

East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI

Achieving Gender Equality in Education for Children with Disabilities

Highlighting the gender dimensions of education for children with disabilities



Education for girls with disabilities

Adapted from upcoming EAP UNGEI draft working paper "Girls, Disabilities and School Education" by David Clarke

The 2010 Education For All Global Monitoring Report identifies disability as one of the most potent factors in educational marginalization. Data show that in the majority of countries in East Asia and the Pacific less than ten per cent of children with disabilities were enrolled in school and in some countries the estimated are as low as 1-2 per cent. (UNICEF, 2003).

Marginalization of children with disabilities intersects with gender based discrimination and girls with disabilities are among the least likely to receive an education. Surveys in 51 countries found 50.6 per cent of males with a disability had completed primary school compared with 61.3 without disabilities. Females with a disability reported 41.7 per cent primary school completion compared with 52.9 per cent of those without disabilities (WHO, 2011).

Education for all children cannot be achieved without the inclusion of girls and boys with disabilities. Ensuring effective policies and programmes will require investment in focused research and in depth analysis to examine how different children are affected and how areas of marginalization intersect. The girl child with a disability warrants attention in education discourse, policy and practice. This edition of the EAP UNGEI newsletter is focused on highlighting the issues affecting girls with disabilities in East Asia and the Pacific.

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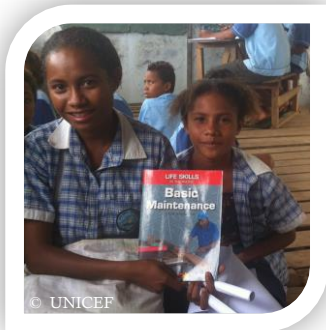
UNGEI drawing contest 2012-2013: Winners announced!

News from the Secretariat

Reflections from the Chair: School Clubs and the Potential for Gender Equality

By: Chemba Raghavan

In March, Dr. Cliff Meyers (UNICEF's Regional Education Advisor) and I visited Papua New Guinea (PNG) as part of a country support mission. My role was to offer a regional perspective on gender in education and early childhood policies, initiatives and activities in the country.



Students from Gavuone Adventist Primary School

One of the most enriching parts of this trip was a visit we made to two schools in the Kupiano District of Central Province, a picturesque four-hour drive from Port Moresby. One school was a government school and the other is church run. In schools such as these, UNICEF is helping train teachers to run weekly child friendly school clubs. These clubs are supported by parents and community members.



Children from the Creative Arts club at Gavuone Primary School perform a dance for us

School clubs are particularly attractive to children because they are fun, relevant and help build children's skills. As I chatted with the school administrators I saw that these clubs had great potential to bring children currently not in school back into the education system.

As the UNGEI Regional Focal Point, I was looking around me with a "gender lens". This made me more aware of the potential of school clubs to promote gender equality. At Gavuone Primary School it was heartening to see both boys and girls taking part in the Creative Arts club, and to see girls participating actively in the carpentry club – a stereotypically masculine profession. Yet, as in many other countries, cooking remained a favorite activity for the girls while boys opted for fishing.

It occurred to me that, while these clubs can provide a context for promoting gender equality, they also involve choice. The challenge is to work out how to develop the clubs and use them as a strong medium for dialogue on gender equality without preventing children from choosing the activities that they find most interesting and relevant.



School Clubs at Gavuone Primary School

It's easy to view school clubs as an extra-curricular luxury. Yet, in the contexts of disadvantaged remote areas, and for marginalized groups such as ethno-linguistic minorities, investing in low cost programmes like school clubs can boost student motivation, community involvement and create a pressure-free environment for children to pursue their talents. They can also serve as a powerful platform for advancing gender equality.

Identifying Barriers to Employment of Youth with Intellectual Disabilities in Cambodia

By: Aide et Action

Aide et Action (AEA) Cambodia has recently launched the publication of its AusAID/Australian Red Cross funded study “Identifying Barriers to Employment of Youth with Intellectual Disabilities in Cambodia”.

The study analyses young adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities’ livelihoods and employment opportunities and also considers education and vocational training opportunities for these youth. Analysis confirms gender imbalances both at school and in the workplace, with particular barriers disproportionately affecting women and girls with intellectual disabilities.

During focus group discussions, it was found that intellectually disabled (ID) men and women both experienced difficulties in going to school. However, a significantly higher majority of young women experienced difficulty attending both school and work (15.9%), in comparison to men (3.8%).

Major barriers were related to personal safety and lack of transportation. It is interesting to point-out that lack of transportation itself was not necessarily an obstacle, many youth and care-givers noted that transportation providers were unwilling to provide services to ID youth, indicating the discrimination faced by persons with disabilities every day.

The report further states: “young women also identified more difficulties than men, which they had encountered in school and at work. As a result, fewer young women wanted to or did leave the house to work outside.”

Nevertheless, at no point in interviews with employers and potential employers of ID youth were issues of safety or gender based concerns for women employees considered by interviewees; this is potentially due to the fact that 81% of employers interviewed were men.

Among the Reports’ many recommendations, gender sensitization of male human resources department heads is viewed as a critical step forward in creating a safer and more equitable working environment for young ID women.

Furthermore, the report states: “employers also need to institute precautionary measures to ensure safety in the work environment for all female employees with or without disabilities and provide reassurance to their employees about their safety.”

To reinforce this it is suggested that the government establish a system to monitor companies employing persons with disabilities under the newly implemented “set quota system”, which has been put in place to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

For more information and to read the full report please visit the Aide et Action South East Asia website: <http://www.aei-sea.org/en/index.php>



Changing the world through Education

The Very Busy Day of Srey Keo

Adapted from a book produced by Aide et Action



But I have to learn the alphabet first.

My name is Roth Srey Keo. I am five years old. I know you might be thinking that I look a little different than you. Well, I have Down Syndrome. Let me tell you about my day.

Mum is calling, "It is time to go to school, Srey Keo."



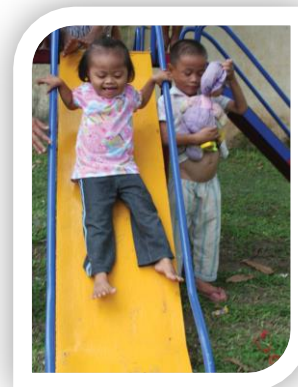
Sometimes I pretend to be the teacher.



"Can you draw the small and larger circle, Srey Keo?"

"Yes, I can, teacher. Look!"

When I grow up, I want to be a painter, or maybe a graphic designer.



I did so much work today. Now I need to take a rest and play! I just love going down the slide!

Empowering Children with Disabilities through the Inclusive Children's Parliament

By: CBM

The Inclusive Children's Parliament (ICP) is a joint venture by CBM and the Neighbourhood Community Network (NCN). It was initiated in South India and is gradually expanding to more states in India and to additional countries. To emphasize the inclusion of children with disabilities a "Child Ministers for Disability Concerns" project was also initiated in Kerala and Tamilnadu states in South India.

The ICP aims to empower children to take a leading role in their own development and the development of their communities while creating a strong base for their improved and meaningful participation at different levels of society.

Case Study: Swarna's Story



Ms. Swarna Lakshmi at the 57th Session of the UN Commission on Status of Women in New York

Swarna Lakshmi is an ICP representative. She has a visual impairment and was selected as the fourth State Child Finance Minister when she was 12 years old. Swarna eventually became Prime Minister of Tamilnadu Pondicherry State Parliament of Children and led a state level advocacy team.

Swarna's advocacy work has included collection of around INR 300,000 (5,500 USD) from her school during the Thana flood and working to provide stationary to children affected by the flood so they can continue their education.



Swarna during the ICEVI & Dbi conference in Ahmedabad

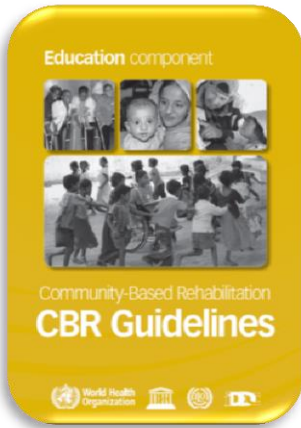
Through the ICP, Swarna has been hugely active in promoting inclusion of children with disabilities.

Aged just 13 she made a big impact at the 57th Session of the UN Commission on Status of Women in New York in March 2013 and presented a paper on Inclusion through the Children's Parliament during the 2nd Joint Asian Conference of ICEVI & Dbi in Ahmedabad the following month.

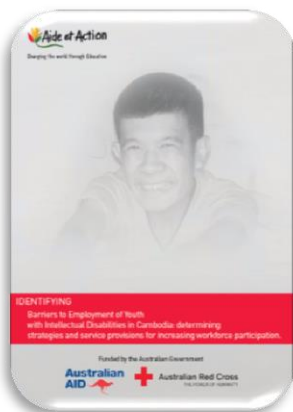
Innovative models to facilitate participation of young people with disabilities such as the ICP can provide useful lessons and inspiration for initiatives in the East Asia and Pacific region.

Related resources

Did you know...



Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Guidelines: Education Component
 By: WHO, UNESCO, ILO, IDDC



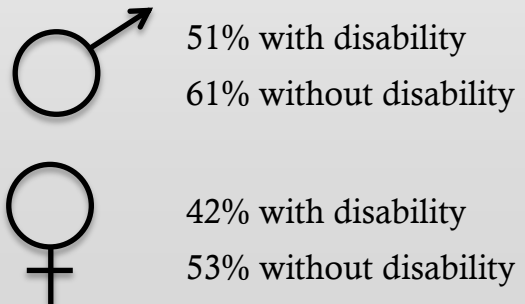
Identifying Barriers to Employment of Youth with Intellectual Disabilities in Cambodia
 By: Aide et Action



Factsheet: Bridging the Education Divide for Girls with Disabilities
 By: EAP UNGEI

UNICEF (2012) estimates that globally there are 93 million children aged 14 or younger living with a disability. That's 1 in 20 children.

Primary school completion rates are lowest for girls with disabilities (WHO, 2011):



Article 7.1 on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states “parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children”.

Of 26 countries in East Asia and the Pacific:

- 7 countries have signed the convention
- 12 countries have ratified the convention

(SOWC, UNICEF, 2013)

Winners of the UNGEI Drawing Contest 2012-2013 Announced!

We are delighted to announce the winners of the UNGEI Drawing Contest 2012-2013 on promoting gender equality in education.

The theme of this year's contest was 'What can a teacher do to ensure girls and boys benefit equally from quality education?' The contest was open to all nationals and residents in the Asia-Pacific region aged 18 years or under. We received more than 800 entries from across the region. Thank you to all who participated!

56 drawings were shortlisted for public vote and one drawing from each of the participating countries has been selected by the public.

Winning drawings have already appeared in a picture set to illustrate the key messages for Global Action Week 2013 on the theme "Every Child Needs a Teacher". View the drawings and read the Global Action Week key messages here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/unicefasiapac/sets/72157633301759874/>

Winning drawings will also be featured in a notebook and a lesson plan for teachers. Winners will receive an official certificate of merit and three copies of the notebook each.



Congratulations to all the winners of the 2012-2013 Drawing Contest!

- Dipta, 12 years, Bangladesh
- Karau, 18 years, Bhutan
- Wing Sum, 16 years, China
- Yashwant. V, 8 years, India
- Nandarie Rahma, 10 years, Indonesia
- Katya, 10 years, Kazakhstan
- Saichai, 13 years, Lao PDR
- Wern Sze, 15 years, Malaysia
- Azha, 13 years, Maldives
- Ankit, 9 years, Nepal
- Zaigham Nisar, 11 years, Pakistan
- Lord Ahzrin, 11 years, Philippines
- Shanika Rangani, 16 years, Sri Lanka
- Pkamon, 17 years, Thailand
- Huyen, 13 years, Vietnam

News from the EAP UNGEI Secretariat

It's been a packed year so far for EAP UNGEI...

UNGEI recently facilitated a session on girls' education at the Regional Workshop "Effective Programme Development to Delay Child Marriage: A Pathway to Stop Child Marriage in Asia" held by ICRW, UNFPA and Plan. With Plan and Intel we participated in a screening of the fantastic film "Girl Rising" and follow-up panel discussion at KIS international school, Bangkok.

In March, Chemba visited the picturesque Kupiano District of Central Province in Papua New Guinea to provide inputs on gender issues in education projects being implemented with UNICEF support. Read her blog post at <http://blog.ungei.org> Chemba also participated in the UNGEI Global Advisory Committee meeting in New York.

New resources now available on the UNGEI website:

The Gender Dimensions of the School-To-Work Transition:
Follow up Study http://www.ungei.org/index_3130.html

Joint statement to mark International Women's Day 2013
http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/2253_3148.html

Winning drawings from the UNGEI Drawing Contest 2012-2013 in a picture set to mark Global Action Week
http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/2253_3192.html



New EAP UNGEI Communications Consultant

We would like to offer our congratulations to Ms. Goy Phumtim on her great new role at UNGEI Global in New York. Goy contributed a huge amount to EAP UNGEI over the past three years and we were very sad to see her go, although delighted she will be waving the UNGEI banner from New York. We are also pleased to welcome Ms. Jessica Aumann as the new Communications Consultant.

Upcoming EAP UNGEI Paper: Girls, Disabilities and School Education

This exploratory study for EAP UNGEI will be released later this year. The paper will provide a preliminary scoping of the situation of education for girls with disabilities in East Asia Pacific, identify the specific barriers to education these girls face and make policy recommendations.

Expert Webinar: Join the Debate!

EAP UNGEI will organize an expert webinar to discuss this issues raised by this paper. If you have expertise or an interest in the gender dimensions of education for children with disabilities we want to hear from you! For more information please contact us at eapungei@unicef.org

EAP UNGEI Editorial Board

The EAP UNGEI Secretariat would like to thank everyone who has made this Newsletter possible. All content of the EAP UNGEI Newsletters are based solely on the contributions from UNGEI members and partners. Submissions have been reviewed by the EAP UNGEI editorial board: Maki Hayashikawa, Kenny Kolijin, Karishma Kripalani, Malisa Santigul, Chemba Raghavan, Aliénor Salmon, Daniel Shephard, Cyrene Siriwardhana, Jessica Aumann and Lucy Tan-Atichat.