Learning from Difference

An action research guide for capturing
the experience of developing inclusive education

EeNET
Enabling Education Network

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A. Background

(i) EENET's action research project

The project (*"Understanding community initiatives to improve access to education"*) aimed to investigate ways in which community members can be helped to think about, reflect on, record, learn from and share their own valuable experiences in the area of inclusive education.

The project was based on EENET's belief that many of the solutions to the challenges of inclusion can be found within local experiences or within the experiences of people living and working in similar contexts. Reliance on advice and documentation from 'experts' in other (Northern) countries is often neither appropriate nor sustainable.

EENET strives to 'create conversations' between Southern practitioners and stakeholders, and to give a voice to these people who are often the real experts in their own contexts. The action research project was part of this ongoing commitment by EENET.

The Guidelines presented in this document were originally developed as an interactive CD-ROM.[1] The Guidelines provide ideas for methodologies and activities (based on the lessons learned during the action research project) that others can try or adapt in order to facilitate similar reflection, recording, learning and sharing within their local communities.

(ii) The story behind the Guidelines

"Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education" is the title of a two-year action-research study which began in April 2001, and which is continuing through the development and dissemination of these Guidelines. The main idea behind the study was to understand how the development of analytical and writing skills within a community can promote changes towards more inclusive practices in education.

☞ See original project proposal and the follow-up/dissemination phase proposal (available from EENET)

The study involved research facilitators in Mpika, Zambia, and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, who worked in collaboration with research facilitators in EENET, the University of Manchester, UK. The study was closely linked to

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[1] The CD-ROM contains audio and video clips, as well as extensive further reading materials, which we obviously are unable to reproduce in this printed version of the Guidelines. We recommend that, where possible, readers use the CD-ROM in conjunction with this printed version. To obtain a copy of the CD-ROM, please contact EENET.

EENET's philosophy and goals of empowering practitioners in the South to document their experience for the benefit of others facing similar challenges.

☞ See EENET's vision, mission and values statement (available from EENET)

The Guidelines can help people involved in community-based initiatives for promoting more inclusive practices in education to:

- learn from their experience of inclusive practice

- document it

- share it with other people.

There is a strong focus in the Guidelines on the importance of "learning from the South". Some of the most interesting and pioneering practice on making education inclusive is happening in countries of the South.

But there are many barriers that prevent people in other projects and cultures from learning about these experiences. Some of the tensions and challenges of working in this way include: the relevance of learning across cultures; bridging oral and literacy-based cultures; collaboration and *power issues* between South and North.

☞ See Appendix 1 for information about power issues

These Guidelines are designed to help practitioners and community members to 'capture' their experience so that it can be shared with a wider audience. Everyone can participate in researching their own experience – no matter what their level of formal education or literacy. The activities in these Guidelines are designed to encourage wide participation in action research. We also hope that the results of action research projects will be shared between practitioners working within similar contexts and, in particular, between countries of the South.

Becoming involved in an action research project should not mean an increased workload or a distraction from routine tasks – it can give added value to what people are already doing in the course of their work. This is why it is called *action* research. The activities in these Guidelines are designed so that they can be built into routine activities in schools and communities. Ideally the process should be led by a facilitator or a team of colleagues/community members who work closely together.

> **Rather than trying to *extract* information from people and projects, the main aim of the Guidelines is to *empower* people and improve projects/inclusive practice.**

In this guide we will use the following definition of action research:

> "the process of collecting and analysing information about a real and felt problem in order to plan action to address the problem".

The action research adopted in our study involved a combination of collaborative inquiry methods, as used in English schools, and participatory learning and action, as practised in the South. This includes group processes and visual methods of recording, in which the behaviour and attitudes of outside facilitators are often more important than the research methods used. A key principle in conducting action research is that there is a sense of ownership of the process of change which results.

(iii) Some key concepts and principles

Establishing a common terminology, or language of research, is essential, especially when working cross-culturally. In addition, when researching inclusive education there is the added challenge of the particularly complex (and often contested) terminology used to describe people who have impairments. In conducting the EENET action research project we made a conscious attempt to use straightforward language and to agree on what we meant by the terms we used.

☞ See "Action Research in Mpika, Zambia: Analysing the discourse of local teachers" which provides further discussion on language issues (available from EENET)

learning	**research**	**action**
participation	**reflection**	
inclusion	**co-operation**	**inquiry**

These are some of the words (terminology) used when talking and writing about action research. These words are used in different combinations to describe various approaches to this kind of work. For example:

- **Co-operative or collaborative inquiry**
  all those involved in the research are both co-researchers and co-subjects. Everybody is involved in designing and managing the project, as well as participating in the activity being researched.

- **Conscientisation**
  a process of self-awareness through collective self-inquiry and reflection. This term was made very popular by Paulo Freire whose writing has influenced the thinking of many people working in situations of poverty.

- **Participatory action research (PAR)**
  emphasises the role of knowledge as a significant instrument of power and control; produces knowledge and action which are useful to a group of people; and empowers people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge.

- **Participatory learning and action (PLA)**
  is a growing family of approaches, methods and behaviours to enable people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor and evaluate.

Both PAR and PLA are concerned with addressing power and powerlessness. They challenge the fact that the most powerful sections of society have total control over the definition and use of knowledge.

PLA, originally known as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), was developed in Kenya and India in the late 1980s. It has been used in a wide variety of contexts: agriculture, water, forestry, women's projects, adult education and literacy. Three common elements are found in a PLA approach: Responsibility; Equity and Empowerment; Diversity.

PRA/PLA entails a shift of emphasis:

from	dominating	to	empowering
from	individual	to	group
from	closed	to	open
from	verbal	to	visual
from	measuring	to	comparing, ranking and scoring

☞ See further reading list in Appendix 2

The Guidelines have built on the experience of PRA/PLA and have applied the principles to the education of children, rather than adults. Blind people have criticised PLA methodology because it uses mostly visual methods: maps, diagrams, pictures, etc. Throughout the development of our Guidelines we have been conscious of the need to make the methodology accessible to children and adults with physical, sensory and intellectual impairments, and all those with few literacy skills. This aspect of the Guidelines still needs more attention and so we would welcome feedback and ideas from you, the user of the Guidelines. Please tell us your experiences of using the Guidelines and your suggestions for making them more appropriate for work with disabled people, people with few literacy skills, etc.

☞ See "Community Participation with the Disabled: Training in Yemen" – this article on PRA and disabled people may contain some ideas you could use in your activities (available from EENET)

The learning cycle

One of the main principles behind PLA and other methods of action research is that the people experiencing the problems are the ones who will be carrying out the research and developing the knowledge. It is the analysis of an experience which transforms that experience into knowledge and which provides the confidence to use that knowledge.

Inclusive education

The central aim of these Guidelines is to support practitioners to research their own experience of inclusive education and to work collaboratively to develop more inclusive practices in education. The term inclusive education, however, is both complex and often misunderstood.

The issue of inclusion has to be seen within the context of the wider international discussions around Education for All (EFA), stimulated by the 1990 Jomtien Declaration on EFA and the Dakar Framework for Action of 2000. Within these international frameworks there is some acknowledgement that inclusion should be seen as an essential element of the whole EFA movement.

Integration is based on an assumption that additional arrangements will be made to accommodate pupils seen as being special within a system of schooling that remains largely unchanged. Many countries are now moving towards *inclusive education,* where the aim is to restructure schools in response to the needs of all pupils.

Barriers

Central to inclusive education is the concept of 'barriers to learning and participation'. In these Guidelines, many of the activities ask you to think about the barriers you are facing in your situation. When adopting a 'barriers to learning' approach to inclusion, it is helpful to ask a series of questions in order to understand the many different barriers which exist in schools and communities. Barriers can be divided into the following types and some examples of possible barriers are given:

attitudes: fear, embarrassment, shame, low expectations

environment: school buildings and toilets which are not accessible

policies: inflexible school timetables; lack of mother tongue teaching

practices: lack of interactive and co-operative teaching

resources: shortage of teachers, large classes.

Salamanca

UNESCO's 'Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education' was produced in 1994, and provides a framework for thinking about how to move policy and practice forward in inclusive education. It argues that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are:

> "…the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all".

Furthermore, it suggests that such schools can:

> "…provide an effective education for the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system".

Salamanca encourages us to look at educational difficulties in new ways. This new direction in thinking is based on the belief that changes in methodology and organisation – made in response to pupils experiencing difficulties – can, under certain conditions, benefit all children. In this way, pupils who are currently categorised as having special needs come to be seen as a stimulus for encouraging the development of richer learning environments.

☞ See Salamanca Statement
(www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF)

Whilst many of the debates and disputes about the moves towards inclusive education are driven by Northern agendas, they clearly have implications for policy initiatives in countries of the South, where many groups of learners are particularly vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion – not only disabled learners. Race, ethnicity, gender and poverty are also factors in educational exclusion.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is another international document promoting the principle that every child has a right to education. Article 2 upholds every child's right to be protected from discrimination, whether due to gender, race, disability, religion, language or poverty. Article 28 states that every child has a right to education, and includes making free primary education compulsory and working towards reducing drop-out rates. Article 29 is also about education and allowing a child's personality, talents and intellectual and physical abilities develop to their fullest potential.

☞ See UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm)

(iv) Aim of the guidelines

The main aim of these Guidelines is to support communities to tell their story of developing inclusive practices in education – through learning, documenting and sharing this experience.

The following guiding principles were developed in order to support this philosophy of 'creative collaboration'. The long-term aim of the Guidelines is to help its users reduce marginalisation and exclusion from education and so make education more inclusive, by:

- **Using existing knowledge**
  Local knowledge helps our understanding of why some children experience difficulty taking part in education.

- **Building on experience**
  Members of the local community have lots of experience that can be used to make education more inclusive.

- **Collecting information**
  There is, therefore, a need to bring together the knowledge that is available within the community.

- **Working together**
  This means that progress depends on people co-operating in order to identify, and find ways of solving, problems.

- **Listening to different voices**
  Working together means learning from one another and, in particular, listening to the ideas of those whose voices are often unheard.

- **Creating conversations**
  It is through talking and listening that we learn. These conversations can lead us to see our own situation differently and thus inspire important changes in the way we practice education.

  ☞ See Appendix 3 for examples of conversations between teachers

- **Evaluating experiences**
  The lessons of action research can be defined in the form of stories. These can be used to reflect on and evaluate the learning that has occurred and share it with others.

 In setting up an action research group it is important to make sure that everybody involved understands these basic principles.

"Difference is our greatest renewable resource."

B. Preparing for action research on inclusion

(i) Establishing a research team

Ideally a research team needs to be formed. This team can provide guidance on the research process, and opportunities for reflection. The team members can agree on a common goal, and share their various agendas. It is the facilitator's role to create a team with diverse perspectives and experiences. Some things to consider in developing a representative team:

- gender balance
- disabled/non-disabled
- insider/outsider
- north/south
- age
- levels of knowledge and interest in the research.

(ii) Research team skills matrix   EENET tried & tested

It is also a good idea to establish what skills are available among the research team. This can be represented in the form of a skills matrix.

List the members of the team on one side, then brainstorm on the whole range of skills and experiences that would be useful to this project. (See example below.)

Discussing the strengths and weaknesses of team members before embarking on a research project helps to ensure that the team has a complementary set of skills and experiences. It also helps the team members to get to know one another and to divide up tasks.

Skill	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5
Local language					
Knowledge of local culture					
Good writing skills					
Good group facilitation skills					
Good one-to-one skills					
Attention to detail					
Overall picture of action research, inclusive education, and local context					
Good listening skills					
Can draw diagrams and pictures					
Can make things fun (can tell good jokes!)					

(iii) Stakeholder matrix

It is important to get a clearer idea of who are the key stakeholders. This can also be mapped out on a matrix, by carrying out a **stakeholder analysis**:

- Who are all the people who have a 'stake' in this project (school, community etc)?

- How important is this project to them? (Rate levels of importance on a scale of 1-5.)

- What is people's existing knowledge of this project? (Again use a scale to denote high or low levels of knowledge on a scale of 1-5.)

Draw up a stakeholder matrix and put the different stakeholders in each box:

Low importance High knowledge	High importance High knowledge
Low knowledge Low importance	Low knowledge High importance

This process is not essential, but can be helpful in ensuring that you have an inclusive team, and to work out:

- who should be involved

- who needs more information (bottom right-hand square)

- who could be involved if the project could be made more relevant to them (top left hand square)

- who could be key resource people and motivators (top right hand square)

- who can happily be left out, or who needs to be given both more motivation and more information (bottom left-hand square).

(iv) Dissemination

It is a good idea to think about project outcomes and dissemination at the beginning, as part of the preparation for the project. For example:

Desired outputs

What do people want the research project to produce?

- a local drama

- a small booklet

- a video

- an exhibition

- a training manual.

Different stakeholders will have different desired outcomes.

Audience analysis

An audience analysis, similar to the original stakeholder analysis, should be carried out in the planning stages, rather than being left to the end.

- Who could possibly be interested in the results of this research?

- How important will it be to them?

- How easily can they access the information?

- What sort of processes will be used for disseminating and sharing the results of the research?

Activities

1. Introduction to the activities

There is a wide range of possible activities which can be used as part of an action research process. The activities in these Guidelines are divided into two main headings: 'looking' and 'thinking'. There is also a small section on 'action'.

We have summarised the process of action research, used by EENET to research and improve education practice, in a framework diagram.

☞ See diagrams on pages 20 and 21

When embarking on an action research project and before introducing changes into schools and communities, it is important for groups to find out about and think about their existing experiences. It is also important to consider the particular culture and history of their situation. This will help determine what kind of information needs to be collected and recorded for analysis. In order for the action research cycle to be completed, the looking and thinking should lead to action.

EENET's action research project emphasised the process of reflection (looking and thinking), more than action. The guidelines therefore contain mainly examples of activities which promote reflection. In the communities involved in EENET's project the process of group reflection did lead to changes in practice in classrooms and communities. We have included just a few examples of these 'actions' as they were not the main focus of the study. Our main focus was how to support practitioners 'to tell their story'.

The list of activities can be treated as a 'buffet menu'. Action researchers (you!) can select from a range of possible methods and approaches depending on the particular situation you are facing, or the specific needs of your team. For example, you can only select the photography exercise if you have access to photographic equipment. If you have such equipment you may decide to use this activity as an excellent way of working with groups who have difficulty recording or expressing their ideas and experiences in writing or through speech.

Each person in the research team will bring with them their own ideas, experiences, memories and prejudices. Every person is a valuable resource in the research process. It is these human resources which are so valuable in action research. It does not cost anything to talk to colleagues and look carefully at your situation.

We have tried to break down the activities involved in action research according to the way we use our main faculties of speech, vision, hearing, thinking – and our ability to read, write and draw. For those who have difficulty

with literacy skills, many other ways of recording ideas and information are suggested.

Please feel free to use the activities as flexibly as you like. We provide a menu of suggestions, not a formula for how to do action research.

Helpful hints

It is a good idea to use your activities to gather and assess information from several different sources, so that you can compare and check the information to see if it is significant. This way of looking at things from three or more different angles is sometimes called 'triangulation'. For example, you could compare evidence from: different people within a particular school community; different methods of data collection; different research team members. However, in reality, you will often get three completely different sets of evidence, which may even contain conflicting information! Make sure this is discussed by the research participants.

Remember it is may be a good idea to do some warm-up or 'ice-breaking' exercises with groups before launching into some of the suggested activities.

☞ See warm-up activities from "Inclusive Education in Cambodia" teacher training materials (available from EENET)

Try to create a relaxed, informal and welcoming environment in which to carry out your activities. Remember, action research is not about testing people's knowledge or grading them on their ability to analyse and change a situation. It is also not about telling them how to do their jobs or what changes they need to make. You want everyone to feel at ease and have an equal chance to say what they want to say.

Evaluate the changes made, and the action research activities used, before starting to look again

Look again in a different way; involve different people

Look
(Observe your situation; talk about your experiences; find out what barriers to learning exist and what methods have already been tried to overcome them)

Act
(Using the information you have gathered through 'looking' and the analyses you have made through 'thinking', make changes to your practices so that barriers to learning can be addressed. Write stories.)

Don't rush into action; go back and look again, gather more information and do some more thinking if you need to!

Think
(Think about: other information you still need, and other ways of collecting it; how you can overcome the barriers and build on successes; discuss, write about and analyse your experiences)

Sharing and networking as part of action research

Your action research

Look

Act

Think

Inspire others to look, think, act

Look

Act

Think

Local dissemination of research (written accounts, video, etc)

Development of written accounts and other outputs (eg, video)

Use outputs for wider networking: at regional, national, international levels
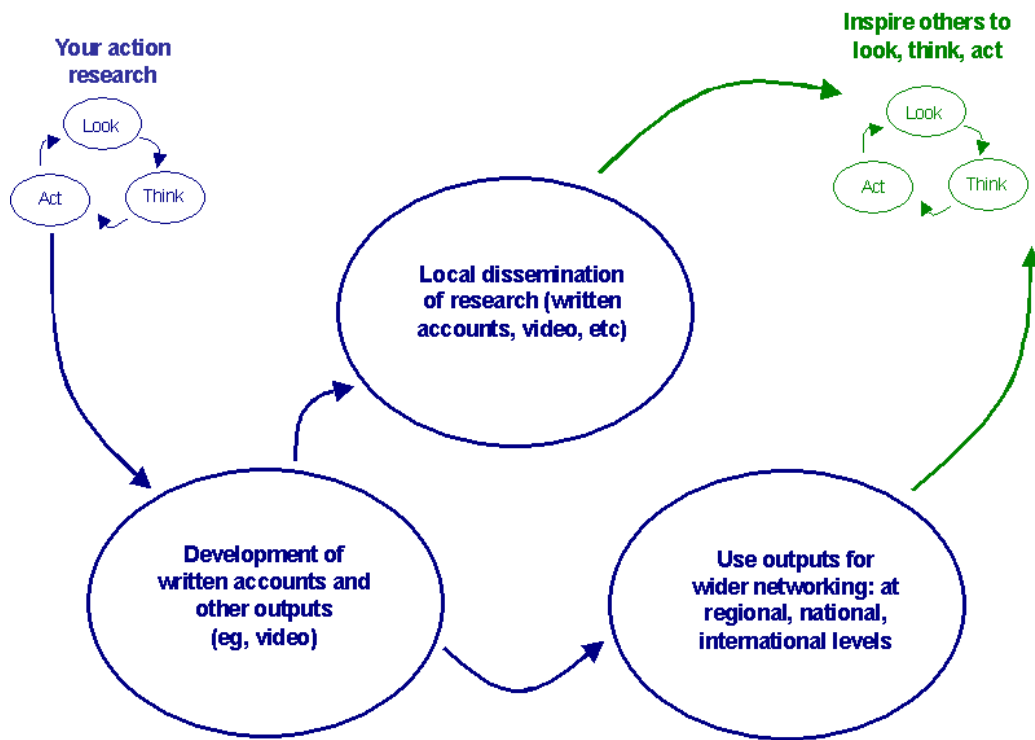
2. 'Looking' activities

'Looking' activities are divided into two categories, those that involve talking and those that involve observing.

The activities we suggest here will help you to *look* at the situation in your own school and community. They will help you to find out what is going on through *talking* to each other, and through *observing and recording* what you see is happening in various different places.

Once you have looked closely at the situation, you will be in a better position to think about or analyse what this means in terms of inclusive or exclusive practices. You will also be in a better position to think about how you might improve practices, to make your school/community more inclusive.

So, 'looking' is very important – it is the base on which you will build your thinking (analysis) and then later your actions to improve practice.

There are, of course, many overlaps between 'looking' and 'thinking'. For example, when we *look* at what is happening in our schools and communities we ideally need to *record* what we see, so that we don't forget. This recording (writing and drawing) is a part of the 'thinking' process.

2.1. Looking activities: Talking and listening

2.1.1. Brainstorming ideas

EENET tried
& tested

Brainstorming is a very quick way of sharing ideas, concerns or key words. Participants are asked to say, or write, the first words that come into their heads when considering a particular issue. There are many different ways of brainstorming – eg, as individuals, in pairs, in a group. Brainstorming can help you to identify (in a relatively short time) the main issues that your action research will cover and the key questions you need to ask during your research.

Brainstorming during a teachers' workshop, Zambia

There are lots of different ways you can bring brainstorming into your action research. Here we describe how brainstorming fitted into a teachers' workshop in Zambia.

Instructions given to the participants
The teachers were first given an individual activity. They were asked to write a short advertisement for their school which highlighted the things they thought made the school a good school. This enabled the day's activities to start from a positive perspective, which is important for maintaining participants' motivation.

The teachers were then asked to sit in groups and brainstorm the barriers that they face in their school, which might make it a less good school. They wrote their list of barriers on a sheet of paper. During the brainstorming they were not allowed to offer explanations of their ideas, or to say whether they agreed/disagreed with their colleagues' ideas.

Only after the brainstorming session was finished were the teachers allowed to discuss the ideas in the list in more detail. This discussion was followed by a second brainstorming activity in which they had to list any strategies they had already tried in order to overcome these barriers.

How did participants respond to this activity?
The groups wanted to discuss their thoughts and to ensure the 'answers' were correct before writing them down on paper. The concept of writing down ideas from the 'top-of-your-head' did not come easily. One group really lost enthusiasm when told several times not to discuss but to brainstorm.

Helpful hints

Here are some suggestions for making your brainstorm activity work well, based on the lessons we learned.

Do not assume that everyone is used to brainstorming. It may be something that people have never done before. It can also take confidence to just state ideas in front of a large group without first discussing them discretely to see if they 'sound right'. Participants therefore need to be given a clear explanation of brainstorming before the activity starts and reassured that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

Think of ways to explain brainstorming that participants can relate to. For example, brainstorming could be compared to a shopping list: you write it down without discussing with anyone, then later you can discuss the details with the shopkeeper – how much milk, what size of bread, etc.

It may be helpful if the facilitators demonstrate an example of brainstorming.

Although a brainstorm should be quick, spontaneous and not involve discussions of the words or ideas suggested by participants, facilitators may need to allow some flexibility with this 'rule'. For example, if participants are speaking in a second language or have learning difficulties, they may not understand all of the words/ideas suggested by their colleagues. In this case, to enable their full inclusion in the brainstorm process, their colleagues should be allowed to give a brief explanation of the word/idea. This may also be necessary if some participants are working through language or sign interpreters and the interpreter does not understand how to convey the word/idea to their client. But make sure the explanations do not turn into detailed discussions!

Recording your brainstorm with a mind-map

Usually a brainstorm leads to a *list* of ideas compiled in a short time. However, it is also possible to record the results of a brainstorm on a mind-map, from which you can then move on to discuss and analyse in more detail some of the ideas contained in the map. A mind-map can sometimes be a more useful reminder of a discussion than a list, or a set of notes/minutes, because it clearly shows the links between issues.

During an EENET workshop in Tanzania, participants worked in school groups, to 'map' the barriers to children's learning and participation that they face in their schools. This was a group brainstorming activity and the barriers identified by the participants were organised into a diagram, or mind-map. Some of the maps were organised into themes (eg, 'resources', 'environment'). Other maps contained more random ideas, and the connections between the barriers were marked on later with arrows.

Participants then presented their mind-maps to each other. They talked as a group about key issues that had been raised in the brainstorming and recorded in the mind-maps.

☞ See Section 3.1.7 for more information about mind-maps.
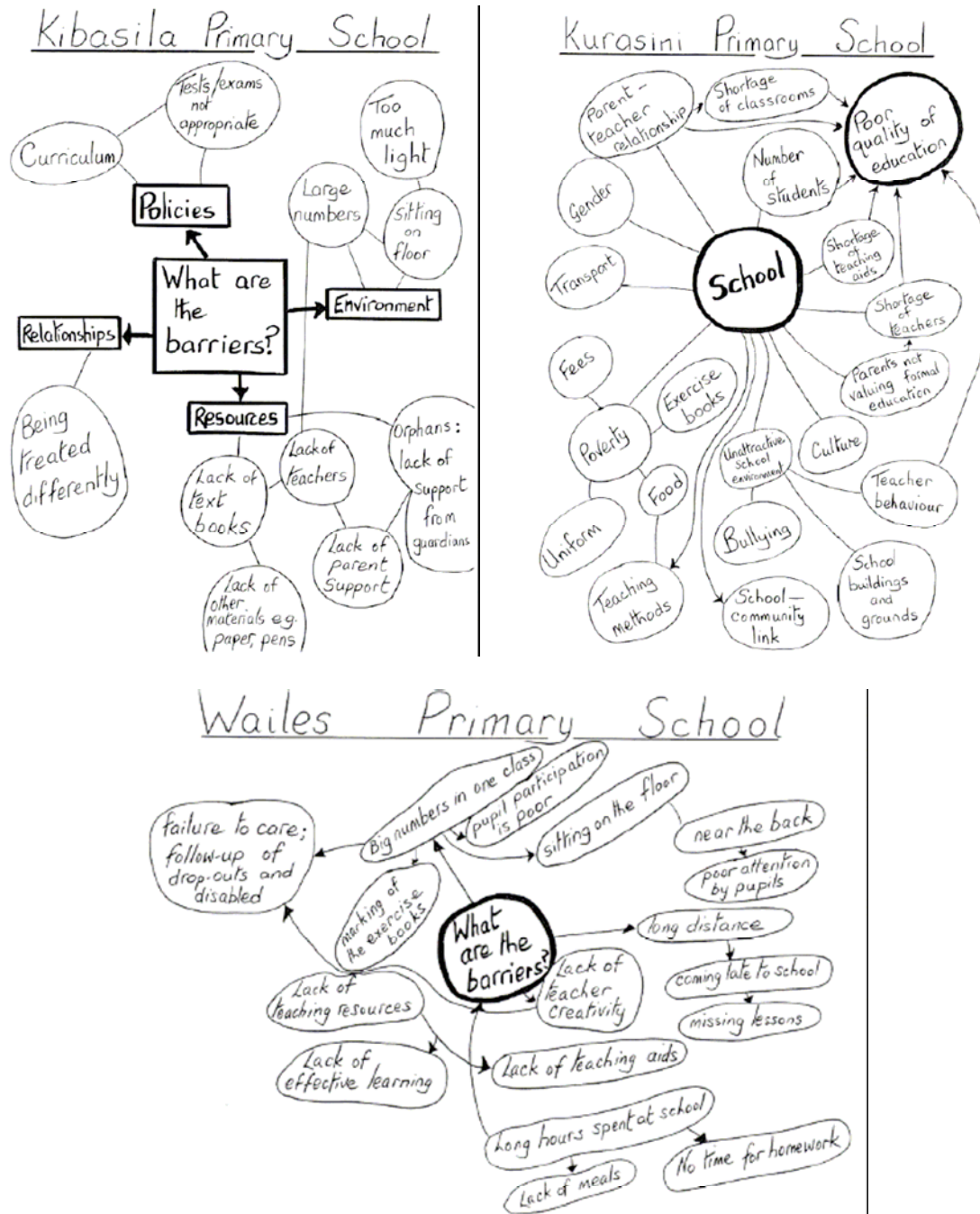
Examples of brainstorm mind-maps, Tanzania

2.1.2. Focus groups

EENET tried & tested

Focus groups are discussion groups. They may involve one particular stakeholder group, for example parents, or they may include a range of stakeholders who are asked to *focus* on a particular topic. At times it may be necessary or preferable to have discussions with one group separately (eg, a discussion with children when their teachers and parents are not present). At other times it can be helpful to bring different stakeholders together in one group to discuss the particular issue you are focusing on.

Zambia: Children took part in a focus group discussion at a rural community school, discussing the things that make it difficult for them to attend, participate or do well in school.

Zambia: After the parents' focus group discussion had finished, some parents decided to continue their discussions.
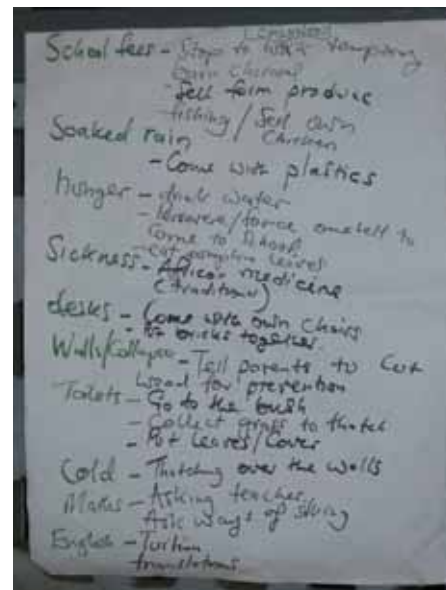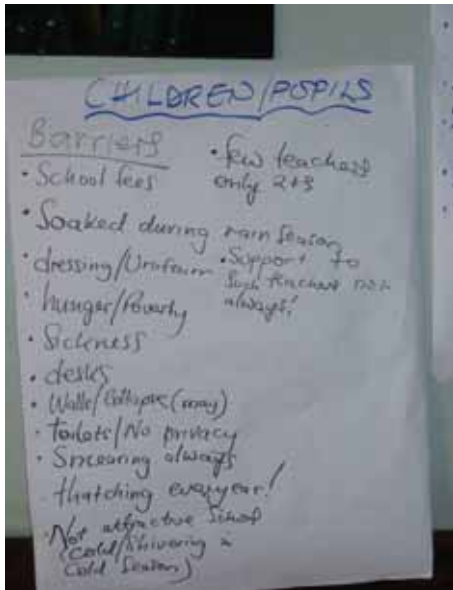
*Zambia: In their focus groups, children identified some of the barriers they face
in education (left) and solutions that have been used to overcome them (right).*

2.1.3. Group discussions

**EENET tried
& tested**

Group discussions can involve of a wide variety of stakeholders and can be
loosely structured around key themes emerging from the action research
project. It is useful to use both focus groups and group discussions in order to
gather as much information as possible.

A group discussion in Zambia. The
group consists of parents, children
and teachers – who had already
taken part in focus group
discussions – and other community
members.

☞ See "Writing Workshops: An EENET Action Research Project. Mpika,
Zambia, 17-24 July 2002". Pages 16-20 of this report provide more details
of the focus group and group discussions held at a community school.
(Available from EENET)

2.1.4. Interviews

EENET tried & tested

Interviews are a good way of helping people to talk about their experiences of inclusive (or exclusive) education. Key 'informants' (people being interviewed) in the community are likely to be:

- teachers
- parents
- children
- educational administrators
- traditional leaders
- community development workers.

Interviews can be carried out with these people in two main ways:

- **semi-structured interview** – using direct questions, sometimes prepared beforehand by the interviewer

- **story-telling** – asking the informant to tell their story in their own way, with the interviewer giving a few prompts sometimes to encourage the informant.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews can be useful for helping your action research participants to begin talking about the situations in their schools, the barriers facing learners and any solutions they have already tried.

The interviewer supports the interviewee to talk about his/her knowledge of the school by using questions. It can be very hard for people to begin vocalising their experiences. They may not know where to start or may think some aspects of their knowledge are not worth mentioning. Informal semi-structured interviews can, therefore, encourage people to start talking without worrying that they may be providing totally irrelevant information. The interview should feel like a relaxed conversation (not an interrogation!).

> *Example of a semi-structured interview*
> *(audio clip is available on the Guidelines CD-ROM)*
>
> The interviewer asks whether there are children who go to no school at all. The teacher says there are some children like this, but does not explain further. Because this is a semi-structured interview – ie, not restricted to pre-set questions – the interviewer is able to ask another question, to encourage the interviewee to explain *who* these children are. The teacher responds that pupils who do not go to school include those whose parents do not want to take their pupils to school because they don't see the reason for taking them; those who cannot afford school uniform, etc; and those who 'play truant' from school, preferring to play instead.
>
> The interviewer asks *when* children drop out of school. The teacher responds that pupils drop out mainly at Standard 3-4. She thinks this is due to the increase in subjects taught

in this Standard and to early pregnancies. The interviewee adds another question about how old the girls are when they get pregnant. The teacher says they are aged 12-15, and then she continues by explaining that other drop-outs include boys who start school when they are already quite old, so when they reach Standard 3-4 they are uncomfortable – they feel too grown-up to stay in school.

Story-telling interviews

An example from Tanzania

During a workshop involving teachers, school administrators/committee members and parents in Tanzania, one of the activities involved story-telling interviews. The purpose of the activity was to help people look at the strategies they had been using to address barriers to children's learning. (The barriers had been discussed in an earlier session, using a mind-map activity.)

Participants were divided into groups, with only one person from each school per group. The school representative might be a teacher, head teacher, parent, etc. As well as the speaker/interviewee there was a listener (a 'critical friend') and note-taker in each group.

Each school representative was asked to talk aloud about their school – explaining the difficulties they face and the ways in which they have already addressed these difficulties. At the end of the interview session, representatives from the same school came together to compare what they had each said about their school (as documented by the note-takers).

'Interviews without questions'

Interview rules
Each group should have just one representative from each school.
Each group should have a school representative, a 'critical friend' and a note-taker.

Interview roles
School representative's role: to 'think aloud', to talk
Critical friend's role: to be an active listener
Note-taker's role: to note down everything that is said.

How did participants respond to this activity?
Some school representatives had no difficulty 'thinking and talking aloud'. They were confident in their speaking ability and had lots to say. Others, however, were unable to say much without first being asked questions or given prompts.

Some listeners/note-takers were more active in their listening, and noted every detail of what was said. Others found it more difficult to give the speaker their full attention, and preferred to ask questions.

Each representative had their own 'stake' in the school, and their own unique perspective on how the school functions. A comparison of the notes on what was said by the different representatives from the same school reflected these differences. This activity therefore went some way towards telling the whole story of the school, from different perspectives.

Example of notes taken by a note-taker during a story-telling interview

At Mgulani we have 3,097 children and 81 teachers. We have included 8 children with 'mental retardation'. At first we were afraid that the pupils wouldn't co-operate with our inclusive education initiative. Later we realised that children don't see the differences. The children have got friends. We need to build on the pupils' interests. We need to make games to help them learn. For example, if they have difficulty saying the vowel 'a', we sing and jump until at last the child can pronounce 'a'. We are able to solve any problems that arise by co-operating with parents. The parents have helped us to build two new classrooms so that we can reduce the class sizes down to 35 children.

Helpful hints

If speakers/interviewees find it hard to talk aloud without lots of prompts or guidance questions – and participants therefore seem uncomfortable with the activity – then it may have to be adapted so that it involves a semi-structured interview. However, this requires preparation. Facilitators and participants need to be aware of the difference between 'open' and 'closed' questions, so that the interviewees are able to express as much information as possible about their school, without being influenced or directed too much by the interviewers.

It may be a good idea for facilitators to plan some suitable semi-structured interview questions that could be given to participants if it seems they are not comfortable with the informal style of a story-telling interview.

☞ See "Researching our Experience". In this document Zambian teachers describe how they researched inclusion issues in their schools. Many of them used interviews (with pupils, parents, colleagues, etc) to find out about the situation in their school and to help them begin to think about how they could make improvements. (Available from EENET)

Story-telling can also be encouraged through the use of timelines, which are described in Section 3.1.3.
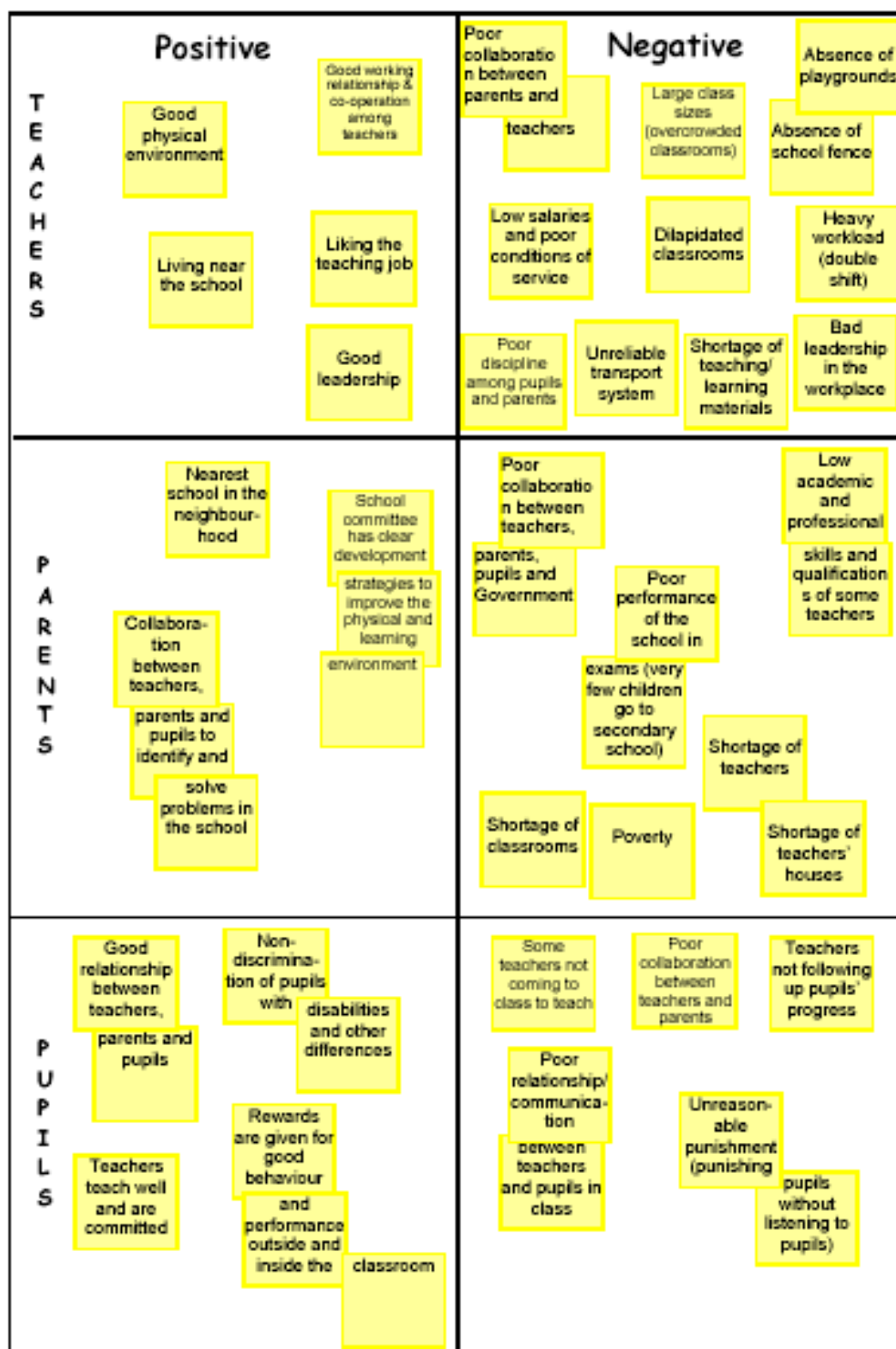
2.1.5. Factor posters

Participants are asked to write their comments about a particular issue on pieces of paper. Often sticky-backed pieces of paper ('post-its') are used. These pieces of paper are placed on a large poster on the wall. The poster is divided into two sections, headed 'successes' and 'constraints/problems/ barriers'. Participants have to decide whether each comment they have written is an example of a 'success' or of a 'constraint/problem/barrier'. 'Factors that support' (successes) and 'Factors that hinder' (barriers) could be used as alternative headings on the poster.

This activity can be done anonymously if preferred – participants do not have to write their names on the pieces of paper. Once the participants have written their comments, and placed them under the appropriate heading on the poster, the comments are read out and discussed. The participants, working as a group, can be asked to suggest ways in which the barriers or constraints that were mentioned can be overcome. These suggestions can be discussed and summarised.

Using factor posters to identify successes and barriers in our work

During a workshop in Tanzania, teachers, pupils and parents were asked to write down two or three positive and negative things about their school on adhesive pieces of paper, without talking to each other. The positives were the things that made them feel they wanted to go to school/lessons or (for parents) to be associated with or part of the school. The negatives were the things that made them feel they did not want to go to school/lessons or to be part of the school.

Each person read out his/her statements. In groups, the participants then discussed the statements to agree on those which best reflected overall practice in their school. These agreed statements were written onto posters and displayed on the wall for other groups to see and discuss.

Factor poster from Tanzania

At a workshop held by EENET in 1998, participants from Southern countries shared information on the successes and barriers they faced when trying to implement inclusive education. They recorded this as a mountain picture, but we have extracted the information to create a factor poster.

☞ See Section 3.1.1 for more information on mountain pictures.

Using factor posters to help us develop a sharing and networking environment

As part of a workshop on deafness and inclusion, EENET carried out a factor poster exercise to help participants find out: (a) what information they already knew and therefore what they could share with others, and (b) what they would like to know or what information they needed from others.

This was a successful activity which demonstrated that participants already had a great deal of knowledge and information about the issue of deafness and inclusion. Participants also realised that their colleagues could help them with many of the things they did not know. The group already contained a high level of experience – they just needed to talk to each other to find out about and share these experiences.

2.2. Looking activities: Observing and recording

2.2.1. Classroom observation

Observing the way people relate to each other is one of the simplest research activities and can be done almost anywhere. This includes doing observations in classrooms, where teachers' and children's activities and interactions can be watched to help us learn more about inclusive or exclusive education practices.

If you are not experienced at observation and note-taking techniques you can practise them in different places before trying them out in the classroom or in the community. For instance, you could practise observing people at home, or even on public transport!

It is important at the start to simply record what is said and what is done, *without* introducing any analysis. Ideally you should begin to analyse what you have observed at a later stage, for example, when you re-read the notes or drawings you have made.

It may be possible to consider the following questions when you are making observation notes, but you should record any personal observations (such as analyses and interpretations of what you have seen) in a separate column on the page:

- Does everyone participate? If not, who is not participating and why?
- How do the teachers relate to each other?
- How do the children talk/behave with the teachers? Are they confident/afraid? How do the children relate to each other? Is there evidence of child-to-child principles being used?
- How do the parents communicate with the teachers?
- Are there any surprises in what you have observed?

When you are analysing your observations you might consider what your observations tell you about:

- teacher-pupil relationships
- pupil-pupil interactions
- child participation
- the teacher's teaching style.

When you write notes about what you are observing, use two columns. In the first column write down the facts – what you see or hear – without interpreting this information. In the second column you can make notes about your thoughts or interpretations of what you are seeing/hearing.

Here is an example:
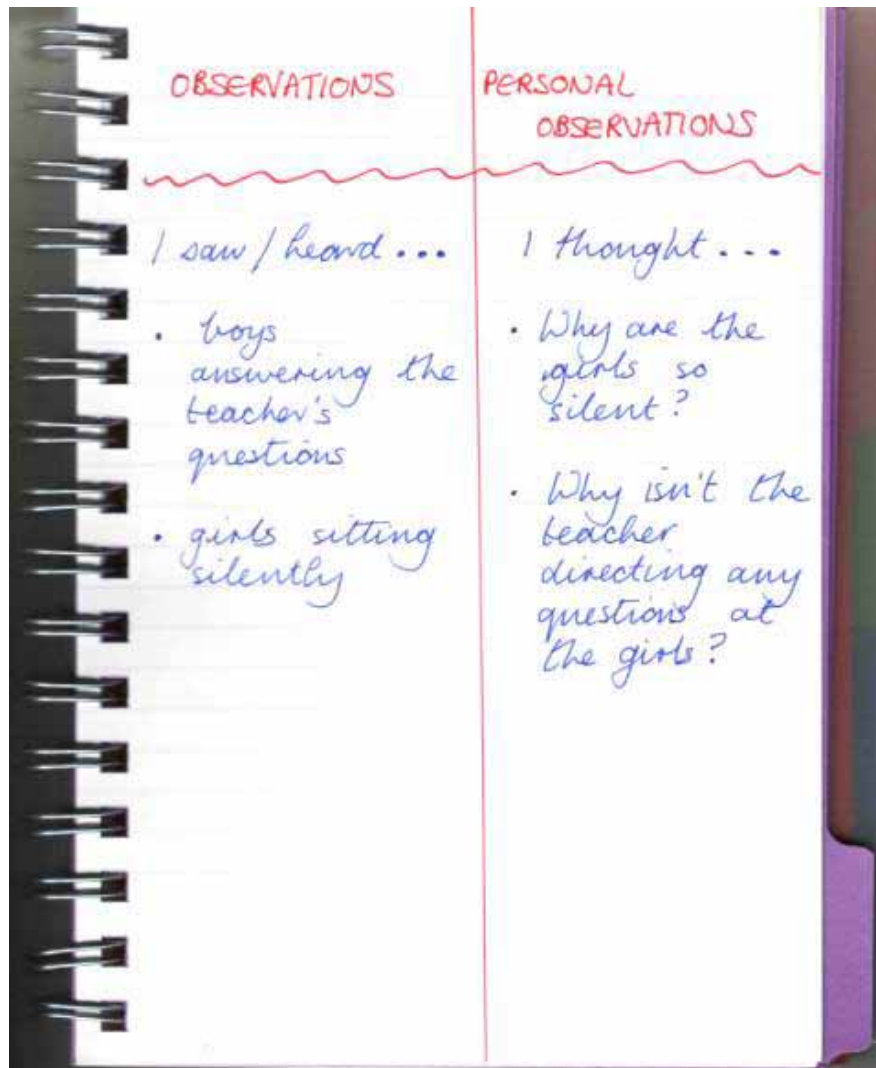
Finally you might find it useful to keep a self-critical diary (see Section 3.3.1) in which you note down observations about the process itself. For example, you might record:

- What worked well in the observation process?
- What difficulties did you face?
- How could you have been a more reflective observer?

For each of the above suggestions you could develop a list of indicators, or check list, to help you take notes. For example:

Child participation indicators/checklist
- Children were/not asking questions.
- Children were/not answering questions.
- Children were following instructions.
- Children looked interested.
- Children were writing on the board.
- Children were using the teaching aids.
- Children presented their work, etc.

Observer self-reflection
- Did you find a good position in the classroom from which to observe?
- Were you a distraction to the class?
- What did you feel about observing?
- What sort of attitude did you have?
- What about your judgement – can you trust it?

Teachers may choose to observe each other's practice. In this case the observation should be mutual – teachers should take it in turns to observe each other. They should then discuss their observations with each other.

Ideally all observation activities should be followed by discussions involving both the observers and those being observed. If possible, you could consider using photographs or video taken during the observation process as an additional basis for these discussions. See below for information on using photography and video in action research.

On the CD-ROM version of these Guidelines we provide a video clip showing four different classrooms in Tanzania and Zambia. We suggest that the video clip could be used to help people practise their observation skills. You could, however, find or make your own short video clips to help your action research participants practise observing.

If you are able to watch the video clip from the CD-ROM, try to make some observations and notes about:

- the teaching style
- the interaction between the teacher and pupils
- the interactions between pupils
- the overall environment and atmosphere of the classroom.

When you are making your observations of the video clip, you should bear in mind that the classes were being filmed and observed by strangers. This inevitably will have had some effect on the way both the teachers and pupils behaved, and the content of what they are saying.

Ideas for using video clips to help you develop your observation and note-taking skills:

- Watch the clips several times to see if you observe different things with each viewing.
- Watch the clips just once, then ask a colleague to watch once. Compare the notes you have taken to see if you observed the same things, or whether you noticed different things.
- Think about what the cameraman is *not* showing us. If you were inside the classroom, what sort of things would you be looking for that the video does not show?

These exercises could be useful for practising observation and note-taking before you use these techniques in a real classroom. This practice will help you develop an idea of how closely you need to observe your own classrooms to make sure you do not miss anything important.

Helpful hint

If you are not able to show video clips, perhaps you could use a short role play or drama for you action research colleagues to practice observing.

2.2.2. Photography

Photography can be a useful way of recording some of the things you observe, so that you (or other people) can look at them again in more detail at a later date. Initially, in EENET's action research project, photography was used only to record key aspects of the action research context and the activities involved. One of the research facilitators used a digital camera during school visits and workshops, taking 200 photographs. Another researcher had a camera which was used by both his action research colleagues and the school pupils to take pictures of school and community life.

Then, at a later stage the photographs taken in one place were used to stimulate debates among other groups in a different place.

Using photographs in group work: Tanzania

A selection of the digital photographs taken in Zambia was chosen by the external facilitators in the UK.

One group of pictures represented different aspects of inclusive learning: the environment; inclusive classes; and disability. Another group of photographs

depicted the process of reflection and analysis involved in action research: workshops; and working outside.

The selected photographs were printed on A4 paper in black and white. They were then grouped into contrasting pairs.

☞ See Appendix 4 for the photographs that were used.

The aim of using these photographs in Tanzania was to encourage the research participants to reflect on their own situations using the images (from a similar context) as a stimulus. During workshops, the photographs were therefore given to focus groups of children, parents and teachers. They were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What do you see in each pair of photographs?
- What information on inclusive education can you gather from each pair?
- Brainstorm, and then discuss, the main features of each pair.
- List the agreed features.
- Group the features into categories.
- Which pictures reflect practices in your school? Discuss.

The photographs provoked a great deal of excitement in the group discussions, and comments included:

- 'Our school is not like this.'
- 'This classroom is not inclusive – it is too crowded.'
- 'We do not sit in groups like this.'

Participants debated enthusiastically and noted down their ideas about what they were seeing in the photographs. They then arranged these observations into categories, which included:

- school environments (both outside and inside the classroom)
- teaching methodology and training
- collaboration, including listening to children's voices.

Each focus group was then asked to draw a mind-map based on one of the themes they had observed from the photographs. Most groups of teachers and parents chose to focus on the environment, whereas most pupil groups worked on teaching methodology.

Helpful hint

In this activity a decision was made not to put captions on the photographs, so that participants' observations would be based purely on what they saw in the photographs and not influenced by what they were told the photographs represented.

However, you could also try this activity with captions or explanations attached to the photographs, to help participants debate things which they might not immediately be able to see in the photograph. For example, one photograph used showed a deaf pupil sitting on his own. Participants were able to discuss ideas about why this child was alone, but of course they could not see that he was deaf, and so they could not discuss if or how this might be linked with him sitting alone. An opportunity to facilitate discussion about inclusion of deaf learners was therefore missed.

You could of course provide uncaptioned photographs to start with, then half-way through the exercise, give participants some explanations of the photographs. They could discuss this new information and perhaps also discuss how their observations varied from the explanation you gave them.

A second set of guidelines (on CD-ROM) will be created in 2006. This new CD-ROM will focus specifically on image-based approaches in action research. In the meantime, see EENET's two reports on "Using Images to Explore and Promote Inclusion. Experiences from Mpika, Zambia" detailing image/arts-based action research activities carried out in September 2004 and May 2005. (Available from EENET.)

2.2.3. Video

As with photography, video can be used to record what you are observing, rather than, or in addition to, taking written notes. It can help you to look again at a situation at a later date (possibly finding new information that you didn't see when you first observed that situation). It can also stimulate you to discuss your observations with others (which you probably could not do when you first observed the situation for real).

Video can also help other people to observe your situation and reflect on what they see, how it compares to their own situation, etc. There are several short video clips on the original CD-ROM version of these Guidelines. If you are able to watch them, have a think about how the situation being shown compares to your own experiences. Have you seen schools like that, or attended workshops like that?

In Zambia, videoing was first used to record action research activities, but then was later used extensively in teachers' meetings to promote discussion

and reflection. The District Inspector of Schools also showed the videos to teachers in other districts to demonstrate what is being done in Mpika. The following quote from a teacher, in response to watching some video, indicates one of the benefits of using locally-filmed footage (depicting similar contexts, cultures, etc), even though such video may not be of high technical quality.

"This is a real workshop, where we were able to watch ourselves and learn from each other, rather than talking about theories that never come into practice. We hope this shall continue."

Helpful hint

Records of your observations can be very useful as baseline data. You can look at this information in the future to help you assess how much progress has been made since you first observed the situation; where the progress has been and what things still need to be improved.

So keep any records of your observations in a safe place!

☞ See Appendix 5 for a table that may help you gather baseline data.

3. Thinking activities

Thinking activities in these Guidelines can be divided into three types: drawing, performing, writing/reading.

The activities will help you to think in more detail about what you have already talked about and observed. They will help you to analyse and record what you have seen and discussed. They will also help you to have more in-depth discussions with each other about the situation (for example, about the barriers and successes you have gathered information on).

By doing the thinking activities you should be able to work towards finding solutions to problems, which will lead you to take action to improve your practices.

You will probably have discovered through the 'looking' activities that some people in your school/community have already started to consider or try out different ideas. For example, some teachers may already have managed to make their class more inclusive for certain groups of children, even though they may not previously have considered what they were doing to be 'inclusive education'.

You will be able to use these 'discoveries' when you are thinking about how to act to make the school/community even more inclusive. Remember, a 'discovery' does not have to be huge or dramatic for it to be useful to you when you are thinking about how to make improvements to educational practice. So make sure you think about *everything* you have seen and discussed already – sometimes it is the simplest things that a teacher is doing that can have the biggest impact on inclusion!

Helpful hint

After thinking about the information you have collected, you might want to go back to the school/community and 'have another look' before taking action. There might be other information that you want to collect, using different observation and talking methods, or involving different people, before you decide on the actions you will take.

3.1 Thinking activities: Drawing

Helpful hint

Drawing activities can be useful for both the 'looking' and the 'thinking' stages of your action research – they do not fit purely into one or other stage. We have presented them in the 'thinking' section of these guidelines, since they are activities that are useful for helping groups work together to *think more deeply* about the initial information they gathered when they were talking and observing. But, many of these drawing activities could also be used at earlier stages in the action research process, to help *record* the initial information as it is gathered. As we explained in the introduction, you should feel free to pick and choose activities that suit your needs at any stage of your action research.

There are lots of possible drawing activities. Some of them have similar aims (eg, helping you to think about positive and negative aspects of an issue). You will, therefore, probably not want to do all of these activities with the same group of people, as it could get repetitive!

3.1.1. Mountain pictures

EENET tried & tested

This activity can help groups to think about what they want to achieve (the top of the mountain); the barriers they have to overcome to reach the top, and the signs of hope they have already encountered on the journey.

During an EENET-organised workshop in Agra, India in 1998, participants drew mountain pictures. In the picture shown below, the (red) boulders on the mountain (with blue words) represent the barriers to progress that the participants had faced or were still facing (eg, 'lack of government awareness'; 'parents attitudes'). Grass/trees (green words) and sunshine represent the positive aspects that the participants had experienced on the journey towards inclusive education in their community/country (eg, 'generous donor support'; 'Bill of Rights').
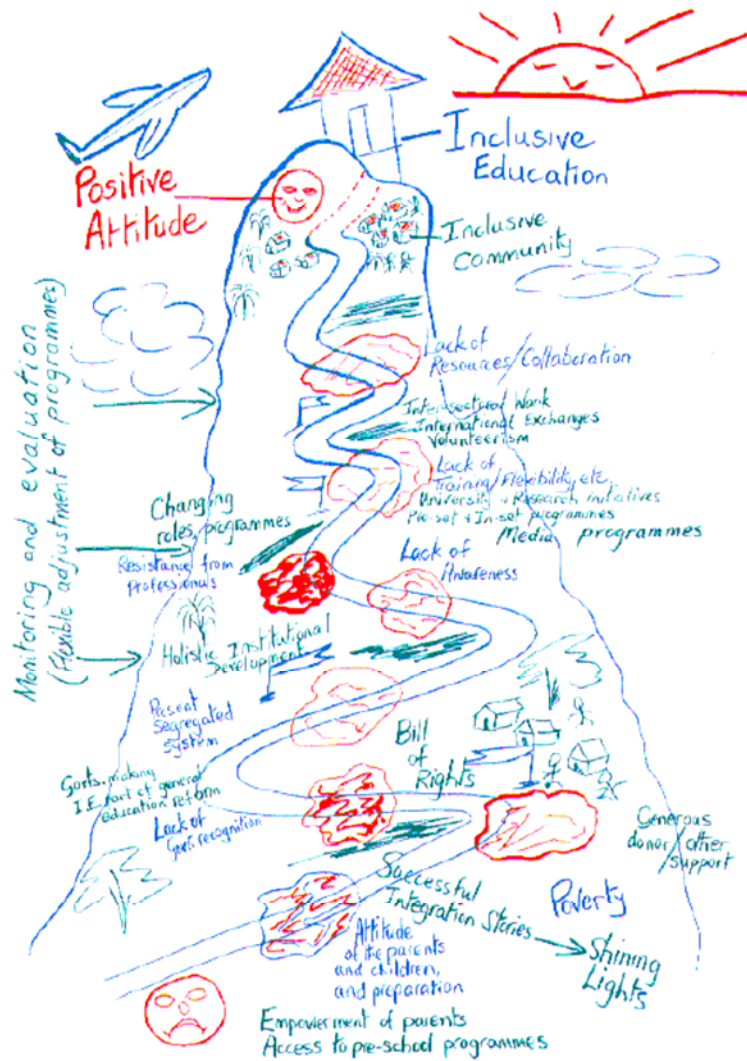
Example of mountain picture, Agra, India, 1998

In a workshop in Tanzania (involving parents, teachers and other community members) groups of participants were asked to draw the shape of Mount Kilimanjaro. Boulders (representing barriers) were drawn on the way up the mountain. Pictures were drawn at the top to represent what they hope to achieve. Unlike the Agra posters, the Tanzanian participants were asked to write at the bottom of their posters a list of people who would be involved in the journey towards their inclusion goal.

The mountain picture exercise can be matched with the factor poster activity (see Section 2.1.5) as they both help action research participants to identify and think about the positives and negatives of their situation. You might choose to use a mountain picture with participants who are less confident with writing. A mountain picture does not need to include words describing the barriers/successes – participants can draw the things that help or hinder progress (though of course some concepts, like 'lack of government awareness', may be quite hard to depict).
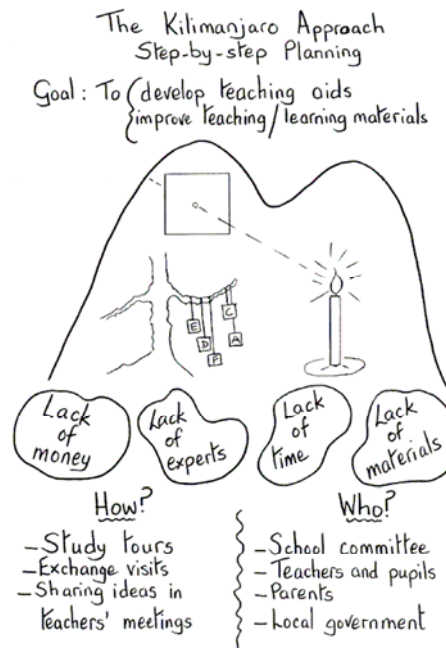
Kilimanjaro poster from a workshop in Tanzania

3.1.2. Children's daily activity profiles

Try this…

Children are asked to draw pictures showing the activities that they do during the day. They draw the pictures on a timeline. Research team members (including the children) then discuss the profiles to gather and analyse information about the children's daily activities. This exercise helps people to gain an insight into the roles that children play in the household/community and into how they spend their time. This in turn can help in understanding what barriers to learning the children are facing, and what they and their families may already be doing to overcome these problems. This activity has not been used in EENET's action research project, but others have used it successfully.

Example of a child's daily activity profile, Lesotho

Source: S.Stubbs (1995) *The Lesotho National Integrated Education Programme: A case study of implementation,* Masters Thesis, University of Cambridge
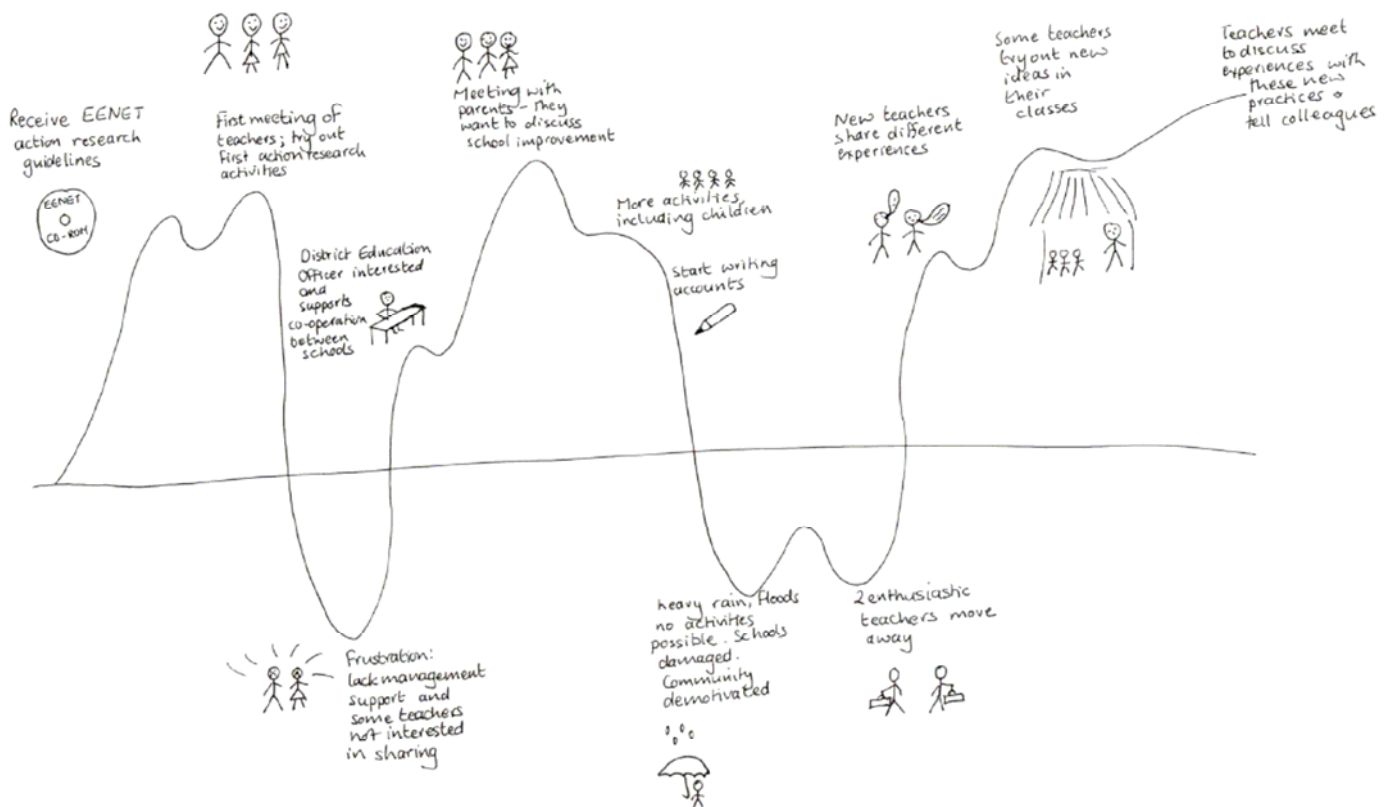
3.1.3. Timelines

Try this...

A timeline is drawn horizontally across the middle of a sheet of paper (or on the floor, perhaps with chalk). Pictures are drawn along the line, either above or below it, representing the 'ups and downs' in the life of the school/ community. The 'ups' are the factors that contributed to successes and the 'downs' are factors (the barriers) that hindered progress towards inclusion.

Again, this exercise provides an alternative or a follow-up to the factor posters, as a way of presenting successes and barriers. Participants can also use the timeline to record and tell others about the story of their school/community over a certain period – the story-teller looks at the pictures to remind him/her about the key events in the story. This activity has not been used in EENET's action research project, but others have used it successfully.

(See also Section 2.1.4 on story-telling interviews for alternative ideas on encouraging people to tell the story of their school/community.)

We have created this timeline around the fictional story of someone receiving their copy of the Guidelines CD-ROM. It shows the ups and downs of their action research!

3.1.4. Diagrams

Try this…

School performance flow diagrams

These diagrams can be used to illustrate the factors in the school environment which lead to either good or poor school performance. This exercise can be done with teachers, parents and children, as each group will have different views about what factors influence the performance of the school. This is another way of helping participants to think about the positive aspects of the school and identify the barriers which need to be addressed. This kind of diagram is very similar to a mind-map. This activity has not been used in EENET's action research project, but others have used it successfully.
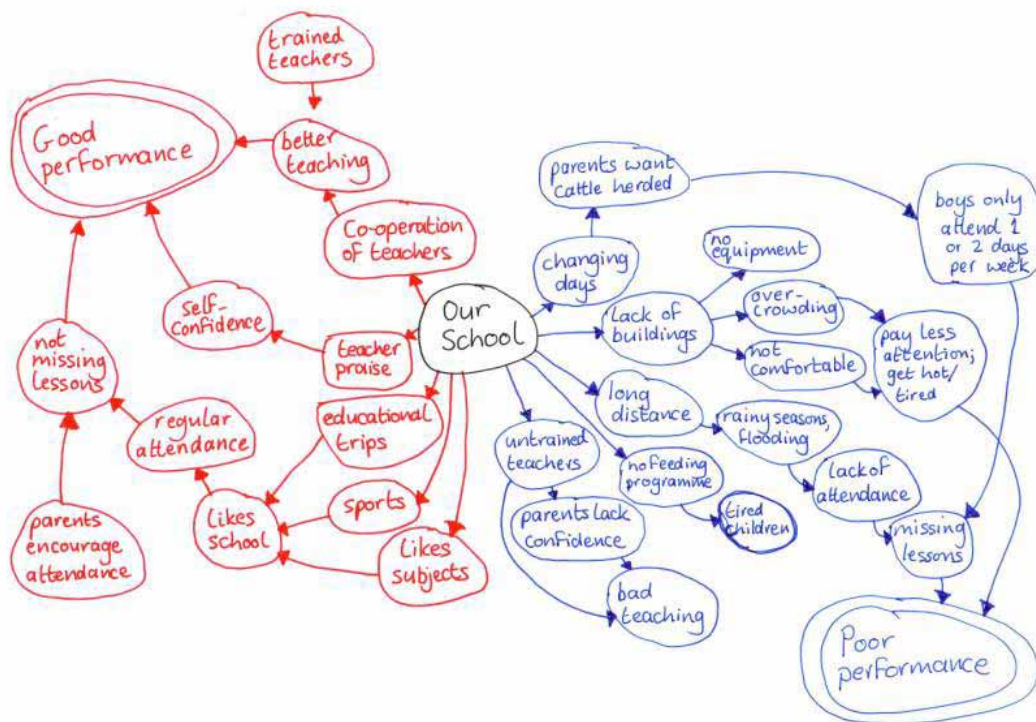
This diagram was created by a school in Lesotho

Source: S.Stubbs (1995) *The Lesotho National Integrated Education Programme: A case study of implementation,* Masters Thesis, University of Cambridge

Networking diagrams

These may also be called 'support diagrams' as they illustrate the ways in which school communities are supported, and with whom they network. Through creating such a diagram, school/community members will be thinking about the contacts that the school/community has with different groups, organisations or individuals. Arrows in the diagram indicate whether support is offered by or received from a particular person/group/organisation.

A network diagram is a useful way of recognising the range of support that is available, and of identifying gaps in that support. Thinking about the support

network can help reinforce awareness of the school/community's interdependence with other schools – in the area, province, country, region, continent, and internationally. Such an activity can also help reduce feelings of isolation; promote the concept of co-operation between individuals and organisations; and help the school to identify sources of further support.

The action research cycle involves an element of sharing, with a wider group of people, your research findings and the results of your actions to improve education practice. A network diagram may be a useful way to help your action research group to think about who else you could share your experiences with, locally or further a field. It could also help you to think about who else could participate in your action research – helping you to look at and think about new issues, before you take action.

A very simple diagram showing the support network of a school in Lesotho

Source: S.Stubbs (1995) *The Lesotho National Integrated Education Programme: A case study of implementation,* Masters Thesis, University of Cambridge
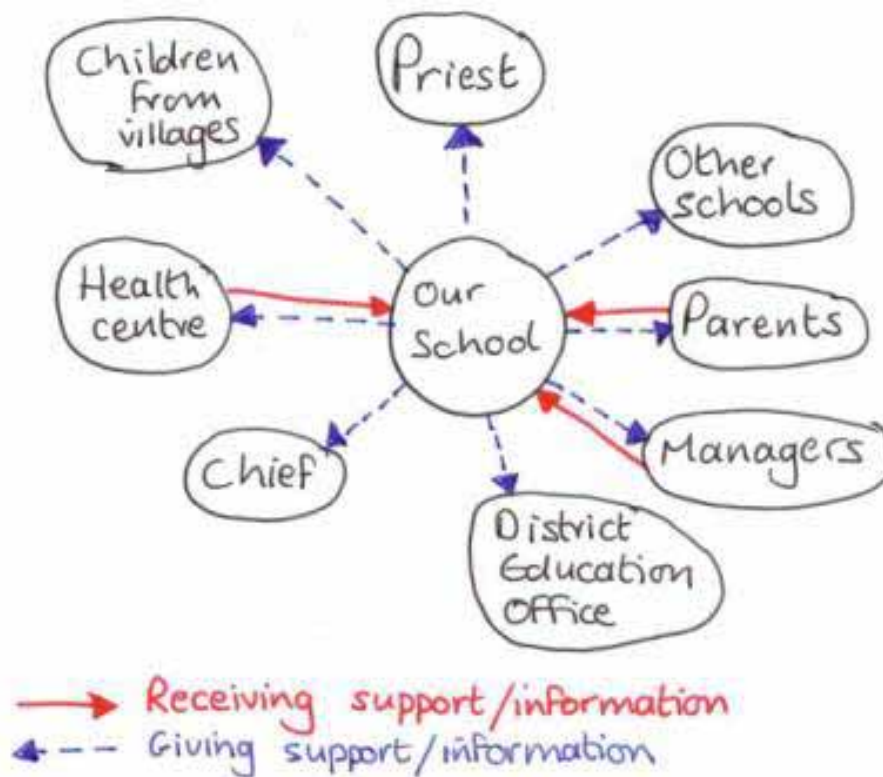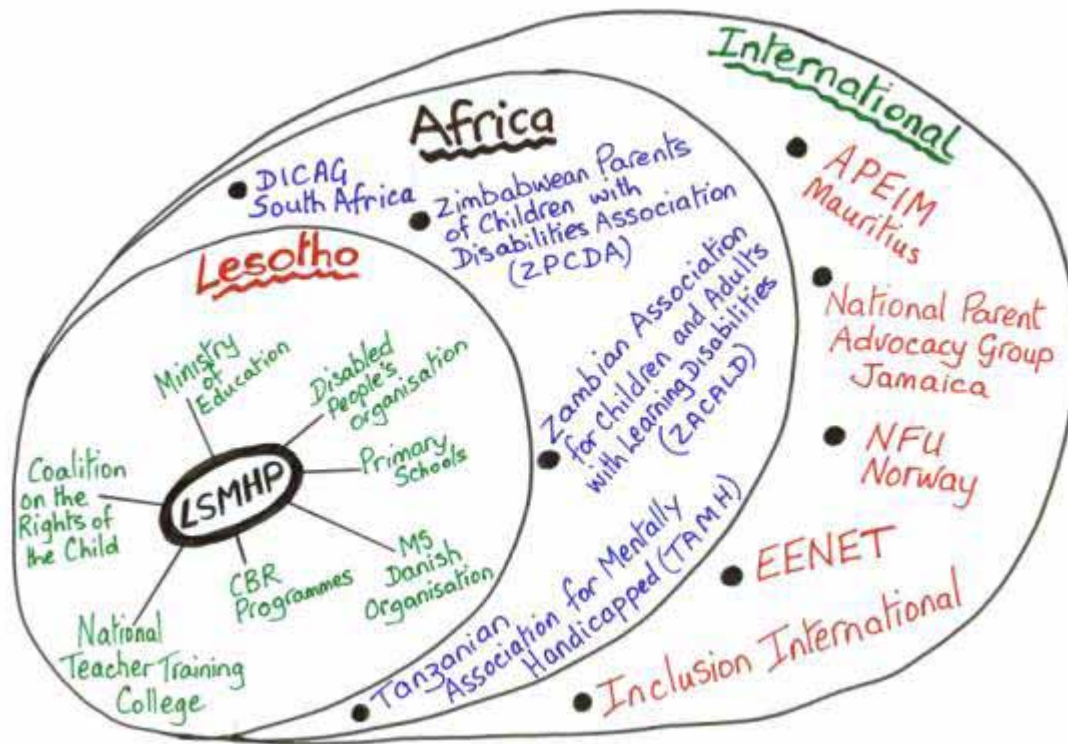
A slightly more complex networking diagram showing the local, national, regional and international connections of a parents' organisation, the Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons.

Source: EENET (2002) *Family Action for Inclusion in Education*, Manchester: EENET

3.1.5. Children's drawings   Try this…

Children can be encouraged to participate in research activities in many ways. One possible way is by asking them to draw pictures which represent their experiences. While this activity was tried in EENET's action research project, it was not properly supported with resource materials, and so did not 'take off' as a commonly-used activity.[2] Drawing materials need to be planned and budgeted for, unless the activity can be adapted to use locally-available free resources (eg, by asking the children to make models which depict their experiences – perhaps with mud, clay, sticks, straw, etc). We recommend that you try this activity as a way of enabling children to think about and share their opinions on their education. As with all of the drawing activities, the pictures (or models) could be used in a variety of ways to stimulate discussions and story-telling among the children and between other groups of stakeholders.

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[2] Since the development of these Guidelines, image-based activities, including drawing, have taken place in Mpika, Zambia (late 2004 to early 2005). See EENET's two reports on "Using Images to Explore and Promote Inclusion. Experiences from Mpika, Zambia" detailing image/arts-based action research activities carried out in September 2004 and May 2005. (Available from EENET)

3.1.6. Cartoons

In Tanzania participants in the EENET action research project produced cartoons to express their experiences of inclusive education. Unfortunately we have not been able to reproduce the cartoons here. However, an example of a child's cartoon from Nigeria is available.

Supplied by: Girl Child Empowerment Nigeria

3.1.7. Mind-maps   EENET tried & tested

Mind-maps offer a way of recording our thoughts and reflections in a visual way. (They can also be used to record information gathered during brainstorming.)

Mind-maps can be more useful than writing lists or detailed notes/minutes of a discussion, because on a mind-map you can much more easily draw lines to demonstrate links between various issues. You can even use different styles or colours for the lines, or arrows, to represent different types of links or relationships between the issues. Participants can also draw pictures as well as, or instead of, words if they feel more comfortable with that.

A mind map is a way of organising thoughts, ideas or themes on paper in visual form. Usually you start with a central point which leads to lots of other ideas. Some people call these spider diagrams and they may look something like this:
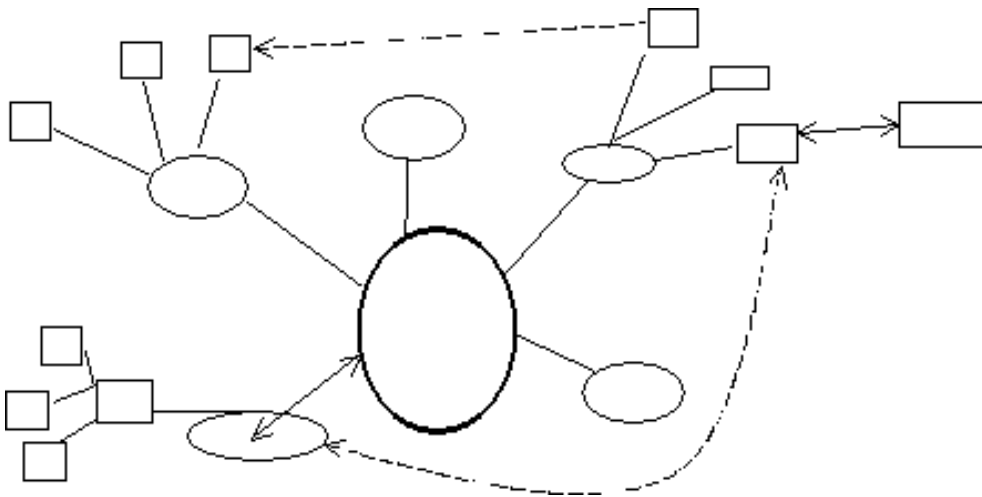
Mind-maps were used on a number of occasions during EENET's action research project – in both Tanzania and Zambia.

To help the participants to get started, the facilitator may ask a question for the participants to think about and build their mind-map around. For example, at a teachers' workshop in Zambia, participants were asked the question "what is the core feeling or approach of your school?". The participants identified the over-riding approach of their school. This was written in a box/circle at the centre of the sheet of paper. They then began to think through in more detail the experiences that contributed to this approach.

A group of teachers are working on their mind-map. They have gathered around the paper so that they can all see and/or hear and contribute to the discussion.
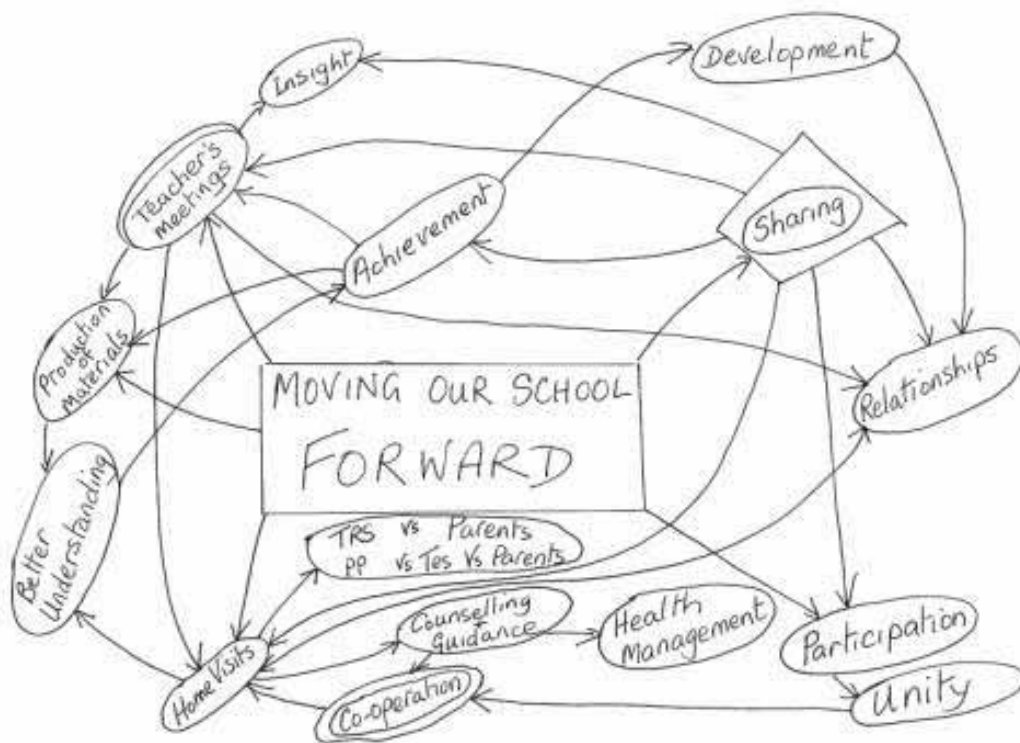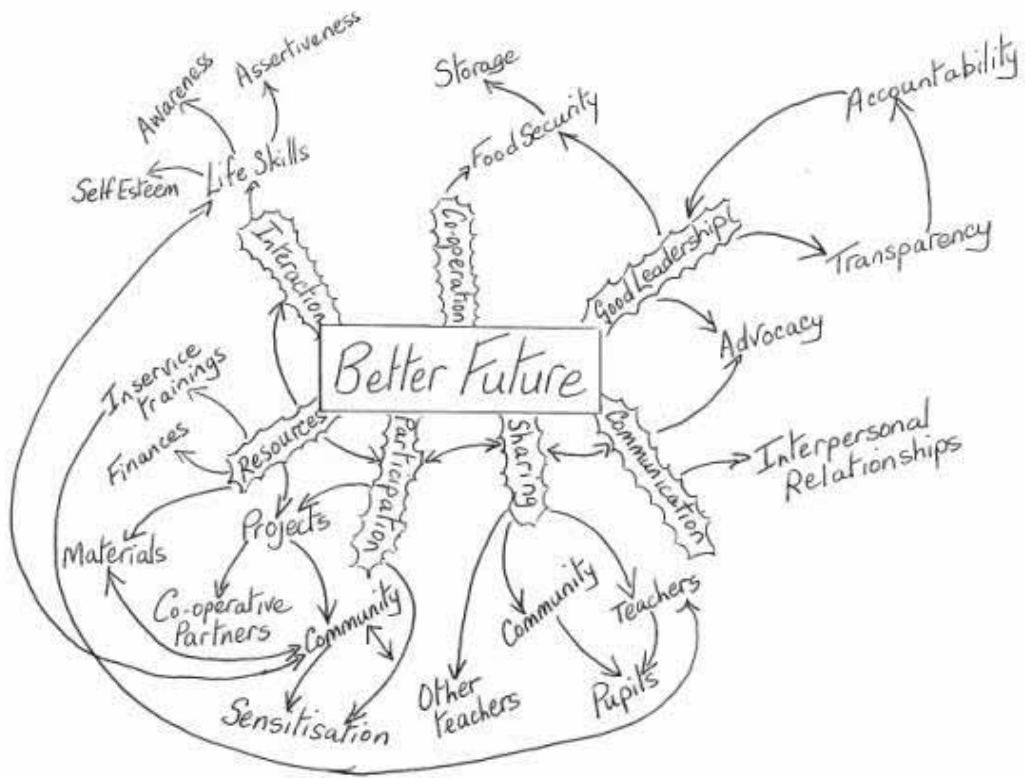
Mind-maps created by teachers from two schools in Zambia.

Helpful hint

Here are some hints for making mind-map activities work well, based on the lessons we learned in Zambia (for more details see the Mpika "Writing Workshops" 2002 report, available from EENET).

A clear explanation at the start of this activity is essential, especially if participants have not used mind-maps before.

It may be helpful to show an example, or even work through a quick demonstration of a mind-map, using a different subject to the one you want the group to think about and 'map'.

If you do show an example that covers a similar subject, be careful about leaving this on display. Participants may copy or be heavily influenced by what the sample mind-map says, and therefore not discuss and record their true thoughts and experiences.

Encourage participants to gather around the sheet of paper, so that they can all see what is written on the paper and contribute to the discussion.

If participants find it hard to understand the mind-mapping concept, think of other images that could be used. For example, they could instead use a tree picture (truck, branches, leaves) to illustrate their analyses of their experiences.

Although mind-maps are supposed to be created in a spontaneous way, you may need to allow participants to create a draft map first (eg, on a scrap of paper). It can take confidence to place your thoughts straight onto a large sheet of paper. Many people will be nervous about making spelling or drawing mistakes and 'ruining' their sheet – especially if it will be displayed for everyone to see. Don't be too rigid about insisting that the map is drawn straight onto the final sheet of paper. You could actually hinder the spontaneity of participants' thoughts and discussions if they have only one chance to put their map on paper and therefore focus more on making their map look perfect than on thinking through their experiences.

Other uses for mind-maps

Discussions and story-telling

Once mind-maps have been created they can be used to stimulate discussions between different groups (eg, to compare and ask questions about each other's maps). As with other drawing activities, mind-maps can also be used for story-telling.

In Zambia, a 'jigsaw classroom' or 'moving classroom' activity was used to help workshop participants share their mind-maps with each other.

Each map was put on the wall. The school groups were warned that they would soon have to tell the other groups what their map meant – in other words, tell the story of their school and its experiences with inclusion, as described by the mind-map. Participants were given a few minutes to rehearse what they might say about the map to someone who had not seen it before.

The school groups were split so that at least one person from each school was in each new group.

☞ See Appendix 6 for a diagram which explains how the activity works

A few minutes were allocated to each poster. The activity was compared to the movement of a train which stops at each station. Each member of each school group had the chance to tell the story of their school to an audience of teachers from other schools.

This can be a noisy activity! We recommend that when you do this activity you use a very large room, or several rooms, or a big outdoor space!

Written accounts

In EENET's action research project the mind-maps not only served as a recording of the results of brainstorms and discussions, they also formed the basis of teachers' written accounts of their experiences (see Section 3.3 on writing). Participants were able to choose, from the mind-map, one of the many themes that had been identified and discussed by their group. This helped them to avoid duplication (ie, everyone writing about the same issue). It also meant that each participant had a more manageable area to cover. One person did not have to try writing about all of the inclusion barriers and successes experienced by themselves and their school – just the one or two that they were most familiar with or which interested them the most. This approach offered a starting point for developing a collective/group story of inclusion.

☞ See "Researching our Experience"

This document is a collection of the accounts written by the Zambian teachers following the mind-mapping activity. The document has been compiled by one of the external research facilitators, but only minimal editing was done to compile the articles thematically. The document offers a collective account of inclusion experience in one town/district.

3.2. Thinking activities: Performing

Performance activities can be an excellent way of helping action research participants to think through their knowledge and ideas and share this with others, in an interesting and accessible way.

Performance activities might involve:

- role plays
- dramas
- puppet shows
- dances
- songs.

In preparing their 'performance' participants will:

- assess the information they already have about their school, its inclusion experiences, etc
- find a way of putting this into some sort of order, or of prioritising the most important elements
- think carefully about how to convey this information simply and clearly to their audience.

Performance activities, therefore, do not just offer a way of sharing information to more people; the process of preparing a performance gives the performers a chance to reflect on their experiences and re-think the information they already have. Sometimes, the process of working out what to tell someone else about your experiences can actually help you realise what information you already know, what you don't know and what you still need to know.

Some action research participants may feel more comfortable with performance activities, than with activities that involve writing or drawing. These activities can also help to liven up the action research process, making it entertaining, especially for participants who are not used to workshop-type activities (or who are getting bored with them).

A performance activity also has the potential to help you bring more people into your action research activities: people may see the performance and want to find out more.

Integrating role play into action research

Mrs Milandile is the teacher of an all-girls class in Zambia. As part of the action research study, she encouraged the girls to explore the reasons why some girls are frequently absent from school. There were 14 girls who were regularly absent. When she realised that 'working at home' was the main reason for absenteeism from school, Mrs Milandile asked the girls to explore exactly what household chores the children had to do, and she prepared the class to conduct a community survey.

The survey revealed that girls had the following responsibilities at home: sweeping the house; washing the plates; fetching water; sweeping the area surrounding their house; washing their brothers and sisters; cooking food; washing clothes; watering the garden; going to the market.

In order to address the issue of household chores, Mrs Milandile arranged for the teachers, parents and girl pupils to meet together in the school. The purpose of this was to share her concern about the effect of household chores on the girls' education, and to see how she could work with the parents in addressing absenteeism.

The girls performed a role play to show the causes of absenteeism. This demonstrated the large amount of work which parents expected children to do instead of allowing them to go to school. The parents were deeply affected by this experience and a debate followed. Many parents did not believe that girls could be treated so badly in some homes. However some of the parents disagreed – they said that it was traditional for girls to do this type and amount of work. They eventually came to the following conclusions:

Parents should:
- give girls less work
- report parents who give girls a lot of work to the victim support unit at the police station
- re-think our roles as parents in order to change those traditions which are harmful to girls.

Teachers should:
- check whether the girls are in school
- give homework to encourage the girls to study (they had stopped giving these girls homework as they did not complete it).

The school should:
- reduce the amount of manual work expected of boy and girl children.
- organise more meetings to address similar problems.

Involving girl students in conducting a survey, consulting parents and performing a role play helped to identify a major barrier to the inclusion of girl children in school and to develop solutions which involved all stakeholders.

Prior to the creation of these guidelines, EENET's action research work had not involved many performance activities. However, in 2006 we plan to create a second CD-ROM/set of guidelines focusing entirely on image- and arts-based approaches. This new resource will be based on the work we have done since the development of the first CD-ROM/Guidelines.

☞ See EENET's two reports on "Using Images to Explore and Promote Inclusion. Experiences from Mpika, Zambia" detailing image/arts-based action research activities carried out in September 2004 and May 2005. (Available from EENET)

3.3. Thinking activities: Writing and reading

3.3.1. Diaries

Everyone involved in the action research (participants and facilitators) should keep a diary throughout the study. This is a valuable exercise that can help you to be self-critical and self-reflective, as well as help record insights into the research process. You can record what you did, how well certain activities worked, how you or other participants felt about the activities, what information you found, thoughts about that information, ideas for what you might do with the information or how you might gather more, etc. The diary could be in the style of a long reflective diary entry, or a short 'memo to self'.

July 2002   PAYE Week

27 *Saturday*   WEEK
(208-157) PAYE Week 17

0900 Today was the meeting of the 'research team' from the project schools to develop
0915 an account of developments in their district. This event provided a great
0930 opportunity to explore ways of bringing together different points of view,
0945 analysing the overall situation and developing a 'script' that could be
1000 used to write a draft account. It threw light on the difficulty of walking
1015 the fine line between facilitation and dominance of the outsider.

1115 The day made me think that we should emphasise the notion of
1130 'creating conversations'. Unlike the Tanzanian experience, where
1145 despite the participatory atmosphere it felt like a pre-planned
1200 workshop, today flowed along in a more natural style.

1400 It is relatively easy for me to appear to be 'busking it' because
1415 I know the ideas well and have lots of experience of
1430 chairing such gatherings. No doubt the materials will have to
1445 recommend an element of pre-structuring of meetings.
1500 Nevertheless we should find ways of encouraging users to
1515 go for a style that is essentially conversational.

Example of an action research diary

3.3.2. Case studies

Case studies can offer a useful starting point for analysing a situation in more depth. For example, the teachers in Zambia first focused on finding out about, and reflecting on, the situation of one child and the challenges he/she faced.

☞ See Appendix 7 for an example of an initial case study

Once the teachers had become very familiar with a particular 'case study' they found it easier to generalise about the issues of inclusion/exclusion they were facing in their everyday lives as classroom teachers.

Ideally your action research should focus on inclusion issues for *all* learners. However, spending some time discovering and analysing as much as you can about the learning and participation needs of one individual child can be a useful way of 'building up' to this wider research work.

3.3.3. Stories

Stories are a good way of recording experiences and of sharing them with others, either locally or in other schools, districts, countries. Many of the other activities suggested in these Guidelines help participants to research and think about the story of their school/community – a story about problems and solutions, practices and policies, inclusive and exclusive situations, etc. Writing this story down on paper can be a good way of 'capturing' it. The process of writing also involves a lot of thinking – while you are writing your story you will inevitably be re-analysing the experiences and ideas contained in this story.

Not everyone will be able to write or will be interested in writing down this story. Writing should not, therefore, be seen as an essential or compulsory element of your action research, otherwise you may exclude the ideas and experiences of people who do not write. If you do have action research participants who do not write, perhaps the whole group could work together to find a way of helping the non-writers to be involved in any writing exercises. For example, you could pair people together so that each non-writer works with a writer.

In Zambia, the teachers wrote stories based on information gathered and recorded on mind-maps. These written stories were then grouped according to themes and published by EENET in the document called 'Researching our Experience'. The collection tells a story about the communities in which the teachers and their students live.

Using written stories to promote further action research

So often the writing of a report is associated with the end of a project. In the look-think-act cycle, however, a written document is not just an end product, it can be used to feed into the next stage of the cycle (or into someone else's action research cycle). 'Researching our Experience' is an example of using writing in this way.

Writing stories

At first it was difficult to motivate teachers to get involved with the action research process in Mpika, Zambia – only the keenest teachers got involved. The original idea was that the teachers would work collaboratively to produce a group story about the development of more inclusive practices in their primary schools. They actually began by writing individual case studies after reflecting on their work. This reflection often took the form of a discussion with the research facilitator; sometimes recorded on audio-cassette to enable future reflection on any progress made. Later the teachers began to write in groups during a workshop led by a team from Tanzania and the UK. In practice, however, most teachers' stories in 'Researching our Experience' were still written individually.

Teachers start to write their stories during a workshop

Using the written stories

The stories – mostly handwritten – were sent to the EENET office where they were word-processed. Poor handwriting or photocopy quality meant some words could not be distinguished, and so in some cases minor details had to be omitted. The stories were grouped into themes under the overall headings of 'presence' and 'participation'. The writing was minimally edited to correct spelling and grammar, and to explain any local terms, while being as true as possible to the original text.

☞ See Appendix 8 for samples of handwritten manuscripts

The collection of stories was named 'Researching our Experience'. Copies for all contributors were sent to Zambia – within six months of the stories being written. This enabled the individual teachers to read each other's contributions – something that had not been easy to do with the handwritten papers. Teachers who had not previously been motivated suddenly became very keen to join in the action research process.

The research facilitator in Zambia was able to use the stories to stimulate the teachers to reflect further on their work. Teachers were able to read about and debate the various actions taken by their colleagues and consider ways in which they may have responded differently to the barriers faced. In addition the stories provided some insight into the work happening in schools for both school inspectors and officials in the Ministry of Education. The stories helped to bring inclusive education alive!

Through EENET's web site the stories have been made available to a global audience. Some practitioners are keen to use them as part of teacher training programmes, as they reflect the reality of the barriers faced by many teachers in African schools. 'Researching our Experience' is an example of how written reflections on action research can be used as part of a wider networking and information-sharing process; offering others a chance to use the action research outputs in their own school improvement efforts. Sharing of the Zambian stories was made possible by EENET, but similar sharing could easily be done locally with minimal editing and copying facilities.

3.3.4. Evaluation exercises using writing

There are many different ways of evaluating the work you have done. Evaluation can help the action research team to:

- decide which action research activities will be most useful in on-going monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education
- agree on which activities did not work well and which could be improved
- make a list of key issues and questions which the research has highlighted and which still need further follow-up.

A quick and straightforward way of evaluating an activity is to write down in a diary the three most important things that you learned as a result of doing that activity.

A longer evaluation which uses prompts may be more helpful. For example, this sort of exercise could include asking participants to complete a sentence such as: 'The most important thing that I learned was...'

☞ See Appendix 9 for an example of an evaluation form used at a Tanzanian workshop

3.3.5. Reading

Reading is a complementary activity to writing. Reading and analysing existing documentation relating to your context is an essential part of any research project or evaluation. For example, you should try to find and read things like: policy documents, lessons plans, records about individual pupils, records of parent-teacher and community meetings. Re-reading your own writing, or reading what your colleagues (or people involved in other projects) have written can be a useful way of reflecting on the progress you or they have made. It can also remind you about information you still need to gather or issues you still need to address through action. (See Section 3.3.3. for details of how a collection of stories has been read and analysed by the teachers who produced it, and by others.)

Reading key texts written by other action researchers and development workers around the world can also help to stimulate your thinking and support the development of your research process.

☞ See *Learning from Difference: Understanding community initiatives to improve access to education. Final report,* appendix entitled 'Communicating ideas through literature' (pp140-41)

☞ See further reading list in Appendix 2

Helpful hints

Not all action research participants will be able to read and/or write. You should prepare activities in such a way that these people are not excluded. For example:

- find ways for participants to help each other with reading and writing activities
- be prepared to adapt activities to reduce the amount of reading/writing involved or to use other media such as drawing, performance, tape-recorders or video cameras for the participants to capture or convey their thoughts
- ensure that there is a good balance of written and non-written activities throughout the action research
- encourage participants to value written and non-written activities and outputs equally. Information and ideas captured in non-written form are just as valuable and useful as written information.

4. Action

4.1. Introduction

The changes and improvements you make in your school/community will depend on the context in which you are working, the barriers you have identified, and the methods that you think will work best to overcome these barriers.

We cannot suggest in these guidelines how you should 'act' in response to the information you have collected, because every situation is unique. However, we provide three examples where teachers have *looked* at their situation, *thought* about possible solutions and then *acted* to make a change. The examples are based on individual case studies produced by a group of teachers in the early stages of an inclusive education project in Mpika, Zambia.

☞ For more details see "Researching our Experience"

4.2. Example: Including girl child mothers

One teacher noticed that pregnancy and motherhood was a barrier to the continued inclusion of girls in his class. He wanted to encourage girls to complete their education, either while pregnant, or after having their babies. (See pp 49-52 of "Researching our Experience" for more details.)

To find out more about the problem, he interviewed girl child mothers, their peers and their parents. He also held focus group discussions within his class of girls. He discovered that the girls who are pregnant or who have babies are teased by their peers and this discourages them from coming to school. He also found that some parents preferred their daughters to get married and have children, rather than 'wasting resources' on school fees. He learned that a girl who has one baby is often unable to resist her husband's/boyfriend's wishes to have another child, before the girl can finish school.

Having gathered this information, the teacher was able to think about possible actions to help the two girl child mothers in his class. He made a special effort to encourage the girls to stay in school. He 'counselled' their classmates about the girls' rights to be in school and about how to help rather than discourage the girls. He also had discussions with the girls' parents. Several months after the teacher had carried out the action research and written up his case study, he wrote to EENET to announce that both girls had passed their exams and were continuing with their education.

4.3. Example: Making toilets accessible

Daniel* had polio when he was younger and now uses callipers and crutches to help him move around. His class teacher was interested to find out more about the challenges or barriers he faces in his everyday life and so visited him at home.

The teacher interviewed Daniel's mother and discovered that Daniel's callipers often needed to be repaired in town. This cost money and took time and so Daniel often missed school. However the teacher also discovered that Daniel chooses not to use his callipers, preferring to crawl. He even crawls into the toilet because he cannot get into there with his crutches. At home he uses his mother's plastic shoes to cover his hands when he crawls into the toilet.

The teacher interviewed Daniel and found that he never uses the school toilets because he has nothing to keep his hands clean if he crawls in and yet he cannot access the toilets on crutches. If the teacher had not made this home visit, and spoken with Daniel and his mother, it is unlikely that he would have collected this important piece of information. In response to this information the teacher has been able to discuss the situation with colleagues and the school has begun to take action: building a toilet which Daniel can use.

*name has been changed

4.4. Example: Including John – an example of teacher self-reflection

The first day that John* attended school was described in detail by the class teacher in one of the earlier case studies produced as part of the action research activities (see Appendix 7). John has albinism – he was born with a very light skin colour. There are many superstitions about albinism and so John had not attended school before. The fears of the teacher and the students were clearly expressed in this early case study. They were afraid of being close to the boy as they believed that his condition was infectious.

The teacher documented information about her own fears, and those of the community, in a process of self-reflection. In the following months she did her best to overcome her own fears. She observed closely the behaviour and reactions of John and his classmates. The information she gathered in this way would make excellent baseline material: something she could look back on in the future to assess how much progress had been made.

She thought of ways to include John in her class. For example, she swapped lessons: getting the children to do physical activities together when they were too distracted by John's presence to concentrate on an English lesson. The teacher began to realise that the main problem that John faced was his poor eyesight and so she worked hard to ensure that he could always see the

writing on the board. The other students got used to John being in class and forgot their earlier fears.

*name has been changed

Helpful hint

In these short examples, we show how three teachers have looked at a problem, thought about some solutions and taken steps to overcome the problem. In Appendix 10 you will find a framework of suggested questions which may help you plan how to act on the information you have gathered and the analyses you have made.

Appendix 1: Power

Power is defined in many ways. There are some core components of what defines power, and there are other components that vary depending on the culture and context. For example: decision-making, participation and access to resources are core components of power; whereas inheritance rights or ownership of livestock may be more important in some cultures than others for defining power.

Also helpful are the classifications of different types of power which are used extensively in gender work and in participatory methodology. One common classification is:

Power over
> most commonly interpreted as power, but can promote oppression, eg, from defensive authoritarian bosses and dictators

Power to
> the individual aspect of empowerment, ie, being able to do things as a result of education or training

Power with
> collective power through tacking issues with others, eg, civil rights movements, self-help groups

Power within
> representing internal strength based on self-acceptance and respect for self and others, eg, Mandela in prison

The 'power continuum' distinguishes between levels of power. This is directly relevant to analysing the extent to which a particular group has or lacks power. Four broad levels are:

Absolute lack of power
> for example, no access to basic rights, including right to life

Low power
> access to basic services, benefiting directly but passively

Medium power
> individual access to decision-making processes, but these are designed by others

High power
> initiation of action, creation of decision-making processes which influence social, economic and political systems

Appendix 2: Further reading

Inclusive education

Alur, M. and Hegarty, S. (eds.) (2002) *Education and Children with Special Needs: From Segregation to Inclusion.* New Delhi: Sage Publications

Bogale, G.H.T. (1999) 'From Exclusion to Inclusion: A Case of Children with Mental Retardation in Kokebe Tsebah Primary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia'. Addis Ababa: Eastern and Central Africa Office Save the Children Sweden
      (available at: www.eenet.org.uk/theory_practice/exclu_inclu.shtml)

Booth, T. and Ainscow, M. (eds.) (1998) *From Them to Us: An International Study of Inclusion in Education.* London: Routledge

Child-to-Child Trust (2003) *Learning Together in the Mpika Inclusive Education Project*, London: Child-to-Child Trust
      (available from EENET)

Holdsworth, J. (2002) *Seeking a Fine Balance: Lessons from Inclusive Education in Lao PDR*, London: Save the Children UK
      (available from EENET)

Khatleli, P., Mariga, L., Phachaka, L. and Stubbs, S. (1995) 'Schools for all: National planning in Lesotho'. In O'Toole, B. and McConkey, R. (eds.) *Innovations in Developing Countries for People with Disabilities.* Chorley: Lisieux Hall Publications
      (available at www.eenet.org.uk/parents/book/lesotho.doc)

Lynch, J. (1994) *Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs in the Asia Region.* World Bank Technical Paper No 261, Asia Technical Series, Washington: World Bank
      (available at http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/senasia.htm)

Lynch, J (2001) *Inclusion in Education: The participation of disabled learners. A thematic study*, Paris: UNESCO
      (available at
      http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001234/123486e.pdf)

Mariga, L. and Phachaka, L. (1993) *Integrating Children with Special Educational Needs into Regular Primary Schools in Lesotho. Report of a Feasibility Study*. Maseru: Ministry of Education Lesotho
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Mittler, P. (2000) *Working Towards Inclusion: Studies in Inclusive Education.* London: David Fulton Publishers

Mumba, P. and Milandile, T. (2002) 'School In-Service Monitoring: An Evaluation Report on the Development of Literacy in Kabale Zone. Mpika'. Mpika: Teacher Education Department, Mpika District Resource Centre

Muthukrishna, N. (2000b) 'Transforming professional development programmes into an inclusive education system'. In Savolainen, H., Kokkala, H. and Alasuutari, H. (eds.) *Meeting Special and Diverse Educational Needs: Making Inclusive Education a Reality.* Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and Niilo Maki Institute
(available at
http://global.finland.fi/julkaisut/yleis/UM_Meeting%20Special.pdf)

Peters, S (2003) *Inclusive Education: Achieving education for all by including those with disabilities and special education needs,* Washington: World Bank
(available at
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Education/Inclusive_Education_En.pdf)

Richard Mmbaga, D (2002) *The Inclusive Classroom in Tanzania: Dream or Reality?*, Studies in Comparative and International Education no. 59, Stockholm: Institute of International Education
(available at http://www.interped.su.se/publications/EurenNo59.pdf)

Save the Children (1996) *Towards Inclusion: SCF-UK's Experience in Integrated Education* London: Save the Children
(available at www.eenet.org.uk/bibliog/scuk/towards/scfukex.shtml)

Save the Children (2002) *Schools for All: Including Disabled Children in Education*. London: Save the Children.
(available in English, Arabic, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish at www.eenet.org.uk/bibliog/scuk/schools_for_all.shtml)

Savolainen, H., Kokkola, H. and Alasuutari, H. (2000) (eds.) *Meeting Special and Diverse Educational Needs: Making Inclusive Education a Reality*. Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland Department of International Development Co-operation & Niilo Maki Institute
(available at
http://global.finland.fi/julkaisut/yleis/UM_Meeting%20Special.pdf)

Stubbs, S. (1997) 'Towards Inclusive Education: The Global Experience of Save the Children UK'. Paper presented to the Second Ibero-American Special Education Congress. London: Save the Children
(available at www.eenet.org.uk/bibliog/scuk/savechdn.shtml)

Stubbs, S. (2002) *Inclusive Education: Where There Are Few Resources*. Norway: Atlas Alliance
(available at www.eenet.org.uk)

UNESCO documents on inclusive education

UNESCO (1994) *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education.* Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF)

UNESCO (1999) *Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes: Report First Phase 1996-1997.* Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education)

UNESCO (1999) *Welcoming Schools: Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools.* Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education)

UNESCO (2001) *Deafness: A Guide for Parents, Teachers and Community Workers* Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education)

UNESCO (2001) *Including the Excluded: Meeting Diversity in Education. Example from Uganda.* Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education)

UNESCO (2002) *Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes: Report Phase Two 1999-2002*. Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education)

UNESCO (2003) *Overcoming Exclusion through Inclusive Approaches in Education: A challenge and a vision*. A UNESCO Conceptual Paper, Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education)

UNESCO (2001) *Open File on Inclusive Education*, Paris: UNESCO
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Research and processes

Chambers, R. (1992) *Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
(available at www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/dp/dp311.pdf)

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Laws, S. (2003) *Research for Development: A Practical Guide*. London: Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: Sage Publications

Linney, B. (1995) *Pictures, People and Power*. London: Macmillan

Mumba, P. (2000) 'Democratisation of Primary Classrooms in Zambia: A Case Study of its Implementation in a Rural Primary School in Mpika'. Paper presented at the International Special Education Congress (ISEC 2000), Manchester, 24-28 July 2000.
(available at www.isec2000.org.uk/abstracts/papers_m/mumba_2.htm)

Prosser, J. (1998) *Image-based Research.* London: Routledge Falmer

Reason, P. and Rowan, J. (1981) *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook for New Paradigm Research*. Chichester: Wiley

Save the Children UK (2000) *Access for All. Helping to Make Participatory Processes Accessible for Everyone.* London: Save the Children UK.
(available in English, English large print, Arabic, French, Portuguese and Spanish at
www.eenet.org.uk/key_issues/communication/communication.shtml)

Stubbs, S (1995) *The Lesotho National Integrated Education Programme: A study on implementation*, Thesis submitted in part fulfilment for Med, University of Cambridge [an example of action research]
(available at www.eenet.org.uk/action/sthesis/contents.shtml)

Teacher and school development

Ainscow, M. (1993) *Special Needs in the Classroom: A Teacher Education Guide.* London: Jessica Kingsley

Ainscow, M., Hopkins, D., Southworth, G. and West, M. (1994) *Creating the Conditions for School Improvement: A Handbook of Staff Development Activities.* London: Fulton

UNESCO (1993) *Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom.* Paris: UNESCO (second edition 2004, UNESCO Publishing)

UNESCO (2001) *Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs in Inclusive Classrooms: A Guide for Teachers.* Paris: UNESCO
(available at www.unesco.org/education)

UNESCO (2004) *Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-friendly Environments*, Bangkok: UNESCO
(available at
www2.unescobkk.org/ips/ebooks/documents/Embracing_Diversity/index.htm)

Project documents from EENET's action research project

EENET (2001) 'Action-learning for Inclusion. Understanding Community Initiatives to Improve Access to Education'. Tanzania workshop report,16-20 July 2001, Manchester: EENET
(available at www.eenet.org.uk/action/tanzania_report.shtml)

EENET (2003) 'Researching our Experience'. A collection of writings by Zambian teachers, Manchester: EENET
(available at www.eenet.org.uk/action/rsrching_experience.pdf)

Lewis, I. (2004) 'Using Images to Explore and Promote Inclusion. Experiences from Mpika Schools', Manchester: EENET
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Lewis, I. and Miles, M. (2002) 'Writing Workshops: An EENET Action Research Project. Mpika, Zambia 16-24 July 2002, Manchester: EENET
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Miles, S. with Ainscow, M., Kangwa, P., Kisanji, K., Lewis, I. Mmbaga, D and Mumba, M (2003) 'Learning from Difference: Understanding community initiatives to improve access to education', Final project report to DFID, Manchester: EENET
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Helpful hint
If you are a reader based within a Southern country and experience difficulty accessing Internet documents, please contact EENET. We may be able to access some documents for you and send you a print-out or CD-ROM.

Appendix 3: Examples of conversations between teachers

In these paraphrased extracts from conversations between Tanzanian and Zambian teachers you will see how the simple activity of discussing each other's problems and concerns can lead to the sharing of ideas and possible solutions – without the need for 'expert' advice.

"We have not been trained to teach children with 'mental retardation' (learning difficulties)."

"Problems are part of life. They are challenges. Even before you had the disabled children in your class, you had problems. If you have 100 children in your class, at least 20 will have problems, but you probably haven't noticed them. Teaching 105 children in Grade 1 was the experience which prepared me for inclusion."

"I also haven't had any special training. We meet every week to discuss our ideas and experience."

"Our classrooms are overcrowded and children drop out of school because they are tired of sitting on the floor."

"It is a good idea to rotate those children who are sitting on the floor. This gives every one a turn at sitting at a desk."

"Children are sad because their parents are dying."

"The most energetic teacher can't make children happy when their parents are dying. But the other children can! When challenged to respond to the needs of 'sad' children, they can be very thoughtful, caring and compassionate. In my school in Zambia they brought shoes, pencils and uniforms to school for those whose parents were unable to care for them and provide the necessary equipment for school."

"So many children are dropping out of school."

"Teachers don't care when children drop out of school because they've got so many children to teach. In fact they are happy – it's less work for them!"

"We are using an inter-active approach. We are empowering the children to contribute to curriculum development."

"We need specialists to teach the children with learning difficulties and other impairments."

"We need to enable all teachers to respond to, and teach, all children. Even if we trained specialists for the next 10 years, we wouldn't have enough."

"Training teachers is not getting us anywhere. They are dying and resigning. We have to look at the children as resources."

Appendix 4: Photographs used during Tanzanian workshop

Inclusive learning

The environment

Image 1: a neat and tidy concrete school building arranged around a courtyard planted with shrubs and grass

Image 2: a rural school with a thatched roof and no walls constructed by villagers

Inclusive classes

Image 1: a girls' class organised into groups

Image 2: a mixed class where half of the children are seated on the floor in groups

Disability

Image 1: a class organised in groups with an 'albino' child seated with his peers

Image 2: eight children, two sitting alone, in a bare classroom with many empty desks. The children are deaf and being educated in a special unit, but this can not be seen from the photograph

Reflection and analysis in action

Workshops

Image 1: a group of male and female participants seated on chairs in rows in a resource centre. The teachers do not appear to be listening intently

Image 2: a group of teachers seated round a table, holding pens and having a lively discussion. A flipchart paper is on the table

Working outside

Image 1: three teachers standing in a wide open space studying a flip chart

Image 2: school children, teachers and parents seated in a circle outside under some trees in a rural area

Appendix 5: A table for gathering baseline data

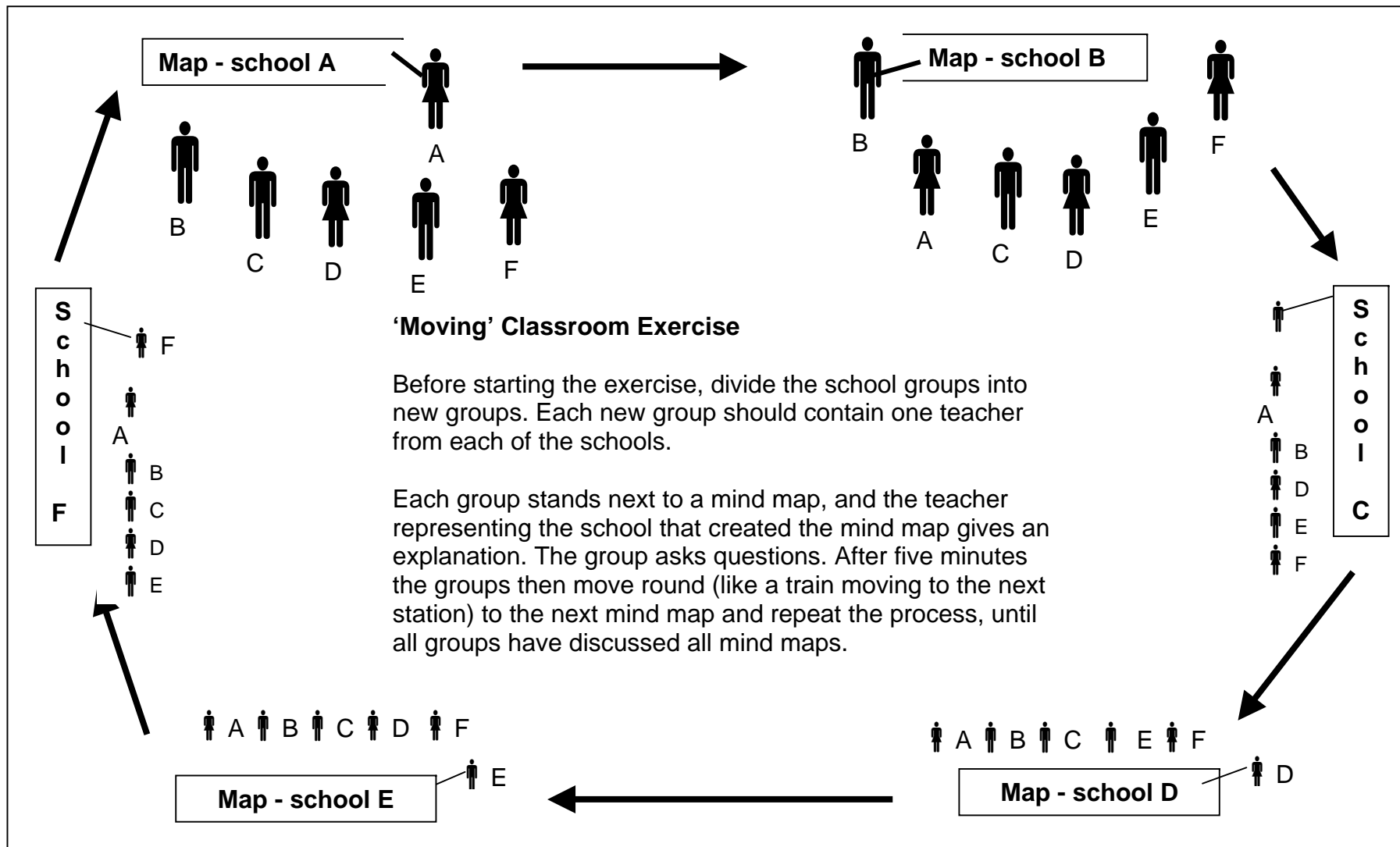| In this district/town/area		How many?	Who are they?	What do we know already?
Presence	Children who are not enrolled			
	Children not attending			
Participation	Children not involved			
	Children who feel unwelcome			
Achievement	Children who do not complete tasks			
	Children who do not get satisfactory results			

What further information do we need in order to understand the barriers that these learners experience?

Are we sure about the information?

Could there be other views?

Are there gaps in our knowledge?

Appendix 6: Moving or 'jigsaw' classroom

Map - school A

A
B
C
D
E
F

Map - school B

B
A
C
D
E
F

School F

F
A
B
C
D
E

School C

A
B
D
E
F

'Moving' Classroom Exercise

Before starting the exercise, divide the school groups into new groups. Each new group should contain one teacher from each of the schools.

Each group stands next to a mind map, and the teacher representing the school that created the mind map gives an explanation. The group asks questions. After five minutes the groups then move round (like a train moving to the next station) to the next mind map and repeat the process, until all groups have discussed all mind maps.

A B C D F
E

Map - school E

A B C E F
D

Map - school D

Appendix 7: An example of an early case study

Musakanya school

Grade 2

Topic:	How we welcomed an albino in class
Reference:	English Teachers Guide Part B
Sub-topic:	Greetings
Teaching/learning materials:	Wall charts and pictures charts

Objective
Having taught a lesson pupils should be able – socialise with an albino freely, communication with him, accept him as a member of our class.

Introduction

I told the pupils to stand and greet their friend John*. I said this is our friend we were told about by Mr Zulu that he was coming, he has now come, he has joined us, we shall always be learning together. Are you happy to see him? They said "yes". I said if you are happy can you greet him, say good morning John. John also said good morning, thank you. I told John to sit anywhere he wanted, he went and sat on the first desk, but the other pupils ran away from that desk.

After I observed this I called all the pupils in class to come in front and told them to do what ever I commanded them to do. I said, "jump", they jumped, "skip", they skipped, "turn around", they all turned, "dance", they danced, "clap", they clapped and John was doing the same. I said, OK go back to your desks. They went but still no one sat on John's desk. Some kept on standing.

Confusion started coming in. Instead of proceeding on with English Lesson, I switched on to sitting arrangement. I always observed that girls were refusing to sit with boys, so this time I told them that they are brothers and sisters and so they should sit together. I made John to sit in front near my desk and I asked the other two boys Peter and Joseph, who were friendly to him, because they stay together in location.

Again I made the girls to sit in between the boy, and the boys in between the girls. I noticed another thing that all the other members of the class were looking at him and there was less concentration to my lesson. Instead I changed that English Lesson to a PE Lesson and we went to the ground. I did so because no pupil showed attention to my lesson. In the actual sense this PE Lesson was supposed to be conducted during the last period of the day. As we were going some pupils from other classes started staring at him and

the people who were passing by the ground were surprised to see John within the group of pupils.

Straight away, I told the class to run half way round the football ground for they were grade ones. After running I introduced "2 by 2" - each child was supposed to be with a partner, but still nobody agreed to be with him. After they had danced I was dancing with him and the song ended. I switched on to "how are you my partner", again I said be with your partners, they chose but John remained alone.

Worse still myself as a teacher I was not so free with him, I feared his hands, he had sores on them. And especially that my belief was that whenever you see an albino you have to spit saliva on your chest, so I imagined that touching him would bring any effect to me. First I called on Peter, but he had already chosen a friend Joseph, he said I am with another one. I just forced myself and I did not want to show it to the pupils that I was not happy with him. We rubbed the hands together for the first round; pupils were again surprised to see me do this.

One good thing I observed on him was that John was free to do anything and ready to interact with anyone.

Next round pupils exchanged partners, I told Joseph to be with John, he agreed and they played successfully. Again we exchanged partners, Peter accepted to play with him. Finally I tried a girl and they played nicely.

It was during break time, we did not go back to class and the other pupils from other classes also came out and came straight to the ground, he was now the centre of attraction. Still his classmates showed fear for him.

I went on to make a circle, trying to do a rhythmic activity, still nobody touched him. I went to him trying to fill up the gap. After one round of doing "Macheni Macheni", I deliberately went at the middle of the circle pretending to be demonstrating, in the actual sense I just wanted the pupils to touch him. One touched him on one hand and the other one on the left hand. I told them to say who ever was going to leave a gap was going to become a toilet and would be brought in the middle of the circle. This also was successfully done.

We proceeded on to a dismissal activity were they did "sheep sheep come home", I made the boys touch the girls. John caught two though the first one refused, but he brought one girl personally to me. After all the girls were caught we went back to our classroom. They all sat on the desk I had given them. I said who ever is going to change the position was not going to receive praise from the teacher or other pupils.

I saw that I was still remaining with some more thirty minutes before knocking off time.
I introduced an English Lesson where I asked pupils to pronounce good morning and good afternoon. It was well conducted. I proceeded on to free practice where I asked pupils to greet each other by shaking hands. The

whole class participated fully and the other pupils were happy to see that John was able to greet and respond back to the greeting.

On writing activity – I wrote letter C for the pupils to copy. John wanted to write but he did not see properly, he came to my table, I wrote in his book, but it took time for him to see. I discovered that he had problems in visual perception. I wrote my work on the board in bigger letters, but still he was unable to perceive anything. We knocked off and John was in the company of Peter and Joseph.

On this day I was supposed to teach six subjects but I only managed to teach 2 subjects. Up to now I do not teach as expected of me. There have been total disturbances in my lessons. I spend much time on John.

Mrs Mauluka

Appendix 8: Examples of handwritten manuscripts

WHAT ARE MY CHALLENGES?

I begin this case study by a question looking at what challenges Joseph Simuoko has in life. Joseph is the born of Mr & Ms Simuoko who lives in Old Kamwanga Compound of Mpika town. The boy is physically disabled (PD) and he is unable to move without clutches. His disability ... from a disease called ... 15 years old and he ...

However, during ... Mpika Inclusive Educ outreach programmes. children who had n ... makes them not to ... had targeted an chil ... they could be included surfaced in teacher'm ...

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

1. PURPOSE: To Identify pupils with poor performance in my class and find ways of helping them and ways of encouraging their parents to accompany them where accademic is concerned.

2. PROCESSES: Brainstorm, Survey, teacher reflection, family pac meeting and discussion.

3. EVIDENCE OF IMPACT: Presence — They have been given learning materials. Participation and ... ements: learners have ... nts are able to reducing the poor ... ldren if they are ...zed. ... to reach parents are experiencing

INCLUSION AND THE GIRL CHILD MOTHER

I am a Grade Teacher for a Grade 9 girls' class at Mwaakanya Basic School in Mpika District of Zambia. The school is in Northern Province. I've been in the teaching profession for 5 years now.

Under the Education Policy for our nation, girls who stop school due to pregnancies have a right to come back to school. Despite having such a good policy in place, some girls come back to school but they stop on the way. Other stop school immediately they discover that they are pregnant. How can these children be maintained in school to move good progress in their academic work.

...

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING

INTRODUCTION
Inclusive Schooling is a special kind of teaching able children and learners with special needs or learning difficulties. At Kabale Basic School, we have dynamised our school by practicing inclusive schooling very seriously for some years now.

1. PURPOSE: To identify those children with learning difficulties and find ways of aquiring knowledge and life skills to sustain their lives in future.

2. PROBLEM: Memory Kaluba aged 7 was not able to write properly.

3. REASONS: She has bend bones both legs and back. This has resulted in stunted growth, very quiet, cannot work properly and she's short.

4. CHILD'S EXPERIENCE IN THE UNITY: When memory was at the unity she said that "she never used to learn mathematics". Most of the times when the teacher was outside the class, she witnessed the deaf pupils fighting. Despite her physical problem, she was writing from the desk just like others and she said that they never used to draw animals and people.

5. TEACHER'S EXPERIENCES: Upon receiving Memory in my class I had the following fear. I had a strong by me for a simple reason that I am not trained in special education hence the problem seemed to be abit complicated for me. Secondly, other members of staff who felt that they cannot teach children with special needs believed that I was overloading my work in order for memory's work to be prepared. Thirdly, I also had some reactions from Norah a pupil in my class. She asked me that why should we learn with memory in the main stream and yet there is a unity? Well, this was really a challenging question I could not complete answering there and then. However, I had an opportunity of explaining to my pupils how a disability could come to a person, the causes and

Appendix 9: Sample evaluation form

In order to learn from the experience of this workshop, we would like you to complete the following sentences:

1. The most interesting part of this workshop was_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. The least interesting part was_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. I enjoyed the way we_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. I did not like_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Next time you should_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. As a result of this workshop I will_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 10: Action research for inclusion – a suggested framework

As we mentioned in the section 'Aim of the Guidelines', we hope these materials will help you to work towards reducing marginalisation and exclusion from education, and so make education more inclusive. The Guidelines will help you to achieve this by guiding you to:

- use existing knowledge
- build on experience
- collect information
- work together
- listen to different voices
- create conversations
- evaluate experiences.

In this section we suggest a framework of questions that you might want to use in your action research, to give some direction to your activities. You can (and should) change or add questions that you and your action research colleagues think are more appropriate to the situation you are researching.

In brackets after each question, we have highlighted the guiding principle that the question will help you to achieve.

At this point you may also want to look again at our framework diagram, which explains how the perpetual cycle of looking, thinking, and acting might work.

Look

- What are the barriers to inclusion in your school/community – for example, in people's attitudes, in government policies, in the environment, etc? [collect information]

- What further information can you collect – for example, about why some children do not attend school, or are frequently absent from school? [collect information]

Think

- What do you already know about barriers to learning and participation in your school/community? [use existing knowledge]

- What strategies have been tried to overcome these barriers? [build on experience]

- What have you learned about promoting greater inclusion in your school/community/country? [build on experience]

- What have you learned from doing these action research activities – what has worked well and what could you have done differently? [evaluate experiences….of doing action research]

Act

- What changes do you and your colleagues want to make in your school/community? [work together]

- Who are you going to work with? [work together and listen to different voices]

- How are you going to make these changes? [build on experience]

- When will these changes be made?

- How are you going to record (write/draw/audio/video) your actions and the changes you make? [work together and listen to different voices]

- What have you learned from carrying out these actions or making these changes? [evaluate experiences….of your actions/changes]

- How will you share your learning and experience? [create conversations]

Appendix 11: Accessibility issues in your action research

The purpose behind your action research will be to help people think about, discuss and take action to improve the teaching and learning practices in their school/community so that they become more inclusive. However it is quite possible that some of the activities you carry out could be hard for some people to participate in – they could be inaccessible.

Making your action research activities accessible need not be a complex or expensive process. The main way to ensure that the activities are accessible is to have an open discussion with all potential participants about their specific needs. Find out whether there are factors which might hinder a person's participation. For example:

- visual, hearing, learning or physical impairment
- understanding of languages
- physical access to or transport to the place where the activities will take place
- work, childcare or other personal commitments.

Discuss with the individuals about solutions and make sure these solutions are achievable. If not, find an alternative way to make the activity accessible for them.

Discuss accessibility issues with the rest of the action research participants, so that everyone is aware of each other's needs and feels free to ask for improvements to the accessibility of the activities at any time.

☞ For more details see "Access for All: Helping to make participatory processes accessible for everyone" (Available from EENET in English Arabic, French, Spanish and Portuguese)

Some specific accessibility issues that may arise with certain activities suggested in the Guidelines

Activities that involve talking and listening

- Encourage participants not to talk too fast, especially if some people are using language or sign language interpreters. If the interpreter cannot keep up with your pace of speech, then their client will be missing out on a lot of what is being said.

- Encourage everyone to speak clearly and to make sure they face the listeners (there should be no looking at the floor or hiding your face behind your hands – even if you feel shy or nervous!).
- Encourage people to use simple language and to avoid jargon that not everyone understands.
- Avoid doing group work in just one room or in a small area outside. When lots of groups of people are talking at the same time it can get very noisy! Participants may find it hard to hear and to concentrate on what is being said in their group if there is lots of noise coming from the other groups. Use more than one room or encourage groups to spread out over a wide area outside.

Activities that involve just two people

Some activities may involve just two people – for example, some interviews may have just an interviewer and an interviewee. Such an activity may be inaccessible to a research participant if, for any reason, they are not comfortable with the situation. For instance, a pupil may be uncomfortable being interviewed by a teacher, or a female participant may feel uncomfortable being interviewed by a male participant. If participants are uncomfortable, they will probably not participate fully or say what they really want to say.

You should always consider the most appropriate way to conduct every action research activity, and whether you need to adapt it to make people feel at ease. This applies to activities involving lots of people, not just those involving two people. Adaptations might include, for example, ensuring that women can interview women, or perhaps facilitating children to interview each other.

Activities that involve drawing

Make sure visually impaired and blind participants are included, for example:

- encourage inventiveness, eg, participants could use three-dimensional materials (string, stones, leaves, etc) so that they create tactile drawings
- encourage sighted participants to describe to their blind colleagues everything that is being drawn, and to follow their instructions as to what to draw.

Activities that involve observations

Remember that what you hear (for example, in a classroom) can be as important as what you see. Blind and visually impaired teachers, parents or community members, therefore, should not be excluded from such observation activities.

Observation can require a lot of concentration, which may be difficult for some research participants (including tired teachers!). Make sure that observation activities are not too long, or that the observers can take a break.

If activities involve observing photographs, drawings or videos, sighted participants can describe what they see to their blind colleagues, and in the process they may also be helped to think more deeply about what they are observing.

Brainstorming activities

Brainstorming activities are supposed to be fast-moving and involve simply listing (or mind-mapping) ideas, rather than having longer conversations about these ideas. However, if some participants in the brainstorming have listening or communication difficulties, make sure the activity is not moving too fast for them to understand or contribute. You could allow short explanations if someone does not understand the meaning of a word (but avoid the short explanation becoming a detailed debate!).

Activities that involve writing

Some of the action research activities suggested in these Guidelines involve writing – as a group using large sheets of paper/blackboards, or individually on small sheets of paper. Some participants will be unable to write (because of a physical impairment; because they have never learned to write; because they have a learning difficulty, etc). Make sure they are not excluded!

In group activities that involve writing, make sure that each group contains at least one person who is confident about writing down and reading out the group's ideas. For individual writing activities, pair people together. A participant who cannot write can instead speak their thoughts and the other person can write them down.

Do not make writing an essential skill for all of your action research activities otherwise you will be permanently excluding people who cannot write or who are not confident with writing – and they may have some very important contributions to make.

Encourage people who are writing to use very clear handwriting, and if they are writing on a board or large sheet of paper, make sure the letters are big enough for everyone in the group to see clearly.

Activities that involve photography or video

Some participants may be unwilling to take part in activities which involve them being photographed or filmed. Don't make your activities inaccessible to them by insisting on using cameras all the time. While capturing conversations and observations in this way can be useful for future discussions and reflections, it will not be useful if it permanently excludes some people or causes embarrassment or resentment among action research participants.

Discuss with your camera-person about who they can or cannot take pictures/film of. If you are doing group activities, maybe you can use separate rooms or areas for the groups that do or do not want to be filmed. Make sure everyone understands and respects the fact that each person has the right to not be filmed if it makes them feel uncomfortable.

Helpful hint

The overall atmosphere of a meeting, workshop or other gathering can determine whether participants find it accessible and are able to participate fully. At times, a very formal atmosphere can make participants feel that they cannot say what they want, when they want, for fear of breaking the 'rules' of the meeting. At other times a very informal atmosphere can seem chaotic and confusing if you are not used to it, which can also deter participation.

Try to strike a good balance: make sure your action research activities don't feel rigidly and oppressively formal, but that there is enough sense of direction and structure to the activities to stop people feeling confused and panicky about what they are doing.