



September 2002

Technical Intervention Area Summary Notes: TIA-4

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

TO COMBAT THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR INCLUDING TRAFFICKING

Precursor

Child labour and the trafficking in children and women are inversely related to the availability and affordability of educational opportunities. With schools widely scattered, transport generally lacking, and the cost of education increasing (in terms of school supplies, uniforms, fees, and transportation costs), parents of poor families in the rural areas often see little choice but to send their children into work activities to supplement household income. Parents in rural areas often have little education themselves and value education accordingly. Children, bored with village life, often prefer to work and gain self-esteem from it.

To mitigate the lack of access and the low quality of formal basic education, non-formal education (NFE) programmes have been set up in many developing countries. Essentially, they are organized outside the formal schooling system, *and* seek to impart not only general education but also life skills and possibly some pre-vocational skills that prepare students for future skills training.

1 Setting up NFE programmes

- Non-formal education programmes, while incorporating a number of standard features, should to the extent feasible reflect in their design the particular features of its target group and the conditions of the area where they live. It has been found important for the success of the programme to involve the community from the start when conceiving an NFE-programme;
- Steps to set up NFE Programmes:
 - ✓ Literacy mapping of an area to detect places with large numbers of prospective students;
 - ✓ Social mobilization of community leaders to orient them on the programme and convince them to organize community meetings to discuss the programme;
 - ✓ Orientation of parents, together with municipal staff and local NGOs and/or community-based organizations (CBOs) on the objectives, target group and activities of the programme;
 - ✓ Recruitment of local NFE facilitators;
 - ✓ Enrolment of participants;
 - ✓ Learning needs assessment of the participants;
 - ✓ Setting a time schedule together with students for the most convenient times for them;
 - ✓ Structuring NFE classes on the basis of education modules;
 - ✓ Testing participants at the end of the NFE courses.

2 NFE Facilitators

Facilitators, also referred to as para-teachers, are considered to form the backbone of the NFE programmes. In addition to the teaching, they are usually also responsible for the preparation of the actual lesson plan.

- Facilitators are an important element in the communication with parents of NFE students. It is crucial to maintain parents' motivation in sending their children to the NFE course;
- Facilitators, of any background, need to receive training before beginning instruction;
- The impression exists that the higher the education level of the facilitators, the better are the results of the NFE course. However, it is obvious that there are a lot of other qualifications that play a role. For instance, familiarity with the participants and their conditions also makes a significant difference. It has been found that former child workers who have managed to return to education and receive appropriate training make very good para-teachers.

3 Enrolment of Students

- Enrolling students for NFE programmes is mostly done through self-selection. Those who belong to the target group apply and are usually accepted. There tends to be few explicit criteria;
- Among working children and youth that have dropped out of school, it requires extensive discussions with parents to convince them to send their children back to school. This can be further facilitated by various incentives, including (but not limited to):
 - ✓ income guarantees, in the form of a nominal amount of money to cover basic living expenses or support in kind, given to the childrens' families;
 - ✓ contractual agreement where the child is guaranteed to be clothed and fed by the NFE programme.

4 NFE Curriculum

Often NFE curricula are watered-down versions of the regular basic education curriculum. However, NFE students have particular characteristics that need to be reflected in NFE teaching.

- NFE teachers may want to instil a more inquisitive and assertive attitude in the students than what is done in the top-down teaching in regular basic education. Education should be student-centred, letting the students do the work instead of sitting and listening to the teacher, and include special elements to keep the interest of young people who do not know or have outgrown classroom conditions;
- Content should be to the point and practical. Teaching should focus on practical knowledge that can be used immediately in the daily life of the students; this also greatly adds to the appreciation of the NFE by parents;
- The curriculum will be a mixture of different elements based on the objectives of the NFE course. These elements can include: (i) general education subjects for literacy and numeracy, (ii) life skills that will help the participants to function better in their community and society and (iii) pre-vocational skills that prepare them for subsequent skills training;
- Teaching should - to the extent possible – be done in the local language, and by local teachers;

- Topics should touch on the special conditions of the students and discuss the causes and consequences of child labour & trafficking;
- Many – especially small – organizations that are engaged in NFE efforts in relation to combating child labour and trafficking rely on their own curricula, invariably determined by the teachers. While this provides maximum opportunity for allaying the lessons to the particular circumstances of the children in the group, it also presents some drawbacks. There is no guarantee that important lessons learned elsewhere, with regard to content or pedagogies, are being fully utilized. Also, it might be that when the teacher leaves the programme, the new teacher will need or prefer to prepare a different curriculum. Fixed NFE curricula prevent this and allow for standardized training of para-teachers in support of these curricula and the learning materials that go with it. Government-approved NFE curricula, moreover, facilitate recognition for the courses and may even result in official certification (and such recognition may help generate support by parents for their children to take up NFE).

5 NFE Delivery

- NFE teaching should be scheduled for only part of a day (two to four hours) so as not to over-stretch the attention of the children and allow for other training or work activities;
- NFE for child workers should differ from regular NFE courses, which try to condense one regular school year into three or four months, and allot at least six months – especially because of the part-time nature of the teaching;
- The size of the classes should not exceed 25 students; 20 participants per class would be ideal;
- Careful monitoring of the attendance of the participants should be maintained. In the case of frequent absence, the facilitator must make inquiries;
- Certification should be available that ensures the possibility for the NFE graduates to continue general education in the formal system or enroll in a vocational training institute.

6 Parent and Community Involvement in NFE

- There is a need for constant attention to the economic and family situation of the children to ensure that they do not fall back into the habit of staying away and getting into work activities;
- Communities are important for peer-to-peer motivation, and monitoring of the attendance of both NFE teachers and students. They may also assist in the organization of NFE (for example, making available training venues and running support facilities), and in assisting the NFE graduates to continue their education or use their knowledge and skills in other ways;
- One of the most important lessons learned in setting up NFE programmes is the important role that community leaders play. Only when they are convinced of the value of such programmes will they work together with the NFE provider to make the courses a success;
- Experiences among different programmes show that the involvement of women is especially important. They are instrumental for community ownership of the NFE programme, organizing preparatory meetings, village role plays, setting up child-care facilities to liberate girls and boys who have to watch over their siblings and monitoring various aspects of programme implementation.

7 Community Libraries and Drop-in Education Centers

- Children need opportunities to practice their newly acquired reading and other skills. However, in developing countries, especially in rural areas, children generally have little access to books other than schoolbooks. To stimulate them, they should be provided with possibilities to read storybooks;
- Setting up (mobile) village libraries or drop-in education centres are an effective way to provide children with reading materials and methods of alternative education. Drop-in education centers provide a library with flexible learning hours for study and creative learning experiences for urban working children who are too busy and/or not interested in attending regular classes.

8 Remedial Teaching and After School Tutoring

- Flexibility in the course programme, individual learning plans, self-paced study options, use of non-print instructional materials, and self-assessment activities are important for already working children enrolled in school or an NFE program and for children who are frequently absent and at risk for working;
- Many children are weak in language and math skills. To improve the levels in these two areas, they need to receive remedial teaching and tutoring to prevent them from completely falling out of the education system. This can be done as follows:
 - ✓ Form small groups (7 to 10 children) and use volunteers (possibly other students) to tutor them;
 - ✓ University students who volunteer as tutors require training in tutoring techniques to better serve as mentors and positive academic role models for children;
 - ✓ The tutoring should be done at least once or twice per week but more often if possible;
 - ✓ A less intensive time schedule for working children is effective if it can be arranged according to their availability;
 - ✓ The tutoring should complement other sources of public and NFE education;
 - ✓ It should be realized that progress can be slow and is difficult to measure.

9 Income Aspects

- Provision of support to the children's families may be necessary to overcome material obstacles that may inhibit the children from attending. Such support may include:
 - ✓ scholarships for the children;
 - ✓ special support measures for the children (school meals, waiving school fees, clothing and even cash stipends);
 - ✓ support measures for the children's families (such as the provision of food and health care or schemes to promote income-generating activities for the parents or other household members).
- Some projects direct their earning opportunities not at the parents but rather at the children themselves. They set up so-called "learn and earn" projects in which children are engaged in suitable income-generating activities;
- However, it is important to keep in mind that while economic incentives can help reduce child labour and keep children in school, the success largely depends on flanking efforts that include awareness raising, improving educational quality and enhancing community involvement.

10 Ensuring NFE Success

- There is an enormous need for organizations at the international, national and local levels to exchange information on approaches, strategies, methodologies, instruments and above all, lessons learned and good practices;
- Certainly, NFE programmes need to be complemented with follow-up in the form of continued monitoring (such as home visits) and support (such as tutoring classes). Field research suggests that it is productive to closely link non-formal education programmes targeted at working children to rural skills training programmes. All too often captive groups of graduates are left to fend for themselves. Usually there are no immediate links to assist them to enter into the formal education system, to find a relevant skills training programme, or to get assistance to set up some income generating venture;
- Governments should ensure official recognition (with certificates) for the NFE graduates to continue their education and training;
- Basic education and especially NFE are major elements in assisting working children. Innovative NFE programmes for working children might be successful in piloting new approaches, but by themselves they will be inadequate for education to solve the problem of child labour. Rather than setting up a parallel system, there is a need for fundamental changes in the formal education system.

Case Study: NFE in Rattanakiri Province of Cambodia¹

- **Background**

- ✓ The province is inhabited by 6 ethnic minorities who have their own language and often do not speak Khmer (nor English);
- ✓ Government teachers are often unwilling to work in this remote province, and locals are not eligible to teach;
- ✓ The provincial economy is based on small farming, coffee, and fruit plantations, and transport takes place by kano/river;

- The project started with a few simple but **crucial steps**

- ✓ Survey on who does not speak the national (Khmer) language;
- ✓ Checking of attendance records at government primary schools;
- ✓ Gender comparison on ability to read and count money;
- ✓ List reasons for low literacy levels;
- ✓ Field trips by national and provincial level government officials & project management to break resistance of local leaders against the project;

- The project is based on **three strategies**

- ✓ Bilingual coverage in the local language (at the start) and Khmer (gradually built up in a 3 year time-frame);
- ✓ Non-formal education (flexible in location & functional in context);
- ✓ Community ownership;
- ✓ Village volunteer teachers;

- **Key elements:**

- ✓ Linguistic analysis;
- ✓ Functional context: numeracy, health, agriculture, NRM, land titling, gender;
- ✓ Training materials are done in local language by local trainers;
- ✓ Teacher training;
- ✓ In case of non native trainers: use 'back'-translation to check whether the message was translated properly;

¹ Based on a report by Ann Thomas as presented during the 10th Conference of the Forum on Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam (19 – 21 June 2001). See mission report to Laos by Hans van de Glind for more details.

- ✓ Transfer of literacy skills from mother tongue to Khmer;
- ✓ Daily classes at night, except during planting and harvesting;
- ✓ Use of solar panels for electricity/light;
- ✓ Materials provided and logistics run by locals;
- ✓ Women organize village role plays and Q&A;
- **Project achievements** for target group:
 - ✓ Khmer fluency in 3 years;
 - ✓ Basic counting and business skills;
 - ✓ Ability to participate in male 'dominated' decision making (NB women arrange preparatory meeting among themselves in their mother tongue before village meetings with men in Khmer).

Reference(s):

For more information please be referred to ILO TICW-project's working paper entitled: *'Non-formal education and rural skills training: Tools to combat the worst forms of child labour including trafficking' (TIA-2)*.