

Leadership & Teacher Training

UK Charity Commission 1119023

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NEPAL SCHOOLS AID (UK)

Briefing Note #2 Quality Education

During April 2010 Nepal Schools Aid ran a Head Teacher training course which focused on Managing Change with one of the topics being Quality Education. The course itself was partially driven by the Nepal government's recent School Sector reform Plan (SSRP) in which the term quality education was constantly used, but not defined.

The SSRP is a 5 year programme 2010-2015 which is far reaching in its aims and goals. Much of the detail within the report document deals in improving the numbers of children attending, completing and succeeding at primary and secondary school levels together with the change in conditions needed to facilitate this. Many of the changes relate to the four outer areas in the diagram below, National Standards & Outputs, School Governance, Physical Environment, Teacher Competence.

1. National Standards & Outputs are the measures by which the programme will be deemed successful or not with specific targets for attendance, completion rates, pass rates and so on being specified.
2. School Governance is concerned with how the school is managed and makes a lot of the role of the school management committee and the role of the Head Teacher/Principal as well as their entry qualifications and continuing training to personally develop.
3. The Physical Environment is widely covered and in some detail with standards set for buildings and their ownership, toilet facilities, drinking water, classroom standards and sizes, class sizes, pupil space, play areas and facilities etc. This is an area for major improvement and will have a major impact on attracting children to school in the first instance.
4. Teacher Competence is also widely addressed and is an area of some concern, especially relating to initial qualifications needed to receive teacher training, the teacher training itself, continuous teacher development, teacher selection, appointment and continuing employment.

The four areas so far described are shown in the diagram below as being “external” to four other components which were NOT covered in the SSRP and which we consider to be vital to any system of Quality Education. These are the Curriculum, the school's Ethics & Values, Teaching & Learning Styles, and Assessment Strategies. Though not strictly correct we have labeled these inner components encircling the child as the software of a quality education system with the outer components being the hardware.

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These four inner software components are what the child experiences in a learning environment with “quality” depending on the content, process and style of each component. For example we would advocate child centred techniques instead of teacher centred techniques and a continuous assessment strategy instead of exam based assessment as contributing to a system of quality education.

In 2005 UNESCO published its EFA Global Monitoring Report and the first chapter attempted to define the term Quality Education. Whilst its framework looks different to our own the components are virtually the same with as much emphasis placed on the software as the hardware. The report can be downloaded from their website though it is rather long and the first chapter may suffice. <http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/reports/2005-quality/>
The report emphasizes quality as an issue in many attempts to improve education in countries such as Nepal which too often emphasise the quantitative aspects such as attendance figures, pass rates, gender equality etc as opposed to the qualitative aspects such as teaching methods and approaches. A good description is given of the need for emotional development in addition to cognitive development as well as a range of psychological approaches including humanistic, behavioural and others.