



Recommendation: The WF reviews the format for reporting that gives the institutions guidance about what to say in order to enable Headquarters to have comparable data to inform decision making.

13. The World Federation has some work to do on its image as there is some disquiet among the workers at grassroots level that they are not appreciated.

Recommendation: The WF ensures that the people who carry out the projects in India know they are appreciated.

14. There is a need to respond quickly to some requests or the educational opportunities for children can be lost. For example if the fees are not paid, sometimes within hours of a place being offered, then it may be allotted to another candidate who has the cash.

Recommendation: The WF reviews the response time between receiving a request, giving an answer and transferring the funds.

15. The training of people needs to be done by locals and the WF should build capacity in India so that this can happen.

Recommendation: The WF helps find and train some local people to disseminate good practice.

16. It is not only teachers who require training but also principals and the trustees in order to better understand their roles.

Recommendation: Training programmes are organised for both principals and trustees to enable them to fulfil their roles.



Analysis of the Objectives

In early discussions with those who organise the scheme the following observations were noted:

1. The schools have certain basic objectives within the Indian Education System that they need to fulfil and also have objectives as a result of being in receipt of sponsorship from the scheme.
2. It is unclear where the scheme is expecting to see an improvement but there is a perception that the communities where the scheme operates are not becoming a part of the Indian economic boom. There is some feeling that not all the schools are delivering quality education but the term quality is not clearly defined. Does it mean improved examination results or an increase in student enrolment or a change in the students' attitudes and behaviour? Perhaps it means all of these.
3. The schools themselves often have a dilemma between increasing the number of students they take on roll, thus increasing the educational opportunity for their community, accepting larger class sizes and possibly increasing their income as opposed to offering more individualised targeted tuition.
4. There is another dilemma resulting from the examination system within which the schools operate. Teaching methods that give rise to in-depth understanding and an ability to question critically could result in the children becoming less successful in the public examinations that do not value these qualities and mostly require rote learning.
5. Data is clearly needed to evaluate the current situation and this information needs to be independently verifiable. Many of the schools are relatively newly established and have yet to enter their students for public examinations. Thus there are no results from these schools that could provide comparative data with other similar institutions.
6. An assessment of the quality of the partner schools is needed but the institutions are not comparable. Some have been in existence for decades and others are just starting to grow, some are catering for a sophisticated population whereas others operate in an area where the population is mostly illiterate and have no cash economy; sometimes the work is being done in poverty ridden inner cities and in other cases with isolated rural communities.
7. The scheme has a mission to eradicate poverty through education and therefore the focus ought to be on those who are in poverty.
8. In order to avoid the negativity of the inspection trap it was agreed that the focus of the visit would be on seeking good practice and disseminating it. The previous reports done by external educationalists suggest that all the schools have some strengths and these ought to be shared.
9. There are common factors for the schools; it might also be useful for them all to develop a shared vision. The scheme is not designed to specifically target the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities but the poor in general. Unfortunately the KSIAMC are among the poorest in India and are not usually part of the economic revolution that is taking place.
10. There was some built in flexibility to the visits to enable unforeseen activities to be accommodated and to extend visits where it was deemed helpful. In the event this was important because it was found that the scheme is supporting more schools than the original number given and is paying for a variety of education related services which needed to be a part of this evaluation.



Methodology of the Consultancy

As an outsider unfamiliar with the Zainabiya School Sponsorship Scheme, it was important to learn about it quickly by:

Reading

The official documents explaining the scheme were read in conjunction with other available information. The secretariat of the scheme also provided a basic report about each school and there were many documents accessible via the worldwide website of the World Federation. In particular following documents were analysed and notes made:

- The Report for the term 2003-6 of the ZCSS that was presented to the 10th Ordinary Conference in September 2006
- The three very helpful reports from educationalists who visited in July and December 2006
- The documentation made available at the schools during the visits
- Official Government Statistics, which gave figures such as population distribution by age and location, infant mortality, life expectation etc.
- Histories of India and Pakistan
- Cultural information about India and in particular of Muslims in the country taken from guides and other books
- Information on the location and distribution of the schools
- Information on teacher supply, distribution and their qualifications

Interviews

Full frank discussions with a number of people were conducted. These people included:

- Staff at the ZCSS secretariat
- Teachers in schools
- Trustees and supporters of the partner schools
- Others working in the Indian Education Service

In a strange place with unfamiliar names, this gathering of intelligence was slow, repetitive and full of contradictions. Messages received were from the individual's point of view and sometimes had a hidden agenda. It was useful just to listen to everyone, making copious notes in order to try to make sense of it all later. Working via local languages can also lead to confusion and perhaps some misconceptions. Using the usual research technique of triangulation enabled confirmation checks to be made. Therefore, it was important to approach the questioning in a variety of ways and to double check the information by using other sources. The limitations of language certainly caused discrepancies in the use of some terms.

Participatory Activities

Following recommended good practice, proposals were presented to colleagues and fully discussed before being recommended. So the following activities were undertaken:

- Presentations
- Writing documentation together with colleagues
- Joint working sessions

Visits

Various visits were facilitated during the consultancy to:

- Twenty three buildings which actually housed twenty seven schools
- Other stakeholders

Based on the gathered information it was possible to work with colleagues to arrive at the conclusions and recommendations in this report.



A Brief of the ZCSS

The World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Muslim Communities (WFKSIAMC) was founded in 1976 and began its mission to eradicate poverty through education in 1981. Direct evidence was obtained both in Meta and Gopalpur that the educational activities of ZCSS are beginning to eradicate poverty in those communities so the mission is working.

ZCSS works by supporting the education of children from deprived backgrounds and the scheme currently supports more than 14,000 children worldwide, both Sadat and non-Sadat. The late Alhaj Mullah Ashgher Ali M M Jaffer was and is a great inspiration for this work and many schools bear his name.

This support is given in a variety of ways. Sometimes children are in receipt of scholarships and sometimes the managers of the scheme help find a donor to assist in developing the schools' infra-structure. The scheme works to a three year plan but the basis for the recommendations in the report of September 2006 that included careers advice, support for higher education and reducing support for primary education were made using incomplete information and misunderstanding the real needs. The majority of the support currently goes to school children in the form of paying tuition fees, the cost of two uniforms per year including shoes, a school bag and books and medical help if the home bread winner becomes sick, because this can cause the child to be kept out of school. The schools try to be self-financing so the fees paid by the students are used to pay the teachers and the school's running costs. As a result the scheme is supporting more than just individual children because these fees keep the school running. For capital work, such as building a school, the scheme actively seeks donors and these projects are locally administered by trustees who often add their own resources. This is important as it gives such projects local ownership and this makes the projects more likely to grow and develop over time.

One of the guiding principles of the scheme is that gradually the responsibility for such educational assistance is passed to the local communities thus making it more sustainable and less dependent upon the overseas donors. The trustees of the scheme were aware of this notion.

The education adviser was asked to examine, from the perspective of an education professional, what is happening in the schools in India that are supported by the scheme. Ultimately the information gathered will inform the both the operation and development of the scheme in the next three year term 2009-2012.



1. A Summary of the School Observations

The full details of what was done under this heading are to be found in the appendices.

However, the findings can be summarised as follows:

Professionalism

In all cases the level of professionalism was very high. Teachers carried out their duties rigorously and with good grace. They arrived at the school before the beginning of the day and were often found in the buildings long after the children had gone home and even at weekends. Their perception of their duty was not as one might expect elsewhere, for example, they did not take work home. No one seems to have given teachers a job description so they were doing as they thought fit, modelled on what they had experienced when pupils themselves. The teachers and children showed respect for each other and little problems such as children's disagreements were handled in a learning caring way. Unfortunately, the teachers often did not use children's names and class registration was frequently done by number, which is impersonal.

Subject Knowledge

Occasionally what was observed was incorrect, noticeably in the sciences. However, the teachers relied heavily on the set textbooks so some errors were due to what had been printed, as in the case of an English lesson observed in Gujarat. What was lacking was an ability to enthuse the children with the subject and to take the subject material further to interest the able pupils.

Pedagogic Knowledge

Knowledge about the best way to teach a topic or the common mistakes learners make when introduced to a new concept was not in evidence. The methods used were the same whatever the idea or age of the learner.

Lessons

The planning of lessons was not detailed and in some cases was not done at all. Most lessons had no structure. One teacher began his lesson by borrowing a textbook from a student and asking where they had got to last lesson. Usually the lessons followed a lecture style of presentation and teaching aids were not in evidence. The environment of the classroom was boring with little to stimulate pupils and the furniture was arranged in rows with the exception of some nursery activity rooms and computer laboratories.

The objective of most learning sessions was not clear and there was little variety in the activities that children did. It is known that most learners have a strong kinaesthetic learning style but most of what was seen was passive with a strong emphasis on reading and writing. However, children often came to the front of the class to show their classmates how to solve a math problem or lead a chant. There was much reliance on repetition but little monitoring to ensure everyone was participating and teachers mostly stayed at the front of the class often sitting in a chair. The tradition of rote learning and chanting is ingrained in the culture across all religious groups and is the basic methodology used. Explanations about why this or that was done to solve a problem were rare.

Board work was mostly good but the quality of some of the boards caused learning difficulties. For example a break in the board meant the teacher wrote the word watch as wa tch and that is what the children copied into their books. Teachers need to model



quality by, for example, using a ruler when drawing a table on the blackboard and expecting the same care from their pupils. It is also very difficult for pupils to organise their work if they only have one notebook. It would be useful to have one classwork book for each subject and a separate homework book which could be collected in during a lesson and marked by teachers outside the class hours. There was much note taking and dictation with mistakes and missed sentences in the children's workbooks. The challenge of having to operate in many different languages exercises both children and teachers.

In most cases able children spent a lot of time waiting for others to catch up and the concept of differentiation is unknown, though teachers did give individuals a lot of help. Much caring was seen and very little use of the stick.

Questioning was invariably low order and rarely involved all the class. Assessing the learning and monitoring the achievements were not seen but homework was being set. Most teachers marked the children's work in class with long queues forming to get their books seen. Occasionally teachers demonstrated a point but they never considered if every pupil could see what they were showing.

The above paints a rather dire picture but it must be remembered that due to the nature of the State curriculum such methods work and the majority of the schools obtain high pass rates with good marks in public examinations. The regularity of the teaching and the frequent repetition make these schools far better than their government counterparts.

School Management

The role of the school board or trustees, who are not usually educationalists, can in some instances detract from what the education professionals see as good practice. The senior teachers can be sidelined by the 'interested' trustee. I even saw an overseas donor telling the school how it should work! Generally the senior managers have no training for their role, little experience of the way other establishments work and no ideas about innovative strategies.

The older boys and girls were usually segregated either within the classroom or more often placed in separate accommodation.

The times of lessons are often only thirty minutes which is very short for meaningful learning activities. The principals often teach and cannot monitor what is happening around the school though a few schools had defined systems to check what is going on and even reviewed the children's work diaries on a daily basis.

All managements are careful about fulfilling the government's requirements for registration, recording examination results and attendance. They ensure the prescribed syllabus is followed and have been recognised as efficient institutions by the relevant government body. The schools usually have extra-curricular programmes and additionally place a strong emphasis on moral and social values in their teaching.

Examinations are well managed to ensure fairness. There is a well monitored procedure for setting papers and the invigilation appears to be strict. The construction of timetables that support learning is not always done and many schools have the same pattern of lessons everyday. There is also a lack of resourcefulness in the senior managers who do not try to find innovative ways to solve problems.



Teachers

Most of the teachers had some good relevant qualifications but were not pedagogically literate. Applicants for teaching posts are not necessarily going to be good teachers just because they have impressive qualifications. Interestingly one of the best groups of teachers seen working had only intermediate qualifications or had just obtained matriculation. Often the better qualified teachers made long winded cases for an improvement in pay, not taking into account the free food and lodging they were receiving. They all told of elderly parents to support or sisters to marry off and one case had a remarkably large number of elderly parents! There are some genuine hardship cases but the trustees are usually aware of these and use their influence to alleviate the problem. In fact some qualifications awarded by some institutions are of dubious quality and interviewers need to see the candidates perform in the classroom before appointing them. Once appointed the teacher needs an induction programme and to be given literature about the school and a handbook. During their career teachers also need regular in-service training so that their competence grows and they learn techniques such as how to teach large classes in small spaces or how to deal with multi-grade classes.

Despite receiving lower pay than they might expect elsewhere they were often happy to teach in these schools and be a part of a successful institution while serving their community. For many women a local job was appreciated.

Building and Services

The condition of the schools built under the scheme was impressive and they were generally well maintained. Schools just starting used whatever accommodation they could find but usually had a long-term development plan. Specialist rooms are often missing and in most States laboratories are not required until PUC classes are taught. The services such as electricity, telephone and water are not reliable. Most schools had good toilet and washing facilities and a prayer room. Many schools with more than one floor had only one exit to use in the case of an emergency and apart from one instance it was difficult to accommodate children with disabilities. Some schools have health and safety issues and although India does not have developed law in this area it is possible that if a child had a serious accident the WF might be held accountable for what it has sanctioned.

Teaching Resources

These were conspicuous by their absence. Some schools had a multi-projector, laboratory and library. The libraries were usually poor and the science equipment difficult to use effectively. Most schools had some computers and many teachers had been given some training in their use as well as the use of any other resource the school had. There was a lack of posters or any interesting displays on classroom walls. Many of the schools are growing faster than they can build classrooms and some schools operate shift systems or have very crowded rooms. The rooms were usually very basic with bare walls but well ventilated. In many schools the pupils did not have the basic texts and had to share with a friend or group of friends.

Finances

These are meticulously kept and the larger schools have an office manager to deal with this. The fee structure varies from 300 rupees per month to 10 rupees but the schools try not to deny children an educational opportunity on financial grounds. This is where the ZCSS comes into play and the local knowledge of the community ensures it is efficiently targeted. It has to be remembered that as a part of getting things done it is necessary to sweeten the way otherwise the children could be disadvantaged. This can cause some difficulty with accounting. Generally the real cost of keeping a child in school in India appeared to be consistently 4000 rupees per annum.

**Community**

The schools clearly see themselves as a part of the community and recognise the role of the family in the education of their own children. However, few schools were proactive about working directly with the parents to help them gain skills like writing, knowing what constitutes a good diet, the importance of pure water etc. They felt it was enough to tell them about their child's progress and what they should be doing to help.

Recent Developments

Generally the recommendations of previous educational visitors have not been carried out. The reason for this has not been a lack of resources or understanding of how the recommendation could be implemented. For example some advisers suggested the classrooms could be made more attractive and ran some sessions on how to do this but the walls were still bare at the time of this visit. The reason was probably because the teachers did not have ownership of the ideas or understand the value to their work. It is possible that although the teachers enjoyed the training it was meaningless in terms of their everyday work. The training of teachers is fraught with pitfalls and takes a long time because it usually involves a change of culture.

Other Facilities

Some schools have staff quarters or student hostels. These are usually good quality, clean and well run. First hand experience of them was gained during the visits as these were used for accommodation. There was also the opportunity to see other educational provision such as coaching centres which provide a useful resource for the poor students of illiterate families and other schools.

Additional Comments

The hospitality and arrangements for the visits were excellent and being given a free hand to see and ask about anything enabled a comprehensive picture to be built up during the five weeks. There was a lot of travelling involved but every effort was made to make it stress free.



2. An Analysis of the Philosophy behind the Scheme

It is clear that much good work is being done by the Zainabiya Child Sponsorship Scheme but whether this is an efficient use of the considerable resources involved is a matter of debate. However, serious consideration must be given to the fate of the children currently supported if the scheme is either reduced or the emphasis changed.

Any project that is supporting the development of other communities needs to address certain basic criteria such as the wants and needs of the community, sustainability and community ownership. The donors need to be clear what their objectives are and although the ZCSS has some defined principles, such as supporting the whole community irrespective of any differences, the work currently being done is fragmented across India and the world. The declared intentions in the report for the period 2006 – 09 are unlikely to be met. For example the majority of the support in Gujarat is being given to primary children although the aim was to put more resource into supporting those going for higher education.

The danger of a fragmented approach is that nothing is done well. The scheme needs to decide whether it wants to operate in so many different countries and even, where it operates in a large country like India, whether it should have a presence in so many different places. In India the question has to be asked why some communities are being supported and other very poor ones not.

The current scheme is about child support but in the field of development work the emphasis has changed. The argument is that if you help a child that child and their family benefit, particularly if the child is able to access a good education. However, if you help teachers then many generations of children can benefit. The provision of infrastructure and resources are important but if the teachers are not supported then the quality of education provided will inevitably be poor.

The World Federation needs to decide whether it wants maintain the current system or move, albeit gradually, towards a more focussed approach.



3. An Analysis of the Perceptions of the Senior Managers

In many of the schools there are a number of dilemmas. One is that the Trustees or School Boards interfere daily in the working of some schools and these people do not usually have an education background. Another challenge is that where a school has teachers paid by the local government they sometimes bring with them attitudes not conducive to ZCSS ideals. A third concern is that headteachers, who, as all research shows, are significant if a school is to be successful, usually have no training or experience to fulfil their role.

To begin to address this, a two day workshop for senior managers was convened in Bangaluru. The programme was as follows:

Day One

Opening ceremony and general introduction.

1. An Introduction to Basic Management

Objectives

1. to be able to describe the main duties of a school manager and recognise the personal qualities required to carry out these duties
2. to formulate strategies to motivate your staff members

2. Observing Teachers

Objectives

1. recognise the importance of clear learning objectives for planning an effective lesson
2. describe a good lesson
3. decide what constitutes a good lesson observation format and devise clear criteria for making judgements
4. evaluate the evidence from an observation of a lesson

3. Giving Feedback

Objectives

1. to determine the purpose of feedback on lesson observations
2. to devise a procedure for feedback

4. Complete an Action Plan as a result of the programme of day one

Day Two

Review of day one and check homework exercises.

1. The Booklets Schools Need

Objectives

1. explain why schools require quality documentation and determine what constitutes 'quality'
2. clarify what documents are needed
3. classify the information they should contain
4. begin to produce the basic format for the agreed documentation

2. What Does School Data Tell Us?

Objectives

1. examine what data schools currently collect



2. examine how that data can be analysed and the results presented
3. consider the interpretation of the results
4. examine how issues raised from the data can be resolved

3. Using Data to Inform Target Setting

Objectives

1. to clarify the procedures for target setting
2. to consider what indicators can be used to measure performance
3. to consider how the impact of an action can be measured

4. Introducing the School Development Plan

Objectives

1. to describe and justify the need for a long term plan
2. to determine the areas of school life that require long term planning
3. to devise a format for a school development plan
4. to create a development plan in school teams

5. Complete an Action Plan as a result of the programme of day two.

6. Complete an evaluation of the workshop.

Such a short workshop can only begin to raise issues but each participant left with a personal action plan to implement in their own school. It remains to be seen if this bears fruit.

The attendance was disappointing with no one coming from Hyderabad and various schools not represented or not sending an appropriate senior manager. In the end only twenty three people attended.

	School	Name	Designation
1	Avalkonda	Mr Ramana	Principal
2	Alipur	Mr Ramesh	Headmaster
3	Alipur	Mr Gouspeer	I/C PUC Section
4	Kareempur	Ms Bibi Hajira	Asst. Teacher
5	Kareempur	Ms Nirmala	Asst. Teacher
6	Muzaffrapur	Mr Raza Mehdi	Principal
7	Alipur	Ms Fathima	HOD Deeniyath
8	Reliance (Bangaluru)	Mr Hassan Ali	Educationalist Urdu
9	Potena Halli	Ms Reshema Taj	Headmistress
10	Potena Halli	Ms Shama	Asst. Teacher
11	Golpalpur	Mr Zaffar Abbas	Principal
12	Bhavanghar	Mr Parvez Merchant	Principal
13	Meta	Mr Mukesh Desai	Asst. Teacher
14	Talaga	Mr Salim Hingora	Principal
15	Alipur/Kareempur	Mr Mir Hafeez Hussain	Inspectot
16	Bright (Bangaluru)	Mr Jaffer Hussain	Trust President
17	Bhavanghar	Mr Muhsin Dharamsi	World Federation
18	I.W.E.T. (Bangaluru)	Mr M Z Hussain Muzammil	Trustee
19	I.W.E.T. (Bangaluru)	Mr Mirza Mohamed Mehdi	Trust President
20	Kareempur	Mr Meer Muntaqab Ali	Trustee



	School	Name	Designation
21	Bright (Bangaluru)	Mushahera Begum	Principal
22	Elite Education Trust	Musarath Fathima	Trustee
23	Reliance (Bangaluru)	Nusrath Hussain	Administrator

At the end of the workshop an evaluation was done that revealed that the participants learned much from the workshop. There were complaints about the lateness of information, about the venue and hotels and that the hotel had no restaurant so they had difficulty getting food.

The second day was difficult as a Trustee came who considerably disrupted the programme and it was therefore not completed as originally intended.

However, it can be judged to have been a good start in getting principals to consider their role. Even so it would be more appropriate if a good trainer could be found locally to do such work. Perhaps it would be good to train some trainers who can then disseminate the ideas around the schools.

It is hoped that the action plans which are held in the Bangaluru Office will be followed up and that the workshop will have some tangible outcomes.



Conclusion

The visit achieved the original objectives and a clear picture of the working of the scheme in India was obtained. As a result there are a number of issues for the executive body to consider and some policy decisions to be clarified or made. Until they are made the next stage of the development of the scheme cannot take place.

The value of becoming a temporary member of these communities and being able to see and value the work they are doing in very difficult circumstances should not be underestimated. If nothing else results from these visits it is hoped that the project implementers will have been encouraged in their formidable tasks.

It is anticipated that this report will provoke a dialogue about a variety of educational issues germane to the operation of the ZCSS.

Postscript

A short visit presents some special challenges mostly centring on the time constraint. It was necessary to be able to adapt very quickly to the new environment and absorb information and ascertain issues rapidly. Bearing in mind that there are nuances of the culture that take a lifetime to understand this has to be done with care, as it is easy to gain a false impression. There was also the challenge of holiday closures of schools to contend with that meant visits were sometimes curtailed.

The support of the colleagues with whom one is working is the key to success and this visit would have failed but for their help.



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