

## **Combating Bullying in Primary Schools: The Case of Minlik II Primary School at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Preconference Paper)**

### **Batch 8 Change Agents:**

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**September 26, 2012**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

## **Purpose of the Project :**

The purpose of the project is to minimize and eventually abolish the practice of bullying in schools and protect children who are victims of bullying actions.

## **Key Words (max 5):**

Bullying, School violence, Child Rights, Discipline

## **Summary of the Focus of the Project Implementation**

Following the training on Child Rights, Classroom and School Management, Batch 8 change agents designed an intervention project to promote CRC in primary schools through combating bullying on one sample school.

We started our intervention by conducting an action research on the nature and prevalence of bullying in the target primary school. An intervention plan was then drawn on the results of this study.

According to the intervention plan, the first activity was providing a TOT training on combating bullying to members of school (head teachers, unit leaders, students, teachers, guards and so on). As indicated in our final report, we started our first TOT training with students who are members of child rights clubs with the hope of reaching out to the rest of the students through them. All expenses necessary for the training had to be covered by the change agents which made it difficult to organize further trainings despite the success of this first training.

The TOT training focused on the issue of awareness creating and the development of civil culture among children in schools with aim of creating child friendly schools for all children. Accordingly, the following issues were emphasized in the training

- Developing caring and positive attitude among students towards each other
- Raising the level of awareness of school children towards the dangers of bullying on children and the mechanisms of fighting it as a group and individually.
- Strategies on how students protect themselves from becoming victims of bullying and stand on the side of those who are already victims
- Ways of stopping bullies from attacking children and creating a safer school for every one

The TOT training outcome revealed important strategic focus areas that paved the way for further actions and interventions. Based on the strategic focus areas project plans were designed. Then a financial and technical proposal was prepared and submitted to different organizations to solicit funding to implement the intervention plan. Unfortunately, as we indicated in our final project report, we were not able to secure any funding though some organizations including the Ministry of Education were interested in our project.

## Challenges

It was unfortunate that we could not go beyond conducting a single TOT training as a group.

Although the reasons for this are quite many, the following are the main ones:

- We could not solicit funding for our project though we were able to write a proposal and submit it to potential donors
- After we submitted our project report it became increasingly difficult for members of the project to continue to meet and work on the project as we are from different organizations with little flexibility in work schedules.
- Besides one member of the project was away from the country for nearly two years which added to the difficulty.

However, despite all the challenges, Batch 8 Change Agents have been individually active in promoting CRC in their respective areas of endeavor. Below are a summary of what the group members did in promoting CRC in schools in particular and in other sectors in general.

## Achievements

### Change Agent A

- ✓ Following the training on CRC, one member of the team got the inspiration to get more involved in children's issues and even managed to win a European Union Sponsored Erasmus Mundus Masters Scholarship in Early Childhood Education and Care where CRC was an integral component of the study. The University of Gothenburg in Sweden was an associate member of the consortium of the universities where he did his study.
- ✓ Save the Children Sweden in collaboration with Ministry of Women's Affairs and Association for Nationwide Action for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN-Ethiopia) recently prepared a manual on Positive Child Disciplining. This manual is intended to promote CRC by teaching parents, teachers and other child care workers in institutions on how to discipline children without resorting to punitive and humiliating treatment. Using the Manual one member of the change agents was able to provide a three round separate TOT training for community based childcare workers, for participants drawn from different nongovernmental organizations, Addis Ababa Education Bureau, and Primary Schools. This same change agent has information

that participants mainly those who came from primary schools( this includes principals) had been able to organize similar trainings to teachers from their own and neighboring schools. Again, all these trainings were commissioned by Save the Children Sweden.

- ✓ In Addis Ababa there is a very popular private FM Radio Station. In this station there is a program called *Askuala* in the local language (meaning school or education). In this program this change agent was able to give two interviews at different times on the rights of children and how teachers and parents can discipline them in a non-punitive way.

#### **Change Agent B**

- ✓ The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) where this change agent belongs to has been giving a number of trainings concerning child rights to the general public in general and to specific stakeholders in particular. These groups include women associations, parliamentarians, judges, police officers, primary and secondary school teachers, etc. This change agent had contributed a lot so that during each training session, enough time is allotted to sensitize the participants about rights of the child (CRC) and child friendly schools. Efforts were also made to incorporate the lessons learned from the "Bullying Project" to provide basic knowledge to the participants so that they can minimize the problem in their specific mandate.
- ✓ This year EHRC conducted a study on the "Situation of Human Rights in and around Ethiopian Secondary Schools" where this change agent was one of the researchers. The draft of report of the research is already prepared and sent to professionals in the commission and ministry of education for feedback. Concerning child rights, a detail questionnaire was developed incorporating the rights of children to learn in safe environment, right to education, right to participation and so on. This shows that the SIDA training has an impact on this change agent as she was able to give more attention on child rights issues after the training on CRC.
- ✓ In 2010, the change agent B, in collaboration with the relevant professionals organized a consultative workshop concerning the concluding observations (Recommendations) given to the country, based on the report Ethiopia presented, by the United Nations Committee for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Relevant stakeholders participated in that workshop. Participants were given awareness of the concluding observation, they discussed in groups identifying problems in implementing

CRC in their respective regions and institution. Finally, they agreed to implement CRC according to the recommendations and implement the CRC.

- ✓ In January 2012, a change agent from other batch had organized a training for 10 selected schools from Southern Nations Nationalities Regional State focusing on Child Freindly Schools. This member of the 8th Batch had given awareness on how child friendly schools should be, and how primary school community should respect the rights of the child.

#### **Change Agent C**

- ✓ This change agent is currently working in a primary school as a school Principal. In this school there is a CRC club and civic and ethical education club. In the activity plans of both clubs the issue of fighting bullying inschools is incorporated upon the recommendation and guidance of this change agent. Change Agent C is currently overseeing all the activities of these clubs to make sure that these activity plans are properly implemented.
- ✓ Change agent C has been also active in the formation of in CRC change Agents Network in Addis Aababa which invloves members from other batches. In Addis Ababa there are around 16 change agents. These change agents agreed to work together in promoting CRC in the education system especially in Addis Ababa Schools in collaboration with with teachers and education officials. For this the group listed the following activities:
  - a. Conducting training (awareness creation) for government primary school directors and PTA representatives o the issue of CR,
  - b. Strengthening existing CRC Clubs by building the capacities of the members through training
  - c. Working with Ethiopian Human Rights Commission to provide training for members of Ethiopian Teachers' Association and other stakeholders( in the process)
  - d. Providing technical support to education offices in the sub-cities through developing manuals, providing training and consulatation.
  - e. Working with teachers training colleges particularly with Kotobe Teachers Training College to provide training for teachers on CRC CTE to provide two days training for the teachers.(in the process)

- f. Supporting education offices and colleges to mainstream CRC issues in the curriculum. (in the process)
- g. Building the capacity of teachers, directors as well as sub city education officers on CRC specially on the 3Ps, leadership and related areas.