

# Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards 2012

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At the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (15CCEM), ministers of education recommended that good practices in education in the Commonwealth be recognised and shared. This resulted in the launch of the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award (CEGPA) at the 16CCEM in Cape Town and a second Award at the 17CCEM in Malaysia.

The CEGPA is a competition among Commonwealth ministries of education, civil society and non-governmental organisations working in the field of education. The awards recognise and promote good practices in education programmes, projects, policies, strategies or significant interventions that have made a positive difference to the status and condition of schoolchildren, teachers or the education system in their countries.

To maximise publicity and participation for each round, a launch ceremony is usually held at Marlborough House in London to which high commissioners and their education attachés are invited, along with other relevant education partners. They then assist significantly in the dissemination of information and promotional and application material.

The CEGPA has become a much anticipated aspect of the CCEM and offers the opportunity to share good practices in education, notably highlighting the resourcefulness and creativity of educators in the Commonwealth, who very often have to function with minimal resources and in difficult circumstances. The sharing of these good practices from around the Commonwealth provides an essential knowledge-sharing mechanism where ministries of education, civil society and non-governmental organisations working in the field of education can adopt and apply practices that significantly enhance teaching and learning in Commonwealth countries.

Feedback and comments from previous participants have indicated that educators find the projects very useful as they are often applicable, innovative, easily replicated and, very importantly, cost-effective.

The 18CCEM, which will take place in Mauritius from 28–31 August 2012 and will mark the third round of the CEGPA, saw an increase in submissions from 49 to 123. The first adjudication panel was held in January 2012 when 20 submissions were short-listed. The second adjudication was held in March 2012 and resulted in the selection of ten finalists from around the Commonwealth who deal with issues such as basic education, numeracy and literacy, climate change education, teacher training, inclusive education, youth, and teaching in mother tongue at the early education stage.

The final adjudication and the presentation of awards will take place at the 18CCEM, where both the finalists and the winner(s) are recognised for their good practices. These are shared with

conference participants and subsequently disseminated throughout the Commonwealth. The award will be announced and presented at the opening ceremony on 29 August 2012.

The submissions are evaluated according to the following criteria: relevance to the local context; measurable impact; sustainability; efficiency and effectiveness; community involvement; and ability to be replicated.

To reflect the work of the Education Section 2010–2012, the practices were required to address at least one of eight Action Areas:

1. Achieving universal primary education
2. Eliminating gender disparities in education
3. Improving quality in education
4. Using distance learning to overcome barriers
5. Supporting education in difficult circumstances
6. Mitigating the impact of HIV on education systems
7. Using education to promote sustainable development
8. Promoting civil paths to peace.

In this regard, the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards becomes an even more worthwhile programme as the majority of our member states are developing countries that are struggling to achieve the International Agreed Goals (IAGs) by 2015 in a particularly unfavourable global economic climate.

The following provides a short summary of the ten finalist good practices for the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards 2012.

### Enhancing mother tongue reading development (in early childhood education)

**Organisation** Ministry of Education, Seychelles

**Description** There have been concerns in the Seychelles education system about the level of reading in the mother tongue. Results of tests and examiners' reports suggested that the basics of language acquisition and reading skills were deficient in a significant part of the population of early learners. As a result, the Ministry of Education decided to build a team of educators to develop a complete and comprehensive reading programme for early childhood classrooms, and the 'Apran Lir Avek Papiyon' (ALAP) or Learn to Read with Butterfly project was born.

The innovative ALAP reading project, the first of its kind, has been implemented in all primary schools in Seychelles since 2009 as part



*'Aprann Lir Avek Papiyon' (Learn to Read with Butterfly) project, Seychelles*

of the reform of early childhood education. Its main focus is to increase the level of literacy, thus enhancing the economic and social advantage of having three national languages: English, French and Creole. The ALAP project is intended specifically to:

- Strengthen the early learning and readiness of children.
- Enable each child to develop his or her full learning potential.
- Improve the quality of teaching and reading in the early years.
- Utilise locally produced reading materials.
- Enhance efficiency and effectiveness of reading development in the mother tongue (Creole).

The project consists of four phases, ranging from development of illustrative and audio-visual curriculum materials, piloting of these materials, sensitisation and training of teachers, full implementation and monitoring in schools, and evaluating overall effectiveness. The project is based on a collaborative research model as an effective approach to bring about and sustain effective educational practice.

### Impact and effect

The ALAP programme is home grown, hands on and experientially based. An evaluation study reported that it has produced outstanding results and positive impacts on the intended group – children at the early childhood stage in schools. More specifically, the following findings can be highlighted:

- Substantial increase in the pupils' mean score on the pre-post evaluation study.
- Over 90 per cent of the learners were at or above the expected level in the post test.

- A consistent pattern of improvement in instructional practices as measured by the Classroom Observation Schedule.
- Over 75 per cent of the teachers found the curriculum materials very good and very effective.
- Parents were impressed by the teacher-centred approach and motivational dynamism of the programme (interview data).

The project has had an overwhelming impact throughout the education system. This can be linked to capacity-building to develop curriculum materials and to train teachers. A model to monitor good practices and structures at the ministerial level has also been established to manage and sustain the developmental educational project. Moreover, international literacy benchmarks (particularly the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality) have been used to set local standards.

### Looking ahead

With the recent emphasis worldwide on early childhood care and education, this programme can be an impetus for further developments in early literacy, and the following initiatives provide some indications for its sustainability:

- Longitudinal monitoring
- Curriculum review and development
- Capacity-building and professional development
- Multimedia conversion
- Community diffusion and partnership
- Replication and promotion regionally and internationally
- International publication.

## Teacher training colleges for rural Mozambique

**Organisation** Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo (ADPP – Development Aid from People to People), Mozambique

**Description** ADPP runs 11 teacher training colleges all over Mozambique. Since the first one started 17 years ago, they have gained recognition as centres of excellence that produce teachers with a high standard of ethics, sound theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The students are recruited mostly from rural areas where they return to serve as teachers. The programme aims to produce teachers who both build knowledge and take an active part in the development of their community. To prepare these students as agents of change, they live and study at the college where they share the responsibility for managing the daily activities and are trained in other skills besides teaching, such as organising and mobilising communities, health and nutrition campaigns, small-scale agriculture, sports and other extra-curricular activities.

The key to the success of the teacher training colleges is a methodology called Determination of Modern Methods, which ensures a holistic approach to education through its organisation into:

- **Studies** – where the student is connected to a digital database with all subjects structured into tasks.
- **Courses** – run by experienced instructors.
- **Experiences** – school practice, community work, practical chores, sports, etc.

This methodology gives students the chance to organise their studies through a personally developed timetable of tasks to be realised and goals to be achieved where the teachers serve as mentors. This makes each student the driving force of his/her own education, contributing towards raising self-esteem and an unprecedented sense of being in command of their own educational development.



*In Mozambique, pupil-teacher ratios are high*

### Impact and effect

The pupil-teacher ratio in Mozambique continues to be very high and the Ministry of Education has conceived of a number of initiatives to ameliorate this. However, it needs all possible support to overcome the situation. At the same time, the challenges in the primary schools – low completion rates and poor learning achievements, especially in rural areas – call for highly qualified teachers who are also able to take action and act as mobilisers and negotiators.

So far, the colleges have trained 11,000 teachers pre-service, most of whom continue to work in primary schools and have an impact on thousands of children yearly. Several external evaluations have confirmed the graduates' positive impact on learning performance and drop-out rates, especially among girls – with case studies of female pupils who returned to school after their teacher's intervention. The teachers are reported to have a proactive, problem-solving attitude and have been observed to carry out community work after classes with parents on topics such as preventive health, women's and children's rights and domestic violence.

### Looking ahead

The Ministry of Education introduced a new curriculum for teacher training in 2012 that extended the existing one to three years in order to provide the opportunity for more thorough preparation. ADPP welcomed this and has responded by developing a very innovative programme that prepares teachers for the challenges in education in Mozambique and the world.

## Community Led Action for Children (CLAC)

**Organisation** Plan International – Uganda (Plan Uganda)

**Description** Plan Uganda's Community Led Action for Children (CLAC) project is a child rights-based approach intended to prove that 100 per cent of disadvantaged children between 0 and 8 years in targeted high poverty communities can achieve child well-being indicators and school success with holistic early childhood care and development support. The approach aims to enrol children in primary school on time so they can have the same academic success as their more privileged peers. CLAC demonstrates that the community-based model is a cost-effective approach to ensure that all children, including those from poor, marginalised households, are ready to enrol and succeed in school. Consequently, CLAC will result in the realisation of Education for All goals 1, 2 and 3 and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2 and 3 on expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, achieving universal primary education (UPE) and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

CLAC is modelled on four pillars:

1. Bettering the knowledge and practical skills of parents/guardians by encouraging them to discuss and act on child development in order to improve child health, development, learning and protection.
2. Early learning stimulation to ensure school readiness in low cost/high quality community-managed early learning centres for all children a year or two before they start primary school.



*Gender (socialisation, equality) is emphasised in the CLAC programme*

3. Supporting the effective transition to and quality of primary schools through school- and community-based activities that enable children to start school on time, stay in school and learn.
4. Collective action to include early childhood in community and national level policies to ensure a strong foundation for young children.

These interventions are all designed to provide quality services for the children who need them most – poor children, girls, children with disabilities and children affected by conflict – in urban, post-conflict and rural areas. The participation of children from poor, marginalised households in the school readiness programme is essential to reach the goal of UPE.

### Impact and effect

CLAC has a long-lasting impact on the lives of the most disadvantaged children in Uganda. In a recent evaluation, children benefiting from CLAC demonstrated better cognitive abilities, especially in early literacy and maths, in comparison to their peers in transition primary schools. The gender socialisation and gender equality emphasised in the CLAC programme has laid a firm foundation to ensure that girls and women have equal rights throughout their lives.

### Looking ahead

Plan Uganda will continue scaling up CLAC to more communities in Uganda. In addition, Plan will document and share its experiences and best practices emerging out of implementing the CLAC model to both government and non-government actors. The ultimate desire is for government and others actors in the education sector to adopt the model, with necessary modifications to suit different contexts, as a way of going to scale to meet the needs of more children in most need.

## Prevok-BEK: literacy and numeracy within national pre-vocational education

Organisation **Bureau of Catholic Education and Institut Cardinal Jean Margéot, Mauritius**

**Description** In 2004, the Bureau of Catholic Education designed a literacy and numeracy programme called Prevok-BEK – the first mother tongue-based curriculum introduced ‘informally’ through the ‘formal’ national framework of pre-vocational education, with Kreol Morisien being used as both a language of instruction and a language subject. Since 2005, this programme has been implemented in 12 secondary schools representing 900 students, 55 teachers and 70 staff.

Prevok-BEK is grounded in several United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declarations and conventions on multilingual education that encourage education in the mother tongue alongside bilingual or multilingual education. Prevok-BEK devised an innovative bilingual (English/Kreol) mode of assessment in 2008, and in 2009 Kreol and bilingual textbooks were produced for mathematics.

The Bureau adopted the use of Kreol Morisien as a means to solve the problem of school drop-outs and high rate of failure at the Certificate of Primary Education examinations. After seven years in the primary school cycle and three years in the national pre-vocational stream, students were still not achieving functional literacy and numeracy, mainly because the medium used is English, the third language of the students after Kreol and French.

The main objectives of using Kreol Morisien as a taught subject and as a medium of instruction are to enhance students’ self-esteem, ability and confidence; rekindle students’ interests and motivation in learning; improve student-teacher relationships; and activate students’ participation.

Prevok-BEK is led by an Action Research Team comprising a project co-ordinator, a linguist/consultant, 12 school co-ordinators, teachers’ learning teams, an administrative body (Bureau of Catholic Education) and a training agency (Institut Cardinal Jean Margéot) in applied pedagogy. The Team works on beliefs and understandings, ensures leadership and co-ordination, sets standards and targets, monitors and assesses, designs classroom teaching programmes and intervenes and provides special assistance. It also nurtures and fosters home, school and community partnerships.

### Impact and effect

Prevok-BEK breaks taboos about the status of Kreol Morisien. Since 2005, it gradually influenced public opinion and informed government policy decisions. Considered as a ‘patois’ or dialect, Kreol Morisien was not officially recognised as a full-fledged language (although it is the home language of 80 per cent of Mauritian families) until 2010, when the government finally acknowledged the standardised written version of Kreol Morisien and announced its introduction as an optional language in Standard I in primary schools from 2012.

### Looking ahead

The work accomplished by teachers, with the support of parents and students, bears witness to the importance of the use of the mother tongue for equality of opportunity and equality of agency in education. We look ahead to a Mauritian mother tongue-based curriculum alongside other multilingual education projects within the Commonwealth.

## Inclusive Education Advocacy Programme

**Organisation** Department of Special Needs, Ministry of Education, Malawi

**Description** Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the Commonwealth. It continues to face a number of challenges in providing education for its young people.

The mainstreaming of learners with disabilities or special needs is a relatively new policy in Malawi. Traditionally taken care of by missionaries or specialist institutions, blind, deaf, physically impaired students or those with learning difficulties are increasingly being enrolled in school under a new context of inclusiveness.

Despite these recent gains, negative community attitudes towards those with disabilities continue to stand in the way of Malawi achieving its goal of providing quality education for all. To combat this, the Department of Special Needs, Ministry of Education, designed an Inclusive Education Advocacy Programme. The Programme aims to:

- Increase access to schooling for young people living with disabilities.
- Improve the quality of special needs education in regular schools.
- Assess and counsel young people living with disabilities.

Using an approach that looks at the issue of disability holistically, the Department of Special Needs catalyses three district-based activities in the neediest areas of the country:

- Interactive community sensitisation workshops on the rights of people with disabilities.
- Village-based disability assessment health clinics.
- Teacher trainings on inclusive education approaches.

Through our Inclusive Education Advocacy Programme, we have begun the process of changing the mindsets of community decision-makers and teachers. It has resulted in the reduction of discrimination and the elimination of barriers to education facing those with special needs.

Through our activities, we have improved the access and quality of education for learners with special needs by first training community members and teachers on inclusive education and then empowering them to continue to sensitise their own communities on the same issues.

### Impact and effect

We are proud to report that through our pilot activities undertaken in 2011 across 2 of the 34 districts in Malawi, namely Mangochi and Mwanza:

- 270 teachers have been trained in inclusive education techniques.
- 185 community leaders have been sensitised on disability rights.
- 136 mother's groups, parent-teacher associations and school management committees have been oriented on how to create disability infrastructures in their schools and communities.



*The IEAP programme has reached mothers' groups, parent-teacher associations and community leaders*

- 1,300 potential special needs students were assessed through 19 specially arranged village-based disability health clinics.

We have facilitated the programme in a further five districts already in 2012, training 1,250 people on inclusive education. This will be extended to more districts over the coming months.

We continue to receive monthly reports from the field about the activities our local groups have implemented since their trainings. Additionally, media coverage of inclusive education activities has included national newspapers, television and radio.

### Looking ahead

The Inclusive Education Advocacy Programme is a replicable model suitable for other developing countries, and we have a plan to implement it across all 34 of Malawi's districts. The government and some non-governmental organisations have expressed interest in supporting the programme in other focus districts. We feel the programme's success has been due to its focus on sustainability, a low reliance on resources and ensuring community participation.



## Effective Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTL) practice

**Organisation** Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour Association, New Zealand

**Description** Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTL) assists teachers and schools to meet the needs of students at risk of underachievement due to learning and/or behavioural difficulties. A resource was collated describing effective RTL casework and the practices that lead to positive outcomes for the target students. The case examples were annotated with reference to the literature and current Ministry of Education initiatives and priorities. They included RTL work focused on individual students, groups, whole classes, teacher capability and school systems.

Successful outcomes were evident when RTL worked in an inclusive, culturally responsive, collaborative, consultative model in which assessment data was gathered ecologically and the contributions and aspirations of RTL, teachers and Hanau (families) were equally valued in the planning and implementation of strategies to address the identified difficulties. This resource of evidence-based practices and interventions is a catalyst for RTL to improve its practice.

### Impact and effect

The 760 RTL practitioners in New Zealand work across 2,500 schools, impacting on over 20,000 students and their teachers each year. The success of RTL interventions is determined using measures such as ecological observation, academic records, incident records, parent interviews and teacher feedback. The resource highlighted cases with positive outcomes such as:

- Gains of two to four years in reading age for classes of 13–14-year-old boys following a Reciprocal Teaching Programme in a secondary school.
- A 66 per cent reduction in negative playground incidents following the use of a 'playground audit' and the development of playground activities, rules and values.
- A reduction in students displaying 'at risk' behaviour from 11 per cent to 4 per cent following the introduction of whole school 'Positive Behaviour for Learning'.
- An upward shift in numeracy knowledge for 10–14-year-olds following a Peer Tutoring programme, with a particularly positive upward shift for Maori students.
- A target student, who had been removed from class due to continual bullying and non-compliance, showed 80 per cent compliance and the class climate improved following RTL support to the teacher.
- A mentoring programme involving senior student role models and incorporating Maori-preferred learning styles reduced school stand-downs and suspensions.
- Restorative practices used with a group of 12-year-old students stopped bullying incidents.

### Looking ahead

The format used in this collation of effective RTL practice is being used again at this year's RTL Conference. RTL practitioners are being asked to showcase further examples of successful casework. The resource is being used by the universities training new RTL practitioners, by the Ministry of Education's own staff and by practitioners who are using the case examples to reflect on their own practice within communities of practice. This year, the numbers of RTL practitioners are being increased. This is confirmation that they are a valuable asset in supporting schools to provide environments that promote quality outcomes, respect and understanding for all, and supporting teachers to ensure that all students reach their potential.

## The School Cooperative – A Training Ground for Future Entrepreneurs

**Organisation** St George's Girls' School (SGGS), Penang, Malaysia

**Description** SGGS started its humble beginnings in 1827. Since then the school has flourished and produced many outstanding leaders. The School Cooperative – A Training Ground for Future Entrepreneurs was established in 1970 and has since become the pride and ethos of our school. In 2010, the school was conferred high performing status by the Malaysian Ministry of Education and this has helped spur its success.

Through the years, the Cooperative has expanded into various business activities undertaken by its members, namely the School and the Hostel Cooperative Shoppe, chilli fertigation, cafeteria, kiosk, cyber café, tourism, catering, Georgian cookies, Coop Mart, fitness centre and budget hotel. With a total membership of 138 staff and 1,414 students, the Cooperative was able to reap profits of RM131,915.71 for the financial year ending 31 August 2011. This led the Board of Directors to declare a 15 per cent dividend.



*Restorative practices and group working can help stop bullying*

In line with Malaysia's Education Development Master Plan, which aims at producing first-class human capital to enable the country to face the challenges and competitiveness of a globalised world, a holistic education system is envisaged whereby innovation and entrepreneurship play as important a role as academic achievements. Innovation and entrepreneurship among the younger generation will help Malaysia achieve its vision of being a fully developed country by 2020. The School Cooperative contributes greatly to this as what is learned in the classroom translates into good practice in the true sense of the word. Knowledge related to the subjects such as economics, accounts, commerce and ICT is aptly applied to the operations of the School Cooperative, a perfect training ground for the student entrepreneurs. The diversified nature of the Cooperative's business concerns gives the students a wide range of experience.

### Impact and effect

The existence of the School Cooperative has given its members opportunities to attend countless seminars, conventions, carnivals, competitions and courses related to entrepreneurship.

The hard work, commitment and dedication of the teachers and students have culminated in the School Cooperative continuously winning prestigious awards, too numerous to be listed here, at the state and national levels.

The highly esteemed image of the School Cooperative has brought not only local but also international schools to learn the ropes of proper running of a school cooperative.

### Looking ahead

The School Cooperative looks forward to achieving greater heights as we envisage an expansion of our business concerns into the community outside the school. Moving beyond the confines of the school environment into the real business world will help our students face realistic challenges in the true sense of the word.

Over the years, SGGs has been very successful in embedding entrepreneurship skills in its students. The School Cooperative has been in operation for many years and we have seen how students have blossomed from shy and timid 12-year-olds into mature, confident and enterprising 17-year-olds. SGGs is confident that this project will be a tool that can be used by any committed school for the good of the future generation.

## Nine-year basic education fast-track strategies

**Organisation** Rwanda Education Board, Ministry of Education

**Description** The introduction of universal primary education in Rwanda in 2003 led to a remarkable increase in the number of children completing six years of primary school from 2008 onwards. This created a heightened demand for secondary education, and meeting this demand was prioritised by the government. In 2009, a 'fast tracking' approach was initiated to provide an additional three years of lower secondary and achieve nine years basic education (NYBE). The objectives of NYBE were ensuring equitable access for all children and providing them with the quality education and skills necessary to achieve their full potential while at the same time reducing repetition and drop-out rates.

A core element of the programme involved rapid construction of classrooms and latrines. The strategy drew on the Rwandan tradition of *Umuganda*, which is a culture of community participation in developmental activities. Monthly community activities were conducted at village levels throughout the country. The NYBE fast tracking strategies were planned and implemented with local communities contributing labour, resources and locally available building materials (such as stones, water, wood and sand).

Construction was accompanied by adaptations to the school system to ensure the quality of education. The strategies adopted included: the extension of double shifting to the full primary cycle as an interim measure; teacher specialisation to improve utilisation of teachers and their skills; a realignment of the curriculum and course content allowing students to obtain a more solid foundation of core literacy and numeracy skills; teacher training; and decentralisation of procurement and delivery of learning materials.

The community-based approach was very cost-effective. A single classroom built using the new community approach cost almost 50 per cent of what it would have cost using the traditional approach – saving the Ministry of Education an estimated US\$49 million in just one financial year.

### Impact and effect

The NYBE fast tracking programme saw a rapid increase in enrolment, retention and completion at primary and lower secondary levels. The number of students in primary increased by 34 per cent between 2001 and 2011. The overall net enrolment rate in primary schools increased from 91.2 per cent (2003) to 95.9 per cent (2011), with 97.5 per cent for girls. The transition rate from primary to lower secondary reached 94 per cent in 2010 against a 2012 target of 92 per cent; by 2011, it was at 96 per cent. In 2009 and 2010, 6,008 new classrooms and 14,899 latrines were constructed. Primary repetition rates fell from 15.3 per cent in 2008 to 13 per cent in 2010; and drop-out rates fell from 15.2 per cent in 2008 to 11.4 per cent in 2010.

### Looking ahead

In 2012, with the success of the NYBE programme through consolidating and building on the gains made over the past three years, the government took the more ambitious move of extending the programme to 12 years of basic education (12YBE). The decision was based on a number of positive lessons drawn from the NYBE including:

- Ownership of the school programme by the communities in the villages, which had increased the communities' involvement in school affairs including school management.
- The designs, standards and approach used in NYBE programme school construction, which provides a platform to ensure that future infrastructure is durable and sustainable.
- Government commitment to providing a full cycle (six years) of secondary education, ensuring that the programme has ongoing political commitment.

All children who completed the nine-year basic cycle from 2011 onwards can look forward to continuing their studies to the full secondary cycle of 12 years and beyond.

## Demonstrating adaptation to climate change in schools: rainwater harvesting

**Organisation** Ministry of Education in collaboration with Ministry of Environment and Energy, Seychelles

**Description** Seychelles, a small island developing state, is vulnerable to particular climate change effects and challenges. These have adverse impacts on the health and functioning of ecosystems and consequently on the well-being of humans as they affect the social and economic systems that are central to human existence.

This problem of water scarcity is further compounded by the ever-increasing demand for water occasioned by increased economic and social development as well as population growth. To address this, the country has invested heavily in the construction of reservoirs and desalination plants. This did not help, however, as it increased the use of fossil fuel and thus helped to emit more greenhouse gases. Increased school population and the local educational campaign to green school grounds resulted in increased demand for water and hence high water bills.

The objectives were to:

- Harvest rainwater from school roofs so as to meet the needs of selected schools and reduce the cost of water bills.
- Educate school children on the impact of climate change on our water resources and on the methods used to adapt to climate change.
- Raise awareness among the general public on climate change impacts on Seychelles and on rainwater harvesting as a means of adapting to water problems caused by climate change.

Share the water harvesting experiences of the schools with other organisations.

### Impact and effect

The project proved that rainwater harvesting can be used to increase water security at schools. Schools taking part in the project were collecting and storing over 2,000 litres of extra water. During severe drought, schools depended greatly on the water stored.

The project also helped the schools economically. All schools that participated in the project stated that their water bills had gone down. When comparing two bills in one particular school (before and after installation), there was a difference of Rs13,423.18.

In addition, there have been significant requests from people in the community, and a local non-governmental organisation is also promoting the project at community level including homes and some public buildings/infrastructures.

Most schools adopted pedagogies that were more action-oriented, where the global problem of climate change was localised to address the urgent needs of the children and teachers. There was also a shift from a teacher-centred to a more action-learning approach. The increased focus on project-based learning assisted in solving environmental issues through creativity, innovation and critical thinking, important requirements for education for sustainable development. This in turn will better equip young

people to prepare themselves for future global challenges, especially in regards to climate change, and to learn important skills in education for sustainable development.

### Looking ahead

The project has been recognised by both governmental and non-governmental organisations as an example of best practices for climate change adaptation. The government is now encouraging rainwater harvesting as a means of climate change adaptation and is mainstreaming it in environment and sustainable development plans of the country.

The simplicity of this project ensures that it can be upscaled easily in other areas, ensuring its benefits are spread to as many school children as possible. This enhances universal primary education and promotes social equity as children who were previously disadvantaged by poor access to water are now on a par with those from areas of a higher social standing.

In 2012, six new schools are implementing the project.

## Recovery for Acholi Youth (RAY) project 2010–2013

**Organisation** Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda

**Description** Recovery for Acholi Youth (RAY) is a programme designed for the northern region (seven districts) of Uganda. The region had experienced an insurgency for 20 years, a situation that only improved two years ago and left a shattered economy that impacted negatively on all aspects of life including education. The programme is supported and also greatly facilitated by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

RAY is a three-pronged project aimed at offering recovery opportunities to the children and youth in Acholi sub-region, thereby mitigating the potential for renewed conflict in the region. The three components are:

1. Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)
2. Youth Education Pack (YEP)
3. School Construction (SC).

### 1. Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP)

ALP's objective is to increase access to quality basic education for out-of-school children in the Acholi sub-region through the promotion of alternative education models. The target beneficiaries are the vulnerable children of school-going age (9–14) who are out of school. Those catered for are mainly orphans, child mothers, child-headed households, children with special needs, former abductees, children born in captivity and those from poor families who because of this factor are unable to either join or continue with their basic education.

### 2. Youth Education Pack (YEP)

The objective of YEP is to expand access to basic vocational skills training for war-affected youth in Acholi sub-region through the establishment of community vocational centres. Under the programme, vulnerable youth aged between 14 and 24 years attain one-year skills training in brick-laying and concrete practice,



carpentry and joinery, catering, welding and metal fabrication, salon and hairdressing, and basic motorcycle repair. This category of vulnerable youth is similar to ALP but only varies in age range.

### 3. School Construction (SC)

This component is to improve the quality of education in the Achill sub-region through construction of teachers' houses and expansion/ improvement of infrastructure in selected schools.

#### Impact and effect

The programme has offered opportunities to more than 2,500 formerly out-of-school children to re-join primary education.

In 2011, a total of 44 classrooms and 38 pit latrine stances were constructed. Ten other classrooms were renovated in the ALP host schools and the YEP centres to accommodate the learners, and 70 teachers' houses (35 blocks) have also been constructed in some of these centres. About 4,000 youths have graduated in the respective skills since the programme started in 2006. As of 2011, RAY had seven YEP centres in the Achill sub-region.

All three components of RAY are implemented in collaboration with the respective district education authorities. An estimated 1,040 learners are undergoing practical vocational skills training in these centres. Five similar centres initiated by the programme are now being managed separately by local authorities, having been handed over to them in 2010.

#### Looking ahead

By the end of 2012, 22 more ALP centres will be operational. The programme aims that by the end of the project in 2013, over 7,000 learners – 55 per cent of them girls – should have accessed basic primary education or been mainstreamed into UPE or universal secondary education systems. Another set of learners get training in a partnership with Papule vocational training school.

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