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Formative Research Project**

Study Report 17

**Classroom Transformation for Better
Conditions of Pedagogical Processes and
Student-centered Learning**



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Classroom Transformation for Better Conditions of Pedagogical Processes and Student-Centered Learning



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Quality improvement has been an important component of educational reform programs in Nepal. One vital area related to quality is improvement of classroom teaching-learning. Educational endeavor to enhance the quality of learning of the students and of classroom teaching-learning for that end is essential.

Classroom teaching-learning improvement activities have been undertaken by various quarters -- government, INGOs, NGOs, and the private sector. This study examines the lessons drawn from these innovative programs. The lessons are deemed useful for utilizing improved practices in relation to classroom teaching-learning in the Nepalese primary schools.

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Ganesh Bahadur Singh
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Acronyms

ATL	Active Teaching-learning
BPEP	Basic and Primary Education Programme
BS	Bikram Samvat
CAS	Continuous Assessment System
CCOSP	Child-Centered Out-of-School Program
CCS	Centro Coporazino Sulunivippo (i.e.Center for Cooperation and Development)
CCTLP	Child-Centered Teaching-learning Process
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CERID	Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development
CFS	Child-Friendly School
COPE	Community Owned Primary Education
DACAW	Decentralized Action for Children and Women
DA-IRI	Dual-Audience Interactive Radio Instruction
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDC	District Development Committee
DEC	Distance Education Center
DEO	District Education Office
DOE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
ETC	Educate the Child
ETC	Educational Training Center
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRAG	Formative Research Advisory Group
FRP	Formative Research Project
ICD	Integrated Community Development
IFCD	Innovative Forum for Community Development
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCED	National Center for Educational Development

NGO	Non Government Organization
OSP	Out-of-school program
QEP	Quality Education Project
QERP	Quality Education Resource Package
RP	Resource Person
SC/N	Save the Children/Norway
SC/US	Save the Children/United States
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SS	School Supervisor
TOT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WE	World Education

Executive Summary

Students' learning is the major intent of educational endeavor and improvement of classroom teaching-learning has been the focus of various educational reform programs including EFA. This study covers selected programs that focus on classroom teaching-learning improvement (as cases to be studied). These programs are termed 'innovative' as indicated in the terms of reference for this study. The research questions are related to the understanding of the issues and the ways to the classroom transformation for better pedagogical methods and processes. The research questions were:

- What are the successful cases of pedagogical processes adopted by various innovative programs?
- What are the requirements for classroom transformation?
- How have the local stakeholders been involved in the transformation process?

In order to understand the purpose of the study and information requirement the research questions were elaborated and sub-questions were developed.

The innovative programs covered in this study are mainly those of SC/N (Child-friendly Schools -- CFS program), UNICEF/Nepal for which IFCD provided technical support (Innovative Child-centered Teaching-learning Process -- CCTLP), COPE, and WE (Quality Education Resource Package -- QERP). Two of the programs, ETC (Integrated Community Development -- ICD programs) and Dual Audience Interactive Radio Instruction program of DEC covered in this study have already been completed. Piloting of local curriculum in Rasuwa is also covered in the study.

In the study districts other organizations were found supporting the schools such as CCS, Italy (Kavre) GNHA, Germany (Kavre), World Vision International (Morang), Room to Read (Kavre), Rural Reconstructions Nepal (Morang), Plan Nepal (Morang), Round Table (Morang), Rato Bangla School (Kavre), Langtang Quality Education Initiative (Rasuwa), and Seto Gurans National Child Development Services.

A conceptual framework for the study was designed, considering the elements for the success of the classroom pedagogical transformation process. These elements are related to shared vision, shared knowledge and understanding, and change chain. The research tools used were consultative meetings, classroom observations, document analysis, and interactions (such as FGDs/Group Discussions, Interviews). Preliminary findings were shared and comments were collected at the field level as well.

Major Findings

Child-centered education as envisioned in MOES documents and the curriculum and discussed at forefront in the FRP studies was in practice in the programs covered in this study. It was evident that these programs were run on the collaboration of government institutions, communities and parents.

FRP studies undertaken by CERID for MOES have focused on quality in education as one of the major research areas. Some of the findings of these studies were: classroom learning dominated by teacher; emphasis on rote learning; repetition of textual materials; lack of instructional materials; restricted movement of the teachers and students in the classroom etc. Some of the good practices observed in the innovative

programs were: focused training; discuss-demonstrate-practice training; use of materials; incremental/ stepwise development; stakeholders' awareness. These aspects were also suggested in the previous FRP studies. This indicates that the suggestions provided in the FRP studies for the improvement of classroom teaching-learning were useful and relevant ones.

The major findings of this study are presented below in the major themes related to program implementation, requirements for classroom teaching-learning improvement and stakeholders' involvement:

Program in Practice

- The programs emphasized collaboration with government institutions and partnership with NGOs and other organizations for program implementation. There are also field offices for monitoring and technical backstopping.
- There had been improvement in the classroom display and seating arrangement in the visited schools. There was emphasis on the use of the curriculum for preparation and delivery of the lesson in the class. Use of curriculum and flexible class scheduling was in practice.
- There were more interactions between teachers and students. Active participation of students were found in the learning process. Availability and use of the instructional materials in the classroom were commendable.
- The following aspects were found to contribute to improvement in classroom teaching-learning:
 - Building shared vision, knowledge and understanding
 - Incremental, stepwise development process
 - Focused training with emphasis on discussion, demonstration and practice
 - Provision of materials and use of the materials in the training
 - Follow-up and technical backstopping emphasized and practiced
 - Change in educational belief.
- Several issues came up and problems surfaced. So the programs need to:
 - Include the upper grades within program support (because the students in a child-centered class will later move to subsequent grades).
 - Upgrade materials and activities with grade upgrade -- SC/N practice can be useful in this aspect.
 - Address the emerging needs -- CAS, portfolio, equality of opportunity.
- Sharing and learning from each other was weak at the field level.

Requirements for Classroom Transformation

Ways and means for translating better practices of the innovative programs in a wider context in the Nepalese schools were also discussed at the field. The following aspects were found to support improvement in the classroom teaching-learning process:

- Shared vision, shared knowledge and understanding through training/orientation.
- Incremental development modality, opportunity to understand and use smaller portions of the skills and build upon the learned skills.
- Focused training emphasizing demonstration and practice and clarifying the concepts behind the skills.
- Instructional materials as part of training and the use of the materials during the training itself.
- Emphasis on curriculum use -- teacher message, correspondence between activities, materials.
- Refresher training, monitoring and technical backstopping (on regular basis) which focus on feedback and demonstration class as required.

Stakeholders' Involvement

School, home, and community are the three important facets of a child's life. Their expectations, support, and interaction influence the learning of the child. Realizing this, innovative programs have included stakeholders' involvement as one of the major features:

- Parental and community awareness and involvement have been regarded as one of the major components of the programs. This was useful in building shared vision and understanding.
- Involvement facilitated through formation of committees, briefing about student progress, invitation to observe the school/classroom.
- Orientation/training for the local stakeholders about the classroom teaching-learning process as a part of awareness activities.
- Increased parental concern about children's progress and increase in parental support to the children (reported in the field).

Conclusions

- Collaboration with government institutions have been emphasized in the programs. Greater effort is still needed for active working relationship.
- Child-centered education, as envisioned in MOES documents and the curriculum and discussed at forefront in FRP studies, is found in practice in the programs covered in this study. Continuity and building upon initial successes is essential.
- There is an appreciable improvement in classroom seating arrangement, classroom display and classroom learning practices. Several of the practices and issues and problems are similar with the programs. Sharing and learning from each other is desirable.
- Consolidation of better practices and using them is essential for enhancing quality of teaching-learning in the classroom. It is necessary to establish working relationship between government institutions, donors, teacher associations, NGOs, teacher training organizations, and private agencies.

- Piloting programs that comply with the concept and practice of piloting would be useful in utilizing the effective and successful practices in the child-centered approach.
- There is now pressure on the schools to improve the quality of classroom teaching. Child-centered education can be a support in this direction.

Suggestions

Programs covered in this study as innovative cases were found paving ways for better classroom teaching-learning process, specifically the child-centered process. Learning from the successful cases and utilizing the improved practices is the major concern as well as a challenge. In this respect this study has come up with the following suggestions:

- *Form a consortium* involving government institutions and organizations working/involved in the classroom teaching-learning improvement activities. This consortium needs to work to:
 - draw lessons and identify best practices in the classroom teaching-learning improvement.
 - derive and suggest ways for consolidation and utilization of these lessons and practices.
 - establish working relationships and collaborations among organizations working, or willing to work, for the improvement of classroom teaching-learning.
 - pilot child-centered education in a larger sample.
 - use child-centered education/improved classroom teaching-learning process in a gradual manner through out the nation.

A consolidating seminar would be helpful in forming a consortium and developing further action plans.

- Provide focused training and piloting of the programs in compliance to the concepts and practices of piloting.

Table of Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgement	iv
Acronyms	v
Executive Summary	vii
CHAPTER I	1
Introduction	1
Background	1
Research Questions	2
Limitations of the Study	3
Reviewing and Clarifying the Study	4
Shared Vision	4
Shared Knowledge and Understanding	4
Change Chain	4
CHAPTER II	5
Methodology	5
Study Strategy	5
Sample	7
CHAPTER III	9
Classroom Pedagogy Focused Programs	9
Program Description	9
Program Introduction	9
Implementation Strategy	12
SC, UNICEF/Nepal, COPE, WE, CCS Strategy	12
ETC and DA-IRI Strategy	13
Notable Outcomes	14
Building Shared Vision and Knowledge	14
Classroom Teaching-learning Improvement	14
Impact on Learning Achievement	15
Physical Infrastructure Development	16
CHAPTER IV	17
Features and Requirements for Classroom Transformation	17
Program into Practice	17
Selection of the Schools	17
Teacher Preparation	17
Provision and Use of Materials	18
School Setting	18
Classroom Setting	18
Instructional Setting	19
Follow-up and Technical Backstopping	21
Issues and Problem Areas	22
Sections in the School	22
Grade-Upgrade	22
Transfer to Other Classes	22
Sharing, Support, Pressure	23
Sustainability	23
Piloting	23
Main Features of the Programs in Classroom Teaching-learning Improvement	24
Shared Vision	24
Shared Knowledge and Understanding	24

Change Chain	25
Requirements for Classroom Transformation	26
CHAPTER V	27
Local Stakeholders in the Program	27
Program Provision	27
Stakeholders' Understanding	27
Stakeholders' Expectation	28
CHAPTER VI	29
Discussion	29
Reflection on FRP Studies	29
Developing Shared Vision and Knowledge	29
Components of Classroom Teaching-learning Improvement	30
Reflection on Classroom Teaching-learning Programs	32
Cost Concern	32
Intensive Efforts	33
Sharing and Learning	33
Reflection on Government Provisions	33
Reflection on Utilization of the Successful Cases	34
CHAPTER VII	35
Major Findings	35
Program in Practice	35
Requirements for Classroom Transformation	36
Stakeholders' Involvement in the Process	36
CHAPTER VIII	37
Conclusions and Suggestions	37
Conclusions	37
Suggestions	37
ANNEX 1	39
Sample Schools	39
ANNEX 2	40
Programs for Classroom Teaching-Learning Improvement	40
References	47

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Students' learning is the major intention of an educational endeavor. There have been a number of plans and programs for the improvement of the classroom teaching-learning to enhance students' learning. This study examines several of the innovative cases¹ designed for the improvement of the classroom teaching-learning at the primary level in Nepal. This chapter presents background of the study, questions the study attempted to answer, limitations of the study, and an attempt to clarify the study in order to address the research questions appropriately.

Background

Primary education in Nepal has received major focus in the Nepalese education system. Focus has been on quantitative expansion as well as on qualitative improvement. Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP) and Education for All (EFA) programs intended to improve teaching-learning practices in the Nepalese classrooms. There has been stress on curriculum improvement, better teacher training programs and school development provisions for improving the classroom practices. Child-centered education has been a vision as well as an intention regarding teaching-learning in the primary schools in Nepal. Despite many efforts classroom transformation such as classroom practice with child-centered approach is not forthcoming. Therefore, there is a need to study what it takes to turn the classroom towards better pedagogical processes such as a child-centered approach. Classroom transformation is necessary from students' and teachers' points of view as well. Fullan (1991) raised concerns about high proportions of students being alienated, performing poorly or dropping out. On the other hand, many teachers are frustrated, bored, and burned out. These things have an impact on any reform activities undertaken for classroom transformation. Besides students and teachers, there are educational managers, community and school people who should be active participants in the school transformation processes.

There might be a myriad of requirements for classroom transformations such as using curriculum differentiation to respond to the needs of the students (UNESCO, 2004); organizing the primary classroom environment as a context for learning (Pointton and Kershner, 2001); making the experiences of the students' central to the educational process (Fishman and McCarthy, 1998; Dewey, 1938).

A number of initiatives taken by Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), Nepal and other organizations focused on pedagogical improvement in the Nepalese school classrooms. The initiatives include United Nations Children Fund's (UNICEF) life skill education, Save the Children (SC/N and SC/US) Child-friendly School, and United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Community Owned Primary Education (COPE). There is a need to study these initiatives so that successful cases of pedagogical processes from these interventions could be emulated by others, specifically Department of Education (DOE), Curriculum Development Center

¹ Innovative cases: Terms of Reference provided to the study team required to examine successful cases of pedagogical processes adopted by various innovative programs. Here an innovative program means the programs of various organizations that have a focus on the classroom teaching-learning improvement in the primary level education in Nepal. Such programs are mentioned as innovative cases in this report.

(CDC), and National Center for Educational Development (NCED). Learning and sharing among various organizations working for improvement of classroom practices as well as with the government agencies such as DOE, CDC and NCED is a must.

Five of the previous Formative Research Project (FRP) studies undertaken were related to the classroom teaching-learning processes. One major synthesis of these studies was that of child-centered education, continuous assessment and individualized instruction, which seems to have been embraced at the visioning level. Such a vision has yet to be defined and demonstrated at the classroom level. This is a major challenge in improving classroom practices. Preparing teachers to change teacher-dominated and lecture-oriented traditional practices to a child-centered, activity-based practice is also another major challenge. Learning rather than teaching has still to be the focus in the development of curricular materials, teacher training and assessment practices. There is an urgent need to improve classroom practices in general so that specific focus programs such as Continuous Assessment System (CAS), teaching in the mother tongue and life skills education can be effectively implemented.

Another valuable source of information for this study was "Longitudinal Study on System Indicators: Cohort and Trend Analysis" (CERID, 2007). This study on cohort data, examines access, quality and efficiency of the sample schools. Student promotion rate, one of the indicators of quality of education, shows a higher percent in the consecutive years. It has been predicted that in next five years the percentage of the students promoted to grade 5 within the given 5 year cycle will be doubled (the current 20.1% to at least 40%) - better progress in the case of girls (p.13). There must be some valid reasons for the increased promotion rate, which, no doubt, is improvement in teaching-learning. Aspects instrumental in improvement of teaching-learning should be analyzed. As for the teachers' qualifications the trend remains more or less unchanged, from 2002 to 2006. On the other hand, number of teachers with training certificates has tremendously increased, from 43% in 2002 to 90.8% in 2006. This could be looked at as a factor in classroom teaching-learning improvement. However, transfer of training skills to the classroom has been reported to be weak in several studies including the FRP study undertaken in 2003 (CERID, 2003a). Aspects in which improvement has been observed are: increase in the number of teachers with license of teaching (1.5% in 2002 to 86.5% in 2006), availability of library facility (35.5% to 53.2% in 2006) and school visits by RPs and DEOs. The student-teacher ratio increased in 2006 (37.2 in total) [2002 (31.7) and 2003 (31.0)]. It is important to note the factors which played roles in improving the pass percentage of the students. The study 'Longitudinal Study on System Indicators' is not explicit in this matter but it indicates that quality improvement is taking place. Therefore, how transformation of classroom teaching-learning is taking place needs to be studied.

Research Questions

The research questions in the Terms of Reference (TOR) provided by MOES relate to understanding issues in and ways to the classroom transformation aimed at better pedagogical processes. These questions were:

- What are the successful cases of pedagogical processes adopted by various innovative programs?

- What are the requirements for classroom transformation?
- How have the local stakeholders been involved in the transformation process?

In order to understand the intentions of and information requirements for the study the research questions were further elaborated as follows:

- What are the successful cases of pedagogical processes adopted by various innovative programs?
 - What are the programs recently launched in the Nepalese primary schools for the improvement of teaching-learning?
 - What are the main intentions and implementation strategy of these program?
 - What are the notable outcomes of these programs that could be taken as a guide for improvement of the teaching-learning in the Nepalese primary classrooms?
 - What are main features (processes) for the successful implementation of the programs to bring about the improvement?
- What are the requirements for classroom transformation?
 - What are the main factors of the successful implementation?
 - What are the things that worked well in a particular program? What are the reasons?
 - What is required for the transfer of a successful implementation to other schools?
- How have the local stakeholders been involved in the transformation process?
 - What provisions were there for involving the local stakeholders?
 - How do the local stakeholders understand the innovative program? What are their expectations?
 - What impact does the understanding of the local stakeholders about the innovation has on the implementation of the programs?

The above questions were used as guides to collect information during field study.

Limitations of the Study

In field study several difficulties were encountered. The fieldwork time (April) was students' admission time in the schools. Therefore, classes were just going to start in Morang and Sunsari. In Kapilvastu and Kavre schools were not operating owing to teacher and student strike. Since time for the study was limited, fieldwork could not be postponed. Community visits, interactions, workshops were organized but no classroom teaching-learning activities could be observed. So classroom teaching-learning practices could not be described with more cases and examples.

Another limitation (this again due to shortage of time) was inability to observe the teacher training programs. Some of the training programs were planned for June/July, but the field study was to be completed by June 15 (The study had to be completed on July 15, 2007). One of the important factors for improved classroom teaching-learning is teacher preparation but teacher training could not be observed

and analyzed. However, perceptions of the teachers were collected and teacher training manuals were analyzed.

This study intended to study innovative cases. Several organizations providing support for improving the classroom teaching-learning were consulted. They suggested visits to other successful program areas such as Baglung (World Education), Sindhupalchowk and Karnali (Save the Children/Norway) and Kavre (Centro Coporazino Sulunivippo, Italy). But for lack of time the cases in these places could not be covered. So some good cases and good lessons had to be forgone.

Reviewing and Clarifying the Study

For the requirement of this study a few of the documents related to educational reform and classroom teaching-learning improvement were studied and the personnel working on the programs on the classroom teaching-learning were contacted.

Three elements necessary for success of a reform process are explained below:

Shared Vision

One important aspect pointed out for change by Fullan (1991) and Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) is the shared vision of the program managers and teachers. Innovative programs are developed by experts. For this, consultations take place and a lot of work time is spent. However, such programs if imposed, are likely to be weakly implemented or almost fail. This is one of the important aspects to be considered in the planning for classroom transformation.

Shared Knowledge and Understanding

Hirsch (1996) makes a good argument on the dependence of learning on shared knowledge. In his view, for effective classroom learning to take place, class members (teachers) need to share enough common reference points to enable all students to learn steadily, albeit at differing rates and in response to varied approaches; otherwise educational reform would not yield as desired and reforms would be limited to vocabulary changes. Some of the examples he has cited - 'projects' have become 'thematic learning' or 'multi-disciplinary' activities; 'training the mind' has become 'critical thinking skill'; 'lived experience' has become 'hand-on activity' or 'deep understanding', 'group participation' has become 'cooperative learning'.

Therefore, it is essential to understand the concept and review the practice of the child-centered approach-what works in it and what the weak points are - in the Nepalese context. Pros and cons of this approach need to be analyzed (Sutherland, 1988; Fenstermacher and Soltis, 1998).

Change Chain

Fullan (1991, 1993) views that many innovations entail changes in some aspects of educational beliefs, teaching behavior, use of materials, and more. These are essential elements of the 'change chain'. Whether or not people develop meaning in relation to all three aspects is fundamentally the problem. Fullan provides examples of innovations which failed because these three components were lacking in the change chain.

CHAPTER II

Methodology

This is a case study to examine the features of and requirements for classroom transformation. The study has been framed to list down innovative cases, sample the cases to be covered in the study and study of the selected cases in some detail. This chapter presents the study strategy, samples, and consultative approaches used in this research.

Study Strategy

The study area as provided in the research questions in the TOR, entails study of innovative programs intended for pedagogical improvement, analysis of successful cases which demonstrate requirements for classroom transformations, and examination of the roles of local stakeholders in the transformation processes. It requires observation and goal-free assessment of the pedagogical interventions of various organizations as the first layer and then thorough assessment of what is working better in these initiatives to draw implications for the adoption of these innovative programs as the next. Thus, observation of the pedagogical interventions and assessment of their impact on classroom transformation were the major strategies used in this study. Diagrammatically, the study entails:

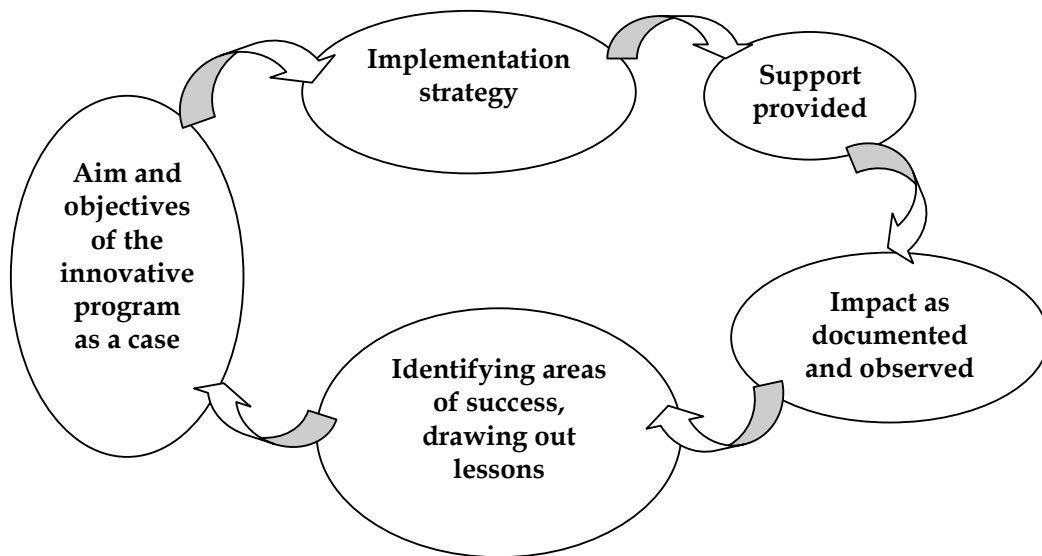


Fig1: Framework for analysis

Another major study strategy was interactions with teachers, students, parents, school management committees (SMCs), program related trainers, managers etc. Interactions were designed to take place in the form of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), group discussions, and in-depth interviews. Workshops were also organized to draw implications for the adoption of the successful innovations in the regular systems of DOE, CDC, NCED. The major purposes of the interactions and workshops were to understand the innovative program, background of program initiation, program implementation and outcome (qualitative), and the successful cases and their feasibility potentials for the wider context, nature of the involvement of the stakeholders, etc. A central level seminar is suggested to discuss the study

outcome and draw implications for the classroom transformation by reflecting on the Nepalese context, and innovative programs in Nepal and on what could be learned from the international context.

One of the frameworks used in this study is related to the shared vision and understanding among the stakeholders. An innovative program is more likely to succeed if there is shared vision and shared understanding among the policy makers, program developers, implementers, teachers, students, parents, and so on. A gap weakens the innovations (Fullan, 1991). The study also focuses on analyzing if such shared vision and shared understanding exist.

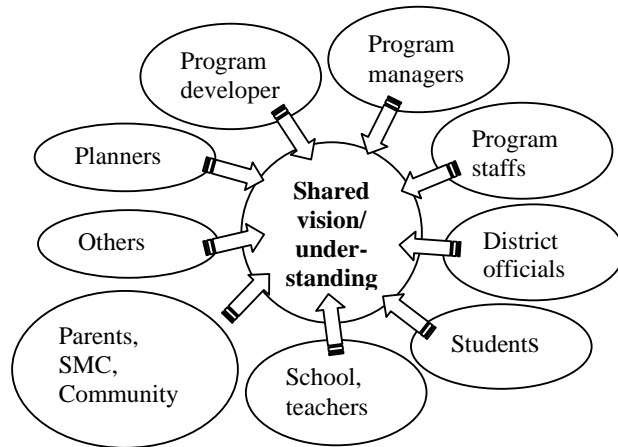


Fig 2: Framework to study shared vision and understanding of stakeholders

One of the important things for the success of an educational reform is to have a holistic nature that addresses conceptual development (or educational belief), pedagogical method (or teaching behavior) and support provision (or use of materials). Addressing only one of these - which usually happens in the innovative programs - will not help bring about the intended reform in the classroom practice. Any successful educational reform program transcends any one particular focus. The reform processes initiated with any of these foundations essentially involves improvement in other areas (Fullan, 1991). In this context, cases of the innovative programs for improving classroom teaching-learning were studied with the following frame in mind as presented in figure 3:

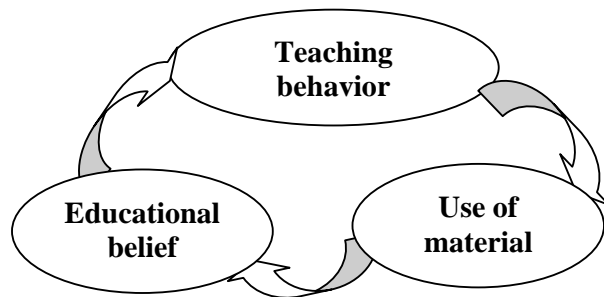


Fig 3: Framework for the study of the three aspects of educational reform

In this light, the study undertook the following activities:

- Familiarization/consultative meeting:** A consultative meeting was organized 1) to familiarize the research team with the policies, programs and activities of MOES/DOE/organizations supporting innovative programs regarding pedagogical focuses, 2) to clarify the research questions and expectations of MOES/DOE and these organizations, and 3) to share study methodology and get feedback on it. This consultative meeting was also helpful to develop study instruments, devise processes for the study, and identify the needs and information requirements. MOES, DOE, CDC, NCED personnel and representatives from universities and partners organizations had been invited to participate.

- **Document analysis:** Program documents (BPEP, EFA), research studies and documents of innovative programs and other reference materials were reviewed in connection with the pedagogical approaches emphasized for the primary school classrooms.
- **Tools development and pre-testing:** An outline and general strategy for data collection was developed and pre-tested. The pre-testing focused on whether required information could be generated by using this data/information collection strategy. Pre-testing was part of the first field visit.
- **Classroom observation:** Classroom processes were observed to examine classroom setting and instructional modality (special focus). A rapid assessment of the classroom practices in the selected schools was made to record the classroom setting and instructional process. This initial classroom observation was analyzed and recorded. In the process specific areas and questions were devised for a follow-up in the second visit to these schools.
- **Interaction:** Interaction sessions (such as FGDs/Group Discussions, Interviews) as well as informal talks were organized at the central level and field level to identify the emphasized pedagogies, effect of implementation, lessons to be learned, issues and problems, and to get suggestions for better policy and implementation strategies. These were then cross-examined on the observation of the researchers.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** In the field, rapport was established with DEOs and concerned stakeholders. Local enumerators, were used for help (where necessary). Note taking as well as tape recording (where possible) was done. One of the research team members was assigned the work of note taking. In the evening time sharing sessions were organized to 1) share information and impression on individual basis, 2) raise queries for clarification on the next day visit, and 3) sum up each days' fieldwork. An overall summary of the fieldwork was prepared in the field.

Data and information were compiled and sorted as per the themes and descriptions prepared. They were triangulated as far as possible (interaction, observation, classroom process, inputs provided, etc.).

Sample

Improving classroom teaching-learning is one of the most important aims of educational endeavor. In Nepal there have been several innovative efforts for teaching-learning improvement. Some of them have failed (e.g. CAS); some have been forgotten (e.g. Seti Project), Quality Education project (Kathmandu University with support from DANDIA), Interactive Radio Instruction (DEC/UNICEF/Nepal), and some other programs are on going (e.g. life skills education (UNICEF/Nepal), Child-friendly School (SC/Norway, SC/US), COPE School (supported by UNDP), etc. Personnel/offices of some of these programs were contacted and information was gathered. This preliminary exploration was helpful in the selection of the study sample. (See Annex-1 for list of the sample schools and Annex-2 for description of the innovative programs).

Districts/schools previously covered under FRP and the programs (Life Skill Education of UNICEF/Nepal; New Curriculum Piloting of CDC; Child-centered Approaches by Innovative Forum for Community Development (IFCD), World Education (WE) and UNICEF/Nepal; Child-friendly Schools of SC/Norway and COPE program of UNDP) were taken as samples for this study. The selection of programs to be covered in this study was done after consultation with the program implementers, DOE and CDC in the consultative workshop at the central level, and specific schools were selected in consultation with program supporters, District Education Offices (DEOs) and partner organizations in the field level.

CHAPTER III

Classroom Pedagogy Focused Programs

Several programs are currently being implemented in Nepal for improving the primary level classroom pedagogy. Several programs had been implemented in the past. But most of those programs, currently implemented or implemented in the past, could not be listed. No database was available. However, attempts were made to identify and list down such programs through document reviews and consultations. A few were chosen as cases for the study. This chapter presents a description, implementation strategy and notable outcomes found in the evaluation studies of these programs.

Program Description

Various programs from various quarters have been launched for improving classroom pedagogy in the primary levels of education in Nepal. This chapter describes some of these programs. The programs are described under three major headings: Program Introduction, Implementation Strategy and Notable Outcomes.

Program Introduction

Programs for improving classroom pedagogy have been initiated in tie with the global campaign for EFA, adaptation of good examples, demonstrate a model, or extension of the program.

CFS program: The Child-friendly Schools (CFS) program has been launched in Nepalese Primary Schools with the support of Save the Children, of Norway and the United States in response to the global campaign for EFA and the United Nations (UN) convention on the rights of the child. CFS initiative was started in Nepal after a Child-friendly School conference in Thailand. Save the Children organizations (Norway, USA and Japan) collaborate and coordinate the CFS program. CFS focuses on school conditions where classroom pedagogy is teacher-centered; student punishment is prevalent; learning environment is poor; classrooms are crowded; and the dropout, repetition, failure and student irregularity rates are high and where the Early Childhood Development (ECD) opportunity is low and the infrastructure is poor. CFS intends mainly to focus on education as children right, school infrastructure and child-friendly environment, child-centered teaching and increased participation of children and parents in school management (SC/N, 2006). Teacher training, school management training, school improvement plan (SIP), infrastructure such as building, toilets and water facilities, and promotion of child protection messages are the key activities in the CFS program (SC/US, 2006).

SC/N signed a memorandum in June 2006 with DOE/MOES to work for EFA in 24 districts. CFS and Active Teaching-learning (ATL) components are also included in this program. SC/US have the CFS program in Siraha, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. School coverage has been expanded every year.

Innovative Child-centered Teaching-learning Process: IFCD has developed a manual for child-centered teaching-learning in Nepalese primary schools. UNICEF/Nepal has been the major supporting organization in this endeavor. IFCD's child-centered approach was developed from the out-of-school program (OSP) funded and supported by UNICEF/Nepal. UNICEF/Nepal organized an eight-day educational visit to Gonoshahijja Sangstha in Bangladesh in June 2000. The aim of the

visit was to learn how to improve the teaching-learning environment in OSP. This visit program was an impetus to the integration of child-centered approach into OSP. IFCD with the support of Rato Bangala School conducted a refresher training on child-centered out-of-school program (CCOSP) methodology for the facilitators. A rapid assessment of the UNICEF/Nepal supported OSP program (IFCD, 2004) indicated improvement in and motivation for teaching-learning activities, increased interaction and creativity, and insistence on the use of the learning corners, songs and games, and creative writing.

It was strongly felt that child-centered approaches employed in CCOSP could help in making classroom teaching-learning effective and joyful to the children in the formal education. Another visit program, organized by UNICEF/Nepal, to Thailand, underlined the possibility of the use of this approach in Nepalese context. Child-friendly teaching-learning supported by UNICEF/Nepal with technical support from IFCD can be termed as adopted innovation. Innovative child-centered teaching-learning developed by IFCD is now in use in the schools of Kavre, Siraha, Saptari, Sunsari, Morang, Udayapur and Panchthar districts (with the support of UNICEF/Nepal) and in Chitwan, Dhading, Bardiya, Dang and Gorkha districts with the support of other partners including non government organizations (NGOs). UNICEF/Nepal provides the supports through DEOs. IFCD training is conducted directly by their own trainers or through Training of Trainers (TOT) for the DEO supervisors, Resource Persons (RPs) or Educational Training Center (ETC) trainers.

Child-centered method, concept and skill development; rescheduling of the class time-table for flexible and coherent classroom activities; children empowerment activities; participatory, interactive and joyful learning activities; materials provision, grade teaching, supervision/backstopping are the major components of the IFCD approach.

COPE Program: This program was initiated in 2000 by the government with a focus on decentralized management of primary education, with the support of UNDP. The primary objective of COPE is to demonstrate a model of community ownership of primary education and to experiment with innovations in school governance, pedagogy and school-community relations. COPE schools hired female teachers from local communities and there are at least 2 female members in the SMC from the community. The School Endowment Fund for each school (of about NRs. 7 lakhs per school) has been raised. There is also a provision of small grants to schools for infrastructure, rehabilitation of classrooms and development of school improvement plans (SIPs). Schools are also provided with teaching-learning materials. The program supports professional development of teachers in the areas of general pedagogy, child-centered teaching, continuous assessment of students and school management. There is a focus on capacity building of District Development Committees (DDCs) and Municipalities for primary education. COPE has established 120 new schools in partnership with community organizations, in 83 Village Development Committees (VDCs) of 6 districts. The aim of the program is access to quality education.

Quality Education Resource Package: In response to government plan to enhance quality of education World Education conducted a study covering 100 schools. Based on study findings, a workshop was organized in October 2003. The workshop suggested four areas to be improved -- community mobilization, welcome to school, school management and local governance, and improvement of teaching-learning. Based on this WE developed 30 modules and posters related to the modules in a

phase-wise manner. This package is called Quality Education Resource Package (QERP).

QERP has been distributed in 42 districts - 22 WE districts, 15 UNICEF/Nepal Decentralized Action for Children and Women (DACAW) districts and 5 government's School Based Program districts. Generally, orientation/training is provided for the effective use of QERP.

Other on-going programs: In the study districts other organizations also such as CCS/Italy (Kavre); GNHA/Germany (Kavre); World Vision International (Morang), Room to Read (Kavre), Rural Reconstructions Nepal (Morang), Plan Nepal (Morang), Round Table (Morang), Rato Bangla School (Kavre), Langtang Quality Education Initiative (Rasuwa), Seto Gurans National Child Development Services were found supporting the schools. CCS's support for the improvement of classroom teaching-learning is basically an extension of the existing CFS program. Similarly, GNHA support uses Rato Bangla School's teacher training and materials for child-centered teaching.

Some of the past endeavors for improving classroom teaching-learning were also covered in this study. These are Dual-Audience - Interactive Radio Instruction (DA-IRI) program conducted by DEC and the program conducted by Educate the Child (ETC).

DA-IRI: DA-IRI programs were supposed to provide continuing training during regular class time. In this program teachers as well as students were provided specific instructions for activities based on the objective of content covered. This is why the program was labeled dual audience (MOE, 1999; CERID, 2001). Development of DA-IRI programs started in 1998, and 25 programs for Grade 3 Mathematics and 25 programs for Grade 5 English were developed. The programs promoted teaching strategies that emphasized student-to-student interaction, use of teaching materials, and link of content to real-life situations.

ETC program: ETC launched Integrated Community Development (ICD) programs in Nuwakot and Rasuwa districts from 1995 to 2003. Participatory approach to local development was emphasized in this program. The ETC program was driven by the conviction that education works as stimulation to trigger changes and to transform people mentally and materially. Other programs that followed this focus were agriculture support services, smokeless stove distribution, toilet and biogas distribution and micro-credit schemes. In the education sector ETC support was for infrastructure development, teacher training, material and textbook distribution, scholarships etc. (ETC, 2006).

Local Curriculum: CDC revised the 2049 BS curriculum in 2060 BS. This revision made a provision of local curriculum with 100 marks for the mother tongue/local subject and 20% marks weightage for the local content in Social Studies, Creative Arts and Physical Activities (CDC, 2060 BS). The local curriculum is being piloted along with the revised curriculum. FRP study has looked after the piloting of this local curriculum in Rasuwa where three of the schools had 'Potato Farming' and two 'Nepali Language'. The local curriculum has recently been implemented at the national level, up to grade 2.

Implementation Strategy

Collaboration with the government institutions has been the main strategy for the implementation of classroom teaching-learning programs. Involvement of the field offices, partnership with NGOs and collaboration with the community were important strategies for program implementations of SC, UNICEF/Nepal, COPE, WE and CCS. Teacher training, monitoring and technical backstopping were also equally prioritized. The ETC program strategy related to community mobilization and empowerment. The DA-IRI program intended to enhance teachers' skills through the instructions on the classroom setting provided through the audio. All these are described in the following paragraphs.

SC, UNICEF/Nepal, COPE, WE, CCS Strategy

Basically on-going programs of SC, UNICEF/Nepal, COPE, CCS and WE emphasized the following components in their working strategies.

Collaboration with Government Institution: SC/N has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DOE at the central level and it also works with DEO at the district level.

UNICEF/Nepal Eastern Regional Office has signed MOUs with the DEOs of its program districts. There were delays in signing the MOUs at the local level as there was some administrative clarity to be made in this regard.

The COPE program of UNDP has been working in tie with Ministry of Local Development (MLD), DDCs and DEOs.

Other programs covered in this study also have some collaboration with the government institutions. DEOs were valuable sources of information for the study team regarding organizations working for the classroom teaching-learning concerns. Another important thing observed was that some DEO personnel were working as focal persons for the programs e.g. in Kavre one person for the UNICEF/Nepal program and one for the SC/N program. This kind of collaboration is a positive aspect. *Despite such collaborations, impact of these programs on policymaking and program replication at the government level are not a rule. These are seen as projects, and projects usually remain in action during the project period only.*

Field Offices: All the programs covered in this study, namely, SC/N, UNICEF/Nepal, CCS, COPE, have their own field offices and staffs for program implementation. The impression at the school/community level is that these field offices are responsible and accountable for the program. *There was no realization that the focal point of the support is the public system and the main purpose is capacitating.*

Partnership with NGOs: UNICEF/Nepal has involved IFCD for training and material development. It has also been collaborating with WE to provide QERP to the school it has been supporting. *Such a collaboration is supportive to enhancing expertise and its utilization. Expanding such collaboration and utilization of NGOs/private institution expertise is seen to be fruitful.*

Community Mobilization: Community mobilization and parental awareness were emphasized in the programs covered in this study. SC/N, UNICEF/Nepal, COPE and ETC programs emphasized orientation and involvement of the community and parents in the program in various forms such as participation in the management committee, monitoring, etc. The community mobilization and involvement aspects are elaborated in Chapter V.

Training: SC/N and UNICEF/Nepal with the help of IFCD have developed short-term training packages for child-centered teaching-learning -- ATL by SC/N and Child-centered Teaching-learning Process (CCTLP) by IFCD. COPE uses NCED's 10-month package with one additional manual titled 'Supplementary reading materials for COPE school teachers'. With the support of SC/N, DOE has prepared a 5-day short-term training manual titled 'Child-friendly Schooling Teachers' Training Manual, 2062'. Classroom teaching-learning is also covered in this manual. SC/N field office in Kavre found this manual crowded with the theoretical/conceptual matters so that there was less time to cover and practice skills useful for the classroom. SC/N, Kavre field office attempt to fulfill the need to make classroom teaching-learning more active and activity-based resulted in the development of 'Active Teaching-learning Training Package' of 5 days' duration. NCED, on the other hand, uses the 'Child-friendly Schooling Teachers' Training Manual, 2062' in its trainings. *Two of the above examples might have some implications: 1) if NCED training needs to include additional packages, like that of COPE, for better training result, and 2) how to establish a communication link between programs and government institutions to share in the development, e.g. development of ATL.*

Materials: Required materials for effective classroom teaching-learning have been provided in the programs. SC/N, UNICEF/Nepal and COPE have provided sets of materials. More instructional materials were also developed in trainings. The teachers appreciated the provision of the materials and admitted that this provision was instrumental in using the skills learned during training in the classroom. FRP study (CERID, 2003) on 'Transfer of Training Skills in the Classroom Delivery' had identified the provision of the materials as one of the factors helping the transfer of training skills into the classroom.

Monitoring and Technical Backstopping: The office staffs of DEOs in Kavre, Morang and Sunsari were found monitoring the programs for which they were involved as focal persons (SC/N and UNICEF/Nepal). Monitoring was also done by the field offices. IFCD has provided technical backstopping to the UNICEF/Nepal program with which it is involved. SC/N Kavre field office was providing technical backstopping to the teachers directly and through the key teacher. Such monitoring and technical backstopping was viewed as helpful to do away with misunderstandings and difficulties faced by the teachers. But frequencies of such visits were limited because of *Bandhs* and strikes.

ETC and DA-IRI Strategy

ETC: ETC strategies for program implementation were community mobilization and collaboration with NGOs. So NGO capacity building and direct involvement of the community people were emphasized. The target population was involved in identifying and, prioritizing the needs, and in the intervention of the program. In the program designing, the women groups were the key players; they shaped and designed the programs. Leadership development and capacity building were also emphasized in the program. (ETC, 2006).

DA-IRI: The Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program, intended for both teachers and students, were piloted in 50 schools in 5 districts. Programs were developed and program cassettes were provided to the 'formative evaluators' (the DEO supervisors). Formative evaluators used to bring the cassette recorder and IRI program cassettes with them to the participating schools and play them in the classrooms. They provided their feedback on lesson quality, materials production quality, teacher

behavior and student behavior to DEC. The objective of the program was to provide classroom skills to the teachers, thereby requiring them to practice the skills they listened to on the IRI cassette. (CERID, 2001; MOE, 1999).

Local Curriculum: The local curriculum implementation strategy of CDC is piloting the program for two years and then implementing it at the national level as described above in the program description section. *Though the local curriculum is said to be piloted, the process adopted is not that of piloting.* There was lack of support and backstopping for the continuous improvement of the piloted program.

Notable Outcomes

The programs covered in this study are found to have succeeded in improving classroom teaching-learning. Findings based on field study are presented in the next chapters. In this section, findings of the study reports of these programs are presented (as excerpts from these study reports) to exemplify the impacts. The language of the excerpts has been slightly modified.

Building Shared Vision and Knowledge

Training the teachers and involving the community people including parents in the program are the strategies of these programs. This has been helpful in building shared vision and knowledge, to some extent though. The findings of the studies to back up this statement are:

- Intimate relationship between school and community could be seen in the COPE schools (Kafle and Bhattarai, 2004, p. iii) There was regular monitoring and close supervision of teaching-learning by stakeholders such as parents and community members... (p. v).
- Stakeholders have realized the need for spacious rooms and child-friendly sitting arrangement and they are working for it.... Parents have a positive attitude towards the new classroom setting, neat and clean classroom for grades 1-3 and interactive sitting arrangements for the students of the higher grades (Koirala, Dhakal and Dhakal, 2006. p.8).
- Women have taken up a leading role in developmental issues. They have been capacitated to think, participate, and act on social issues and have an equal say in decision making on issues related to community and social development (ETC, 2006, p. 24).
- The impact of CCOSP on community can be seen in two terms. Directly, the program has contributed to increasing awareness on the need and importance of education, access to educational opportunities and increasing level of literacy. In indirect terms, the program has contributed to increasing community awareness and collaborate activity in local development process. (IFCD, 2004, p. 61).

Classroom Teaching-learning Improvement

Classroom teaching-learning improvement is one of the major purposes of the programs covered in this study. Child right, child-friendly approach, avoidance of corporal punishment, use of materials and interactive approach, emphasis on curriculum, continuous assessment have been emphasized. The findings of the studies to back up this statement are:

- Teachers prepared lesson plans, used CAS, practiced improved teaching techniques, created child-friendly learning environment, maintained linkage between curriculum, manual and resource materials. They were non-discriminatory and aware about gender issues (Kafle and Bhattarai, 2004, pp. iii-iv).
- Grade teaching helped teachers for effective teaching and students for creative learning (Koirala, Dhakal and Dhakal, 2006. p.10), teachers were found without sticks in their hands indicating non-violence in classroom (p. 11), classroom teaching through play, discussion, demonstration and story telling (p. 13).
- SC has contributed to the quality of the learning environment through teacher training, child-centered methods, construction and use of appropriate materials, and provision of additional staff where necessary (SC/N and SC/US, 2007, p. 40).... Children in the program schools tended to like their schools and teachers.... Teachers were using more creative and engaging teaching methods which children described with enthusiasm (p. 44).
- In the child-friendly classrooms children were found happy, and un-frightened. Improvement in the classroom management, grade teaching, child-friendly classroom environment and use of training skills in the classroom were in practice (IFCD handout, 2007).
- Prior to ETC intervention, teachers used the conventional method, which was monotonous, tedious and de-motivating. The new and scientific teaching methods and techniques have provided some efficient tools to the teachers to enhance the quality of teaching-learning (ETC, 2006, p. 34).
- IRI program modeled good teaching practices (CERID, 2001, p. 6), involved students in joyful learning (p. 7), motivated to develop and use instructional materials (p.7), and demonstrated child-centered teaching-learning technique (p. 8).... This program provided training to the teachers through demonstration and practice (p. 7).

Impact on Learning Achievement

Classroom environment and classroom teaching-learning have been reported as being improved. There are also reported evidences of the impact in students' learning achievement, regularity, enrollment, etc. The findings of the studies to support this statement are:

- With the Quality Education Project (QEP) intervention, the enrollment rate and pass percentage of the schools has increased over the years (Koirala, Dhakal and Dhakal, 2006. p.11) Almost all children of the school catchments are enrolled in school and they are willing to go there (pp. 12-13).
- SC/N and SC/US reported that better teaching-learning in the program schools has resulted in higher achievement of the children (2007, p. 50) Program children were doing much better than the school children, in all subjects -- $p < 0.05$ (p. 45)
- The pass rate of the students has increased and teacher and student attendance has increased, whereas the student dropout rate has decreased in the program schools (IFCD handout, 2007).

- The school enrollment rate of children has dramatically increased after ETC intervention. Particularly, female enrollment has considerably gone up (ETC, 2006, p. 27) There has been an increase in the trend of giving equal treatment to boys and girls. This shows community's growing sensitivity to gender issues and the rights of girl children to education (p. 29).
- The average achievement levels of the students of DA-IRI pilot schools in Mathematics (Grade 3) and English (Grade 5) were found higher than those of the non-pilot schools (CERID, 2001, pp. 24 and 31).

Physical Infrastructure Development

The programs covered in this study have essential physical facilities such as classroom, toilet, and drinking water. Supports provided to the schools in the area of physical infrastructure have been reported. These supports were viewed to be important for enhancing the quality of education, as reported in the evaluation studies of these programs.

CHAPTER IV

Features and Requirements for Classroom Transformation

This chapter covers findings from observation of classroom settings and teaching-learning practices, interactions at the field, and outcomes of the workshops. This chapter also describes the implementation of the programs, and draws implications for classroom transformation.

Program into Practice

The programs (as cases) covered in this study have improvement of classroom teaching-learning as one of the major component. Collaboration and cooperation was seen among program supporting organizations, government institutions and NGOs. This is an important base for building a shared vision. Training for the teachers, head teachers and SMC members, parents and community people is another important aspect in this regard. The tool to translate the vision into practice is (shared) knowledge and understanding. The programs need monitoring and technical backstopping. Another important aspect in the program implementation is improvement achieved through a chain of changes. The programs and their implementation are described in the following paragraphs.

Selection of the Schools

Schools were selected mainly by DEO or the local stakeholders involved in program implementation e.g. the coordination committee at DDC. Coordinated effort for the selection of the program schools has helped avoid duplication. There were a few cases where two or more organizations were working on classroom teaching-learning improvement in the same school. The problem in the selection of the schools was inadequate information generated for launching the program. One such case was found in the Morang based UNICEF/Nepal program. UNICEF/Nepal requested DEO to select 25 schools for the 'Child-friendly Teaching-learning' program. As the number of children in grade 1 were overlooked, only one of the sections of the grade could be supported. This resulted in two different environments for the children of the same grade which was another problem. This problem occurred for lack of communication between supporting organizations and DEO. SC/N and COPE programs were found having more coordinated communication with DDC/DEO in this matter.

Teacher Preparation

Short-term training (SC/N and UNICEF/Nepal) and long-term training (COPE) on classroom delivery were provided to teachers. Refresher training, follow-up and technical backstopping, sharing and consultation were emphasized in the programs. These programs emphasized and monitored the use of the training skills in the classroom. Monitoring and technical backstopping by IFCD in the UNICEF/Nepal program were found effective by head teachers and teachers.

Head teachers and teachers observed that training provided by IFCD and SC/N were effective. They found the training to be less theoretical and more practical. Skills were explained, demonstrated and practiced during the training period. According to teachers, such a training strategy was instrumental in transferring training skills immediately into the classroom.

Provision and Use of Materials

Another aspect of the programs studied was the provision for materials for classroom. Both SC/N and UNICEF/Nepal had provided materials kit to the program schools. UNICEF/Nepal also provided schools with WE's QERP. SC/N support has been for grades 1-3 from this year in most of the program schools. UNICEF/Nepal support is mainly for grade 1. This has raised issue of grade-upgrade, which is elaborated in the coming section. COPE has also provided required materials to the teachers in their program schools.

The materials provided by the programs were being used in the classroom. Charts, drawings, and pictures were displayed inside the classroom. Jumbles, puzzles, dice and other materials had been kept in boxes or racks in the classroom. Both teachers and students had an easy access to these materials. In a number of cases, children were found playing with these materials even in the absence of the teacher. This was one of the most appreciated aspects of the child-centered approach initiated by SC/N and IFCD. Teachers of other classes also remarked that in the 'child-friendly class' students were found to be engaged performing activities even when their grade teacher was not in place. Group formation and use of the group leader is a useful concept. Easy access to the materials and the play-way nature of the materials were productive. In fact, students learn while they are playing/engaged with the materials.

The low level blackboard on the classroom wall was conducive to the 'child-friendly class'. Students used their share of space on the blackboard. Support had also been provided for carpeting (of the classroom floor), cushions, cupboards, toilets, and drinking water. All these activities were found helpful in improving the school settings for a child-friendly environment in the classroom and outside.

School Setting

Infrastructure development, parents' awareness and active participation, community involvement and support, students' learning enthusiasms were emphasized in the programs covered. Training for the SMC (DOE, COPE and SC, 2062 BS), formation of PTA, organization of children's club, parent and community involvement in the school management and monitoring and supervision are very important for the improvement of classroom teaching-learning.

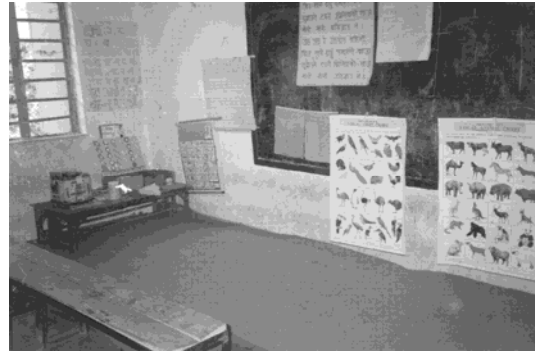
Classroom Setting

In most of the schools supported by SC/N, UNICEF/Nepal, and COPE two things could be distinctly seen at first sight in the classrooms, sitting arrangement and classroom display (Please see the photographs). In most of the classrooms desks and benches were replaced with floor carpets and cushions for students' sitting. In some of the classrooms low tables and floor carpets were in use. Students' sitting were arranged to facilitate teacher's

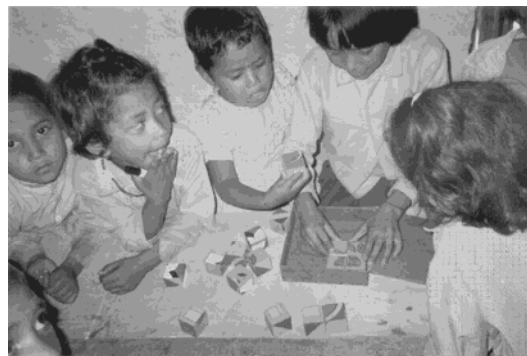


access to each individual student and ensure flexibility for group work.

In the classrooms displays could be seen (as described above). Mostly, display materials were the ones provided from the program side. In some schools teachers had also constructed materials for the display in the classroom. But only in a few cases student works were seen in the displays. Several questions were raised regarding classroom display:



- Are the materials in display changed as per the lesson? The general practice in most of the schools was to paint classroom walls to help the materials stand there for a longer duration. This provided less space on the walls for the display of student works and lesson-related materials.
- Are student work samples kept in display? In 8 classrooms (out of 30) student work samples were found kept in the display. *This indicates that student work is not taken as vital materials for classroom teaching-learning nor is it counted as a source of student motivation.*
- Are the materials displayed in the classroom used in classroom instruction? Most teachers said they are but they were found being used only in 20% of the observed classes.



Instructional Setting

As admission was going on in the schools during field work in Morang and Sunsari, the research team had limited opportunities to observe the regular classroom teaching-learning. Another hurdle in the field was teachers' strike in Kavre and Kapilvastu. Also, the research team had limited opportunities to observe classroom teaching-learning of the innovative programs. Only a few good practices could be observed. Some of the positive aspects of the classroom teaching-learning can be summarized as follows:

- Improved classroom display: Display of student works found in about 25% of the classrooms
- Sitting arrangement: Flexible arrangement, sitting on the carpeted floor

- Interaction: Teachers spent more time on interaction, providing all, or most of, the children to speak and answer such questions as "who are there in your family? Do they all love you?"
- Activities: Teachers did not force all the students in one single assignment/activity
- Games: Students played games by themselves even when the teacher was not in the classroom
- Singing and Dancing: Students enjoyed performing these activities
- Teachers: They took keen interest in the classroom activities
- Classroom schedule: Flexible
- Grade teaching: It was done.

The play-way method improved the classroom environment. Reduction of corporal punishment and availability of instructional materials in the classrooms were highly appreciated by parents, students and teachers. All these motivated the students as well as teachers. Illustrations:

Happy learning opportunity: A girl child from a private (boarding) school got enrolled in a public school. This transfer took place on the child's own interest, not on parents' force. When she was in the boarding school, she would often see her friends, who were in the program school, sing songs and play different types of games. This attracted her. She would come to the program school classroom with her friends. She was attracted by the play-way method. So she requested her parents to transfer her to the program school. Her parents also appreciated the joyful teaching-learning methods being used in the school. Now she is in the program school in grade 2.

When she was asked which school (the previous school or the program school) she found more joyful, her reaction was, "There were more play materials and equipment such as swing, slide, see - saw etc. in the boarding school... These things are not available here in this school..." About her choice of the program school as she said, "Here we learn by playing, singing, dancing.... I enjoy... Learning is easy... The teacher is loving and does not force us... The materials we use for our learning are like toys. Playing and learning at the same time (with friends) is good."

What the student expressed could be observed in the classroom environment as well in that program school of Sunsari.

A satisfying experience: The teacher in Sunsari, who was going to retire officially in about two years, was planning to retire ahead of her retirement time. She felt exhausted and burned out. At that time she was sent to a twelve days' 'child-centered teaching-learning' training conducted by IFCD and supported by UNICEF/Nepal. This training changed her concept. In her words, "I learned in the training how to make teaching-learning joyful to the students and myself..." She wondered how child-centered methods could work effectively in the classroom. Back in the school, she found the sitting changed (with carpeting). The classroom was decorated with the materials provided and developed in the training. With each activity the face of the classroom changed for the better and the positive impact on the students was beyond expectation.

Children quickly picked up the songs and games and got engrossed in the puzzles, dices and other materials provided in the kit box. Barriers between the teacher and students had broken down. Students' interest, motivation, regularity, fearlessness, and their approaching to her (as to a loving and caring mother) and, above all, ease at which children learned was a satisfying experience to her. She had never felt such a satisfaction in her teaching profession. So she had changed her mind; she will teach grade 1 till her retirement day.

Students' learning and happiness is the key: A teacher in Kavre wondered how he could be able to use the skills he had learned in SC/N training on the 'child-friendly approach'. There were a lot of things to do every day -- plan the lesson, prepare the materials, give group works, understand children on individual basis, etc. For first six months everything was frustrating. The only thing he enjoyed was interacting/talking and encouraging the students. As days went by, he sensed that students had become friendlier to him. They talked with him more frankly and frequently. They enjoyed learning by playing with the materials provided in the kit. For him students' learning and happiness was the key to satisfaction and the 'child-centered approach' was instrumental in bringing about improvement. Now the teachers also enjoy grade teaching as much as his students do.

Follow-up and Technical Backstopping

There are provisions of monitoring and (regular) follow-up in the programs. Technical backstopping and feedback are provided to the program teachers and interactions are organized. Key teacher, mobile meeting and invitation to parents to observe classroom teaching are undertaken for this purpose.

The key teacher concept is used in the SC/N program. A key teacher is designated for a cluster of schools. The key teacher is supposed to spend 50% time for the school and the other 50% time for the cluster schools. This teacher observes classroom teaching-learning, provides feedback, discusses the problems faced by the teacher and conducts demonstrations (if necessary).

Mobile meetings are organized in UNICEF/Nepal supported and SC/N supported programs. The cluster schools organize meetings on rotational basis. This provides them opportunities to share their problems, learn better practices from one another and improve the school setting by visiting and observing other schools. Mobile meetings have been seen as sources of inspiration to do more than others have done.

Inviting parents to visit the school and observe classroom teaching has been emphasized and practiced in the program schools. This gives the parents an opportunity to understand what is going on in the school and also helps generate parental support for school/classroom activities. Feeling of responsibility towards their children and their education has been reported to have increased due to parents participation.

IRI Case

In Nuwakot teaching-learning was observed in 6 classes taught by four teachers who had been involved in the piloting of the IRI program for five years. Two of these teachers (one teaching English at Grade 5 and the other teaching Mathematics at Grade 3) were found using the training skills in their classes. When these teachers

were asked from which training program they learned these skills, they related these skills to the IRI program. The main features of the IRI program as stated by them were: 1) audio lessons for teachers and students at the same time, 2) listening to and practicing the skills, 3) songs, games, activities which made learning easy and joyful.

An evaluation of the IRI study by CERID (2001) reported that IRI program as a complementary training program, had been effective. But IRI program could not go beyond piloting.

Issues and Problem Areas

The programs covered in this study have contributed significantly within a short span of time work (about 5 years of COPE to about 1 year of UNICEF/Nepal). As change is a process, not an event (Fullan, 1991), it is natural that issues emerge and problems occur in the implementation of a program designed to improve on continuous basis. Major issues and problems found in the implementations of the programs are as follows:

Sections in the School

In the 5 schools visited in Morang and Sunari there were two sections each at grade 1. As support was provided for one classroom only, the schools and teachers had to face the problem of having to involve 50 percent of the children in a facilitated classroom and the other 50% in a usual classroom. Parents requested the teachers to take in their wards in new classroom. To avoid this situation, in three schools another section (section B) was also provided with a similar sitting arrangement and some materials support. The expenses for this were borne by the teachers and/or school. In one school DEO provided the ECD center support for this section.

Grade-Upgrade

The 'Child-friendly Classroom' program was launched from the mid-session of the school last year, in Sunari and Morang, with the support of UNICEF/Nepal. This means that last year grade 1 children had the opportunity of joyful learning and so this year they are in grade 2. These students of grade 2 were taught in a old type classroom with rows of desks benches and no proper display on the walls in 4 schools, and 3 schools were planning to have a setting in grade 2 similar to that of grade 1 (child-friendly classroom). However Grade 2 teachers were not trained for child-friendly teaching. Upgrading the classes for child-friendly teaching-learning along with the upgrading of the children is necessary to sustain the child-friendly approach.

Along with the grade-upgrade issue comes the issue of upgrading the materials and activities. In some schools the same materials kit (used for grade 1) was provided to grade 2 as well, but teachers did not know how to use these materials for grade 2. Under the SC/N program different sets of materials were provided to the higher grades. There was however a suggestion that repetition of activities from one grade to another would produce no effect. Therefore up gradation of materials in the higher grades was necessary.

Transfer to Other Classes

In a discussion some teachers said that they found some of the activities, skills used in grade 1 'Child-friendly Classroom' to be helpful in teaching the upper grades. But

the adaptation and modification of the materials and activities were a problem in this regard for the upper grade teachers because they were neither oriented nor provided necessary support.

Sharing, Support, Pressure

There was sharing of the programs, child-centered methods and instructional materials within the school (to some extent) and among the program teachers in the meetings such as mobile meetings as designed in the SC/N program. This sharing was helpful to clarify confusion about the use of the method and materials and learn from each other. But most of the time there was no handy support and follow-up for the teachers. In all the schools the head teachers were supportive to the grade 1 teachers and provided materials (when asked) for the 'Child-friendly Classroom'. But in only two schools the head teachers were found to pressurize grade 1 teacher to use their skills for improving teaching-learning in the classroom.

In the study districts several organizations were found supporting the classroom teaching-learning improvement initiatives. However, sharing was mostly absent with these organizations regarding training, material provision, implementation strategy. They were planning and implementing their programs in consultation with DDC and DEO, but collaborative relationships with other organizations were weak.

Sustainability

The programs covered in this study are all donor-supported programs, except the 'local curriculum' piloting by CDC. Schools were provided one or more of these supports -- carpeting for the classroom, cupboard, materials kit-box (worth Rs. 7000-15000), additional teacher, toilet, drinking water, extra classroom, training (teacher, head teacher, SMC, PTA), provision of key teacher etc. The general concern raised about these programs is what will happen when the support for the program is over. Koirala, Dhakal and Dhakal have also pointed out this issue, "SC/N, in the absence of an adequate number of teachers relied on its funded teachers and rahat teachers to take quality education program into the classroom... Once the resource is withdrawn, the concept of grade teaching will be jeopardized (p. 15) Model schools are set up. But the challenge is how long they will remain model schools after the withdrawal of SC/N support (p. 16)." Sustainability of the program was also a common concern of the organizations/donors as well. Therefore, involvement of DEO, DDC, and local community was emphasized. The COPE program even envisioned cost sharing modality from the beginning of the program implementation and generation of school endowment fund (COPE, 2002).

Piloting

The local curriculum has been piloted by CDC from 2061/062 BS. A FRP study looked at the local curriculum piloting initiatives in the schools of Rasuwa in the years 2005, 2006 and 2007. But there were no follow-up, technical backstopping, records of strengths and weaknesses, and corrective measures in the piloting of the local curriculum in Rasuwa. Now the piloted curriculum is being implemented at the national level. Some schools were confused about the local curriculum -- even the schools participating in the piloting phase. Of the three schools piloting 'potato farming' as a local curriculum subject, one was planning to continue it to grade 3 before making any prior decision and two others were planning to replace 'potato

farming' with 'English language'. This case raises the issue about the way piloting is done and use of piloting outcomes to make decisions.

Main Features of the Programs in Classroom Teaching-learning Improvement

Firstly it should be reiterated that the programs covered in this study as innovative programs have been able to improve classroom teaching-learning. Certain common features were observed in these programs such as community involvement, incremental development strategy, delivery of focused training, provision of the materials, technical backstopping etc. These features have been described under three analytical elements -- shared vision, shared knowledge and understanding, and change chain.

Shared Vision

One of the necessary criterias for success in innovation is sharing of vision among the concerned stakeholders - mainly teachers, head teachers, students, parents, SMC, trainers, supervisors at the school level. In all the visited schools these persons were also asked about their perceptions and expectations about the classroom teaching-learning as emphasized in the programs. Stakeholders at the district and school level were generally not consulted and not involved in the program planning and development, because they would be acquainted with the program only during the implementation phase. However, parents and local stakeholders had opportunity to be familiar with the program through the training/orientation. They also came to know about the improvement/changes from children. Teachers were also instrumental in acquainting concerned stakeholders with the intended changes in the classroom teaching-learning. Such interactions and discourses were helpful in building shared vision among the concerned stakeholders in a gradual manner.

Shared Knowledge and Understanding

Vision needs to be translated into reality. Shared knowledge and understanding are the tools for clarity and the implementation of the program (as envisioned). Contacted stakeholders were also asked questions related to the knowledge and understanding about the 'child-friendly/child-centered teaching-learning'. Most of the parents said that their children enjoyed the activities, and were now more willing to go to the school. According to the teachers and head teachers, classes could be run (without punishment) in a loving and caring way. Children engaged themselves in learning, and joyful learning was helpful in enhancing the quality of children's learning. Trainers who were involved in these training and monitoring/supervision were more explicit in describing these aspects. In this sense building of a shared knowledge and understanding was found. The following aspects were instrumental in this regard:

- Grade 1 teachers were provided 12 days' training and head teachers of the respective schools were provided 5 days' training.
- A one-day sharing/orientation session was organized for the SMC members, parents, and other teachers of the school.
- In some schools parents were invited to visit and observe the class.

- In some schools students' individual registers (portfolios) had been developed, which were shared with the parents from time to time.
- Students expressed their pleasant feelings at home like this - "I was given a welcome in the school today." "I was given a chocolate/biscuit." "There are a lot of play-things in our school." "We sang and danced in the school today." "This is the picture I drew today in the school."

Such interactions between school, home and child is building. This is a very positive sign. Teachers also expressed the need of adequate and timely technical backstopping so that they could implement child-friendly approach in the classroom in a correct and consistent ways.

Change Chain

Fullan (1991) says, "Successful implementation consists of some transformation or continual development of initial ideas." Therefore incremental nature of change is supportive to sustainability. It is also necessary to build upon success and failure of the program in a step-wise manner. Change needs to be taken as a process that builds another chain. The elements of change chain could be found in the programs covered in this study.

Incremental development: The child-centered teaching-learning approach is being planned, implemented and improved. For example, SC/N, after trying out CFS training, simplified it into an ATL package providing more room for practicing useful classroom teaching-learning skills. After the second year of implementation of the program in Kavre, teachers have expressed the need for CAS to find out the learning achievement and status of each individual student and use the evaluation for supporting the student's learning. Therefore, the team was working on simplifying and preparing guidelines for CAS. With CAS the need of portfolio was also surfacing. This indicated incremental and step-wise development of the program.

Focused Training: The training packages developed by DOE with the support of Save the Children Alliance (DOE/SC, 2062 BS), IFCD (Undated), SC/US, Biratnagar (2062 BS), SC/N, Kavre (2064 BS) mainly focus on child-centered teaching-learning approaches. The training (as described by the trainers and trainees) used explanation, demonstration and practice of skills useful in the classroom. Emphasis was not on cramming concepts, models and content but on making the trainees confident and competent enough to use these skills in the classroom situation. These training also emphasized the use of the curriculum and the curricular learning indicators in the classroom. In the words of one of the trainees, such a training was an eye-opener and an indicator of the fact that "teaching-learning can happen even without a textbook".

Follow-up and Technical Backstopping: Regular monitoring, refresher training, technical backstopping (such as key teacher concept) are also important aspects of these programs. But due to *Bandhas* and strikes in some of the districts monitoring activities were disrupted. Where movement was possible, feedback and technical backstopping were provided to the teachers, which were deemed fruitful.

Materials Provision: The teachers were also provided materials kit-boxes, and training in the use of the materials in individual or group contexts. Teachers were also provided skills in the teacher-made instructional materials. Material display in

the classroom, display of student works, preparation of and maintenance of the classroom schedules were also covered in the training. As the teachers had the opportunity to practice these aspects during training, they felt confident about using them in their classrooms.

Changing Educational Belief: A successful reform needs to bring about changes in educational belief as well. Even at this stage certain positive beliefs that were building could be pointed out:

- Children should not be punished. Fear impedes learning.
- Learning can be joyful.
- Children learn better when they enjoy learning.
- Game, play, singing, dancing are better tools of joyful learning.
- Children can also choose what is good for them.
- Classroom teaching-learning should be based on the curriculum.

Requirements for Classroom Transformation

Programs covered in this study were found bringing about improvement in classroom teaching-learning. Building shared vision, building shared knowledge and understanding, and connecting the changes in a classroom transformation chain (the change chain) were the positive aspects of these programs. Based on these observations, the following aspects are said to be conducive to improving the classroom teaching-learning process:

- Developing shared vision and shared knowledge and understanding through training/orientation for the key stakeholders such as head teachers, teachers, SMC, PTA, parents, students, etc.
- Incremental development modality that provides teachers and other concerned stakeholders to understand and use smaller portions of the skills and to build upon the learned skills.
- Focused training that emphasizes demonstration, practice and clarification of the concepts behind the skills.
- Provision of the instructional materials as a part of the training and use of the materials during the training itself.
- Emphasis on curriculum use -- teacher message, activities correlation, materials.
- Refresher training, monitoring and technical backstopping on regular basis and focus on feedback (as required).

CHAPTER V

Local Stakeholders in the Program

Home support is an important factor in the education and achievement of the child. For a better learning opportunity for the child home and school should come closer. In this chapter program provisions for involving parents and the local community, their understanding of the program and its impact on program implementation have been presented.

Program Provision

Infrastructure development, strong parental awareness, community support, and students' involvement have all been emphasized in the programs covered in this study. SC/N program emphasized formation of a committee of teachers, parents, community members and students. The SC/N, UNICEF/Nepal and COPE organized orientation/training for the parents, SMCs, PTA, etc. Day-to-day monitoring of the school has been one of the major responsibilities of the parents in the COPE program. Parental visit during class hours has been given a place in the UNICEF/Nepal and SC/N programs as well.

Short-term training had been organized in order to familiarize the head teachers with the program and teaching-learning process in a 'child-friendly class'. In the case of UNICEF/Nepal program the head teachers and teachers who were involved in the training, organized a one-day orientation for their fellow teachers, parents, SMC members, and community members. This was found instrumental in developing shared vision to some extent.

Stakeholders' Understanding

Stakeholders' (particularly of parents, SMC members and community people) understanding about the program was enriched thorough orientation/training programs, children talking about school/class with the parents, briefing/explanation by the teachers, and parental visit to school/classroom.

The programs have recognized parental and community involvement as a crucial factor. So they had a provision of orientation/training where the purpose of the program was explained, expected improvement in the classroom teaching-learning practices was described, and parental/community support/involvement discussed. Such a general orientation for the parents/community and training to the SMC members have been said to be valuable in enriching parents, SMCs, and the community.

The changes observed in the child and the child's own briefing on what goes on in the classroom was another source of class information for the parents. Parents of the program schools said that after the introduction of the child-centered approaches they found changes in the behavior of their wards. They now sang songs, counted objects (in Mathematics), gathered various things from their surroundings, and played alone or in group sorting, grouping, counting, etc. Another major change the parents saw in their wards was questioning behavior -- children seemed to be more inquisitive after the introduction of the child-centered approaches in the classroom. Parents' came to request the school to enroll their wards in the section where the child-centered approach was used. In some of the schools where there were two sections in grade 1, only one section used the child-centered approach.

According to the teachers, some of the parents enquired about the new methods and changes adopted in the classroom. It was a good opportunity for the teachers to explain to the parents the child-centered approaches that they were using and to expect supports from them in stopping corporal punishment at home, providing required educational materials to the child, sparing some time for the child etc. Parents were also invited to visit the school and observe classes by themselves. Interaction with the teacher and opportunity to observe classroom activities were an important factor of enriching stakeholders' understanding about the program.

Stakeholders' Expectation

Developing stakeholders' shared vision, their shared knowledge and understating are important features for their knowledgeable support in the program implementation. Parents, SMC members, and community people expected for the quality education for their children. They wanted their children to learn better. Some of the observable changes in the children were encouraging, some parents said. One of the parents said that her daughter who used to miss her classes previously was now regular in the school.

Parents showing their concern about their wards' learning were increasing in the program schools but, as one of the head teachers said, parental visit to the school was still on a low profile. Two of the schools have made it mandatory for the parents to visit the school at least once in a month to be briefed about their wards' progress. Some schools require parents to come to the school to collect their wards' result sheets.

Parents appreciated the play-way method, the joyful interactive environment and the punishment-free approach of the child-centered teaching-learning. Most of the parents found their wards' learning better (now). Some of the parents and teachers observed that content learning (width and depth) would be low if children spent more time in play. In this connection one of the program school teachers expressed his bewilderment, "Children seem to enjoy the class.... but I am not sure if they are learning more now..." student's learning is most important. Joyful learning is most desirable. Regular interaction between home, school and student is must and the programs are paving ways for this. Another important aspect is program growth in step-wise chain and sustainability. This aspect needs considerable attention in the program.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

Improving the quality of basic and primary education is one of the major goals of EFA. The EFA National Plan of Action 2001-2015 stresses three areas of process indicators -- the teaching-learning, curriculum transaction and instructional, and student achievement assessment system (MOES, 2003). This study covers innovative programs intended to improve classroom teaching-learning. Improvement in the teaching-learning has been found in these case studies. The challenge is utilization of the improved classroom teaching-learning practices within the government system. This chapter discusses these issues, drawing upon relevant findings and suggestions of the previous FRP studies, major approaches of the innovative programs covered in this study, support from the government provisions, and reflecting upon possible ways for utilizing the lessons learned.

Reflection on FRP Studies

The FRP studies undertaken by CERID for MOES have been focusing on quality education as one of the major research areas. Classroom delivery (2002), transfer of training skills in the classroom (2003a), assessment practices (2004a), multi-grade teaching (2003b), special needs education (2004b), school effectiveness indicators (2003c), head teacher role (2004c), learning needs of the children (2005) and life skills education (2006) are the major FRP studies that looked at the classroom teaching-learning practices. Some of the common findings of these studies were: teacher-dominated classroom practices, emphasis on rote learning, repetition of the textual materials, lack of instructional materials, restricted movement of teachers and students etc. Classrooms where improved teaching-learning practices took place ranged from 10% to 20%. The findings related to classroom teaching-learning were similar to those in the studies of NCED, such as 'Training of Teachers: Factors Contributing to the Effectiveness of Training in Classroom Practice' (NCED, 2000a), 'Teacher Training Follow-up: A Study Report' (NCED, 2000b), 'Follow-up Study of Teacher Training Program' (NCED, 2002a), and 'Teacher Training Follow-up: A Study Report' (NCED, 2002b).

Improved classroom teaching-learning practices are found in the innovative programs covered in this study. It will be useful to discuss, at this point, the suggestions provided by the FRP studies and the similarities that could be observed in these suggestions and the practices of the innovative programs².

Some of the improved practices observed in the innovative programs (which mainly included practice-based training; material provision; incremental/stepwise development and stakeholders' awareness) were also suggested in the previous FRP studies. These are discussed in the following paragraphs:

Developing Shared Vision and Knowledge

FRP studies (CERID 2004, 2005, 2006) indicated a gap between vision and practice. The vision as documented is that of child-centered education. In practice, the classroom teaching-learning was poor. There was no conceptual clarity about child-

² This is not to argue that the innovative programs had been developed on the basis of FRP suggestions. These programs were developed independently. What is emphasized is that the suggestions provided in the FRP studies and the implementation of the studied programs have similarities.

centered approaches. There was need of a theoretical base to establish what we are aiming to achieve in child-centered education. There was an emphasis on teacher-parent meetings for exchange of ideas, parents-community awareness for a grasp of the child-centered approach.

The programs covered in this study have tried to clarify and discuss the concept of 'child-centered education'. These programs have parental awareness and participation as an integral part of the program.

Components of Classroom Teaching-learning Improvement

Important components of classroom teaching-learning such as use of curricular materials, focusing on children's learning, use of assessment for learning enhancement, addressing children's learning needs, teacher preparation etc. were covered in the FRP studies. Aspects related to teacher preparation, provisions of materials, assessment practices, monitoring and follow-up, need for consolidation (which can also be termed change chain) were discussed and suggestions were provided. These components are discussed below:

Incremental Development Strategy: FRP studies (CERID, 2004a, 2005, and 2006) related to classroom delivery emphasized the development of action plans with intermediary steps to fulfill the targets of child-centered education. Such plans should state which of the existing supports directly relate to child-centered education and what further support/activities need to be provided in the near future.

Louis and Miles (1990) says that it is good to start with small experiments, and expand the successful ones and contract the less successful. Therefore, incremental and stepwise development in learning needs to be adopted. Child-centered classroom process of the studied programs have taken this incremental and stepwise development.

Teacher Preparation: One of the FRP studies focused on transfer of training skills in the classroom delivery. Emphasizing on the need to improve training delivery the study (CERID, 2003a) provided the following suggestions:

- Provide focused training on child-centered approaches.
- In the training lay emphasis on the display and use of materials and on the activities suggested in the manual. Localize/contextualize the situation/activities/examples etc. It is important to decide before hand what particular learning outcome(s) is to be focused in the training.
- Provide training materials like Teacher's Guide, textbooks, cassettes and others.
- Emphasize discussion, demonstration and practice of the skills in the training.
- Use training as a model classroom.

An analysis of the training manuals developed by the programs and of the responses of the program personnel, teachers and trainers showed that the training focuses on improving classroom teaching-learning through the child-centered approach. SC/N ATL and IFCD trainings covered only a manageable numbers of skills, but the skills were provided thorough discussion, demonstration and practice modality. Materials to be used in the real classroom were also used as models.

Provision of the Resources/Materials: FRP studies pointed out poor availability of curricular materials and inadequate use of them (CERID, 2002). They suggested the

identification of skills and resources required for child-centered education and preparation of teachers to implement it. Without support materials and proper skills in using them it would be difficult for the teachers to conduct a child-centered classroom. Conducive classroom environment, appropriate class size, manageable teachers workload, display of required materials, sitting arrangement, space with appropriate design, learning corner, appropriate furniture etc (CERID, 2006) were suggested too.

The programs covered in this study have developed materials kit-boxes and trained the teachers in the use of materials in the classroom. Support for seating, display, and (low-level) blackboard for the students are provided to the schools from the program side.

Assessment Practices in line with Envisioned Child-centered Approach: A FRP study (CERID, 2004a) analyzed school based assessment practices including CAS in the pilot schools. This study pointed out the need to improve assessment practice in line with the child-centered approach:

- Put emphasis on Criterion Referenced Test and informal techniques of assessment such as classroom questions, project, group work etc. in the training.
- Simplify the presently piloted CAS form to make it user-friendly and to ensure continuous assessment.
- Devise assessment methods and forms to record the assessment outcome and planning made on the basis of the assessment of each individual child.
- Record in the student's portfolio or a specified form students' strength and weakness; repeated mistakes, misconceptions and corrective measures/supports; level of student's achievement (with respect to learning outcomes).

The programs covered in this study emphasized the use of curriculum objectives/learning indicators in the classroom teaching, continuous assessment and improvement of students' learning, and achievement analysis to find out students' learning difficulties. This year a CAS form was also being developed for use in the program schools. Some of the schools have started to keep individual student's portfolio.

Monitoring and Follow-up: Regarding the transfer of training skills into the classroom the FRP study (CERID, 2003a) recommended that it should be made mandatory for the teachers to use the skills learned in the training in their classrooms. If materials and supports are required, they should be provided. But it should be an integral part of the training to monitor the use of the training skills. Frequent monitoring rather than frequent training should receive priority in the present context. One mechanism suggested for the follow-up/monitoring was: trainers should go after their trainees in the first year (after the training) to provide on-the-spot support, and in the second year RC/DEO/Center should monitor the use of the training skills. Regular visit, feedback and on-the-spot demonstration (if required) as part of the training (CERID, 2004a) need to be organized.

Mobile meeting, key teacher concept, technical backstopping, monitoring and follow-up (from program and DEO sides) are in practice in the programs covered in this study. These are also positive aspects of the programs.

Consolidations of the Efforts: As there should be room for continuous improvement in the reform process, so should there be ample room for the consolidation of efforts. Providing cases in which the assessment practice changed frequently and created confusion in the teachers, the FRP study (CERID, 2003a) suggested, "It is essential to emphasize implementation that is planned and to provide time for the consolidation of the efforts." It also emphasized consolidation and streamlining of efforts and supports (curriculum, curriculum materials, teacher training, assessment practices including CAS) converging on child-centered education (CERID, 2006).

The incremental and stepwise development strategy adopted in the programs covered in this study seems to allow time for the consolidation of efforts. There is also conscious effort to streamline classroom approaches, instructional materials, and assessment practices for child-centered education.

Proper Piloting Strategy: FRP studies (CERID, 2004a, 2005, and 2006) emphasized to pilot programs (such as Local Curriculum, Life Skills Education) in proper ways. Piloting should comply with concept and practice. But the piloting had no regular monitoring, no record. Certain schools, in certain districts were designated as pilot schools without any further input, supervision and monitoring, or learning the process. Once the time allocated for the piloting was over, the program would be implemented at the national level. Procedures and steps for piloting were absent in life skills education and the local curriculum.

Consolidation of efforts and corrective measures in the piloting of the local curriculum in the sample schools of Rasuwa district was found to be weak, in this study as well.

Pressure to the School for Quality Education: Public schools were found in problem because private school had been opened. Due to the opening of private schools, they suffered shorter enrollment. In such schools there was a feeling that for their survival quality of education should be improved. This is a good opportunity to maintain pressure and support for improvement as pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources (Fullan, 1991).

Reflection on Classroom Teaching-learning Programs

At the district level, discussion/interaction sessions were organized where these issues/concerns were raised:

Cost Concern

SC/N and UNICEF/Nepal's child-centered teaching trainings for the teachers were organized in-house in the hotels. Concern over the cost that entailed in such trainings was raised. Similarly, the cost of the materials kit-box was also a matter of concern. The materials kit-box costs about Rs. 7000 to 15000. There were other costs connected with materials display in the classroom, carpeting, and stationery. When this cost issue was discussed, the head teachers viewed that such problems could be resolved. In their view, if quality education was provided support could be generated. Some of the schools had already included plans and costs for child-centered education in their School Improvement Plans (SIPs). What needs to be considered here is the comparison of the total cost involved and the outcome.

Intensive Efforts

Questions regarding field offices and provision of local partners to oversee the program were raised during discussions. One special point raised was that during the project period there would be enough human resource and developmental cost; monitoring, supervision and backstopping would be intensive; and extra financial support to the school and teachers would be provided. Maintaining the cost and resources after the donor support ceases would be difficult. The tempo of effort during the project would fizzle out and turn out to be a failed innovation intensifying the failure fear. This was serious concern for the DEO personnel. Organizations supporting the program have shown concern over consolidation and utilization of the positive outcomes of the program. Therefore, their effort is for success and effect in practices. There are also suggestions to take the program (as a pilot program) to the national level.

Sharing and Learning

The programs covered in this study are supported by SC/N, UNICEF/Nepal, COPE with the involvement of IFCD, WE, and DEOs. There are a number of similarities in these programs regarding training, kit-box, emphasis on parental involvement and non-violent environment. There are some differences (that might be issues during program extension) in seating arrangement, CAS form and up-gradation of methods and materials. Three different modalities of seating is found in practice in the program schools - replace desks and benches with carpets (in some schools there are cushions as well); carpets for seating and low desks for writing; and desks and benches arranged to facilitate teacher and student movement. It is difficult to say if there is a philosophical rationale governing the use of any particular material and arrangement for seating. It is necessary to come up with a consensus about these matters before programs go large scale. For example, if floor carpeting would be found problematic (needs repair/replacement in two-three years, cold in winter, difficult to keep clean) and desks and benches are already thrown away -- it would do more harm later. Therefore, sharing and learning from each other is important.

Learning from past endeavors such as training on curriculum development by Finish Technical Assistance Support (Opifer Ltd. 04, 2002) and sharing current practices such as ATL package of SC/N (2064 BS) should be into practice, to learn and grow. Some of the problems they are facing are also similar such as appropriate use of CAS, grade-upgrading, utilization of the successful aspects of the program. At the implementation level sharing and learning from each other is absent. Sharing and learning from each other will benefit the program in several ways.

Reflection on Government Provisions

Teacher training, material support, community mobilization for improving quality of education and above all, classroom teaching-learning practices are the major focus of government programs. In the classrooms of the program schools several activities and materials used were the ones emphasized in NCED, DOE trainings, e.g. grade teaching, attendance board, flash card chart, CAS form, student portfolio etc. When asked, the teachers they related these activities with the previous trainings they had. They found these very relevant and restarted to use them in their classes now. *Therefore, it should be concluded that previous training has done a good job – at least for the teachers' readiness enabling them now to grasp the skills easily and quickly.*

Reflection on Utilization of the Successful Cases

There are several successful cases that provide useful lessons and examples to improve classroom teaching-learning in the child-centered approach. Even a limited number of cases covered in this study suggest: 1) support is available for classroom teaching-learning improvement activities, 2) national expertise is building in the areas of teacher preparation and materials development, which has facilitated classroom teaching-learning improvement in Nepalese schools such as IFCD, WE, Rato Bangala, Seto Guras etc., and 3) schools either have readiness or are in pressure to improve classroom teaching by using the training and other inputs provided the best way they can.

The issue here is how to utilize the successful cases in the regular programs of the government. One strategy could be the formation of a consortium to undertake child-centered education in a larger sample. Another strategy could be DOE's readiness to coordinate piloting and make it mandatory to include child-centered education as integral component in all the education-related programs. In either case, a national framework for child-centered education and national expertise building (that includes teachers' associations, NGOs, teacher training organizations, private agencies and concerned individuals) will be necessary. This is and should be the common concern of all those working for the quality enhancement of education in the Nepalese schools.

CHAPTER VII

Major Findings

This study is an attempt to look closely at innovative cases that are intended to improve classroom teaching-learning process in line with the child-centered approach. The basic framework used for the analysis and interpretation of data/information is related to three elements of success in reform -- shared vision, shared knowledge and understanding, and change process. On the other hand, the pedagogical emphasis of the program includes requirements for classroom transformation and involvement of local stakeholders. The major findings of this study are presented below, in line with the objectives of the study.

Program in Practice

It was found that the programs studied had a number of common features as described below:

- The programs emphasized collaboration with government institutions and partnership with NGOs and other organizations for program implementation. There are also field offices for implementing, monitoring and technical backstopping of the programs.
- There was visible improvement in the classroom display and seating arrangement (in the visited schools). There was emphasis on the use of curriculum for preparation and delivery of the lesson in the class. Use of the curriculum and flexible class scheduling was in practice.
- There were more interactions between teacher and students. Classroom activities were based on instructional materials.
- The following aspects were found as contributing to the improvement of classroom teaching-learning practices:
 - Shared vision, knowledge and understanding
 - Incremental, step-wise development process
 - Focused training and emphasis on discussion, demonstration and practice in the training
 - Use of materials in the training
 - Follow-up and technical backstopping
 - Change in educational belief.
- Problems the programs need to address:
 - Inclusion of upper grades in the program support because the students in a child-centered class move to higher grades.
 - Upgrading materials, activities with the grade upgrade -- SC/N practice can be useful in this aspect.
 - Addressing emerging needs -- CAS, portfolio and equality of opportunity.
 - Sharing and learning from each other at the field level.

Requirements for Classroom Transformation

The following things are essential for improving the classroom teaching-learning process:

- Developing shared vision and shared knowledge and understanding through training/orientation.
- Incremental development modality providing opportunity to understand and use smaller portions of the skills and then build upon the learned skills.
- Focused training that emphasizes demonstration and clarification of the concepts behind these skills.
- Provision of instructional materials as part of the training and use of the materials during the training itself.
- Emphasis on curriculum use -- teacher message, congruence of the activities and materials.
- Refresher training, monitoring, and technical backstopping (on regular basis) with focus on feedback.

Stakeholders' Involvement in the Process

- Parental and community involvement regarded in building shared vision and understanding.
- Formation of committees, briefing on student's progress, invitation to observe the school/classroom etc.
- Orientation/training to the local stakeholders on the classroom teaching-learning process as part of the awareness activity.
- Increased parental concern about children's progress and increase in parental support to children.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter states the major conclusions of this study and provides suggestions for improvement of the programs studied as cases and for utilizing the lessons of success from the programs.

Conclusions

- Collaboration with government institutions has been one major contributing factor in the programs. However, greater effort is needed for active working relationship.
- Child-centered education as envisioned in the MOES documents and curriculum and discussed at forefront in FRP studies are in practice in the programs covered in this study. Continuity and building upon initial successes are essential.
- There is appreciable improvement in classroom seating, display and teaching-learning. Several practices and upcoming issues and problems are similar among the programs. Sharing and learning from each other's experience is desirable.
- Consolidation of better practices and utilizing them are essential for enhancing the quality of teaching-learning in the classroom. It is necessary to establish working relationships between government institutions, donors, teacher associations, NGOs, teacher training organizations and private agencies.
- Piloting programs that comply with the concept and practice of piloting would be useful for the utilization of effective and successful practices in the child-centered approach.
- There is pressure on the schools to improve the quality of classroom teaching-learning. Child-centered education can be a valuable support in this direction.

Suggestions

- There are a number of things that can be useful in improving classroom teaching-learning. These are: (1) developing shared vision, knowledge and understanding; (2) adaptation of incremental, step-wise developmental process; (3) focused training; (4) provision of required materials with the program package, (5) regular monitoring with technical backstopping. DOE and other institutions of MOES need to consider these elements in their programs.
- *Form a consortium* involving government institutions and organizations working/involved in the classroom teaching-learning improvement activities. This consortium should work to:
 - draw lessons and identify the best practices in the classroom teaching-learning.
 - derive and suggest ways for consolidation and utilization of these lessons and best practices through out the nation.

- establish working relationships between organizations working or willing to work for the improvement of classroom teaching-learning.
- pilot child-centered education in a larger sample.
- Use child-centered education/improved classroom teaching-learning process in a gradual manner through out the nation.

A consolidating seminar would be helpful in forming the consortium and developing further action plans.

- Provide *focused training* and do the *piloting* of the programs in compliance to the concept and practices of piloting.
- *Conduct a second phase of this study next year -- on time* so that more of the classroom teaching-learning are observed, more cases are covered, training sessions are observed and materials provision and use are studied in regular classroom settings.

ANNEX 1

Sample Schools

Kapilvastu

Chetana Primary School, Bishanpur
Jahadi Primary School, Jahadi
Ramdev Primary School, Bithuwa - 5, Sauraha
Saraswoti Primary School, Bhaduwa VDC, Laxmanpur
Saraswoti Primary School, Maharajgunj - 8, Chamartole
Shova Samudayik Primary School, Maharajgunj - 3, Anbalia

Kavre

Janajyoti Primary School, Kavre - 3
Janauddhar Primary School, Panchkhal - 3, Mayalpani
Mangal Janvijaya Higher Secondary School, Mangaltar
Mangaleshwor Primary School, Bahare

Morang

Beganlal Primary School, Lakhantari
Buddha Lower Secondary School, Devijhoda
Lower Secondary School, Biratnagar Sub-Metropolitan, Kanchanbari
Machchhindra Higher Secondary School, Kerabari
Raghupati Primary School, Biratnagar Sub-Metropolitan, Mills Area

Nuwakot

Chwadi Secondary School, Chawadi
Indrayani Primary School, Pande Gaon
Prithivi Lower Secondary School, Bidur
Raktakali Primary School, Pipaltar

Rasuwa

Barahi Primary School, Laharepauwa VDC, Banuwadanda
Bhimali Primary School, Dhunche VDC, Bhimali
Bhimsensthan Primary School, Laharepauwa VDC, Bhimsensthan
Nilkantha Higher Secondary School, Laharepauwa VDC, Betrawati
Siwalaya Primary School, Laharepauwa VDC, Laharepauwa

Sunsari

Badri Nath Primary Vidyamandhir, Dharan
Mahadevsthan Secondary School, Itahari
Panchayat Secondary School, Dharan
Singhadevi Primary School, Itahari - 3

ANNEX 2

Programs for Classroom Teaching-Learning Improvement

1. Child-friendly School Program

Save the Children Alliance

(A) Background for initiation

- This year (2006), Save the Children's primary education program focused on improving access, quality and management in primary schools. Save the Children is one of the key partners for Global Campaign for education. It is a nation wide enrollment campaign led by at least 15 agencies. (A.R. 2006).
- Save the Children (Norway + US) have been supporting primary education in Nepal since the early 1990s. It has become clear over the years that no one intervention can change a system with multiple problems and weakness. SC has tried increasingly to provide an integrated package of supports with the goal of creating more accountable child-centered environments and more involved communities.
- The Global campaign for Education for All and the United Nations Convention on the Child Rights and child-centred environments focus on individual child's overall development. In the last decade of the twentieth century, Save the Children/US had actively participated in developing the child-friendly concept. In 2000, following a child-friendly school conference in Thailand, SC/US started the child-friendly school initiative in Nepal.
- The main objective of the child-friendly school initiative is to promote a child-friendly environment that fosters creative, capable, confident and happy children. An important component of this initiative is to address children's psycho-social needs. The child-friendly school initiative is based on establishing strong school, family, and community links.
- SC/US envisions a primary school environment where every child has the opportunity for holistic development through access to right-based child-friendly, safe and positive learning opportunities.

(B) Objectives

- To create, safe, secure, nurturing and healthy learning environments
- To improve children's psychosocial well-being, creativity, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- To increase active participation of children, SMC and teachers in school management and in creating the SIPs.
- To build teacher capacity and commitment to apply joyful, life-relevant, activity-based and participatory teaching-learning methods.

(C) Programs/provisions

- Save the Children mobilized school management committees and local child clubs, distributed English workbooks to first graders and facilitated

provision of government scholarship. It runs special classes for overage children where they are taught a condensed curriculum that prepares them for enrolment in grade 4.

- CFS aims to improve the physical and psychological environment of primary schools by training early grade teachers in active teaching-learning and SMC members on self-assessment and school improvement plans, by providing toilets and water facilities and by promoting child-protection messages (A.R. 2006).
- SC programs include the following:
 - (a) Participatory school improvement plans (Involving parents/children/teachers/SMC members)
 - (b) Strengthening the teaching staff (training for grade 1 teacher, extra teacher in the more crowded schools, helping teachers, to sharpen their skills)
 - (c) Early childhood development centers
 - (d) Support for school management committee
 - (e) Attention to children's health (finding hope in trouble).

Child-friendly Schooling:

- SC/N along with Department of Education and Save the Children (Japan+US) has been promoting child-friendly schooling methodologies and approaches in 1,500 govt. schools. A new trainers' training manual has jointly been developed by Teachers' Union of Nepal, Department of Education, Save the Children and Kathmandu University. It was field tested in more than 20 districts in the last three years. The child-friendly schooling mainly focuses on:
 - (a) establishing education as the right of each child
 - (b) making the school infrastructure and environment child-friendly
 - (c) Promoting child-centered classroom environment
 - (d) Increasing participation of children and parents in school management (Nepal Program Report/2002-2005)
- The CFS initiative has been implemented in Siraha, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. In the year 2000, this program was piloted in ten schools in Jhallari, Pipaladi and Dekhatbhull VDCs of Kanchanpur. The CFS initiative has now expanded to the districts of Siraha and Kailali. There are currently 53 schools in Siraha, 58 schools in Kanchanpur and 51 schools in Kailali.
- Strategies adopted are (1) Focus on the Whole - School community as a unit (2) develop a School Improvement Plan (3) mobilize the community (4) train teachers on ATLM (5) Ensure sustainability (6) Provide financial support (7) Establish a School Health Program (8) Hold a quarterly review meeting of program schools (Strategy to improve the quality of education).

(D) Implementation

- Clean classrooms and toilets, well tended gardens, abundant teaching materials in grade 1, and boards with child rights messages are some of the noticeable features of a child-friendly school. (A.R. 2006).

(E) Outcomes/Success Cases

- ATLM has brought remarkable changes in the quality of learning in grade 1. Teaching aids such as color books, play materials, pictures etc. readily stimulate children's imagination. Unlike in the past, they ask questions, share their observations and enjoy the learning process. Classroom interaction is lively. Teachers trained on ATLM know that children can't be taught by threat and punishment.
- The number of schools using the CFS strategy reached 173 from 54 in 2004. The pass rate in primary grades has increased from 81 to 85 percent. The repetition rate has gone down, from 18 to 15 percent (Annual R. 2006)
- Changes observed in child-friendly schools:
 - (a) Student's enrollment and attendance have increased and dropout has decreased.
 - (b) Students are performing better in schools
 - (c) Teachers are regular in their school duties
 - (d) Interactions between teachers and students have increased and are healthier (Non-threatening teaching)
 - (e) Increased interaction between teachers
 - (f) Increased participation of children in school management and decision-making.
 - (g) Stronger school, family and communities.
 - (h) Extracurricular activities are regularly conducted
 - (i) Schools are equipped with minimum facilities.

2. Qualitative Education Resource Package

World Education/Nepal

(A) Background for program initiative (What led you to develop this program?)

Government is providing the following things to enhance the quality of education of the basic level:

- (a) Teachers' salary
- (b) Teachers' training
- (c) Free textbooks
- (d) Scholarships
- (e) Provision of SMC/PTA
- (f) Teachers quotas
- (g) SIP Fund etc.

Even then the existing status of education is not satisfactory World Education thought there was still some gap. Then WE visited more than 100 schools (East to West) of the hills and terai regions and met the SMC/PTAs, students, teachers, parents, NGOs (working in education field), RPs, Ss, DEOs etc. and asked about the decreasing condition of education. They provided us suggestions and we documented them area-wise (Teachers' area, Parents' area, government area, SMC/PTA area, student area etc).

On October 22, 2003 we held an workshop of following persons:

- (a) Representatives of MOES, DOE, CDC, NCED
- (b) Representatives of INGOs (working in education field)
- (c) Parents
- (d) Students
- (e) Teachers
- (f) SMC/PTAs
- (g) UNICEF/Nepal
- (h) COPE
- (i) DEOs
- (j) RPs

We displayed all the suggestions, areawise. The participants studied the suggestions and suggested four areas to be improved. After that, with the help of the concerned experts World Education developed 30 modules.

(B) Programs/provisions (What are your programs/provisions for classroom teaching-learning improvement in the Nepalese primary schools?)

In coordination with DOE and UNICEF/Nepal, World Education has developed a package with focus on the primary level known as Quality Education Resource Package (QERP). It covers four areas:

- (a) Community mobilization
- (b) Welcome to all children to school
- (c) Improving school management
- (d) Help teachers (Grade 1-5) improve their teaching skill (Learning is Fun)

These four areas include 30 modules and their ultimate aim is to improve the quality of education.

(C) Implementation strategy (How are you implementing your program?)

The implementation strategy is -

For UNICEF/Nepal, DACAW districts, WE produced the manpower (Resource Persons of QERP) as follows:

- (a) MTOT - Regionwise (Participants from four regions)
- (b) DTOT - Participants from all RCs
- (c) RC level - Participants from all schools of RC's

For World Education districts, the process of orientation is:

- (a) MTOT - Cluster basis (Participants from all partner NGOs)
- (b) School level orientation - From all project covered schools

(D) Outcome/successful cases (What outcome/impact of your program have you seen so far? What successful cases would you like to highlight for others as lessons?)

To have changes (improvements) takes a lot of time. Even then, we have seen the following improvements within a short time span of three years.

- (a) Regularity of both students and teachers
- (b) Feeling of school ownership in the parents.
- (c) Students enrollment/ girls enrollment
- (d) Retention
- (e) Stakeholders involvement in planning (SIP)
- (f) Child-friendly teaching
- (g) Learning achievement of the students.

For instance, we propose to visit the following schools:

- (a) Om Santi Primary School, Bhandara, Chitwan
- (b) Pharse Dhayaring Lower Secondary School, Parbat
- (c) Titaure Lower Secondary School, Baglung.

- We also provided the QERP orientation to the trainers of NCED and they really appreciated the package. NCED is now thinking how to integrate the QERP activities in its regular teachers' training program.
- We provided other orientations of QERP to INGOs and pre-service teachers' training organizations. They have commented that if QERP is implemented, no other materials will be necessary in this sector.

3. Classroom Teaching-learning Improvement

Educate the Child (ETC)

(A) Background for the program initiation (What led you to develop this program?)

ETC used the participatory approach to local development and launched the integrated community development initiative (ICD) until 2003. The 7 VDCs in the hilly terrain, largely populated by Tamangs, barely witnessed any non-government development initiative which could have a chain effect across the community and stimulate the community to pursue mental and material change by themselves. ETC, at start, opted for school enrolment with emphasis on girls enrolment.

It's underlying assumption was to create an enabling environment in which poor, excluded and marginalized groups come together, organize themselves, work in union and get access to resources and facilities. ETC adopted the ICD approach. In a pre-dominantly Tamang inhabited villages, most of the girls

were trafficked across the border with India. ETC made children's school enrollment as the entry point of its ICD intervention. ETC was driven by the conviction that education works as a stimulant to trigger changes and to transform people mentally and materially.

(B) Programs/provisions (What are your programs/provisions for classroom teaching-learning improvement in the Nepalese primary schools?)

ETC's financial and material support in providing children access to education, teacher's training, infrastructural development and distribution of books and equipment, scholarships to 2645 girls and 737 boys from 1995 to 2003.

Strategic programs:

The other areas supported by ETC were health and sanitation, toilet construction, drinking water supply, smokeless stoves, kitchen gardening, IG Program, livestock management, garden, micro credit schemes etc.

(C) Implementation strategy (How are you implementing your program?)

- To reinforce education, ETC introduced other subsidiary themes in an integrated way based on the demand and priority of the local people.
- For resource generating, income generating activities were provided on assumption that children will not be put on jobs like shepherding, fodder collection.
- ETC understandably avoided policy advocacy and lobbying initiatives
- ETC conducted legal education, targeting women
- ETC put people at the centre of implementation. In the process, transfer of various skills, development training, agro-based training and literacy class contributed to the capacity building of disadvantaged population.

(D) Outcome/successful cases (What outcome/impact did you see of your program? What successful cases would you like to highlight for others as lessons?)

- Infrastructure building
- Number of trainings organized

4. Curriculum Development Centre (CDC)

(A) Background for the program initiation (What led you to develop this program?)

- (a) Experience
- (b) Stakeholders' opinion
- (a) Review of literature, e.g. SLC Study Report (more specifically)

(B) Programs/provisions (What are your programs/provisions for classroom teaching-learning improvement in the Nepalese primary schools?)

Regarding this, NCF (National Curriculum Framework, recently approved by the government) has pointed out the following provisions:

- (b) Teacher need to be prepared in such a way that he/she should be information transformer, co-learner, three player interacter and promoter

- (c) Mother tongue should be the medium of instruction
- (d) The learning environment in the school need to be managed in such a way that student can learn through interaction, project work, community work etc.
- (c) For boosting the teaching-learning activities more realistically the students' assessment system need to be teaching-based.

(C) Implementation strategy (How are you implementing your program?)

- (d) Through dissemination
- (e) Preparing implementation plans
- (f) Organizing interaction programs with NCED.

(D) Outcome/successful cases (What outcome/impact have you seem of your program? What successful cases would you like to highlight for others as lessons?)

We will comment after the implementation.

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