



ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

8 COMMIT TO REALIZING POSITIVE SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they collaborate to realize sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalized populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.



Photo: Children's Book Project

Reading CODE Program: CODE

CODE focuses on improving literacy and education for children through increasing access to books and teachers, as well as supporting developing country publishers.

CHALLENGE

Through its Reading CODE Program, CODE works closely with overseas partners to build capacity and assist in the professional development of educators, with the end goal of increasing literacy rates. To that end, the program works through multiple channels (educators, resources, and networks) to support teachers and publishers in developing countries. While the program achieves its goals, CODE works towards ensuring that each country where Reading CODE is adapted reaches the same depth and quality of comprehensive programming to substantially affect literacy and learning outcomes.



RESPONSE



The organization expanded Reading CODE to include professional development programs and a multi-year strategy, supporting teachers and technical staff alike. Its more comprehensive approach involves not only the school, but also the wider community to achieve the critical mass necessary for positive change. Reading CODE brings international teaching standards into the local arena, working with national education officials to facilitate evaluation and certification for prospective teachers.

LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

Mainstreaming a gender equality dimension throughout the program areas of teacher education, access to reading materials, and assessment remains a challenge. As such, CODE and its country partners remain committed to working with all partners to ensure gender equality is integrated throughout the program. Standards and indicators of effective practices to support gender equity and equality are shared among the network of partner organizations. Specific targeted activities to support girls' and women's active participation and access that have been tested in one country are reported on and disseminated. Guidebooks and other resource materials are reviewed with a gender lens and tips to further gender equality are integrated into these materials.



Cooperation with local education officials and the wider community has generally been good, but issues have emerged around the language of instruction and mother tongue literacy. For example, in Kenya, as directed by the national government, mother tongue is the language of instruction in primary schools for kindergarten to grade 3 within monolingual communities, while English and Kiswahili are taught as subjects. CODE and its partner in Kenya, the National Book Development Council of Kenya (NBDCK) have been instrumental in asserting the value of learning to read in the mother tongue, while acknowledging that different cultural and historical dimensions influence language practices in schools and that changes in practice will be gradual.

Classroom sizes, conditions inside and outside the classroom, and all contextual issues affecting access to education can complicate the program. Teacher transfers, which hinder the development of a knowledge base, can be disruptive. Ultimately, CODE and its partners see a commitment to a multi-year, multidimensional program to influence positive change to improve the quality and relevancy of education.

MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING



Currently, CODE and its partners are putting more emphasis on assessment in order to capture evidence on performance change. Instruments are shared among the country projects and they assess the literate environment - access and provision of reading materials; to performance of educators (teachers and/or librarians) in effectively using the reading materials to support literacy development; and, ultimately, student literacy. The assessments are designed to support CODE's results statements, articulating expected outcomes.

NEXT STEPS

Designing, administering and reporting on these assessments in a standardized way ensuring flexibility for the individual projects has been challenging. CODE and partners will continue to prioritize assessment in its programs and ensure that the assessment results help to inform program planning and contribute to the global knowledge base of assessment for literacy development in primary schools.



FURTHER INFORMATION

CODE Website
<http://www.codecan.org>