Children Consultation Results

Facilitated by Plan International
In Thailand and Vietnam
June 5, 2005
As an input to the Writers’ Workshop organised by
UNESCO
On Children with Disabilities in School and in
EFA Monitoring, June 6-10, 2005
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Objective of the consultation:

1. To provide children with disabilities with the opportunity to participate, share their views on issues, and their recommendations on how to include children with disabilities in the education system

2. To create an environment for children to participate in discussions and voices their views

3. To contribute children’s views from the consultation to the UNESCO workshop on Children with Disabilities in the education system.
Who was involved:

- Children with disabilities, aged 11-18 from Khon Kaen area, Thailand
- CWD from Tu Liem district, Hanoi, Vietnam (some at primary education level, some at lower secondary, some at high school and 2 from a school run by the Blind Association)
- Facilitators: by Plan staff, in cooperation with key government staff (e.g. in Vietnam- teachers and key staff from Tu Liem District Education Office, and a specialist of the Research Centre for Strategy and Curriculum for Children with disabilities)
Methodologies used:

• Group activities, games, questionnaires, individual interviews

• In both countries children were asked to identify the issues that they see as the key issues.

• Then the children suggested their recommendations. In Vietnam children chose 2 themes that they would really like to discuss in-depth (viz. themes 5 and 6 - Teacher training, and Role of the disabled peoples’ organizations, community and family in education provision)
Recommendations for
Theme 1: *Policy, legislation, budget and financing for CWD*

• Government to put in the legislation and policy that CWD are allowed to attend regular schools.

• Ministry of Education should have a policy of affirmative actions for CWDs, e.g. giving extra marks for the entrance exams for college/university.
Recommendations for theme 2: *Implementation strategies, administrative procedures, education providers for CWD*

- Government (Ministry of Education) should establish education fund or scholarships for CWD and to provide monthly support to the families, including transportation to visit doctors.
- Adequate budget should be allocated to district and village level so that support can be provided to the CWD regularly.
- More facilities for the CWD, e.g., sport playground, wheelchairs, hearing aid or learning aids, including computers should be provided.
- Hospitals should give priority to CWD.
- GO/NGO should ask children for children input in the development of action plan at community and sub-district level (especially in rural areas) and for budget allocation. Smaller forum is better.
• Allow CWDs to attend regular school, like their friends with understanding and care of teachers and friends.

• For specific cases, children with disabilities should be sent to Special Learning Center eg, school for the blind, deaf. The number of centers should be expanded to rural areas, closer to communities.

• Teachers, authority figures should see CWD as having right as ‘normal’ kids, to have access to free education including uniform, supplies and transportation.
Recommendation for theme 3: Education system structures for CWD

• Government representatives at all levels (province, district and village) should assist the setting up of disabled peoples’ organizations at community or sub-district level to work with them.

• CWDs should be enabled to be employed and earn income. Therefore the government (Ministry of Education and relevant ministries) should provide alternative education options (e.g. vocational courses that are disability-relevant) and employment possibilities for CWD.
Recommendation for theme 4: Monitoring and evaluation of CWD, statistics and definitions.

• Government should have records of CWD and monitor the services provided to CWD, including protection.

• Government should ensure the implementation of the policy- punish those who do not carry out the policy.
Recommendations for theme 5: Teacher Training and professional development.

For the communities:

• Awareness raising for other classmates, parents, teachers and communities on knowledge/understanding on the rights and capacity of CWD

• Government, teachers, communities, parents should ensure the right to education of all children, including CWD

• Service providers (education/ health authorities) should take care of CWD’s health, their needs and their rights.
For teachers:

- Provide CWD the most easy accessible seats in class, such as at the first row or the first seat of the row.

- Give exemption for CWD on certain subjects, such as gymnastics, being on duty, reduction in school contribution fees.

- Give clear explanation in class and be sensitive to CWD and their “signals”. If needed teachers should repeat explanation during after class hours. Suitable teaching aids for CWDs should be made available by the schools.
• Schools should provide appropriate and suitable games for CWDs and teachers should be trained on how to help CWD to play them.

• Teachers should discuss frequently with parents the children’s progress at school

• Teachers and children should have trust in CWD and provide them with equal opportunities, give them more opportunity to participate in class activities
For children:

- Assign capable children to support CWD in their study, games and play and in every day life in general.
- Sensitize ‘normal’ children by teachers and community leaders to avoid discrimination against CWDs.

For Ministry of Education/District Education office and other organizations

- Train teachers in teaching skills/methodology to teach CWDs, and sensitize them so that they are sensitive and receptive towards CWDs
- Hold consultations with CWDs in order to understand their views so that their concerns/solutions are reflected in the strategy and interventions
Recommendations for theme 6: The role of disabled peoples’ organizations, community and family in education provision

To improve the life and study of CWD, government, local and international organizations, families and communities should do the following:

- Provide CWF with scholarships and equipments (hearing aids, special glass for visually impaired, wheel chairs)
- Provision of learning aids and materials
- Enable poor CWDs to go to school by waving their school fees
• Ministry of Education and Health should establish consultation centres where children, parents and community can go to get advice

• Communities, district education office should organise exchange forums, platforms and games where CWDs can participate so that they become more confident in social activities.

• Establishment of a special fund for CWDs (by the Ministry of Education and other relevant agencies)

• Local organisations, NGOS, government agencies should organise awareness raising campaigns through the mass media

• Health, education service providers need to ensure the realisation of the rights of CWD and give them equal opportunities to study and develop as any other children.
There should be support from the school, the teachers, classmates, the communities, the local leaders, the donors, the local and international organizations working with and for children, and especially the families, so that CWDs are integrated in school and community.

Family members (grandparents, parents, siblings, relatives) should provide extra support and understanding for the CWD in their daily life and study, e.g. give them less house work, more time for study, taking them to and from school if needed, etc.

Parents and relatives should be provided with training for taking care of CWD at home

Everyone should be aware of Child Rights, especially parents.
• Village health volunteers and care givers should be encouraged to pay more attention to small children with disabilities.

• More consideration and resources for CWDs