



The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

## BRIEF PROGRAMME DESCRIPTIONS

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### *Pakistan: Heights of Learning—The growth of self-help and participatory schools*

School conditions and teaching methods in the north of Pakistan used to be as harsh as its mountains. Now, new classrooms are going up and age-old rote learning is gradually being replaced by an approach to education based on self-help and participation. This is producing not only better exam results but also a greater sense of community and new opportunities for local people, particularly girls.

The first Aga Khan schools in Chitral and the Northern Areas of Pakistan were set up with funds raised by the Ismaili community in 1946, to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, the 48th Imam and the present Aga Khan's grandfather. In those days, well before the Karakoram Highway and the start of daily flights from Islamabad to Gilgit and Chitral, the region was among the most isolated on earth. Its inhabitants, more than a third of them Ismailis, worked against the odds of climate and geography to coax a living out of the land.

There was scarcely any formal education, and schools that did exist were exclusively for boys. The Diamond Jubilee schools were set up to supplement the efforts of the government. As in

other Aga Khan schools, the emphasis was on girls, who for centuries had been relegated to a life of unremitting, often backbreaking labor. Lack of instruction made it impossible for them to improve their situation or give their children new horizons.

There are now 154 Aga Khan schools in Chitral district and the Northern Areas, but parents in many villages have not yet overcome their reluctance to enroll their daughters. One reason is that many of the teachers are men (because few women are educated). Some parents still pull their girls out of school to get married at an early age or to work in the fields. All too often, parents are unconvinced that what is taught is useful. The result is that even today in many of the villages not a single woman can read or write.

These problems are far from solved. They are not improved by the low level of government spending on education and a rate of demographic increase likely to double the population of the region over the next 25 years. But some things are changing.

This report appeared in Development Network, quarterly publication of the Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland.

### *Peru: Preschool Education Training Centres—A process of empowerment*

Transforming the educational activity in the classroom is the main objective of CNCD—Centro Nacional do Capacitacion Docente en Educacion Inicial No Escolarizada (National Preschool Education Training Centre—in Peru. CNCD operates two Bernard van Leer Foundation-supported projects in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The first is concerned with the "transfer of preschool training methods" and the second with developing a "strategy for the transition between preschool and the early years of primary school." Both involve training people who train staff of preschools (animadores) and primary schools (teachers) and both use two working methods: action-reflection-action and investigation-action. CNCD estimates that it reaches 23,000 children in the marginalized urban and rural areas in Peru in which it works.

Action-reflection-action is a method that springs from people's own life experiences. Starting from this, a process of reflection develops according to the situation and what needs to be changed or improved. This reflection then leads to new action. In other words, each training activity concludes with a commitment to modify the situation or bring about personal change. This method is used in the training of teachers, in the work with animadores, and in work with parents. We want all these groups to use this method, to counteract the attitude of the professors who think that they have to say everything, to explain everything, rather than drawing on the real situation.

Trainers are trained to work with the community. When they begin a programme, they contact the community leaders to check what children's needs are; in other words, they make a diagnosis. Generally, the parents understand the needs, and teachers and animadores plan activities according to the wishes of the community, trying to develop a programme that will be serviced by a local person. The agreement of parents to participate actively is important; it is not simply an

undertaking by the teacher or animadora to deal with the educational situation, but a joint venture involving parents, teachers, animadores, and community leaders.

The other method is investigation-action, which is practically the same. It is investigation as you go along. Staff are asked to record what happens with the children or with the work with the community, to keep a simple record that allows for evaluation. This allows them to consider if there are other methods that could be used and to collect information about what is happening and, on the basis of this, make an analysis.

A CNCD teacher comments about her work with the project. "Countries that really want to have creative and healthy young people and adults have to take care of the needs of children. It has been proved that a child who does not receive adequate nutrition and health care in the first year of life is already disadvantaged by the time he or she gets to school. Because of malnutrition in our Third World countries we are destroying mankind."

Her work has much influence on her life: "I have learned to respect children, because they have great creativity, great potential. We parents generally think that we have all the answers and that the children must do things in a certain way. On the contrary, we have to respect the child's world, understand and stimulate it, not reduce or limit it."

### *Indonesia: A Women's Income Generation and Literacy Programme*

"Learning and Earning" opportunities are being offered by the Kejar Paket A and Kejar Usaha programmes for women in Indonesia. The programmes, supported by such facilities and activities as village reading courses, rural newspapers, and preparation for primary school equivalency examinations are aimed at eliminating illiteracy, especially among women; increasing participation of women in child survival and development activities; and enabling women to increase their income through loans for small businesses.

According to Faesol Muslim, Project Officer for Education, UNICEF Jakarta, UNICEF's assistance in the programmes includes providing management expertise and training of volunteers at the subnational level and developing child survival and development booklets to supplement Paket A textbooks distributed to learning groups.

Kejar Paket A learning groups are formed on a rotation basis, with the proposal originating from the village itself and passing through a supervisor to district and provincial nonformal education officers. Most learners are poor, illiterate girls and women between the ages of 13 and 44, with no fixed occupation. Tutors are selected from the community, which also provides a venue for classes. A village task force manages funds for the programme.

The 1987 midterm review found that Kejar Usaha group members have been able to increase their income by as much as 34 percent a year, and Kejar Paket A learners have been able to raise their income by 20 percent a year. The Kejar Paket A scheme has also become an alternative to formal schooling for primary school dropouts, who form 46 percent of learners. A new innovation in the Kejar Usaha programme is that loans are being extended through the Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) on collateral furnished by UNICEF and the government. This offers group

members a chance to learn to deal with banks; it allows task forces greater control of funds; and it frees civil servants from having to keep detailed accounts of payments and repayments. As UNICEF demonstrates the programmes' positive impact, Kejar Paket A and Kejar Usaha are being replicated in other areas in Indonesia. A total of 5.6 million illiterates will be reached during Repelita V, the country's next five-year development plan.

For more information contact Project Officer for Education, UNICEF, P.O. Box 202, Jakarta, 10002, Indonesia.

### *Argentina: Cruz del Sur—A Constellation of Challenges*

Two key ideas form the backbone of the Cruz del Sur project in Argentina. These include the belief in the great importance of the early years of life and in the need to attend to all aspects surrounding the child—health, nutrition, quality of the environment, and so on—with the active participation of the mother.

In San Luis, a city that as a consequence of internal migration, has doubled its population to 160,000 in the past 3 years, the Cruz del Sur project is being carried out as an initiative of the National University of San Luis with the support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

There are slums—barrios where there is absolutely nothing, no telephones, no lights, no police. There are areas where people arrive with five or six bricks and a pole with a flag, and where if in the space of a month they put up walls somehow and put a roof on it, they can remain. It is in one of these barrios, the most difficult, where they have begun work.

For the past year, six professionals have been **working in one of the poorest** barrios—barrio Tibiliti—where a Centre of Learning is functioning. The local people call the centre la escuela (the little school). In a small building, which was renovated by a working group and the families of the barrio, the Tibiliti Learning Centre was developed. The mothers and their children meet there each afternoon. There a kindergarten teacher supervises a learning workshop for the children, and there is also a workshop in which the mothers participate in various activities. The centre is a place for reflection and action.

The project eventually hopes to develop a nonformal education model that can be applied in the region by transferring it later to the relevant government institution. The model will be varied, but the basis will be a Centre of Learning with a teacher and three animadoras. The objective is that the mothers who work with the teacher will take what they learn back to their homes and thus not only improve the quality of life of their families but also have a stimulating function in the barrio, which will help in the search for solutions to some of the larger problems.

The mothers who are selected for training as animadoras have to meet certain conditions. They must be from the barrio; they must like children; and they must have the time to dedicate to the work, because we hope they will become partners with the teacher. They are paid, since they are very poor. Some of them have to leave their work as domestic servants to work in the Centre. At the moment, the first mothers are being selected.

Interviews are underway to start a second Centre, and a third will be opened soon. The Cruz del Sur project is a constellation of challenges and experiences of mutual learning and constant evaluation. The project also hopes to influence the training of kindergarten teachers. Most University graduates are not trained to work with marginalized children, and therefore we must incorporate more information about the social context in their training, to change the attitudes they have about marginalized children.

Cruz del Sur foresees much work in the future, and the motivation and enthusiasm of everyone is immense. One of the teachers in the project has remarked, "The work in the project has changed my life and that of all the team. It is somewhat far-reaching. We are very motivated to do something for our children, for our province and our country. Marginalized children affect us a great deal, and for this reason we have much strength to get on with the project. Today we have a different perception of the world, of problems in general, of our work in the university, of everything. It is a very fulfilling job."

This project was reviewed in the Bernard van Leer Foundation's Newsletter, July, 1989. For more information please contact the Foundation, P.O. Box 823334, 2508EH, The Hague, The Netherlands.

### *Philippines: An Early Childhood Enrichment Programme*

This programme grew out of a research study launched in the early 1980s to determine parents and institutional workers knowledge of and attitudes towards child care. Based on the findings, a training curriculum for child care workers and teaching/learning materials for preschoolers were developed and tested on a regional scale. The positive results of the tests gave birth to a national project called Early Childhood Enrichment Program (ECEP). Four government agencies (Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Agriculture, University of the Philippines Child Development Center, and the Council for the Welfare of Children) and two nongovernment organizations (Children's Communication Center and Nutrition Center of the Philippines) collaborated in implementing the project. The National Economic and Development Authority and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided technical and financial assistance for manpower training, development and production of materials, and research and evaluation.

ECEP teachers are guided in their work by a weekly activity guide that consists of the following components:

- Objectives for each session and the corresponding tasks of the day care worker for achieving these objectives;
- Learning situations that aim to develop the child's motor skills, language competencies, mental capacity, social behavior, and values;
- Exercises that allow each child to discover his bodily functions, to communicate, to accomplish simple tasks individually, to relate with other children, and to recognize positive values.

Teachers are also guided by a checklist that details the expected characteristics of a child at a certain age and the corresponding activities to be undertaken to facilitate the child's development. Such an aid allows teachers to devote special attention to those children who exhibit problems in their physical and intellectual growth.

An ECEP kit is also given to those who have completed the training. The items include a child care manual for parents; a manual for child care workers; a collection of songs, poems, toys, and games for preschoolers; storybooks and a companion manual on storytelling; and a resource book of relevant information.

These materials emphasize the use of symbols and images that are familiar to the children, themes, and representative objects describing the children's environment. Information is readily available. Play materials can be constructed from available paper, boxes, bottles, cans, buttons, leaves, flowers, sea shells, seeds, stones, and other household or neighborhood items.

As of December 1987, a total of 5,213 day care workers (DCWs), 960 Rural Improvement Club (RIC) leaders, 267,514 parents, and 1,691 day care trainers were trained and assigned to serve the children and promote early development. A total of 103,689 sets of learning materials were developed and produced for the use of various day care centers, RIC children's centers, and parent groups organized by the DSWD and the Department of Agriculture (DA). The books, toys, and similar materials were evaluated to determine if they were useful and appropriate for early childhood development.

Evaluations of the programme indicate that on the whole, preschool children who participated in the program performed better in school than those who did not participate in any preschool program, as shown in the evaluation done in 1987.

In a country where only 3 million of the 11 million children have access to some form of early childhood learning and where preschool education is not officially part of the public school system, ECEP offers a distinct alternative. But the challenge remains. For every village that has been reached by child care services, a thousand others stagnate; for every child who benefits from these services, a million others languish.

Additional information about this programme is available from Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), Molave Wing, DSWD South Building, South Superhighway, Nichols Interchange, Makati, Metro Manila.

### *Kenya: The Development of Early Childhood Education and Care*

Early childhood education in Kenya gained momentum in 1972, when the Kenya Government and the Bernard van Leer Foundation started the Preschool Education Project. During a 10-year period 1972-1982, the project carried out experimental work in training preschool teachers, developing culturally relevant materials for the preschool programmes, and encouraging community participation in preschool programmes.

These activities were carried out in the Nairobi, Murang's, Kiambu, Kilifi, and Keiyo Marakwet districts.

In 1984, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, in collaboration with the Kenya Government, launched the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE) at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) to coordinate preschool education in the country.

Today the NACECE plays a significant role in the design, development, and dissemination of professional ideas, educational materials, and services for early childhood education and care. Specifically, the NACECE provides the following:

- Training for early childhood education personnel
- Curriculum development and dissemination
- Research in early childhood education and care

Another function of the NACECE is to coordinate and disseminate the work of the District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECEs). The District Centres are intended to facilitate the training of preschool teachers. The teachers, in turn, bring services closer to the preschool children and their families.

District Centres for Early Childhood Education are currently training 750 preschool teachers per year. The teachers undergo a 2 year inservice programme. Apart from training teachers, DICECE's also mobilize the local communities, so they can improve the quality of life for preschool children. This is accomplished by ensuring enriched educational provision, improved health services, better nutrition, and care of the children.

The activities of the NACECE and the DICECEs have had far-reaching effects on the early childhood education and care programme in the country. There is an increased awareness of and concern for the young child among the local leaders, the parents, and the community. Local authorities are providing sites for building DICECE's and improving physical facilities. Intake of teachers in the 2-year inservice programme has increased from 200 in 1984 to 750 teachers at this time. Currently the Kenya Government and the Bernard van Leer Foundation are funding a building at Kenya Institute of Education that will house the NACECE and facilitate Early Childhood Education activities in the region.

This report appeared in the first issue of the. NACECE Newsletter For information, contact the Editor, Kenya Institute of Education, P.O. Box 30231, Nairobi, Kenya.

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*Early Childhood Counts: Programming Resources for Early Childhood Care and Development.*  
CD-ROM. The Consultative Group on ECCD. Washington D.C. : World Bank, 1999.