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NOWPDP ACTIVITY COMPLETION REPORT



Network of Organizations Working for
People with Disabilities, Pakistan

NOWPDP Activity Completion Report

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1. ACRONYMS

AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKES,P	Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKPBSP	Aga Khan Planning and Building Services
AKU-HDP	Aga Khan University – Human Development Programme
AKU-IED	Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development
CSRC	Civil Society Resource Center
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DDE	Deputy Director of Education
DSA	Daily Spending Allowance
EDIP	Education Development and Improvement Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HI	Hearing Impairment
ID	Intellectual Disability
IDI	In-depth Interview
LD	Learning Disability
LLI	Local Level Institutions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MERMIS	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Management Information System
MT	Master Trainer
MTR	Mid-Term Reviews
NOWPDP	Network of Organizations Working for People with Disabilities, Pakistan
PD	Physical Disability
PDCN	Professional Development Centre North
PDT	Professional Development Teacher
PWD	People with Disabilities
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ToT	Training of Trainers
TT	Teacher Training
VI	Visual Impairment
WBS	Work Breakdown Structure

2. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Attitude	a: a mental position with regard to a fact or state b: a feeling or emotion towards a fact or state
Children of school-going age	Children between 7 and 18 years of age
Disability Sensitization	The sharing of knowledge (types, causes, characteristics, levels of severity etc.) regarding disabilities with a group of people with the aim of bringing about a different, more positive, reaction to disability and persons with disabilities due to increased understanding. Directly addressing common misperceptions is also helpful in the process of disability sensitization.
Family	Refers to not only the nuclear family (i.e. mother, father, siblings), but also to the extended family (i.e. grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins) in the context of Gilgit-Baltistan where joint-family households are common.
Focus Group Discussion	A gathering of people from similar socioeconomic, cultural, educational, and linguistic backgrounds who share a common interest in a topic. The topic is discussed in the gathering for a certain period of time during which common ideas, perceptions, beliefs, and debates within the group emerge. Focus Group Discussions often have a moderator, sometimes two (dual moderator approach), and a note-taker.
Inclusive Education	<p>Inclusive Education is a process of increasing the participation of all students in schools, including those with disabilities. It is about restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality.</p> <p>Inclusion implies that the system should be flexible enough to adapt to and accommodate a child with disabilities as opposed to the prevalent system which expects that the child with disabilities must adapt to the existing system.</p>
Moderator	Leader of the Focus Groups Discussions who was responsible for initiating discussing by asking key questions and encouraging participation. Part of the field team.
Perception	The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.
Special Education Needs	Any characteristic or problem, whether visible or hidden, permanent or temporary, which interferes with the child's learning at school and requires special attention.
Training Needs Assessment	A study through which the training requirements of a specific group regarding a specific topic are researched in terms of their present

level of understanding, along with the general understanding of the community. Involvement of the community provides additional context.

Training of Trainers (ToT)

A training in which participants of the training are prepared to become trainers themselves. ToTs often cover material, as well as training techniques.

NOWPDP conducted a three-week ToT with 18 master trainers from across GB, who then went on to conduct 21 training sessions on the same topic in various districts.

Translator/Note-taker

Individual responsible for recording the entire Focus Group Discussion and taking detailed notes over the two hour session. Part of the field team.

3. BASIC DATA

As part of EDIP's efforts for whole-school improvement, NOWPDP has implemented a teacher training programme to sensitize them to disabilities and provide inclusive education for children with mild to moderate disabilities.

The programme covered 98 schools in six out of seven districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. These included:

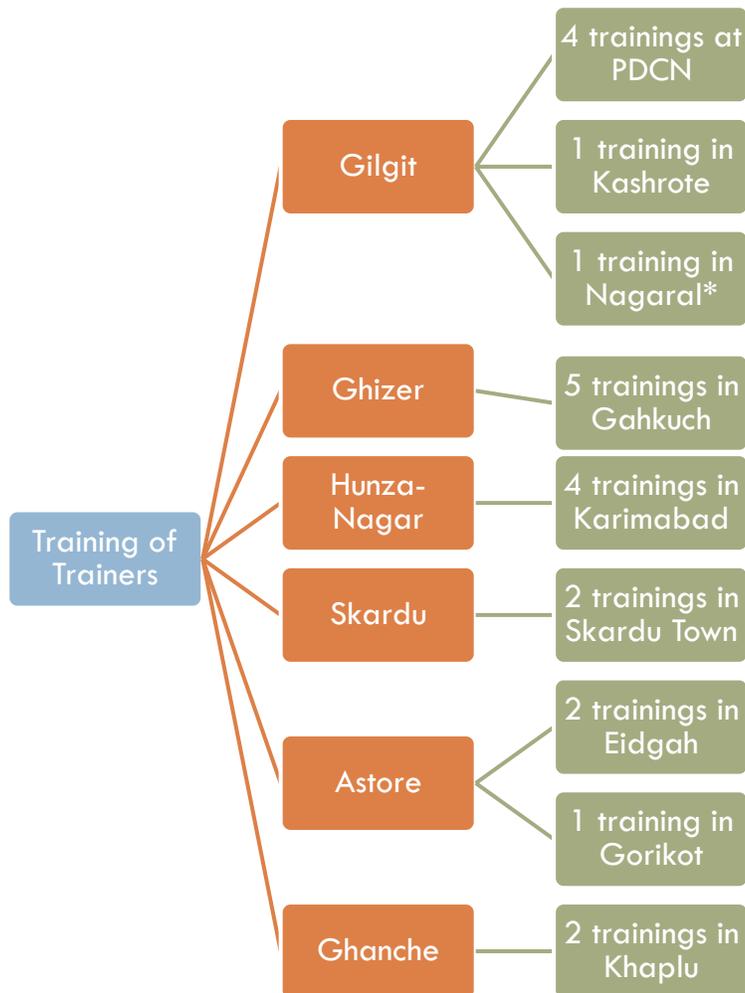
- Astore
- Ghanche
- Ghizer
- Gilgit
- Hunza-Nagar
- Skardu

Diamer was not included in the programme due to security concerns within the district.



FIGURE 1. MAP OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN

In total, one Training of Trainers (ToT) session was held and 22 teacher training sessions as outlined below. Three of these teacher training sessions were unplanned but held on account of low attendance. These trainings were completed in the allocated budget. Approximately 525 teachers from participating schools were included in the trainings.



Improvements can be seen through 4 case studies conducted in the region. They were marked in the areas of classroom environment, communication with teachers, and communication with peers.

*Teachers from the Oshkhandas cluster were brought to Nagaral for trainings due to security concerns; March 2012.

4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOWPDPs involvement in EDIP was limited to disability sensitization and inclusive education. Introducing the concept of inclusive education in Gilgit-Baltistan was of the utmost importance, and has a lot of relevance to the existing mechanisms of educational institutions.

It is widely agreed that separation of children with disabilities into special schools early in life results in their permanent separation from mainstream society later in life as well. It is for this reason that inclusive education is important; it is where the mainstreaming of people with disabilities into society begins.

NOWPDP worked closely with various project partners to complete its major activities. While NOWPDPs involvement in EDIP was initially 18 months, the organization was given a no-cost extension in which to complete activities which were delayed due to circumstances out of the control of the project.

A Training Needs Assessment (TNA) was completed to gauge the attitudes and perceptions towards disability in GB. Learnings from the TNA were incorporated into the NOWPDP training manual on Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education, which was used to train Master Trainers and teachers from 19 Learning Resource Schools (LRSs) and 98 schools across GB. Relevant parts of the manual were also used to train Local Level Institutions (LLIs) on the same topic. Finally, NOWPDP held awareness events for community members in which trained teachers and LLI members were identified, and linkages established between community members. The importance of inclusive education was highlighted.

Impact assessment and success stories have been compiled and included as annexure in this report. Based on our experience in the field, NOWPDP has also developed a list of suggestions for future phases of EDIP; these have been outlined near the end of this report.

5. BACKGROUND

The status of persons with disability had not been explored in Gilgit-Baltistan prior to the Education Development and Improvement Programme (EDIP). The programme presented the team with an opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of the current status of disability in the area, as well as the needs and requirements of people with disabilities (PWDs) and their families living in Gilgit-Baltistan.

NOWPDPs goal in EDIP was to improve the school environment for Children with Disabilities (CWDs) already enrolled in schools. The indicators set measured the following –

- Improved classroom environment
- Increased participation of CWD in classroom discussions
- Increased participation of CWD with peers in classroom
- Increased confidence of CWD
- Improved attitude of teachers towards CWDs

While increasing the enrollment of CWDs was not a planned indicator, there was an organic increase in enrollments over the course of the project cycle, as expected, due to improved classroom environment and the presence of trained and sensitized teachers. Setting increased enrollments as an indicator was planned for Phase II of EDIP, during which NOWPDP has planned to train community members and parents of CWDs in Disability Sensitization, Inclusive Education, and Disability Prevention. In an area where disability is prevalent, but not discussed or supported, NOWPDP believes that a trained and sensitized school community is only the first step to inclusion; upon the sensitization of parents and communities (planned for Phase II) there will be a natural rise in enrollments of CWDs. It is for this reason that the team felt it was important not to measure success through enrollments during this three-year project period.

A study on attitudes and perceptions of disability in Gilgit-Baltistan, which would serve as a Training Needs Assessment, as well as a baseline, was initiated by NOWPDP in spring 2011. The TNA provided a basis for the materials for the Teacher Training sessions as well as for planning out the activities for the Community Events that were culturally sensitive as well as relevant. The TNA was a qualitative study which explored attitudes and perceptions of communities in Ghizer, Gilgit, Skardu, and Ghanche through Focus Groups Discussions (FGD) with teachers and parents, both of children with disabilities and of non-disabled children. General attitudes observed were that disability was often perceived in relation to role fulfillment; causes of disabilities included more myth rather than medical explanations in some of the districts; most parents and families reacted negatively to the news of the birth of the CWD; inclusion in family life as well as in society was greeted with much negativity; and inclusive education was not considered ideal by all three groups. These general findings were incorporated in the content development of the training manual for the Teacher Trainings, and also to aid in the planning of Community Awareness Events.

Teacher trainings provided teachers with the basic tools and skills they would require to identify potential indicators of disability in their classrooms and to work effectively with students with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms. Teachers were indicated to stay away from diagnosing children themselves, and to focus instead on managing the symptoms of the disability. Eighteen Master Trainers from 18 LRSs underwent a three-week training session on Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education. In the last four days of the session, the Master Trainers re-shaped the training manual for the five-day teacher trainings sessions. Due to their involvement in developing the teacher training manual, the Master Trainers were able to retain a sense of ownership. These Master Trainers further trained teachers.

Relevant parts of the training manual were also used Local Level Institution (LLI) Training sessions. The Teacher Training sessions were to promote inclusion in the schools, while the LLI Training sessions were aimed at training parents who formed school management committees.

EDIP Partners

The partners that NOWPDP worked with closely in the tenure of EDIP include:

- AKF
- Government of Gilgit-Baltistan
- PDCN
- AKES,P
- AKU-HDP
- AKPBS,P
- AKU-IED
- CSRC

AKF: As a lead partner, NOWPDP worked closely with AKF to coordinate with other partners, provide project updates, schedule field activities, and report challenges.

Government of Gilgit-Baltistan: While coordination with the government was not a responsibility of NOWPDP, it was necessary for NOWPDP to seek permission of the Deputy Directors of Education (DDE) in each district prior to holding an activity in the area.

PDCN and AKES,P: NOWPDP worked with these partner organizations to help with coordination with schools, plan logistics and travel arrangements.

PDCN presence in government schools through Professional Development Teachers (PDT) was used to organize NOWPDP trainings. Any coordination with the staff of government schools had to be done with the help of PDTs; they played a vital role during the Teacher Training sessions and the Community Awareness Events. NOWPDP was working closely with AKES,P for the Teacher Training sessions and Community Awareness Events in the schools run by them.

AKU-HDP: NOWPDP worked closely with the HDP team prior to commencing its TNA. AKU-HDP also played a key role in training NOWPDP team members on the qualitative data analysis software NVivo.

AKPBS,P: NOWPDP worked closely with AKPBS,P in the initial stages of the project and provided technical advice and assistance to assess the physical accessibility of EDIP schools. NOWPDP also provided AKES,P with a list of basic retrofitting required at each school. At a later stage, a list of schools suitable for retrofitting was compiled by AKPBS,P, and a final list of schools to be retrofitted for accessibility was compiled in coordination with NOWPDP.

AKU-IED: Dr Kausar Waqar from AKU-IED worked with the NOWPDP team as a consultant on the training manual on Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education.

CSRC: CSRC 10 community mobilizers were trained by NOWPDP in Disability Sensitization and an Introduction to Inclusive Education in a five-day session. CSRC community mobilizers were tasked with training LLIs on behalf of NOWPDP.

6. EFFECTIVENESS

Below is a list of achievements of the Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education component of EDIP lead by NOWPDP.

Output 1.2.1

Enhanced awareness and understanding of teachers to identify children with mild to moderate disabilities

Activity 1.2.0.1 - A qualitative study in the form of a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) was completed by NOWPDP to understand prevailing attitudes and perceptions regarding disability in Gilgit-Baltistan. This TNA provided a solid base for the development of the Teacher Training Manuals which were used for the Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education sessions. This activity was completed as planned. Please see Annexure I for the Training Needs Assessment.

Activity 1.2.1.1 – Four (4) training packs were developed, using information collected in the TNA. This included training packs for the Head Trainers (who carried out the Training of Trainers), Master Trainers (who carried out the Teacher Training sessions), Head Trainer for Community Mobilizers, and for the Community Mobilizers (who carried out LLI trainings). This activity was completed as planned. Please see Annexure II for the NOWPDP training manuals.

Activity 1.2.1.2 – Master Trainers were selected from all 19 participating LRSs and underwent a three-week session in Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education. A male participant was removed from the training due to inappropriate behavior towards a female participant. While all 18 participants received intensive training in Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education, 14 were chosen as Master Trainers based on their professionalism, positive attitude, training ability, willingness, and enthusiasm. This activity was completed as planned.

	Male	Female	Total
Participants	11	7	18
Master Trainers selected	8	6	14

Activity 1.2.1.3 – Teachers were selected from across all participating schools in the six districts of Gilgit-Baltistan. One-week training sessions were held in each district, led by Master Trainers and NOWPDP staff. Please see Annexure III for the NOWPDP Teacher Training and Lessons Learned Report.

District	Number of Training sessions	Participants (Male)	Participants (Female)	Participants (PWDs)
Gilgit	4+2*	9	123	0
Hunza-Nagar	4	29	31	2
Ghizer	5	79	46	0
Skardu	2	21	15	0
Ghanche	2	20	18	0
Astore	2+1**	35	51	0
Total	22	204	291	2

*Extra (unbudgeted/unplanned) training sessions were held in Gilgit in March 2012 to compensate for poor attendance in the planned sessions during the summer of 2011

**An additional training session was arranged upon the request of teachers in Eidgah for gender segregated training sessions in November/December 2012

Output 1.2.3**Increased development of knowledge products to understand the needs of children with disabilities at school.**

Activity 1.2.3.2 – The TNA report was completed and will be disseminated to all project partners.

Output 1.2.4**Increased participation of parents of children with disabilities in the management of schools belonging to targeted clusters of GB.**

Activity 1.2.4.1 – A one-week training session for CSRC Community Mobilizers in Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education was conducted as planned in August 2011.

	Male	Female	Total
Community Mobilizers	6	3	9

Activity 1.2.4.2 – LLI training sessions, which were to be conducted by CSRC community mobilizers in the fourth quarter of 2011; this activity was significantly delayed. The LLI training sessions finally commenced after an unplanned/unbudgeted refresher training to CSRC by NOWPDP in the third quarter of 2012. Sessions were completed by CSRC in December 2012, with trained LLI members displaying an increase in understanding of inclusive education in the post-training assessment.

District	Participants (Male)	Participants (Female)	Participants (PWDs)	Total
Gilgit	14	31	0	45
Hunza-Nagar	115	87	0	202
Ghizer	271	117	7	388
Skardu	46	8	1	54
Ghanche	46	9	0	55
Astore	41	15	0	56
Total	533	267	8	800

Activity 1.2.4.3 – The community awareness events by NOWPDP were scheduled for June 2012. The event was postponed due to the deteriorating security situation in Gilgit-Baltistan, and rescheduled for September 2012. As the security situation did not improve, the events were postponed yet again. The community events were carried out in April/May 2013. Please see Annexure IV for the Community Events Report.

	Skardu	Ghanche	Gilgit	Hunza-Nagar	Ghizer	Astore	Total
Fathers	53	54	20	22	360	-	509
Mothers	104	84	368	265	555	-	1376
Teachers	50	69	63	37	174	-	393
SMC Members	18	2	2	36	80	-	138
Students	110	22	17	19	793	-	961
Total	335	231	470	379	1962	0	3377

Output 1.2.5

School assessment for accessibility and seismic retrofitting completed

Activity 1.2.5.2 – NOWPDP developed and handed over a school accessibility survey for AKPBS in August 2010. The purpose of this survey was to ensure that a select number of EDIP schools were made physically accessible to students with disabilities. While this survey was used by AKPBS, and many conversations were initiated by NOWPDP on the matter, there has been no clear sign of retrofitting for accessibility actually taking place in any of the EDIP schools. Please see Annexure V for a copy of the accessibility survey.

Output 1.2.6

Study conducted on improved student learning for children with mild to moderate disabilities

Pre & Post Student Surveys were developed as part of the EDIP baseline. Unfortunately, due to the substantial delays in developing this survey, NOWPDP had already completed its Teacher Training sessions before the survey was administered in participating areas. This would indicate that the baseline data collected for on students with disabilities in EDIP schools is contaminated.

NOWPDP has prepared qualitative assessment to gauge the impact of its trainings. Please see Annexure VI for the NOWPDP Training Impact Assessment and Success Stories.

7. MANAGEMENT

Overall Management

The overall management of EDIP during the project cycle was relatively smooth, with regular partner meetings aimed towards ensuring agreement between partners, and some efforts at ensuring coordination.

While the lead partner did have a major task in coordinating eight project partners, methods of data collection were not always efficient or timely. As well, methods of data collection prepared by AKF and sent to partners appeared to vary constantly during the course of the project, until the finalization of MERMIS, which led to a lot of repetition in data entry for partners. A suggestion would be to standardize monitoring and data collection mechanisms at the start of the project – perhaps during the time partners are working on finalizing indicators - and share these with project partners as soon as possible to ensure consistency and efficient time management.

Risk Management

Partners were made aware of potential risks and had time to develop adequate mitigation strategies.

However, it appears that unforeseen risks, such as the security situation in GB led to activity delays which were not foreseen by AKF or any other partners. Mitigation for this risk was not discussed or planned for enough, even though AKF was adept at communicating with its partners and helping find solutions for activities delayed due to the security situation.

AKF was efficient at dealing with emerging issues. For example, NOWPDP faced cooperation issues with the DDE of Astore, which AKF was very efficient in managing. The resignation of the AKF programme coordinator was an obstacle which could have been overcome faster in order to ensure continuity in the field.

Efficiency in Project Spending

While the project was overall efficient in spending, it is important for the lead partner and donor to differ between “under-spending” and “saving” when looking at efficiency.

NOWPDP, along with many other partners, was informed that it was under-spending. However, at that time, NOWPDP had completed all of its planned activities on budget, but had made efforts to save on “overheads” such as hotels, transport, and staff Daily Spending Allowance (DSA). All of these were approved in the NOWPDP budget by the lead partner; however, once the team arrived in the field, more cost-efficient options were found. It is also advisable to have local partners share knowledge of cost-effective options during the budget drafting process.

Some suggestions for further overall cost-efficiency can be found below –

1. Video conference meetings of partners in different cities can replace frequent partner meetings at the AKF offices in Islamabad; this would save on costs associated with hotel rooms, air tickets, transport within the city, and meals.
2. The AKF coordination team can visit partners in different cities for Mid-Term Reviews (MTRs) instead of all project partners travelling by air to Islamabad.
3. Project partners can stay at guest houses in Gilgit instead of the Serena Hotel. Guest houses in Gilgit offer clean, safe rooms and food at reasonable rates. This would prevent unnecessary spending which is not directly related to project activities, while supporting the local economy of the project area.
4. Partners could better plan work itineraries in the field and therefore share vehicles; this would not only reduce costs, but decrease the overall carbon footprint of the project.

Efficiency in Partner Coordination

Project-wide

While partner relations were relatively smooth, NOWPDP felt that the management of the baseline survey part II was inefficient. Baseline part II on improved student learning was conducted quite late in the project cycle, *after* NOWPDP had already completed its trainings on Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education in Gilgit-Baltistan. It was therefore, not very useful to NOWPDP. Had it occurred prior to NOWPDP interventions, it could have benefitted greatly by having access to information and learnings which would enrich its activities.

PDCN

Working with Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) proved to be challenging for NOWPDP. It was agreed at the beginning of the project that NOWPDP would work through AKES,P and PDCN to coordinate and implement activities in the field instead of working independently, which would create confusion in the amongst stakeholders. Therefore, NOWPDP was dependent on the efficiency of PDTs and their communication with PDCN. PDTs were often inefficient and slow to mobilize the school community, and their communication with PDCN appeared to be weak in certain districts. In order to ensure that activities were successful, NOWPDP was forced to interact directly with PDTs to support and encourage mobilization. PDTs were often difficult to reach via telephone, with many cases of PDTs not answering or returning phone calls, and ineffective at coordination and communication.

CSRC

At the conception of the project, NOWPDP was tasked with the completion of LLI trainings in Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education. However, during the initial partner coordination phase, AKF, CSRC and NOWPDP agreed that CSRC would undertake these trainings, which would be conducted by their social mobilizers. Unfortunately, this activity remained in NOWPDPs work breakdown structure, and remained missing from CSRCs. As a result, coordination was difficult, with CSRC prioritizing other activities over the LLI trainings. LLI trainings were completed in December 2012, the same month CSRC exited the programme, due to pressure from the AKF.

For future projects, it is important to ensure that the responsibility for joint activities is reflected equally in the work breakdown structures of both stakeholders.

AKPBS,P

While retrofitting for accessibility was a part of EDIP from the very beginning, the timelines provided and expected were unrealistic. NOWPDP provided technical input to AKPBS,P regarding building accessibility at the beginning of the project; however, retrofitting has only just begun, close to the end of the three-year project cycle.

A more realistic work-plan would allow a better approach to the tasks requiring completion, as well as reasonable expectations from all sides.

8. IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

It was stressed from the beginning by NOWPDP that the Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education component of EDIP is just a “first step” in a series of steps to be taken to lay the foundations of inclusion.

Sustainability

NOWPDP has taken the following steps to ensure sustainability –

- Master Trainers were selected from each LRS to ensure that the training and knowledge of Disability and Inclusive Education remains within the cluster once the project is complete.
- Only mild and moderate disabilities were covered in the teacher training sessions. This, being the first step towards being fully inclusive, ensured that teachers did not become overwhelmed with information and teaching methods in the one-week session.
- Simple teaching methods were shared with participants. A majority of the methods shared require teaching aids which can be made using materials available in each area.
- The importance of knowledge sharing was stressed to participants; knowledge sharing would work towards an inclusive school community, allowing for long-term sustainability.
- When discussing physical access of children with disabilities to schools, the NOWPDP team held a separate session with training participants to discuss transport issues specific to their district. This encouraged community participation and discourse.
- NOWPDP Community Awareness Events established linkages between schools, LLIs, parents, and disability organizations (if any) working in the area.

Impact

Impact Assessments and Case Studies

The NOWPDP impact assessment and case studies provide a clear understanding of the impact of the NOWPDP trainings on Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education. Aside from the evidence of impact depicted via an improved classroom environment, NOWPDP was also assessing the sustainability of the trainings imparted. Factors which contribute towards sustainability are knowledge sharing, sensitization of non-disabled children, and a holistic change in the attitude of the Head Teacher towards the concept of inclusive education. These topics were covered in the trainings, and their importance highlighted.

NOWPDP conducted four case studies in order to assess the impact and sustainability of the training. Case studies have been given one of the following ratings based on the findings –

1. Good
2. Satisfactory
3. Poor

The case studies rated **good** showed evidence of the following –

- A strong understanding and demonstration of inclusive education and the techniques used in inclusive classrooms;
- Knowledge sharing amongst faculty members regarding disability sensitization, inclusive education, and inclusive techniques/teaching methods;
- A real increase in the confidence and participation of the CWD being observed;

- A real increase in the interaction of the CWD with his/her peers and teacher within the classroom;
- A positive change in the CWDs academic performance;
- A positive change in the overall classroom environment ;
- Willingness of the school to be sensitized to disability and inclusive education.

The case study given a **satisfactory** rating showed evidence of the following –

- A reasonable understanding of inclusive education; demonstrated use of only some teaching methods and techniques;
- Very little knowledge sharing between faculty members;
- Some increase in the confidence and participation of the CWD being observed ;
- Some increase in the interaction of the CWD with his/her peers and teacher within the classroom;
- Little or fluctuation change in the CWDs academic performance;
- Some change in the overall classroom environment;
- Some interest of the school to be sensitized to disability and inclusive education.

The case study given a **poor** rating showed evidence of the following –

- Basic understanding of the concept of inclusive education;
- No knowledge sharing amongst faculty members regarding disability sensitization, inclusive education, and inclusive techniques/teaching methods; teachers that did display knowledge worked in isolation;
- Very little to no increase in the confidence and participation of the CWD being observed; even if an increase was noted, it gave the impression of being temporary and not holistic;
- Some increase in the interaction of the CWD with his/her peers and teacher within the classroom;
- Little to no change in the CWDs academic performance;
- Little to no change in the overall classroom environment;
- A lack of willingness of the school to be sensitized to disability and inclusive education.

There were two case studies which highlight sustainability in the LRS in Shigar and the LRS in Khaplu. Both involve knowledgeable and inclusive school communities, along with a desire to improve access to education for everyone.

9. RELEVANCE

Appropriateness of EDIP objectives and broad programming logic in the context of GB

NOWPDPs involvement in EDIP was limited to disability sensitization and inclusive education.

Introducing the concept of inclusive education in Gilgit-Baltistan was of the utmost importance, and has a lot of relevance to the existing mechanisms of educational institutions.

It is widely agreed that separation of children with disabilities into special schools early in life results in their permanent separation from mainstream society later in life as well. It is for this reason that inclusive education is important; it is where the mainstreaming of people with disabilities into society begins.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, disability is a topic seldom discussed. People with disabilities are misunderstood, often due to negative perceptions and fear due to a lack of awareness about disability. They are shunned, mistreated, and viewed as being of little use in society. There is little realization that with an education and social support, a child with disabilities can become a productive, integrated member of society.

CWDs in Gilgit-Baltistan are often unable to go to school, mostly because of the negative attitudes they face and because of the low expectation people have of them. Highlighting the importance of going to school, along with training teachers and community members in disability sensitization and inclusive education is a first step towards encouraging the inclusion of CWDs into mainstream society.

Clarity and realism of the objectives and their performance indicators

NOWPDP, in close discussions with AKF, altered performance indicators at the start of the project to reflect a more holistic change.

The indicator measuring enrollments of students with disabilities as a marker of success was removed. Instead, qualitative impact assessments were kept as a performance indicator. The NOWPDP team believed that a programme of 18 months, and even 3 years, is not long enough to see an organic increase in enrollments. Measuring change in the classroom environment however, was believed to be a much better indicator for success, which would then lead to an increase in enrollments over time.

NOWPDP appreciated the cooperation and understanding of AKF during discussions regarding the change of performance indicators. It is refreshing to work with teams that place more focus on holistic impact rather than rudimentary measures of success.

“Moving forward”

In the event that there is a Phase II for EDIP, NOWPDP would suggest the following activities regarding Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education –

1. Refresher trainings in Disability Sensitization and Inclusive Education for teachers and LLI members; as requested by most participants, the training sessions should ideally be at least 10 days long;
2. NOWPDP facilitated knowledge sharing sessions among teachers within project schools;
3. Disability sensitization sessions with children of school going age in project areas;
4. Disability identification camps across all districts;
5. Disability sensitization, inclusive education, and disability prevention sessions in the community; preferably door-to-door, home based sessions to ensure understanding and impact.
6. Community sessions on community-based retrofitting for accessibility.

The above, when combined with completed NOWPDP activities, would help foster an aware, sensitized community. Combined with a sensitized school community, NOWPDP would expect enrollments of CWDs to rise organically. Therefore, in the next phase, including increased enrollments as a performance indicator would be necessary.