



CASP Newsletter

The Community-based Alternative Schooling Project

समुदायमा आधारित वैकल्पिक विद्यालय शिक्षा परियोजना

School Sector Reform (SSR) - Whose Reality Counts?

Mutsumi Tsubouchi, Chief Advisor

The pre-appraisal mission for the School Sector Reform Program (SSR) was organized December 1 to 11, 2008. Going beyond conventional political rhetoric, practical and realistic approaches were selected. The Aide-Memoire, which outlines the decisions and agreements made at the mission, states that the SSR plan will elaborate these available choices:

- (i) Free basic education for Grades 1-8.
- (ii) Reaching the out-of school children and achieving literacy for all
- (iii) Expanding access to education versus improving quality and internal efficiency
- (iv) Increasing demand for secondary education as Nepal intends to move to the next development stage
- (v) Securing skills for employment for school leavers

This is great news for CASP's potential target group, or "out-of school children." These children are called "hard to reach" as they represent 8% of the school aged children, or approximately 250,000, who are not enrolled in school. They are becoming "harder" to "hardest" to reach. Why is it so hard to reach them?" We need to look at their realities.

Many of these children live in remote areas where no schools are found in the neighborhood. In addition, for generations, their family members have never got a chance to school, as they had to pursue work instead of education.

Children in urban areas face a different sort of challenges. Many of their parents are poor immigrants without permanent houses and communities to belong to. Children have little discipline to follow simple commands like "sit down and listen to teachers in classroom," as they learn literally hand by hand by their family or elders or "masters.

On top of it, misfortunes plague their lives almost daily. For example, a father of a child, without insurance, died in an accident. The child stopped coming to class and started working at a hotel far from her house. Her facilitator tried to persuade her mother to have her back to class, but no success.

How can we reach them? CASP has been working to reach out more effectively to these children in a form of ASP. It has been proved that the more a community cares about education for children, the more effective our efforts will be. The closer monitoring and more technical input classrooms get, the more effective classes are.

Interaction Programs for ASP children

Radha Pradhananga, Program Coordinator

For the ASP children in the Kathmandu pilot area to exchange their learning experiences and ideas, CASP organized two interaction programs on November 29, 2008 in Gokarna and December 16, 2008 in Dakshinkali.



Happy with goodies

137 participants - ASP children, parents, CMC, Education Volunteers, Resource Persons and

Gongabu, Shantinagar, Jorpati and Baudha Tinchule and SOP in Sundarjal- got together in Gokarna, while those from SOP in Chhaimale and Talkududechour, totalling 93, met in Dakshinkali. Starting with self-introductions, the children provided the names of their child clubs, informed each other how often they hold meetings and what they discuss, presented what extracurricular activities they have, and if prizes are involved in any activity, what is given to winners. Topics included how each class deals with children who miss classes, but it was found out that most children, SOP in particular, attended the class regularly. The children were active at both programs. A few children were too shy to speak in front of their peers, but were encouraged by the

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We learned that there is no single prescription to tackle the children's harsh educational realities.

If policymakers do not understand these realities, even the most beautiful policy will fail. We have to remember that education does not occur in the meeting room of Ministry of Education or Education offices. Education happens in the classrooms, schools and communities. So if the policy did not improve the conditions of the classrooms, it would be meaningless. After all we educationists all work for better classrooms.

Whose reality counts? That of children must.



Making new friends

parents and CMC members to try. The children stated that they were interested in enrolling in the formal school after completing the third year of ASP. All the participants were happy.

Focal Persons from FSP in Koteshwor,

Review and Sharing Workshops on ID/OS for ASP

Yasuko Oda, IEC Expert, and Madhav Dahal, EMIS Consultant

CASP and NFEC organized review and sharing workshops for Dhading on 25 November in Malekhu, Dhading, for Kathmandu on 3 December and for the central level 4-5 December, both in Nagarkot, Bakhtapur in order to extract lessons from the pilot classes, which CASP has implemented over three years in Dhading, Siraha and Kathmandu, concentrating on the component of Institutional Development/Organizational Strengthening (ID/OS). At the workshop, the participants actively discussed their field experiences such as the Mother School-based Monitoring System, which the attendees found effective. It

promoted child-friendly education, improved the children's attendance, elevated the effectiveness of classes, enhanced Mother School's sense of ownership, amplified the use of local resources, achieving the cost-effective management of classes. Furthermore, the monitoring activities contributed to mobilization of Education Volunteers (EVs) in the absence of the Facilitator and better communication among the stakeholders. The frequency of monitoring, however, must be reconsidered when the system gets applied in other ASP classes as Resource Persons at each Resource Center will be looking at more formal and non-

formal classes .

CASP will examine the practical suggestions and recommendations given at the workshop, hold further discussions with NFEC Technical Team and organize a sharing meeting among policy level stakeholders in February 2009.



ID/OS Workshop in Dhading

Child Clubs

Radha Pradhananga, Program Coordinator

As part of CASP's community mobilization activities, a child club was established in each of the SOP and FSP classes in the pilot areas of Kathmandu. The club is expected to foster ASP participants' solidarity and enrich their learning experience. Each child club has chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer and members. Child clubs plan and organize a number of extracurricular activities; they host competitions in drawing

and writing, hold a quiz contest and a singing and dancing event, create different games such as the word composition game, plant flowers, publish wall magazines, clean up the classroom and its surrounding, to name a few, with the support of the facilitators and partner NGOs. These extracurricular activities contribute to the ASP children's mental, physical, social and emotional development as these opportunities serve for them to develop their



Gongabu Child Club

leadership, enhance their proficiency in public speech without hesitation, learn how to cooperate with each other, and more. The ASP children have become so active that they enjoy participating in various extracurricular activities.



Schedule of activities



Wall Magazine

More information

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"Sabailai Sikchako Awasar, Dinalai Narakhoun Kasar"
means " Do not hesitate to provide education opportunity for all"