



Bangkok Office
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau
for Education

Meeting Summary



A Kick-off Meeting

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The Equitable Education Association

18-19 February 2020

Bangkok, Thailand

Summary of Meeting

1. On 18 February 2020 in Bangkok, Thailand, UNESCO Bangkok and the Equitable Education Fund (EEF) convened a two-day kick-off meeting to explore possible collaboration in establishing a network on equitable education.
2. The objectives of the meeting were to 1) share current policies and practices that are being implemented to address the issue of equity in education among participating countries, 2) discuss issues and challenges related to equity-based education and 3) explore collaboration opportunities, as agreed upon, to be used as a basis for further discussion on the establishment of the Equitable Education Association.
3. Two approaches to the exploration of the abovementioned objectives were adopted:
 - a. countries, including Finland, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Thailand, and the U.S.A., whose work has been aligned in promoting equity in the field of education, were asked to present their country contexts, program target group(s), relevant policies, budgeting/financing schemes, and delivery of (a) selected program(s).
 - b. participating countries discussed their experiences and challenges with regard to legislative process development, funding schemes including both budgeting and financing, delivery mechanisms, and data and monitoring and evaluation.
4. The key takeaways from the meeting address issues and actions related to prioritization, system creation through collaborative leadership, community-based practice through collaborative partnership, and measuring impact, which is elaborated below:

Prioritization: make the basics a priority

1. Many school systems prioritize improving test scores and comprehension in math and science. Student's health and happiness is rarely considered. Learning from both the Finnish and Japanese cases, the presented school system (Finland)/program (Japan) sought to make the school environment more equitable by employing the following principles:
 - Education is a means of balancing out social inequality.
 - Psychological well-being is crucial.
 - Individualized guidance must be provided for students.
2. This vision supports accepted practices and a holistic teaching environment, especially in the context of Finland, which strives for equity over excellence. All children in Finland are evaluated one-by-one using a method designed by their teacher. Overall progress is tracked in all different types of schools by the Ministry of Education. Teachers are required to have a master's degree before entering the professions. Teaching not a series of checklists and tests. Instead, it is customized to suit the students. Furthermore, working together is emphasized over competing against each other. Students, teachers and schools are not ranked.

3. Participants acknowledged that, in order to make such changes, behavioral changes must also occur. Without proper actions, the desired results cannot be achieved.

System creation through collaborative leadership

1. Equity-related challenges cannot be solved by policy or monetary support alone. Strong and effective leadership enables a community, including students, families, teachers, practitioners, community-based organizations, and local and central governments, to collaboratively strive for a shared goal.
2. Collaborative leadership plays a key role in creating a holistic, systematic process for building inclusion for the educationally underserved as it coordinates all systems to work together across all levels in the government and non-government sectors, and entire communities. Tapping into collective intelligence, rather than working in a silo, can boost productivity and increase partner engagement.
3. Equity-related issues should be addressed and solved at system level, as the work must create a process for building a safety net for children who do not have one. As system-level work includes various actors and stakeholders with different interests and goals, it is important to leadership that fosters collaboration and shares a vision and organizational principles that promote trust. In the long term, such leadership can systemize and sustain programs, projects or initiatives.
4. It is important to acknowledge that leadership should be a highly responsive and contextualized relational process. It must always be connected both to the school's profile of learning results and improvement capacity at any point in time. Every school/community follows an individual path for progress. Thus, learners must be ready to adapt their strategies to changing conditions at different stages in the journey of school improvement.
5. The case of the U.S. suggested that collaborative leadership take place in the context of community-school approach that allows partnerships between the school and other community resources and offers integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support, health and social services. This holistic community development approach can result in improved student learning and healthier families and communities.
6. Good leadership, together with experts who can support an effective decision-making process, is required in order to translate laws and policies into practice.

Community-based practice through collaborative partnership

1. The partnership should be result-focused at both system and school levels. The cases of New Zealand, the ROK and Thailand highlighted the importance of collaborating with other sectors or agencies (e.g., Statistics New Zealand, local immigration offices, Ministry of Health, respectively) in order to provide specific support for particular areas (e.g., improving early learning results through data analysis, increasing access to education, integrating anti-poverty program, respectively). Finland's case reiterated the importance of system-level partnership, as national and local authorities, research

institutions, students, parents, and other stakeholders all play a part in educational prioritization and development.

2. For school-level partnership, a common understanding shared by the participants was that having an engaging curriculum and qualified teachers facilitates collaborative partnership. In addition, the EEF established that partnerships between schools is a way to foster collaboration among students. The EEF is currently piloting the Equity Partnership Programme, which is designed to foster collaboration between urban and rural schools in the country. In this program, five private schools are invited to connect with 10 rural schools and a team of students from both the private and rural schools works together to develop a handcraft project, which can be sold online.
3. Defining clear roles between the central and local educational authorities is key to creating synergy and strengthening community-based education support. For instance, to support the effective coordination of multicultural education at school/community level, local multicultural education support centers were established, under the guidance of the central government, to mobilize all resources in the community that are related to multicultural education, organize local multicultural education courses, and provide the programs requested by the parents and schools in the area.

Measuring Impact

1. Measuring equity in education is complicated and somewhat subjective. 'How do we measure equity?' and 'How is your strategy formed based on indicators?' are important questions to ask to determine progress. Having the right indicators is as important as setting a goal and vision, especially in the context of measuring equity.
2. The New Zealand case demonstrates the importance of analyzing data and understanding the results. By overlaying or contrasting the distributions of the educational outcome for each group of interest, both the absolute degree inequality between/among the groups as well as the degree of inequality within groups. Additionally, when children are asked questions in the language that they understand, their answers have no filter - no grammatical changes and no translating into adult language - which allows researchers to make ground-breaking findings.

Summary of Discussion: Draft Terms of Reference

During the group discussion of the meeting, the participants made the following suggestions before exploring the possibility of collaboration on the Association further:

- Broadening the proposed scope of the Association. Currently, the Association intends to serve as an academic platform. Instead, based on the discussions during the meeting, it should be a community of practitioners.
- Clearly writing the Association's geographical focus: International, regional or Thailand?
- Including clear actions, which are aligned with the vision and goal of the Association
- Discussing further how potential members might benefit from the Association
- Revising the draft TOR and sharing it with them for their internal discussions

Questions, Answers and Discussions

The following section is a record of questions, answers and discussions from the kick-off meeting. The record is summarized by session:

Promise Neighborhoods and the Full Service Community Schools Initiatives by Mr. Kwesi Rollins, Vice President of Institute for Educational Leadership, and Mr. Peter Tatian, Senior Fellow, The Urban Institute, U.S.A.

Question (Dr. Thinsiri Siripor): *Can you please elaborate on the collaborative leadership role within community schools?*

Answer: Collaborative partnership is key. Partnership should consist of a range of people at the table who agrees to work together and collaborate. Work together, blend funding, have deep partnership. It is difficult to sustain partnership as long as people are involved. In addition, having an engaging curriculum, and schools and teachers being qualified in the subject area can also play a role. Such in the case of Promise Neighbourhoods, Promise Neighbourhoods' role is to provide technical training to help organizations build partnership successfully and effectively and that people whom work together are accountable. The partnership should also be result-focused.

Question (Prof. Yoshiyuki Nagata): *It is identified in the presentation that privatization is a challenge. Can you please elaborate why privatization have not work well?*

Answer: 20 plus years ago, Clinton administrative introduced the Charter Schools. The original intent was to a context and innovative to support education. However, after all these years, this have been such a drain and we have individuals benefiting from such system and have proved not to be a systematic solution.

Question (Ms. Thantida Wongprasong): *What are the key factors to make the programme and partnership work? Who are the key players that make this platform successful?*

Answer: Help on how different groups can work together. We have an annual conference where all the grantees can come to learn together through peer learning.

Question (Ms. Hyunjeong Lee): *How are partners of Promise Neighborhoods selected? How are partners identified? What are the strategies to avoid working in a silo, where there are also other organizations working on the same issues?*

Answer: Promise Neighbourhoods grantee pick their own partners. For Partners who have already been working on the issue already, the grantees must identify other organizations and form a working group.

Educational support for multicultural children in Korea by Dr. Heon Joo Suh, Director, and Ms. Min-Seon Park, Program Specialist, National Institute for Multicultural Education (NIME), National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE), Republic of Korea

Question (Dr. Thinsiri Siripor): *What are the top 3 priorities of the Multicultural Education Framework in terms of the elimination of the educational blind spots?*

Answer:

1. enrollment of migrant children in public schools
2. adaptation of the students into the public education system
3. Korean language and cultural education support for the students to be able to integrate into Korean society

Question (Mr. Kwesi Rollins): *What are the programmes that strengthen teacher competence in multicultural education? To what extent that the bilingual programme is introduced for migrant students at early grade?*

Answer 1: There are three types of programmes: 1) Korean as a second language programme; 2) counselling support and training for counsellors; and 3) awareness-raising on multicultural education in Korea.

Answer 2: *No answer was provided.*

Question (Mr. Peter Tatian): *Is there any assessments of multicultural education?*

Answer: There are no indicators for all programmes. However, there are performance indicators for community-based multicultural education centers. There are indicators of social awareness, language and school support to help migrant children to attend the school.

Question (Dr. Thinsiri Siripor): *What are the roles of the local multicultural education support centers?*

Answer: The primary roles of the center are to mobilize all resources in the community that are related to multicultural education, organize the local multicultural education courses, and provide the programmes as requested by the parents/schools in the area.

Question (Mr. Ichiro): *What is the proportion of migrant children compared to Korean children?*

Answer: There are approximately 2.5 million migrants which are accounted for a quarter of the entire population in the ROK. There are no official statistics on children of migrants (to be checked by NIME).

The Education System in Finland and the Aspect of Equality by Ms. Anna Korpi, Embassy of Finland

Question (Dr. Thinsiri Siripor): *What is the intervention in making teaching profession attractive? What is the intervention and mechanism to improve performance of boys?*

Answer 1: Investing in the people are the only resources Finland have which became a national narrative. Finland also have a very small population and to make sure in making the most of the capabilities of the people, it is important to invest in the people. There is also a high appreciation of education in the country. In becoming a teacher, it is believed that they are doing something valuable and a prestigious profession which makes the profession very attractive. A teacher have the power to implement education, mobilize resources, and can get extra support.

Answer 2: Same mechanism. Personalized learning, motivational strategies to be put in place for boys in order to increase outcomes.

Question: What are the support that the teachers give to students? What mechanism is used by government to determine which schools receive funding for special education?

Answer 1: Special education is provided in mainstream schools and within the classroom and support is provided by the student's own teacher and learning assistant. The tools are remedial teaching and part time teaching.

Answer 2: The municipality will receive extra support from the government. The funding is provided by the local municipal government, which collect taxes and provide special education. Local government is responsible for implementing and funding education.

Question (Ms. Nancy Bell): As there are no standardized assessment, how will the teachers know students are falling behind. How will performance be measured?

Answer: As there are no standardized assessment, how will the teachers know students are falling behind. How will performance be measured?

Question (Mr. Kwesi Rollins): What percentage of immigrant students in Finland?

Answer: There is no standardized exam in Finland. There is only one national exam at the end of grade 12 (high school). Finland is not concern with ranking students which will provide a comparison amongst students, but rather concern with self-assessment.

Educational challenge towards a sustainable society with special focus on out-of-school children and youths in Japan by Prof. Yoshiyuki Nagata, University of the Sacred Heart, Japan

Question (Mr. Peter Tatian): How are the alternative schools funded in Japan and what are the mechanisms?

Answer: Kawasaki free space is the only one locally funded free space supported by the local government in Japan. The central government also successfully funded some free schools/spaces in accordance with the existing law.

Question (Ms. Min-Seon Park): What are the reasons why children drop out and are there any changing trends?

Answer: The main reasons are school bullies, academic performance and their relationships with teachers and peers. The gap between the rich and the low-income family has been changing.

Question (Dr. Thinsiri Siripor): What are the roles of the support staff in providing alternative education? Is there any pressure on the community toward the free space/school in Japanese society?

Answer: The role of the supporting staff is to provide caring for learners (and teaching if required by teachers). In the past, there was prejudice toward the OOSC but the situation has been improved due to the current law and its enforcement.

Question (Ms. Nancy): *Will alternative education overtake mainstream education?*

Answer: If the number of alternative schools exceeds the number of formal schools by 10%, we can see its influence in the education system. In Japan, the percentage of the alternative school is around 2%, which is considered too small. In some cases, the alternative school can gradually have an impact on the local communities.

Question (Ms. Thantida Wongprasong): *What are the backgrounds of the OOSC?*

Answer: one out of 6 children is from an impoverished family. There are more demands of free space/alternative schools to accommodate them. The teachers/staff must also be social welfare demand-oriented. These children come from much less caring family which need special care/support.

Conditional Cash Transfer and Equitable Education by Dr. Kraiyos Patrawart, Deputy Managing Director, EEF

Question (Mr. Kwesi Rollins): *Is the amount to qualify for CCT, 100USD/per person? Is training for teachers, about inputting and using the application or does it involve capacity building, empowering growth mind-set of teachers and staff?*

Answer: The 100 USD is an average income of everyone in the same household. Multiple channels for training are available, including regional training and a network of trainers. For advocacy, social media like Facebook page is currently being used. We try to emphasize and prioritize the growth mind-set of teachers first as they have an impact on students' lives.

Question (Mr. Peter Tatian): *To what extent do families that are recipient of the programme involved in the design of the application and the service.*

Answer: The EEF gets feedback on the programme.

Question (Ms. Min-Seon Park): *Do you have any plans in conducting longitudinal study on the programme or conducting any panel research?*

Answer: EEF looks forward to conducting a longitudinal study. For household that allow us to follow for the next 12 years, EEF will evaluate social returns of the programme and prove that the funds invested improve social mobility and livelihoods of children. Using an open data approach will allow us to share the outcomes with others and contribute to other similar studies.

New Zealand's Early Learning Equity Challenge in a Wellbeing Context by Mr. Damian Edwards, Associate Deputy Secretary, Education System Policy Department, Ministry of Education, New Zealand

Question (Mr. Kwesi Rollins): *What are the conditions that make a high concentration of the disadvantage?*

Answer: There are various conditions, such as poverty, the lifestyle of the parents, curriculum, and so on.

Question (Dr. Thinsiri Siripor): Are there any concrete activities under the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy?

Answer: Legislation and budget have been already put in place. Physical system is required for the implementation of community-driven activities.

Question (Ms. Anna Korpi): The participation rate in early learning in New Zealand is very high. What are the ages and fees?

Answer: In general, early learning covers children age from one to six years old. The government covers up to 30 hours of services to stimulate the level of attendance. Some services are completely free or affordable. There is no good fee information at the moment.

Question (Dr. Pumsaran Tongliemnak): Where exactly does the funding go to considering the characteristics of the neighborhood?

Answer: The funding goes to the schools in the neighborhood, not the child. Redistribution of funding can be done in certain cases.

Experiences in establishing international networks of Health Promotion Foundation (INHPF) By Dr. Supreda Adulyanon, Chief Executive officer, Thai Health Promotion Foundation, Thailand

Question (Mr. Peter Tatian): What are the big equity problems in Thailand?

Answer: The national health security office is going to guarantee the coverage of basic health care to all people. There will be some free services for the poor, but to categorize who is poor or not, it is an equity problem. So the ideal solution is to have a universal budget for all. We can make more equitable healthcare by providing a supporting environment for the whole nation. If you provide a service, only some high-class people will receive it. But when you change the whole structure, you may change the whole culture to make it.