regions, the capital city in Inner Mongolia is Hohhot and IM has ethnic minorities of great interest in children's rights.

### *Change processes*

The next strategic change of Chinese participants was when the *Teacher Training institutions* in Inner Mongolia was involved in this ITP. It started in batch 11 when a professor at *the English department Inner Mongolia Normal University* (IMNU) in Hohhot was participating in the training programme as a change agent. From now on she was – together with the above mentioned director at Education Department in Hohhot – a strong support and a key change agent in finding new applicants for the training programme within the area of Teacher Training universities or colleges in Inner Mongolia.

Most of the change agents are from the *English departments* which is needed due to the language of instruction in this training program, English. It is a fact that very few school principals or school teachers in Inner Mongolia speak English, however increasing with the young generations. That was in the beginning a hindrance but later that turned out to be the opening entrance. The CRC changes have started to be translated from English to Chinese – and then in Chinese introduced to *other subjects and majors* within the Teacher Training universities.

These teams and change agents in 13 batches are in sum coming from Inner Mongolia Normal University, IMNU (11 CA) in Hohhot; Tongliao Vocational College in Tongliao city, TVC (8 CA); Chifeng University in Chifeng city, CFU (5 CA); and Hulunbuir College in Hailar city (2 CA). Now, 2016, there are 22 *change agents* out of 33 in Inner Mongolia active in the *Teacher Training universities*.

The focus is on the teaching-learning conditions for the teacher trainers and teacher trainees (teacher training students) in English language education. They made *changes in norms* regarding the students via focusing *participation* in the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. 11 teams out of 13 was focusing participation in their change projects. The reflections clearly showed over time that this focus on change processes *through English teacher training* was a possible way to start implementing and supporting the CRC in educational practice at teacher training universities.

### *Changes in policies*

We found during the Impact and Dissemination seminars 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, that 25 change agents remain very active in the *Inner Mongolia CRC Teacher Training Network*. A basic reflection is that the *CRC TT Network* has been an important *key organisation* when supporting, initiating and stimulating new change processes and *using new CRC norms* in the university teacher training practice.

However long distances the TT Network on CRC in Education have regular meetings – at least once a year and using new ways to communicate: social media like e.g. QQ, WeChat, and Weibo. Supporting structures, knowledge and competences are built into the contexts on different levels. Enough of power, personal and economical resources in Hohhot is a good precondition for changes.

They are making changes in policy and curricula at the four different TT Universities – but policy changes for schools is made by central the Chinese government at the MOE in Beijing. The most important educational issue – often debated openly in China and in Chinese media – is the great national testing and examination system. That is a great hinder for many new educational ideas and most of education is focusing the forthcoming and yearly examinations.

### *Sustainability*

*Inner Mongolia Normal University, IMNU* in Hohhot is the institution for sustainability and also the key organisation in Teacher Training institutions in Inner Mongolia. The university leaders at IMNU are very supportive to the CRC projects. A new centre connected to IMNU is *the Inner Mongolia Education and Research Centre for Child Development and Protection* that was decided in 2014. That is an important step in the implementation of CRC and also Child Development in Inner Mongolia. The Education and Research Centre is a partner to *Child Rights Institute at Lund University* and also other international education and research partners and CRC networks.

Another *complement* to the activities mentioned above is the introduction and application in late 2013 of the *Linnaeus-Palme Teacher Exchange project*. In 2014 Swedish Council for Higher Education decided on a Planning funds for Teacher Exchange between IMNU and Lund University. IMNU & LU English teacher trainers 2014-2015 met in one working week in each other's cities and universities during autumn 2014 and summer 2015. Now they have decided to scale up this in a 2-year application autumn 2016 and involve many more teachers in this exchange programme for 2017-2018. Mutual understanding is a good start of cooperation.

This has been a rather long journey to find the possible, effective and useful methods in English Teacher Training in Inner Mongolia, and that is a good example. Building and maintaining networks are important and in Inner Mongolia and in IMNU there are now solid norm supporting actors and structures that most probably will keep this CRC network going and sustainable. Positive for the future is also that the change agents in Inner Mongolia are young professionals in good positions.

## Colombia

### *Background*

The population in Colombia is about 48 million people. A major challenge that affects all levels in the society is that the country has been in civil war for more than fifty years, and as a result of the war, internal refugees leave the rural areas to try to find opportunities in the big cities. The internal displacement of refugees has generated serious problems of coexistence between different social groups, especially in the cities, and coexistence is a key ingredient in the work of all Colombian teams.

Colombia had its first team in batch 4 (2006) and in total 14 teams. 35 change agents remain active and associated to the network in different ways. The first teams were selected from different areas such as Cali, Medellín and Bogotá, and it was difficult to find synergies and cooperation both within and between teams. From batch 10 change agents from Bogotá, with around 8 million inhabitants, were selected and there are now several links between the different teams.

Most of the change agents are working; a) at local level as principals or leading teachers or as university teachers/teacher trainers in the public or private universities in Bogotá. A few of the participants in the programme have been working at the Ministry of Education but the turnover at this level is very high since most officials have short term contracts.

### *Change processes*

As mentioned before, coexistence is a key ingredient in the work of all Colombian teams, and some examples of aims of the projects are; conflict resolution and anti-bullying strategies, to integrate critical thinking, student participation and leadership, school violence and its influence in child development. The projects have targeted:

1. the children, to give them strategies for coexistence and participation, to strengthen their cultural identity
2. the teachers in the schools, with teacher development, materials development and trying new teaching methods
3. the student teachers at the universities, with understanding of CRC and methods based on CRC and student centred education.

### *Changes in policies*

Colombia has a decentralized school system and very strong policies promoting children's rights are already in place. It has been easy for the teams to connect to existing policies and programs from the Ministry of Education, (e.g. program on human rights and citizenship "Eduderechos"), or from policies, development plans and programs from the Secretary of Education in Bogotá.

## *Sustainability*

The national CRC-network of change agents have decided to have a formal annual meeting to share experiences, and to arrange two fixed events hosted by the network:

1. The annual CRC-seminar; organized by change agents targeting student teachers and in-service teachers, and school principals and other guests. Five seminars have been held with change agents and teachers as presenters talking about their CRC projects.
2. Students' annual meeting; an event to engage and empower the junior change agents in the schools, located in one of the schools where the CRC have been implemented.

The CRC-network also participates in other existing networks in the field of education, coexistence, peace to advocate children's rights, and a CRC research agenda is organized.

## **Egypt**

### *Background*

Egypt, with a population of about 87 million people, has made significant progress over the past decade towards achieving the millennium development goals in areas such as; survival rates for children, school enrolment, vaccination programs, and access to clean drinking water.

At the same time the political arena has changed a lot after the 25th of January revolution 2011. Children's right to participation and to freedom of expression has become a critical issue in Egypt and therefore included in different ways in all Egyptian projects.

Egypt had its first team in batch 3 (2005), and in total 8 teams. 22 change agents are still active and associated to the network in different ways. The teams are working with projects in Cairo, Mansoura and Port Said. The Egyptian Change Agents are working; a) at local level as principals or leading teachers, b) as University teachers/teacher trainers in Universities, c) at the ministry of education with school improvement and quality assessment, and d) in national and international NGO's.

### *Change processes*

One common point of departure in most Egyptian projects is that the child's voice in Egypt is not heard or valued. It is stated that teachers and parents are used to giving orders and expect the children and students to obey without further discussion. There is also a lack of integration of children's rights in the curriculum, and in the educational system at primary and secondary level. As a result, article 12 respect for

the views of the child, in the CRC is used in the frame of reference in most of the Egyptian projects. In practise it means that they are focusing teacher's awareness on children's rights and the ability to teach in a participatory way.

### *Changes in Policies*

In 2010-2011 one team at national level worked on improvement of the primary and kindergarten teachers' performance in the light of the CRC. One of the team members was the chairperson of the curriculum committee for early childhood education. As a result children's rights were included in the new curriculum that was named "The child's right to play, learn and create", and a massive training of Kindergarten teachers all over Egypt was rolled out the following years.

### *Sustainability*

One of the network's achievements is forming and registering a Community Development Association (National NGO) for child development named Blossoms, or Bara3em in Arabic. Bara3em is offering training sessions and activities to children and involved stakeholders as teachers and parents. Through this growing entity, the network managed to unify different projects, and efforts in the field of the CRC, and arrange regular activities and programmes under its umbrella.

The projects that targeted kindergartens in three different cities: Port Said, Mansoura and Cairo are preparing to target faculties of kindergarten in universities in order to have more sustainable results.

The network also conducted an international conference: "Towards A Child Friendly School" that aimed at raising awareness of the CRC and introducing an implementation model of the CRC in education. The network had an opportunity to work together at the conference sharing and gaining experience: participating in organizing the conference, preparing and conducting workshops which was an opportunity to introduce the network, and to get requests for offering workshops for in-service teacher training. As a result the CRC-network was able to scale up and the first steps of establishing a nation-wide committee of interested people across Egypt who are working to support the child friendly school initiative in the Egyptian Education system was taken. And cooperation with the "child-friendly school network", in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and other institutions was initialised, where 700 schools are targeted in a national programme during one year. And finally, change agents in the network are working on re-viewing and modifying all materials and tools that were developed for Egypt CRC projects to be used for future training.



# Ethiopia

## *Background*

The estimated population in Ethiopia is over 90 million, where more than 40% of the population is under 14 years of age. This is a challenge for the educational system. The full name of the country is the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, which means that it is a federation of regions where each region is responsible for education up to university level. In each state there is a Regional Educational Bureau with a Head who is like the minister of education in that specific region. Curricula and educational policies are national.

Ethiopia had its first team in batch 1 that is in 2003 and had in total 14 teams. Around 35 change agents are still active and associated to the networks in different ways. The first teams were selected mainly from the area around Addis Abeba, and the later teams from the area around Awassa, the capital of SNNPR a region in the southern part of Ethiopia. There are now two networks in Ethiopia working mostly separate, but there is also a regular contact between the networks.

Most of the change agents are working; a) at local level as principals or head teachers or b) as teachers/teacher trainers at Teacher Education Colleges specifically in Awassa area. Some of the participants have been working at the Regional Education Bureau and a few have been working at the National Ministry of Education. In Ethiopia there is a system of transfer of staff within the public service so many participants have shifted their positions.

## *Change processes*

In the educational system in Ethiopia there has been a system of clubs as extra curricula activities for many years. Therefore it was natural for many teams to start CRC clubs mainly in primary schools and at Teacher Education Colleges. This was a structure of extra curricula activities well known by teachers, parents, and children as well as by the School management Boards and as such rather easy to develop. Through the CRC clubs the purposes were:

- To raise awareness and knowledge for all involved target groups.
- To reach a higher level of participation for all involved target groups.
- To create a more child and learner friendly climate in the schools/colleges.
- To introduce new experiences in all educational institutions at Regional level.

## *Changes in Policies*

The CRC is already included in some subjects of the Ethiopian school curricula for primary as well as secondary education so the pure facts are in many aspects already known by the teachers and the students. However, for parents there is a need also for knowledge, as well as for School Management Board members. For Teacher

Education Colleges the subject is there but nothing about how to implement the ideas of the convention into a classroom situation. How to implement is the new element introduced by the projects and is presented in Handbooks for various purposes, especially when it comes to the SNNPR.

In Addis Abeba the leadership of schools has been more in focus with a training programme introduced also now at the REB.

### *Sustainability*

The two regional CRC networks introduced by change agents have decided to have a formal annual meeting to share experiences, and to discuss future developments.

The SNNPR network, based in Awassa has more regular meetings as the change agents are living and working closer together with Awassa Teacher Education College as a centre. The CRC club at the college has now more than 300 active participants and they are all involved in various activities and arranging meetings with schools in Awassa town. The SNNPR network has also trained all teachers at primary level as to the CRC in Awassa town. The idea is to also train primary school teachers in the whole region following the cascade model.

The CRC-networks also participate in other existing networks in the field of education, often together with NGOs and/or Human Rights Commission both at regional level but also at national level.

## **India – Kerala state**

### *Background*

India had 33 participants – or change agents – in 11 batches in this ITP-program on Child Rights in Education. 13 participants are female. First participants in batch 3 (2004-2005) and all three change agents were shattered between national level in the capital New Delhi, and an NGO in the mid part of India, and one teacher trainer in the most south-western Indian state, Kerala, a teacher trainer for many years at DIET Wayanad. District teacher training organisations in Kerala is called DIET, District Institutes of Education and Training (Teacher Training Colleges).

In batch 4 the next two participants came from the same two shattered areas but the third one was a change agent from the same area in Kerala as the change agent in batch 3. DIETs are working in every of the 14 districts and is very important for the implementation of the CRC with teachers as seen and analysed over 10 years. The DIETs are organizing teacher training regarding the CRC in all schools. The reflections show that these DIETs had contributed strongly to the realization of the CRC in practice in the education area in Kerala.

India is a very large country with 1,3 billion inhabitants - the seventh-largest country by area, the second-most populous country – and has 29 states. After dis-

cussions with the teams, a strategic decision was taken to focus on applications *from Kerala*. Kerala is a progressive and small state in India and has about 35 billion inhabitants and has focused a lot on education. More than 90 percent of the population was described as literate in the census of India (2011). After some years, the clear focus on the Kerala state showed to be a most important strategic decision for the initiation of CRC change processes in educational practice.

### *Change processes*

In this CRC training programme there are change agents from almost all districts in Kerala state – in schools as principals, in DIETS as teacher trainers or principals, and some as researchers and policy officers in Kerala state government bodies like SSA, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (The Education for All Movement in India, the Indian Government program aimed at the practical universalization of elementary education) and SCERT, The State Council of Education and Training. All 25 CRC projects in Kerala have started the change processes with students, teachers and principals in schools in rather poor and rural areas. They have been making changes in social norms via focusing participation (one of the 3 Ps in CRC) in starting and developing class and school councils – and even school parliaments in the districts – in Kerala. Later it was shown that this focus on change processes through schools and school councils was useful when implementing and supporting CRC in educational practice.

### *Changes in policies*

Furthermore it showed that all these changes in practice on the micro level combined soon with the meso level – and also after some years reaching the state level, the macro level, where there was a strong Kerala state support. Later SCERT made the *policy changes* in the new school curricula in 2014 and 2015 built on CRC experiences done on the micro level. This transforming of the CRC into the curricula work including in-service training all over Kerala was done through the established and strong CRC network. The change agents in batch 16 & 18, working in SCERT Kerala in the state capital city Trivandrum, worked especially on completing the new curricula. *SSA Kerala* also showed to be a key organisation and agent for these state policy changes.

One *key person*, a teacher trainer and principal of a DIET, came to the program in Batch 4 when he was working in *SSA*. First as a new *change agent* he was in a district, later he was Principal at DIET Wayanad, and now he is *State Project Director* in *SSA Kerala*, the first position in Kerala. The two change agents in batch 3 and 4 were the initiating and supporting *key persons* from the very beginning – and they are still important locomotives in CRC in Kerala.

All 33 change agents are active in the *Kerala CRC Network* even after their retirement. The reflection is that the CRC Network in Kerala has been an important *key organisation* when supporting, initiating and stimulating new change processes and using and applying new CRC norms. The network wrote a *Country Book* in

2013 for the Impact seminar 2 in Bangkok, “Kerala’s Real Story in Ensuring Child Rights. The Kerala Network of CRC Change Agents” where the CRC changes were described and analysed in an open way by all the change agents. This CRC Network is a most driving force for the following organisational steps.

### *Sustainability*

Association for the Protection & Promotion of Child Rights in INDIA, APProCh India was as a result of the ongoing and sustainable activities by the CRC network in Kerala state. APProCh India was registered under the Charitable Societies Act in January 2014 but the association begun functioning already in 2013. It is noted when summing up that representatives of APProCh India were invited and used by the Kerala state government when a discussion was conducted by SCERT at Trivandrum, Kerala’s capital city, to develop CRC policy in a Curriculum Framework. The network has also taken active part in material development workshops related to children’s rights conducted by The State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SCERT) in Kerala. In Nilambur Municipality they are working with UNICEF and DIET Malappuram and SSA on Child Friendly City. “Boundless Sky” is a handbook on the CRC for students and also for teachers and produced in this CRC project.

All 33 CRC change agents in Kerala are involved in *APProCh India*. There are many key persons today in Kerala: a former DIET Principal in 3 different districts in Kerala; a former SSA state officer and now a DIET Principal in Wayanad; and two state research officers working at SCERT in Trivandrum with constructing the new curricula for primary and secondary schools and many more. There are solid norm supporting actors and structures that will keep this CRC network going and sustainable.

Reflecting on the CRC changes in practice and policy in Kerala it was found that this CRC network with the change agents active over more than 10 years was of the great importance for *successes and possible sustainability* regarding CRC in Education. 2016 the Kerala network are heading for taking their CRC change experiences in co-operation projects *to the three neighbouring states* and quoting their post-conference-paper: “The main task, we the Indian network of change agents have decided to expand it to the South Indian States namely Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.” That is indeed a great leap for the Kerala CRC network. Another good task is to train even more *change agents* in different parts and levels of Kerala to be able to manage this expansion to the three neighbouring Indian states.

## Indonesia

### *Background*

Indonesia with its about 260 million inhabitants is the world's third most populous democracy, the world's largest archipelagic state, and the world's largest Muslim-majority nation.

Indonesia had its first team in batch 1 and all together 39 change agents in 14 teams have participated in the programme. A majority of them come from Central Java and from two different universities with teacher training: Universitas PGRI (UPGRIS) Semarang (where it started) and Muhammadiyah University (UMS), Surakarta. Most teams have been composed by two lecturers from university and one principal. Child friendly schools and child friendly teaching and learning have been the main themes for the change work aiming at strengthening children's participation in schools and classrooms. Change work is characterized by close cooperation between teacher training and practice. Introduction of the CRC in the Islamic context has demanded special attention to Islamic perspective on children's rights.

### *Change processes*

Change work has started in a small scale at local level with a bottom up approach involving children, teachers and parents. New models and tools for practice of child friendly teaching methods have been developed and disseminated in the project schools and in other schools in connected clusters and regions. It is evident that the atmosphere has changed in schools involved, children's participation has been strengthened and relationships between teachers and students have become more interactive and democratic. The CRC has been implemented in teacher training in different ways at the two universities. Training on children's rights is a part of the curriculum at UPGRIS and change agents there serve as resource persons in the Centre for Community and Woman Empowerment and Child Protection.

UMS has created a Centre for Child Rights Studies initiated by change agents. It dedicates itself to supporting child-friendly education that includes promoting the rights of the child in education, safe and child-friendly environment, joyful learning processes and child-friendly city.

### *Changes in policies*

UNICEF has played an important role in the implementation of children's rights in Indonesia. UNICEF has introduced and disseminated Child Friendly Schools and Child Friendly Cities and worked on changes in laws and policies at different levels. It has resulted in strong support from the Indonesian government and child friendly cities are now used as the operational strategy on how the government ensures realization of the CRC. Change projects within the ITP connect very well to those initiatives as well to the new curriculum of 2013.

## *Sustainability*

About 25 change agents are still active within the area of children's rights. There are two well-functioning networks at Central Java connected to each of the two universities. It doesn't prevent collaboration, change agents in the two networks sometimes come together in common activities and they know each other very well. Two different coordinators guarantee the continuity. Institutionalization of the CRC activities through the Centre for Child Right Studies at UMS is promising for sustainability as well as implementation of the CRC in curriculum at UPGRIS and involvement of change agents in Centre for Community and Woman Empowerment and Child Protection at UPGRIS. Cooperation with UNICEF and connections between the projects and activities conducted through the Child Friendly Cities initiative at local, regional and national level give much potential for sustainability.

The network at UMS arranged in May 2016 The First International Conference on Child Friendly Education with about 350 participants not only from Central Java but also from other parts of Indonesia. Change agents from Namibia, Viet Nam and Sri Lanka joined the conference as well as part of the exchange between countries participating in the ITP.

## **Malawi**

### *Background*

Malawi, with a population of about 15 million people, had its first team in batch 3 in 2005, and in total 13 teams. 31 change agents are still active and associated to the network in different ways. The first batches focused on different impact areas in Salima, Zomba, Blantyre and Mchinji districts, and the last teams focused on schools in Njewa and Kalolo Education Zones in Lilongwe Rural West.

### *Change processes*

The main objectives of the Malawian projects have been on different forms of student participation, e.g. involving students in decision making, and on reducing drop-out rate due to poverty, pregnancy and child labour. The Malawian teams have of course included issues of provision and protection in their projects, but the main topic in most projects have been to strengthen children's opportunities to participate in matter that affect their daily lives. To increase participation of students/learners, the projects have targeted relevant duty bearers such as head teachers, deputy head teachers, School Management Committees, Parents-Teachers Associations, Mother Groups, Traditional and Religious leaders through trainings and review meetings on children's rights in education. This approach has resulted in increased understanding of children's rights in education, how to prevent drop-out, early marriages and corporal punishment. As a result the attendance rate has increased, and teachers

in the targeted schools are able to give students/learners an opportunity to participate in decision making and school governance on issues that affect them. Students' Councils have been established in various schools in Lilongwe and Zomba Districts, and the change agents have provided tailor made trainings to students/learners and teachers involved in the Students' Councils.

### *Changes in policies*

In Malawi national and international policies and initiatives have served as legal support in the projects at school level such as; re-admission policy for school drop outs and child friendly school initiatives. The free primary education policy and the 50-50 selection policy between boys and girls have also supported the development at school level.

One of the main goals for the Malawian national CRC network is to scale up its advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to ensure that the concept of Students' Councils is understood at all levels within the ministry, in order for the initiative to be adopted at ministry level and rolled out to all primary and secondary schools in Malawi as part of the curriculum.

### *Sustainability*

There has been collaboration with a number of stakeholders such as Malawi Human Rights Commission, MHRC, (4 change agents in different teams) that provide financial support for children's rights activities. One very good example of creating training for change and sustainability is the collaboration in a project between MHRC and the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE). The training has structures similar to the global Child Rights programme. Head teachers and their deputies at national level get CRC-training and at the end of the training, they develop action plans which they implement in their respective schools. Head teachers and their deputies in the projects impact areas have been included in this new programme and now there is a national upscale. Another example is the Child Friendly Schools initiative in the Zomba area, in the south, that is supported by UNICEF to make it sustainable.

One indicator of the awareness of the CRC among stakeholders is that people in the villages now are able to report cases of children's rights violations to relevant authorities in order to go through the formal justice systems and the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) as a national human rights institution. This has contributed to enforcement of laws that are supposed to protect children.

The Malawian National CRC network is in the final process of becoming a legal entity and this is an important step for future success and the sustainability and upscale of the initiatives in Malawi.



## Mozambique

### *Background*

Mozambique has a population of 25 million. The official language is Portuguese which is spoken mostly as a second language by about the half of the population. After over four centuries of Portuguese rule, Mozambique gained independence in 1975 and shortly thereafter it became the People's Republic of Mozambique. After two years of independence, the country descended into an intense and protracted civil war lasting from 1977 to 1992.

After the civil war the quality of education has suffered. Today children's rights in Mozambique are legal rights endorsed by laws and in response to them the Ministry of Education has made strong commitments to protect and promote the rights of the children. In 2004 a new curriculum was introduced and compulsory education from grade 1 to grade 7 was introduced.

Mozambique had its first team in 2003 (batch 3) but in total only 5 teams and 14 change agents have participated in the program, since the country has been in and out of the list of countries invited to the programme by Sida. The first team came from Xia Xia, which is 200 km north of Maputo and they chose to focus their project in the area of protection and participation in a partner school of the Teacher Training Centre (TTC). The project has been ongoing since then and has developed the primary school sector in Xia Xia in collaboration with the TTC. The next teams 15, 16, 18 and 20 have been located in Maputo and have targeted two primary schools and one upper secondary school.

### *Change processes*

The change processes have mainly focused on building warm relations between teachers and students in order to increase the student's participation in classrooms and raise their awareness of children's rights. Changing the atmosphere at the school and involving the parents have brought about a fundamental change in the relationship between students and teachers. Today the teachers respect their students and encourage them to respect each other. They are open and friendly with their students, helping and supporting them whenever necessary and they have permanent open conversations and interaction with their students. This information reveals that teachers are aware of the importance of building warm relationships with their students, respecting their rights and encouraging them to participate actively in the classroom. These changes have turned upper secondary school Quisse Mavota into a role model school in Maputo. After working with better communications and building good relationships between the teachers and students they were ready to discuss and solve everyday problems. They started small repair workshops in the school yard that could repair chairs and tables. However, the students had to work on open space without proper safety conditions. In 2014, the principal who had witnessed the



importance of the work being done contacted the Ministry of Education and after negotiations they decided to build a huge workshop at Quisse Mavota Secondary School, where the students will be able to work in a good, comfortable and safe environment. The principal has also started a network for principals together with the District of Education in order to spread the change project to other schools. The parents have started clubs to support the teachers. In 2015 a new subject “entrepreneurship” has been implemented and Quisse Mavota has developed different programmes such as: The Sewing programme and The Carpentry programme and the Cooking programme).

At primary school level in Maputo these change projects have used dramas and role-plays organized and played by the students to highlight the importance of changing roles and relationship between parents, children and teachers. This methodology has played an important role in bringing parents and local chiefs to school. Parents come regularly to school and ask for additional information concerning the participation of their children in education and local chiefs understand the relevance of implement CRC in school, they participate and show interest in the CRC implementation in school.

### *Changes in policies*

The change agents of Mozambique have succeeded in visualizing their work for the Ministry of Education. One change agent works at the national level in the Ministry of Education.

### *Sustainability*

The network operates independently. It is strong and stable, but small. There is a will to come together and share experiences. The coordinator is the driving force. They coordinate their work with the district level and the mayors and district managers. The coordinators of the network are well known to the Embassy of Sweden and they try to collaborate with other NGO's working with children's rights. They have registered their network Nawananga as a national network and invited stakeholders to the network and they regard the Swedish Embassy as a partner to discuss with.

## **Namibia**

### *Background*

Namibia is a large and young country with a small population, altogether 2.5 million inhabitants. Namibia gained its independence from South Africa in 1990 after years of liberation struggle and guerrilla warfare. The majority of the Namibian population is of Ovambo ethnicity, which forms about half of the population, residing mainly in the north of the country. Most of the teams that have participated in the programme

come from provinces in this region (Kavango East and West, Ohangwena, Oshana, Oshikoto and Omusati). The other teams come from the Central provinces Khomas and Otjozondjupa and from Kharas province in the South. Namibia had its first team in batch 2 (2004) and has in total had 11 teams and 32 change agents in the programme.

### *Change processes*

Children's rights in Namibia are legal rights endorsed by laws and in response to the laws the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture have developed different policies to ensure provision, protection and participation (3 Ps) by children in educational activities as well as in other matters that concern them. The change projects developed by the teams have played an important role in putting these laws and policies into practice, to make them a real component of the education. The purpose of all the change projects have aimed at creating "Child Friendly Schools" by raising awareness among the stakeholders and implementing CRC in schools focusing on the 3 Ps. The projects also intend to educate, sensitize and train education stakeholders (learners, teachers, parents, Education Officers, and civic leaders). They have been implemented on local level, in schools with the possibility to spread to nearby schools.

During the last years a parallel process of change has been initiated from the national network, including all batches in Namibia, (team 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21). They have worked towards enforcing CRC nationally and regionally in Namibia as well as among change agents in Africa. The main purpose is to make use of the Namibian change agent's knowledge and good practices from the ongoing projects to educate teachers, principals and school inspectors nationally. This issue has been discussed over the last years and with a lot of efforts especially from the last batches, it was possible to arrange a national network meeting in the capital Windhoek on 5-6th of September 2015. The agenda was well prepared with guests from the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture, TV and Youth organisations.

The Deputy Minister of Education was the key note speaker at the conference in Windhoek 2015 and she welcomed the initiative of bringing all the change agents together at national level. She declared that the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture was very interested in learning from the success stories of the change work that was going on in Namibia. She has invited the change agents to present their different change works/projects during another national conference that will take place in late September 2016. She has also started a tour to visit all the targeted schools in the programme.

The change agents in Namibia are very well aware of the valuable experiences gained by the other teams, their change works and national networks experiences in the nearby countries. They therefore brought forward the idea that Namibia should be the host nation for a conference on CRC to the Deputy Minister of Education. The change agents insisted and showed with good examples from different change projects that the knowledge of CRC is a necessary component in the achievement of a successful implementation of the new sustainable millennium goals 2015-2030.

There will be a call for an African conference in Windhoek 2017 inviting change agents from all over Africa to share and show good practices and change projects.

### *Changes on policies*

The breakthrough in the negotiations with the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture is a great leap forward in putting the CRC on the national agenda. It will benefit the school children of Namibia at micro level and it will educate the teachers, the principals and the school inspectors at middle level and it will open up for the curriculum developers at the Ministry of Education at macro level. It will also create a regional network in Africa on CRC which can open many doors in the research field as well as in general education. The agreement between the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture and the network of change agents of Namibia is one of the most important step that the network ever has taken.

### *Sustainability*

The national network of the Namibian change agents is stable and the change agents meet regularly in meetings, seminars and workshops and use What's App for easy communication online. The new steering committee of the national network has started to plan for the national conferences in CRC in 2016 and the African conference on CRC 2017. At a network meeting in March 2016, the change agents formulated plans to replicate the training programme used in the Swedish International Training Program to a Namibian programme of Child Rights, Classroom and School Management. They have selected mentors and composed workshops and material to be implemented in those regions which have no change agents. They are working hand in hand with the MoEAC. This progress can be seen as a result of the fact that the International Training Programme is closing down and the change agents of Namibia sense that it is their responsibility to go on. The factors that contributed to the success are very much personal factors. The last batches include persons with clear leadership skills and knowledge how to raise awareness of important issues. The matter that they belong to the last batches have given them a mandate to enforce the CRC in Namibia along with the strong will of change agents from batch 2 to 21 willing to go on working with implementing CRC in Namibia.

## **South Africa – Free State Province**

### *Background*

The population in South Africa is about 53 million, of which 18.6 million are children under 18 years. South Africa is a young democracy that is created after three centuries of colonial occupation and domination, as well as four decades of systematic and officially sanctioned discrimination of black and coloured, the majority pop-

ulation, under Apartheid. After the end of Apartheid, in 1994, a new Constitution was formulated. It is said to be one of the most progressive constitutions in the world containing a section of its own on children's rights. South Africa has the status of middle income country but there is a big gap between the poor and the rich. Many children don't live together with their biological parents for different reasons. In 2013 18% of children had lost a mother, father or both parents; 22% of children did not live with either of their biological parents; and 0.5% of children lived in child-only households. (De Lannoy et al. 2015)<sup>1</sup>.

South Africa has its first team in batch 3 (2005) and in total 10 teams and 30 change agents. The first team came from Gauteng Province and the second one from KwaZulu-Natal Province. The sustainability of those teams was weak and we searched for a fruitful recruitment strategy together with one of the participants from Ministry of Education. The third team came from Free State, the third largest of the nine provinces in the country with almost 3 million inhabitants. From there it became possible to get a new foundation for recruitment. All the eight teams have been composed by principals and officials (either provincial or district level) from the Directorate for Values in Education, Department of Education. The ambition, from the beginning, was to create model/focus schools in each of the five districts in the province, schools which could be used as models and inspiration for others.

### *Change processes*

There are many similarities between the eight projects in Free State. All of them have taken place at one or two schools with principals as change agents. All schools are situated in poor areas with heavy social problems. Many children and parents, targeted in the projects, live in shacks or informal settlements in areas with high unemployment rate, drug abuse and crime. Focuses of the projects are varying but all of them have ingredients of all the three P: s: Provision, Protection and Participation.

The first project took place in Xhariep district in schools with deeply rooted problems with corporal punishment. It is common in South African schools even though it is prohibited by law. It was a big challenge for the principal to change attitudes among his staff and to change his own behaviour. But he managed to find his new role – from being the one who used to administrate corporal punishment to be more like a counsellor. The children, who became well aware of their rights, started to report corporal punishment themselves and it happened that teachers were expelled.

The following teams continued to pay attention to problems that were well known but hidden and often neglected e.g. sexual abuse, teenage pregnancies and drugs. The projects met similar challenges. The change agents had to overcome resistance, doubt and negative attitudes among the teachers and parents. The change agents have been successful in resolving misconceptions, in breaking taboos and finding creative ways of involving children and parents. Children have been seen and heard in new ways and they witness themselves on the importance of having knowledge of their own

1 De Lannoy, A.; Swartz, S.; Lake, L. & Charmaine Smith, C. 2015. The Child Gauge 2015. University of Cape Town. [http://www.ci.org.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1154:south-african-child-gauge-2015&catid=40:child-gauge&Itemid=834](http://www.ci.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1154:south-african-child-gauge-2015&catid=40:child-gauge&Itemid=834).

rights. Participation has increased and important basic needs have been provided for. Corporal punishment has stopped. Another characteristic feature of all projects is the involvement of parents and cooperation with stakeholders in e.g. health care and social services as well as churches and NGO: s. Those efforts have contributed to better use of resources and shared responsibility for vulnerable children. New tools and methods have been developed to make reality of the CRC in practice.

### *Changes in policies*

South African education is characterized by many good policies and programmes well anchored in the South African Constitution and the CRC. It means that the change work has been more focused on implementation of different already existing programmes instead of influencing policy making at different levels. Officials from Directorate for Values in Education have introduced and monitored programmes matching the projects e.g. on alternatives to corporal punishment and methodologies for children's participation.

### *Sustainability*

All the participants, with a few exceptions from Free State, are still active as change agents. The initial goal to create model/ focus schools as inspiration and models for others in each of the five districts in Free State has been reached. Results achieved at most of the project schools seem to be well anchored and sustainable. Principals have played a key role as change agents and for guaranteeing further development and sustainability. Continuity has been assured through one of the change agents in batch 11 who has been a key person in recruitment of the participants and coordination of the network. Change agents are now working on strategies for dissemination of the good experiences in broader scale at district, provincial and national level. Networking has been growing with time and the network continues to develop and strengthen its position.

## **Sri Lanka**

### *Background*

Sri Lanka, with a population of about 20 million people in an area of just 65, 610 square kilometres, has one of the highest literacy rates in Asia. Education has been a focussed area for a long time and has been included in the culture as well. However, after more than 20 years of civil war the situation as to the CRC in the country really needs to be in focus. The situation for many children became worse in many aspects included the area of education.

Besides, there is another problem in the area of education and that is the National Examinations. The examinations take place several times during the education peri-

od and these examinations are extremely important for the children and the families of the children in various aspects. As early as in grade five there is a national examination, the children are at that stage around ten years of age. Based on the results in this examination the children (and/or the families) will have the opportunity to select a school for the continued education. If the results are high the best schools in the country can be selected. There will also follow scholarships to cover the expenses there is if the school is located far away from home. Many poor families rely totally on these scholarships and the possibility for their children to select the best schools, but all families are competing to get high results. One consequence of this is that during the fifth grade the focus is very much on the subjects included in the national examination and a lot of extra teaching classes are offered. The children feel such a heavy pressure to succeed on this only day that many get sick. Thus there are two negative aspects of these early national examinations, stressed children and neglect on subjects not involved in the examinations, such as English.

Sri Lanka was represented already in the first batch and has all together been represented in 11 batches. Sri Lanka has many change agents from national level, almost the same number as from local level, 12 at national level and 11 at local level, the remaining 7 are from regional level and represent teacher education. In Sri Lanka there is a national network, split up in two regional networks, the Kandian network and the Colombo network.

### *Change Processes*

As a consequence of the issue of the early National Examinations many projects have directly or indirectly focused on that. Directly through the introduction of a more child friendly climate in the classrooms, specifically in the fifth grade. Participation has been focused to let the children have more real input on what is happening in the school. Also directly by focusing on subjects not included in the National Examination, specifically English. English is later on in the education a very important subject, but neglected in grade five the children will suffer later. Indirectly by introducing and using computers more in the educational process, not only as a nice break, but as an educational tool.

Most of the projects have been targeting participation as to children's involvement in all kind of school activities such as:

- Group work activities
- Practical activities such as decoration of the school environment
- Planning, development and implementation of educational material
- Focusing on important subjects not included in the national examinations

### *Changes in policies*

Children's rights have been included in various subjects and the curricula for certain subjects have been changed. There have been several participants from the National

Institute of Education where the responsibility for curriculum development is based and also responsibility for development of school material. More child friendly approaches have been included in the teacher education, as a subject but also as to teacher behaviours and approaches in the classrooms.

### *Sustainability*

The projects at national level carried out under the National Institute of Education (NIE) are well implemented and supported by the Ministry and by that seems to have good possibilities for sustainability. The NIE has also started a research project dealing with parents' knowledge and use of children's rights. That is also true for some of the school projects implemented by the Kandian network in schools where the principals and parents are active.

The projects started at the teachers' colleges are also sustainable as change agents are working there and have a continuous input.

The networks in Sri Lanka and the network in Kerala, India, have started a cross country network and payed visits to each other and more activities are in the pipe line. They are also in the process to establish closer cooperation with other Asian networks. Change agents are also participating in conferences in the area of children's rights in Asia.

The challenges as to sustainability are more obvious for some school projects where no change agents are working at the school and where the support from parents and principals is not sufficient.

## **Tanzania**

### *Background*

Tanzania with a population of almost 50 million has been in the programme from batch number one. All together there have been 15 teams from Tanzania. Almost all change agents were originally from the Dar es Salaam area, but as a result of the transfer policy there are now change agents in more areas. Besides, the last team came from Mwanza area.

Tanzania has a long tradition of Swedish support in the area of education, mainly from Sida, but also from NGOs and missionaries. Among the change agents have the majority been from national level, which is specific for Tanzania. Many of the teams have had members from ministries, in most cases from Ministry of Education, but also from the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affair and Community Development. Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) was also represented by team members from national level and also Human Rights Commission.



### *Change processes*

The main focus of CRC projects can be presented within three main areas, which are corporal punishment, changing national policies towards a clearer CRC approach and participation mainly by introducing CRC clubs or students' councils.

As in many countries corporal punishment was an issue in schools at all levels in Tanzania. The reasons behind are many, but some of the main reasons are crowded classrooms and ignorance from teachers as well as parents. The projects aimed at getting the teachers to understand the negative aspects of corporal punishment for the learning process. When teachers understood that corporal punishment was a real hindrance for learning their attitudes changed and by the time also their behaviours. It was more difficult to get the parents to understand. In many cases they asked the teachers to use corporal punishment. However, when including all stakeholders, such as Parent Teachers' Association (PTA's), and School Management Boards the situation started to change. But this kind of processes takes time.

As many of the participants in the Tanzanian teams represented central/national level also many projects were aiming at changing of policies. These projects and outcomes will be more explained below.

Among the last teams, representing Tanzania, the focus of the projects was participation. After visiting the schools in Lund and discussing with the students about participation and taking an active part in the activities in schools through student councils the teams wanted to introduce that also back home. In Tanzanian schools the British system of Prefects was in practice and has been for years. However, Prefects were appointed by the administration and functioning under their rules and responsible to them not to the students. In the student councils it is the opposite, the students in the council are selected and appointed by students and are responsible to students. Thus the tasks are different, but sometimes this new situation resulted in confusion. The student councils are on the right track, but it will take some time for them to be settled and functioning independently.

### *Changes in policies*

While working with the projects team members realized the importance of having national policies in place to support their work. Some policies were in place, but others were missing or not clear enough. That is why many teams worked for changes in policies at national level, such as introducing the CRC in a clearer and more pedagogical way in the White Paper, in curricula and in national examinations.

To change the classroom climate from a teacher centred to a learner centred climate, which was stated in the curricula, was the aim of some projects. That the examination system was a steering instrument for teachers and resulted in teacher centred classroom behaviour was understood by the teams. TIE has the responsibility of national examinations and when the teams included members from TIE the issue of national examinations was in focus.



## *Sustainability*

One big advantage concerning sustainability in the case of Tanzania was the number of change agents from national levels such as ministries, Human Rights Commission, TIE and other institutes dealing with education. The framework needed to implement the CRC in classrooms and to change teachers', parents' and principals' attitudes and behaviours is now more or less in place. TIE also has the responsibility to train teachers all over the country in all new developments within education and other organisations are training all managers in education so the developments are now spread to many parts of the country. With such a support from policy documents it will also be easier for other projects to be sustainable.

In one of the projects focusing everybody's right to education the focus was on girls' right to enter education in natural sciences at secondary level, which was not supported by the educational system nor by teachers. During the follow up of this batch teachers from Spyken secondary school in Lund participated and cooperation between Tanzanian project and Spyken in Lund started and is still going on after six years. That project was from the Tanzanian side also supported by JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency).

The Tanzanian National CRC network is now in the final process of becoming a legal entity and this is an important step for future success and the sustainability and upscale of the initiatives in place.

## **Uganda**

### *Background*

Uganda a densely populated country in the heart of Africa had its first team in batch 4. Since then Uganda has been represented in 13 batches. Most of the teams were selected from Kampala area, but with the policy of transfer the change agents are now spread to other areas as well. Most of the change agents are from local or regional level, very few from national level, which has affected the content of the projects.

Uganda has a sad history of a civil war specifically in the Northern part of the country that affected children very much. Uganda has also during the last years receiving many refugees mostly from South Sudan and Somalia. This has been a hardship for the educational system. In 1997 Uganda introduced UPE (Universal Primary Education), which implied a free education for all children at Primary level. A positive decision, but it resulted in very big classes in schools and no extra resources to tackle the new situation. Teachers have been under heavy stress and there have been strikes but no action from government. In this situation the CRC has filled a gap and supported teachers.

### *Change processes*

Most of the projects in Uganda have been at local level in schools, some also at Teacher Colleges. The focus of the projects has been participation and in some cases also on provision. How can the children be active and at the same time provide something for themselves? In this connection the ideas of the projects have been very creative. There has been a focus on creating materials for reading and also learning materials for other subjects, both at schools and in Teacher Colleges. It is rare for primary schools to have libraries where extra reading materials or extra learning aids could be kept; therefore it was important to create material for learning practice. Besides it was noticed that even when some odd schools had a library the students wanted to read the smaller books created by their friends.

At Teacher Colleges these projects have been very successful as the teacher trainees realise the use they can have for this kind of extra material when they are out in the villages on their first positions. Teacher trainees in the two colleges included so far are also very much willing to know more about how to realise the CRC in the classrooms.

### *Changes in policies*

As there has been very few participants from national level in Uganda there are also very few changes in policies. The national level represented is curriculum development, where some changes are introduced to make it more clear how to implement the CRC in the classrooms. Officers from the National Curriculum Development Centre in Kampala have also been sent to TIE in Dar es Salaam for training.

At the Teacher Colleges involved in the projects policies have been changed also in the direction of more methodology, that is to say more of how to implement the ideas of CRC in the classrooms not only focusing on the content of the articles in the convention.

### *Sustainability*

The Ugandan change agents decided very early to establish an independent CRC organisation. That was one reason to make this network very sustainable. This CRC coalition has regular meetings, their own projects and also supports most of the projects implemented during this programme. Even projects from early on are still going on as the network actively participate. The network is a guarantee for sustainability as this network also cooperates with other organisations, mostly NGOs among them the Swedish Diakonia. The network has also during this time supported and guided five master students from Lund University department of sociology to carry out their field studies in Ugandan schools.

One of the master students from the division of education department of sociology at Lund University is still working together with the CRC coalition in a project called STWP (Spread The Word Project). This is a project for primary Teacher Colleges to train teachers to be leaders and to implement a child friendly approach in

the classrooms. The project started with three Teacher Colleges now a fourth teacher education is also included. There is a coordinator at each college and the master student is coming to Uganda a couple of times a year to mentor the programme. There is also a discussion to extend the project to Tanzania. There is lots of material prepared for this project so it is rather easy to expand.

## **Viet Nam**

### *Background*

Viet Nam has for many years been involved in wars and been occupied by other countries; lately by France and USA and the country was then divided in two states. In 1975 there was finally a peace and in 1976 a reunification of North and South Viet Nam. Viet Nam has been rapidly rebuilt but still there are cultural differences between north and south of Viet Nam, between Ha Noi and Saigon.

Viet Nam is the second country in the world – and the first state in Asia – which has ratified the UN CRC. The implementation of the CRC has been institutionalised by law in Viet Nam. The Law on Child Protection, Care and Education (LCPCE) has been ratified by the National Assembly in Viet Nam, August 1991. It is a small, narrow country in eastern Asia, and densely populated with about 92 billion inhabitants.

Viet Nam has had its first team in batch 2 (2004) and in 2016 there are now in total 13 teams and 38 participants or change agents in batches 1-21. 24 out of 38 change agents are female. That is in total: 16 change agents from the capital city, Ha Noi, the political capital situated in the north of Viet Nam; and 19 change agents from Ho Chi Minh City or Saigon in the southern part of Viet Nam. 3 change agents in the middle of Viet Nam. In the children's rights network in Saigon the 12 principals in the primary schools play a key role regarding changes of norms. In Ha Noi there are 5 principals in primary and secondary schools and some researchers that are active.

### *Change processes*

The implementation of CRC in education, learning and teaching, in Viet Nam – in Ha Noi and Saigon – has been dominated by change agents from local schools – principals and teachers – and also some teacher trainers in universities and education officers at the district level. All the 13 change projects are directed against participation in decision making processes by students in primary and secondary schools, but also involving teachers in understanding and realising the CRC-related and important participative processes in schools. In some of the projects parents and the local community are involved in the CR change processes as well.

In Ha Noi there is since the very start one female change agent in batch 2 with long term contacts with and working at Save the Children International (former Save the Children Sweden). She has been the key person all years in Viet Nam and she also established the CRC contacts with educationalists and the Primary Education Department in Saigon. The leaders in the Education Department in Saigon are strongly supporting the changes by the principals and the schools. In the last batch – batch 21 – there is a key contact in Ha Noi with an influential position. That is established at the Ministry of Education and Training, MOET, via one of the change agents in this batch 21 and the team.

During spring 2016 here has been established an Exchange Project between Spyken, the upper secondary school in Lund, and Nguyen Tat Thanh lower and upper secondary School in Ha Noi (affiliated to Ha Noi National University of Education). Five of the principals at Spyken visited Ha Noi and the Nguyen Tat Thanh School and all have the ambition to develop an Exchange collaboration Program and had applied at the Internationella Programkontoret for an ATLAS pilot project.

Three change agents from Teacher Training University in Saigon were participating in the First International Conference on Child Friendly Education in May 2016 in Solo, Indonesia. This as a start of research development also noted in the third Impact and Dissemination seminar for this ITP on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management in 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

### *Changes in policies*

There has been local, district and regional changes in school policy and curricula regarding CRC in primary schools in Saigon and also in Ha Noi. In the last batch (see above) with three change agents in Ha Noi, and one agent with influential position in MOET, will open up new possibilities for policy changes in national school curricula. It also offers possibilities for CRC network cooperation between Ha Noi and Saigon. That could be important seen in a more long-term perspective.

### *Sustainability*

The great possibilities (by a mentor's many reflection) is to unite the activities in the CRC networks in Saigon and in Ha Noi as suggested by the networks. Lots of current work on that is now going on in both cities. There are norm supporting actors and structures established in both cities, Saigon and Ha Noi. Some quotations from the Viet Nam final report in Cambodia are as follow:

“38 change agents all over the country have implemented various successful projects on integrating CR into the education system... CR national network has not yet a clear organisation and structure with assigned roles and responsibilities of each change agent. Additionally, there have been no specific working agenda developed for CR network, spreading from the North to the South. As a matter of fact, geographical proximity remains an obstacle for organizing national network meeting.”

It seems that these new steps of change and contacts can lead to a national sustainable future regarding the implementation and realization of CRC in Education in Viet Nam.

## **Zambia**

### *Background*

Zambia has about 16 million inhabitants. The population is young with almost 50 % between 0 and 14 years. The country became independent in 1963 after about 60 years of colonisation by the British, a factor that had significant influence on structures of the public institutions not least in the school system. Zambia is a young democracy which actualizes the importance of fostering children to democratic future citizens, a situation that is reflected in the change work. Despite a lot of measures taken to guarantee education for all and quality education the number of drop outs from schools is high. There are a lot of reasons for children not coming to school e.g. teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse, early marriages, insufficient school places, overcrowding in schools, insufficient supply of trained teachers and inadequate supply of teaching/learning materials. Zambia has participated in the programme since 2003 with 39 change agents, 13 teams, representing national, provincial and local levels from different provinces: Central, Muchinga, Lusaka and Copperbelt.

### *Change processes*

Work for change has primarily focused on establishment of school councils and development of democracy in schools through children's participation in decision making. The projects have mainly taken place in schools at local level with teachers, students and parents as the main target groups. The change work started in secondary schools where the conditions were bad in many respects. Riots were common among the students. The atmosphere was unruly with poor marks and filthy premises, graffiti, vandalism and aggressive behaviour that in some cases led to regular police visits. Corporal punishment was commonly used. Relationships between students and teachers were bad without mutual trust. The students had no say in issues concerning their own school environment. Besides some initial resistance among teachers the change work was welcomed in the project schools. Improvements in the school environment and atmosphere were soon experienced. School councils are now getting continuous support from link teachers and head teachers and their activities have contributed to totally changed atmosphere in schools. They have achieved a more conducive learning environment with better relations between students and the administration; and students and teachers. In 2016 all secondary schools and some primary schools in the Copperbelt Province (as well as in some of the other provinces) have democratically elected school councils.

### *Changes in policies*

Work on children's rights is well supported by laws and national policies e.g. the Zambian Education Act (2011) that states that all schools must have democratically elected student councils and the National Constitution of 2016. The first team developed a "Tool Kit on the establishment of School Councils" which is still in use in many schools in different parts of the country. It has been of great importance for implementation of structures and routines for the schools councils and for development of democratic processes in schools.

### *Sustainability*

Most of the projects have been conducted in Copperbelt province, where results from the change work have become more and more sustainable with time. The CRC is well implemented at different levels in the province with strong support from the national, provincial and district management. Many change agents have leading positions in the school system with the power to initiate and follow up the change work. Head teachers association plays an important role as continuous supporters. Copperbelt is now viewed as the model province for other provinces in the country. Some districts in Lusaka province have developed a model for "training of trainers", a model connecting very well to existing organisational structures and therefore easy to replicate. Sustainability of the network is guaranteed through annual meetings in the National Conference to which all change agents are invited together with head teachers, link teachers, students and stakeholders e.g. representatives for the civil society. Those meetings give opportunities for change agents to update each other on the activities of the CRC as well as to plan future undertakings. A good foundation has been created but there is still much to do to spread knowledge about the CRC, to continue to roll out school councils to all primary and secondary schools in Zambia and to create sustainable structures for implementation.



# Looking back and looking forward

*Bodil Rasmusson, Lena Andersson, Agneta W Flinck, Ulf Leo and Per Wickenberg.*

## Introduction

In this chapter we as mentors continue with reflections on the development taken place through the ITP in connection with the global movement on children's rights. Experiences from the International Training Programme (ITP) *Child Rights, Classroom and School Management*, make it possible to look back on 13 years of work for change at different levels in the education system in many different countries in the world. The programme has come to an end for now but it is not the end of ongoing change processes.

## Looking back

About 650 participants or “change agents” have been trained to make changes in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (see appendix III for full list of participants). Out of the 29 countries in the programme 16 countries in three continents – Africa, Asia and Latin-America – have been the core. The programme has been very attractive with about 400 applications for each batch. Sida has decided which countries should be invited, which is why some countries have been dropped while others have been added to the list. Other reasons for countries not joining the programme, besides changes in Sida's policy, could be lack of applicants from some countries, poor quality of applications, and lack of security and support from the government and insufficient knowledge of English.

Short descriptions of the background in each of the participating countries (chapter 4) illustrate contextual factors of importance for implementation of the CRC. They show some of the challenges that characterize each of the participating countries. A country's history, political and economic situation as well as e.g.



policies, laws and religion influence interpretation of the CRC as well as change agents' choice of focus and scope of the change work. It is well illustrated through e.g. the history of Apartheid in South Africa, displacement of refugees in Colombia, influence from Islam in Indonesia, war in Uganda and examination oriented school system in Sri Lanka.

A consequence of a country's ratification of the CRC has in most countries resulted in important changes in laws and policies.<sup>1</sup> But despite many relevant decisions at national level there is often a big gap between the good intentions expressed nationally and practice on the ground. Knowledge about laws and policies is lacking as well as strategies for implementation. On the other hand policies and laws provide important mandate for the change work. Some projects have worked on changes in policies and laws at national level but in most cases they have already been in place. Work on changes in curriculum for teacher training is another kind of change of policies of importance for implementation of the CRC in education in teacher training colleges and universities. The change work has also contributed to changes in local school policies in e.g. routines for election of school councils and relationships between prefects and school councils.

Change processes in the participating countries have many similarities. They have mostly started in small scale in one or two schools sometimes just in some single classes. Good experiences have then served as examples for others and good practices have been spread to other schools and further on to districts and regions. The three P:s (Provision, Protection, Participation) have frequently been used as point of departure for planning and implementation of the projects and we have seen through all the thirteen years that most projects have focused on participation (article 12, 13, and 14).

The country reports and mentor's reflections in this book (chapter 3 and 4) show how it has been possible to mobilize e.g. officials, teachers, principals, parents and children to participate in change work in schools and in universities. It has been possible to reach a common understanding about the value of children's rights, at local level but in many cases also at regional and national levels. The country reports show how behaviour, norms and attitudes could be changed e.g. on corporal punishment and views upon children. Interface between top down and bottom up approaches can contribute to bridge the gaps between ideals and reality in practice. We realize that without action the best aspirations codified in the CRC remain only words on paper.

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1 Sweden has for example recently (February 2016) launched a public inquiry on making CRC a Swedish law. It has the title "Barnkonventionen blir svensk lag" (SOU 2016:19). CR is taken into the Swedish Constitution (RF, Regeringsformen, 1 kap 2§ - "... barns rätt tas tillvara": 2014). CR is also in the Swedish Act on Education (2010), Social Services Act (1998), Aliens Act (2005), Parental Code (1998). The report contains proposals for an act on incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and presents a number of measures that need to be taken upon incorporation, and a number of other legislative proposals. It is proposed that the legislation enter into force on 1 January 2018. In Norway CRC was made a separate law in 2003.

## Global development

When looking back we can also take our point of departure in the original decision 1989 by the United Nations on ratification of the CRC. It is evident that Sida is not the only actor working for children's rights globally. The ITP is one of many different initiatives taken to make reality of the CRC globally.

Implementation of the CRC is monitored by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, a body with independent experts from different countries in the world. State parties are obliged to submit reports to the UN Committee every fifth year. This committee is also the foremost interpreter of the CRC's content and message. Practical tools for implementation based on comments and recommendations from the Committee are found in the comprehensive *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*<sup>2</sup> published by UNICEF, an organisation that do a lot of research, investigations and monitoring on implementation of the CRC. This handbook has been used as an important source of knowledge in the ITP.

Statistics on children's wellbeing and living conditions is one of its important contributions to the knowledge about children globally. According to UNICEF<sup>3</sup> the quantity and quality of data on children have increased tremendously. Before the mid-1990s, critical gaps in data hindered accurate and effective analysis of the situation of children. In 1995, UNICEF initiated the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) to facilitate monitoring of the *1990 World Summit for Children Goals* and to support countries in their efforts to fill important data gaps. These surveys have had great impact on countries' ability to document and understand the situation of children on a range of indicators in the areas of health, education, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, child protection etc.

Other important global initiatives with impact on children's rights to education are: UNESCO: *Education for all*, agreed upon at the World Education Forum at Dakar (2000); The *UN Millenium Development Goals* (2000); The *UN Sustainable Development Goals* (2015)<sup>4</sup>. Goal 4 of the SDGs will continue to build on its current achievements: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all."

However, increased knowledge about children's rights doesn't automatically mean that problems are solved. According to UNESCO<sup>5</sup> 123 million children were out of school in 2013. It is estimated that 24 million children will never enter a classroom. Half of all out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa will never enrol. Girls are

2 Hodgin, R. & Newell, P. 2007. *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. New York: UNICEF

3 UNICEF. 2015. Reimagine the future. THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S Children. <http://sowc2015.unicef.org/www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

4 UNDP. 2016. Post 2015 Development Agenda <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

5 UNESCO. 2016. Out of school data release 2015 <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/oosc-data-release-2015.aspx>

the most disadvantaged, particularly in South and West Asia, where 80% of out-of-school girls are unlikely to start school, compared to just 16% for boys.

The global development of implementation of children's rights is also followed and supported continuously through other comprehensive programmes. *Global initiative to end all corporal punishment of children*<sup>6</sup> and *Child Friendly Cities*<sup>7</sup> are two initiatives with great impact on legislation and policy formulation globally.

The number of countries with prohibition of corporal punishment is increasing continuously but there is still a lot to do. There are still 150 states where children can be lawfully hit in the family home, and in 70 states, corporal punishment has not yet been fully prohibited in schools (Global Initiative 2016).

A lot of NGOs play significant role in implementation of the CRC globally. Save the Children International and Plan International are among the biggest organisations with outreach all over the world.

## Research on childhood and children's rights

Children's rights and childhood have become significant fields of study among researchers from different disciplines during the last centuries<sup>8</sup>. Researchers in childhood studies contribute with theoretical perspectives useful for interpretation of the CRC and analysis of childhood in different contexts. Interpretation of the first article in the CRC is an example. Article 1 defines a child as anyone under the age of eighteen, which is also consistent with much national and international legislation. It is however an abstract definition, not saying anything about the characteristics of the child like gender or developmental stages in different ages. The CRC definition was motivated by the awareness of the fact that communities view durations of childhood differently. The answer on the question "who is the child?" has therefore to be sought in relation to conditions in the economic, social and cultural contexts in which the child is living<sup>9</sup>. There are considerable variations between cultures regarding the view of the child and there is no universal definition of childhood. There seem, on the other hand, to be processes going on towards equalization of this kind of differences. The implementation of the CRC worldwide has played an important role in this development<sup>10</sup>. Concepts of childhood are influenced by global processes, which in turn are expected to have an influence in local practices. Researchers talk

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6 Global initiative. 2016. Global initiative to end all corporal punishment of children. <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/>

7 UNICEF. 2016. Child Friendly Cities ([http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index\\_71027.html](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index_71027.html)). March 2016

8 Reynaert, D., Bouverne-de-Bie, M., & Vandeveld, S. 2009. A review of children's rights literature Since the Adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *Childhood* (16), 518 – 534.

9 Lansdown, G. 2005. *The Evolving Capacities of the Child*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

10 Rajabi-Ardeshiri, Masoud. 2009. The Rights of the Child in the Islamic Context: The Challenges of the Local and Global. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, vol. 17, 475-489.

about a paradigm shift, a move from looking upon children as objects to seeing and relating to them as subjects<sup>11</sup>. Verhellen<sup>12</sup> writes about children as “meaning-makers” and as “essential actors and not just reactors”(p 22). Children are first and foremost human beings; therefore our relationships with them have to be based on respect for them as such. New research questions, methodology and theories are, as a consequence of this view, formulated and practiced e.g. on child development, children’s participation in society and childhood conditions from a child perspective. It is nowadays widely accepted to involve children as independent informants in research, something that was very rare before introduction of the CRC.

The CRC emphasizes each child’s individual rights, but this approach appears to be unfamiliar in many countries. In a number of cultures in Africa and Asia, the family as a collective unit is more important than the individual, and the individual’s rights are thus subordinated to the needs of family. Hierarchies related to gender and age has considerable significance. Children’s obedience is regarded very important and disrespecting the elders is seen very negative upon (Cheney 2007). African childhood is in certain respects reflected in the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* of 1990, which was drawn up by a regional forum of African governments – the Organization of African Unity<sup>13</sup>.

The content of the charter is very much in accordance with the CRC but one of the significant disparities is stated in article 31, which reflects a view that family members are considered to be mutually dependent on one another – both children and adults have rights and responsibilities. The child should be responsible not only for his family and society but also “to preserve and strengthen African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral well-being of society” (article 31). This way of talking about responsibility of the child differs from the CRC, where the word ‘responsibility’ is totally absent.

Rajabi Ardeshiri<sup>14</sup> describes a similar feature in the Islamic approach to children’s rights: “Within the Islamic literature, children’s responsibilities are as important as their rights and consequently Muslim children are required to respect their parents and obey them, respect their parents’ privacy and take care of their parents when they are in need (the Quran, 24: 58-9).”

As a result from the abovementioned, research has been confirmed through many of the experiences gained in the ITP. They could also serve as theoretical tools for

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11 Kirby, P. & Woodhead, M. “Children’s Participation in Society” in Montgomery, Heather; Burr, Rachel & Woodhead, Martin, (eds.) 2003. *Changing Childhoods, local and global*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

12 Verhellen, E. 2000. *Convention on the Rights of the Child: background, motivation, strategies, main themes*. Leuven: Garant.

13 Danwood, Mkenge Chirwa. 2002. The merits and demerits of the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the Child. *The International Journal of Children’s Rights*, vol.10, 157-177.

14 Ibid.

understanding some of the obstructions and tensions which challenge the change agents in their efforts to change norms, attitudes and behaviour.<sup>15</sup>

A systematic literature review on Child Rights Convention in Education and concerning the enforcement of children's rights in the classroom context and school management contributes with knowledge about the state of the art within this area.<sup>16</sup> 42 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 1990 and 2014 and they were selected and analysed. The paper presents both a descriptive analysis and a thematic analysis in order to provide the state-of-art of international literature *on Child Rights in education*. The descriptive analysis highlights the main characteristics of the articles included, such as type of study and methods used, classification of literature based on the geographical and thematic focus, article citation frequency, and chronological development of the subject in question. The thematic analysis synthesizes the main findings extracted from the literature and highlights the main trends and gaps in research.

More specifically, the emphasis was placed on the following three themes: (a) *children's rights* in the classroom context, (b) *children's participation* in school management, (c) children's rights *education in schools*. The analysis of the three themes (thematic analysis) shows that countries have made little progress in mainstreaming the children's rights perspective (CRC principles) into classroom relations and school management, even though the CRC has been lauded as a revolutionary document because of its direct focus on the 'best interests of the child' and its unprecedented ratification.

One issue commonly raised in most of the studies was that the schools and educational practices are largely influenced by the *social norms and hierarchical power* structures that view children as passive and immature actors who are not capable of making adequate decisions. Hence, everyday classroom interactions between pupils and teachers are guided by these hierarchical normative patterns, which can explain why innumerable initiatives to promote children's rights in schools continue to remain ineffective.

One important message from the thematic analysis is that there is a need to change the school culture, teachers' perceptions and social norms if we are to enforce Child Rights in schools. This may not be surprising or unexpected; however one very important insight from the reviewed publications is that *they all emphasize* the importance of changing the school culture and *social norms* as a panacea for promoting children's rights in the classroom context and school management. Active *participation* of the students in classrooms, schools and local community seems to be one of the key issues when making changes in norms and culture.<sup>17</sup>

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15 Rasmusson, B. (2016): Closing the gap between theory and practice. Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. International Conference On Child-Friendly Education. Muhammadiyah University, Surakarta, Indonesia.

16 Child Rights, Classroom and School Management: A Systematic Literature Review (2016): Urinboyev, Wickenberg and Leo. International Journal of Children's Rights. 2016:2.

17 Wickenberg, P. (2016): Children's Rights and Education in a global perspective. International Conference on "Children's Rights - origins, normativity, transformations, prospects", Linköping University, June 2016.

Comparing these findings with our own experiences in this international training programme, *participation* seems to be a common denominator.

## Looking forward

We have learned that there are many different factors influencing the future for children's rights and we have here chosen to focus on two different aspects of special importance for sustainability of results achieved in the ITP – networking and continued research and knowledge production.

Country reports and mentors' reflections in this book, as well as in other books produced within the ITP, tell us a lot about progress of networking between change agents in the participating countries. Our experiences show how networking has increased the potential scope and momentum for change. The importance of networking within and between countries could not be stressed enough. It is our hope that the networks will be strong enough to keep the fire burning for the benefit of the development nationally, as well as globally.

We have through the 13 years experienced a rapid development of interest for research and further studies among our participants. Many change agents have started and even finalized their doctor's or master's degrees, often within the area of human rights. A workshop in the Impact and Dissemination Seminar in Phnom Pehn about ideas and wishes for cooperation in research attracted many of the change agents, and fruitful discussions took place about different possibilities. As shown above, research is going on yet it needs to continue to give us deeper knowledge on e.g. change processes and different measures taken to implement children's rights.

The programme has resulted in many spin-off results (see chapter 1) which relate directly or indirectly to unforeseen results that have been achieved within the Swedish resource base (see appendix V). Continued curiosity and knowledge production is of significant importance for the status and position of children's rights not only in the academic world. References to research on children's rights, especially on endemic conditions, can also contribute to strengthen the position of change work in practice.

## Closing words

CRC is taken seriously by many important actors and many initiatives have been taken, globally, nationally and locally, to strengthen and make reality of children's rights. A report published by UNICEF<sup>18</sup> in connection with the 25 year anniversary of the CRC gives many examples of impressive gains. At the same time millions of children in the world are deprived their rights. Anthony Lake, executive Director at UNICEF writes in the foreword:

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18 UNICEF. 2014. 25 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. [http://www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_76027.html](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_76027.html), March 2016

“We cannot claim that children’s rights are being upheld when 17,000 children under the age of 5 die every day.”

He refers to wars going on in different parts of the world, where children endure years of violence, deprivation and displacement:

“These children are the future leaders of their societies, the future doctors and innovators, dreamers and doers. How will they view the world? If their own rights are violated, how will they learn respect for others, which is the foundation of civil duty and citizenship?”

There are reasons for being both optimistic and pessimistic for the future. A conclusion is anyhow: the work must continue at all levels with contributions from all people involved with children or issues concerning children’s welfare and rights in many years to come.



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# Children's Rights in Education

The aim of this report book in Sociology of Law, and Child Rights Institute, Lund University, is to gather, sum up and report, in a summarizing overview in an introduction followed by three concluding articles, our main experiences as researchers and teachers after 2016.

That year, 2016, the English version of the Sida-funded international training program, Child Rights, Classroom and School Management, was finished. However, there was a lot of continued work to come with Children's Rights at Lund University after that.

This report could be viewed as an interesting example of how to achieve spin-off effects through strategies for sustainability and dissemination of knowledge and experiences from international cooperation on implementation of children's rights.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in November 1989. Since then, 196 countries have ratified it, including every member of the United Nations except the USA. By agreeing to undertake the obligations of the CRC, national governments are obliged to develop and undertake all actions and policies to ensure the best interests of the child. Article 4 also mentions that this should be the case in the framework of international cooperation as well.

As part of Sweden's bilateral development Sida (Sweden's Government Agency for Development Cooperation) offers International Training Programs (ITPs). The overall aim is to contribute to capacity development and processes of change in developing countries.

One of those ITPs was "Child Rights, Classroom and School Management", run during 13 years, 2003-2016. It was aiming at implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in schools and education and targeted English as well as French and Spanish speaking participants. These ITPs were run by Departments at Lund University in cooperation with Lund University Commissioned Education, LUCE.



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Research Report in Sociology of Law 2021:1  
SOCIOLOGY OF LAW • LUND UNIVERSITY  
P.O. BOX 42 • SE-221 00 LUND • SWEDEN

ISSN 1404-1030  
ISBN 978-91-7267-435-6 (Tryck)  
ISBN 978-91-7267-437-0 (PDF)

