

## **“Participation of a Child in Developing School Environment Through Gardening”**

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Batch 4

### **Summary of the project**

The purpose of the project was to create a child friendly environment in schools to support learning and make children participate more. Two secondary schools were selected as pilot schools, one governmental (Kibasila secondary school) and one private catholic (Loyola High school). During the project, students planned for activities to make the school environment friendlier. The students started with the outdoor environment and planned for green areas to be used by students. Plans, ideas, the design of the areas, cultivation and caring were all initiated and implemented by the students in collaboration with biology teachers and done in a democratic way. When established, these green areas were used for various purposes.

### **Impact on the personal and professional levels**

Through the training programme, we got opportunities to compare and share experience with participants from other countries while taking into consideration the CRC. Also we have learnt that a Child Rights based approach has the potential to improve the quality and efficiency of education.

As teachers we have learnt that schools and classrooms that are protective, inclusive, child-centered and democratic encourage active participation. During and after the training we realized that the above four major things mentioned, have the potential to minimize or solve problems such as non-attendance, dropout and low academic performance rates, which are very common in Tanzania. In all of the activities related to children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

As parents we have to educate both girls and boys and they must have equal access to education. The training programme has inspired us to become advocates to protect children from harm and exploitation. Listen to children and ensure their participation and their understanding of responsibilities.

The training has made us realize that if children are responsibly involved in decision-making they can make a wonderful social, economic and physical environment. The training programme also made us more familiar with Swedish and other international practices that integrate democratic principles and human rights in school and in the classroom.

We have adopted methodologies used by the facilitators during the training in our daily training for teachers in Tanzania. Inclusive learning, child-centered, democratic and active participation have improved pupils' attendance. The training improved our teaching skills, understanding and attitudes in favour of a child rights based approach. The training programme stimulated and contributed to the development of methodologies in the area of child rights in classroom and school management at large. Daudi Anyigulile Kajigili, one of the change agents from the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), organized training seminars in six child friendly districts for District Education Officials, Ward Education Coordinators and Primary School teachers.

### **Impact on the organizational level**

Teachers' and students' attitude towards Child Rights have positively changed in the targeted schools where the project was introduced. Teachers have improved their teaching and learning methods and a child-centered and participatory approach is emphasized.

The Biharamulo, Kigoma, Temeke and Kinondoni education departments were trained on the Integration of Child Rights in teaching and learning strategies. After the training, participants recommended the TIE, which is responsible for the design and development of school curricula, to revise its curricula for Secondary and Teachers Education in order to integrate child rights in teaching and learning strategies.

As an impact of seminars directed by the TIE, the Dar es Salaam City Council Education Department, the Ministry of Education and the Vocational Training Department of Primary Education, all curricula for pre-school, primary, secondary and teachers' education has been revised.

The Ministry of Education, the Vocational Training Department and the TIE in collaboration with UNICEF have established child-friendly schools in the districts of Magu, Bagamoyo, Temeke, Mtwara rural, Hai, Siha and Makete.

### **Impact on the country level**

Even though Tanzania signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, its implementation pace is still slow in many areas. In that regard, we felt that there is a need for us, the change agencies, to run a project on the Convention on the Rights of the Child by giving students and staff the opportunity to participate in the gardening activity as a way of instilling democratic skills in all.

- In the context of joint activities with the Association of Heads of Secondary Schools (TAHOSA) at District level, we have agreed to

organize an 'Environment Day' during which all schools participate to the cleaning of the environment.

- Since July 2007, the team has been giving CRC seminars on the to the Heads of schools at District level. Depending on the availability of resources, we expect to expand these seminars to the regional and even country level.