

Universalizing the Right to Education*

Various international agencies jointly organized a workshop on Universalizing the Right to Education of Good Quality: A Rights-Based Approach to Achieving Education for All, held in Manila on 29–31 October 2002.

Involved in organizing the workshop were the Philippine National Commission for United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization's Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH), Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, and the United Nations (UN) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The workshop convened representatives of key educational institutions in Asia and the Pacific to exchange experiences, data, and reviews of national policies to map the progress of member countries in universalizing education and eradicating illiteracy by 2015.

The Dakar Framework for Action reaffirmed education as a fundamental human right and provided the guiding principles for governments in complying with Education for All (EFA) obligations. How the UN member countries committed to the Dakar Framework of Action have complied with EFA obligations should be assessed.

The workshop's point of departure was the right to education and EFA. The framework for analyzing the UN member countries' development and implementation of EFA policies was the body of international human rights treaties. The human rights framework was chosen because it embodied key issues and stimulated qualitative and quantitative analyses that

were cross-cutting and globally comparable. But where international human rights standards had not yet been developed (such as for the quality of education), this workshop aimed to fill the gaps.

Conceptual Framework

The workshop examined post-Dakar developments focusing on the process of meeting EFA goals and implementing policies at the national level. It specifically identified the experiences and common challenges in designing and using rights-based approaches to education. The workshop aimed to: (i) harmonize normative action—constitutional and legal measures and government policies—with the various aspects of the right to education as defined in international human rights instruments, and (ii) help ensure the mainstreaming of human rights in EFA plans, policies, and processes.

The international human rights instruments that guided this process included the following:

- Treaties that, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were proclaimed by the UN to constitute the International Bill of Human Rights:
 - the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and
 - the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- Key human rights treaties that reinforce global EFA goals and priorities to eliminate exclusion and discrimination:

* Excerpt from the report on the Workshop on Universalizing the Right to Education of Good Quality: A Rights-Based Approach to Achieving Education for All, Manila, 29–31 October 2002.

- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education,
- Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guides the whole world and outlines the rights of the child relating to education.
- Two treaties generated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) which forge the link between education and poverty eradication, especially the elimination of child labor.
 - Convention on the Minimum Age for Employment
 - Convention on Intolerable Forms of Child Labor.

Not all states have ratified these treaties. Moreover, ratification has sometimes been accompanied by reservations (with the exception of ILO treaties which do not allow reservations), limiting the application of specific treaties in individual countries. The workshop identified these states as well. Participants did preparatory work to map out the status of their countries' international obligations, which helped crystallize similarities and differences in approaches to human rights education.

The workshop focused on the rights of the child and gender equality. Discussions started with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (which generated the greatest level of commitment in the world—with 192 ratifications as of May 2002), and the Dakar Framework of Action. It committed countries to comply by certain dates; for example, attaining gender equality by year 2015.

Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop's objectives were to:

- Review the extent to which national constitutions and laws, policies, and practices have

- been harmonized with the core human rights obligations relevant to education. The workshop examined gaps between the requirements of international human rights treaties and the national laws (as well as between legislation and their implementation), identified difficulties and obstacles to harmonization, and discussed how these could be best overcome.
- Assess the qualitative and quantitative data available in individual countries to determine their progress in fulfilling their core obligations on human rights mandated by treaties and in advancing the implementation of EFA. The data also served to share experiences and best practices in generating necessary and internationally comparable data. Focus was put on issues that were not sufficiently covered by the EFA assessment, such as gender equality and the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, disadvantaged ethnic minorities, migrant populations, etc.
 - Discuss optimal processes and institutional frameworks to fill in gaps between goals and realities, including possible subregional and regional cooperation.

Key Substantive Issues and Proposed Inputs

Common regional challenges and strategies were identified, as well as recent, ongoing (and forthcoming) normative action in human rights education. The approach applied key international human rights treaties and a review of national constitutions, laws, policies, and practices that would translate treaty commitments into practice. By comparing national and regional post-Dakar experiences, preparations for the workshop identified four substantive issues for special focus:

- overcoming exclusion,
- universalizing access to free and compulsory education,
- improving the quality of education and access to work-related skills, and
- achieving gender equality.

Workshop participation

The workshop consisted of 57 participants from eight countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Timor Leste.

Workshop proceedings

Day One

• *Opening Ceremonies*

Dr. Preciosa S. Soliven, secretary-general of UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, opened the workshop. She recalled the developments of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, and the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. She cited the numerous challenges facing education. Culture, heritage, and historical legacies distinguish one country from its neighbors, and the solutions cannot be standard, but must be tailored to the individual country's circumstances. Cultural nuances do not complicate the development of educational solutions, but provide starting points for solutions.

Dr. Ester Garcia, UNESCO National Commission chairperson for the Education Committee and chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, encouraged the plenary assembly to overcome the complex and myriad problems of education in the region.

Mr. Sheldon Shaeffer, director of UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific, presented the workshop's grounding on the Dakar Framework of Action as the underlying principle for attaining Education for All. The presentation included highlights of the World Education Forum of April 2002 in Dakar and the goals of the Dakar Framework of Action.

• *Plenary Session 1*

Dr. Erlinda C. Pefianco, co-chair of the Education Committee of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines and director of

SEAMEO INNOTECH, presented the overview and statement of purpose of the workshop. She outlined the workshop's background, conceptual framework, guiding international treaties and agreements, workshop objectives, special concerns, and key substantive issues.

Mr. Shaeffer outlined the guidelines for the conduct of country-level discussions of the four substantive issues. The points for discussion were guided by two documents:

- Workshop Background Paper prepared by United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education Katarina Tomasevski
- *Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach To Poverty Reduction Strategies* (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

It was explained that the discussion of issues would be conducted through parallel sessions on day two of the workshop. Following the presentation of the discussion guidelines, an open forum was held.

• *Plenary Session 2*

This session focused on the executive and legislative dimension of actualizing Dakar Framework obligations. The Philippine condition was discussed as case study. The following held a panel discussion with workshop participants:

- Edilberto de Jesus, Secretary of the Department of Education;
- Edmundo O. Reyes Jr., Member of Congress, Chairperson of the House of Representatives Committee on Basic Education and Culture; and
- Renato L. Cayetano, Senator, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture.

Mr. Reyes explained the role of the Philippine Congress in crafting legislative framework to attain quality education for all. The House of Representatives Committee on Basic Education envisioned strengthening the basic edu-

cation system to promote universal access and lifelong learning. The guiding principles for formulating education-related legislation are:

- Ensure access to basic education by all.
- Improve quality of basic education and increase the competency and life survival skills of students.
- Increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of schools.
- Foster deeper appreciation of values.

Congress creates laws to infuse funding to cover resource shortfalls, and to mandate construction of new schools and classrooms, purchase of desks and books, hiring of teachers, etc. However, implementation of education-related legislation is often set back by six key problem areas:

- **Unfavorable economic conditions** due to perennial deficit government spending and gross domestic product growth that does not keep up with population growth. The limited budget allocations for education (although the Constitution mandates that education should receive the largest item in the annual national budget) only allows small, if any, funding for education programs, including national obligations to international treaties.
- **Underinvestment in education.** Investment in education (about 2.2% of GDP) lags behind that of neighboring countries, severely limiting the outlay available for capital expenditures for education.
- **High population growth rate.** The annual increase in the number of children entering the school always outpaces the expansion of school facilities and equipment inventories.
- **Overcentralized educational management.** Past policies mandated centralized management of education, which put finances and decisions under the tight control of the Secretary of Education, hindering adaptation and change. Only recently has governance of basic education started to be decentralized, and decision-making and budget-planning

powers devolved to principals and field authorities.

- **Congestion of the standardized national curriculum.** Many past mandates crammed too many subjects into the basic education curriculum. The national curriculum was not sensitive to local needs. While the curriculum supports bilingualism (Filipino and English), it is not enough to contend with the diversity of languages (eight major ones) spoken as the mother tongue throughout the country. However, the basic education curriculum was modified in 2002 to correct these problems, by lessening the number of subjects in the curriculum and allowing the use of the *lingua franca* of each region.
- **Few incentives and entitlements for teachers.** The welfare of teachers is not adequately addressed. Teachers are underpaid and given few benefits and entitlements.

Mr. Cayetano touched on educational budget, teacher competitiveness, and updating the curriculum.

- **The education budget.** Section 5, Article XIV of the Constitution mandates that the government “shall assign the highest budgetary allocation to education.” In the proposed 2003 National Budget of PHP804 billion (about US\$16.08 billion), education would get PHP104.4 billion (about US\$2.88 billion).

Following the Philippine EFA program, education’s share of the national budget increased from 13% in 1991 to 21% in 1998.

- **Teacher competence.** Republic Act 4670, or the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers, seeks to improve teachers’ working and living conditions, welfare, and training. The Senate has pending bills to strengthen mathematics and science teaching, boost teacher training through teacher academies, create a national accrediting agency for teacher education institutions, and provide scholarships and benefits for teachers. Among the pend-

ing bills is a proposal to increase the entry-level salary for teachers from PHP10,000 (about US\$200) to PHP15,000 (about US\$300).

- **Updating the curriculum.** Republic Act 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act, is reorganizing the Department of Education to improve public school management.

Mr. de Jesus touched on the challenges in implementing education improvement programs in the light of budget constraints and limited funds. Limited resources force executive decision makers to prioritize some learning sectors over others, which is unfortunate but unavoidable.

There must be trade-offs in delivering education services when resources are scarce. For example, the Constitution guarantees free tertiary education. Spending for tertiary education may prove to be regressive as there is so much to do to improve the quality of basic education. The Department of Education is forced to reduce allocations to state universities and colleges.

The government's pursuit of high access to education may be detrimental to achieving quality in the educational system. More students must be crammed into limited classrooms, books must be shared by more pupils, and the pupil-to-teacher ratio must go up. That is a specific trade-off, or compromise, that the Department of Education is forced to accommodate.

However, quality cannot be improved by restricting access. Until the Department of Education acquires large resources, it must compromise.

The Department of Education is seeking ways to encourage private sector support of public schools. In 2001, it implemented the Adopt-A-School Program, which involved private companies in sponsoring the capital, operational, and maintenance costs of individual public schools. This program was expanded two weeks before this workshop.

The Department of Education is rigorously pursuing quality EFA at least for the basic education system, and is seeking to generate resources to increase the quality and delivery of basic education.

The following questions were asked during the panel discussion:

Q: (*Savitri Suwansathit, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand*): *What is the structure and mechanism for implementing the "voucher system?" Would there be a list of preferred schools for the program?*

A: (De Jesus): Republic Act 1955 was recently passed giving the Department of Education a mandate to concentrate mainly on basic education. Likewise, the law meant greater devolution, which means that principals now have greater decision-making powers in school management.

The plans [for the voucher program] are to provide private schools an increased subsidy so that they can absorb a greater number of pupils from lower socioeconomic groups. This may be more cost-effective than constructing additional school buildings and hiring additional personnel and teachers for the public education system.

The [voucher] program will have an annual allocation of PHP 800 million (US\$16 million). Instead of constructing more buildings, we are exploring the solution of contracting the education services of private schools. The cost of constructing schools is rising, and there is no land for additional schools.

Q: (*Dr. Jahja Umar, Chief of Center for Examination, Research and Development of Education, Ministry of National Education, Indonesia*): *Education systems must grapple against political control. Is the Philippines considering the examination system?*

A: (Reyes): The Philippines used to have a performance achievement test.

(De Jesus): Before, an end-of-cycle examination was administered for grade 6 [elemen-

tary school] and fourth year [secondary school] students. But there are moves to administer the evaluation examination at the start of the cycle so that the results can be used to improve the system during the students' cycle.

Q: *(Norlia Goolamally, Assistant Director, Education Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia): We have a 10-year education development plan for 2001–2010. One of its goals is to increase the quality of teachers: that is, to have 100% of primary-level teachers complete graduate studies by 2010, and also 100 percent of secondary-level teachers complete graduate studies by 2010. Does the Philippines have a similar system of training for teachers?*

A: (Garcia): Our elementary schoolteachers finish a BS elementary education program, and secondary schoolteachers a BS secondary education program. Their competencies are expanded through in-service training. We are looking at ways to provide specialization programs for elementary schoolteachers. Also, many sectors and agencies provide training for teachers.

Q: *(Dr. Indriyanto Bambang, Head of Policy, Ministry of National Education, Indonesia): Putting education in the broader sense of public policy—Indonesia is now facing difficult political circumstances, as we are now going into decentralized mode. Now, with the local authorities gaining more autonomy and power, they are asserting a stronger presence than the central government. Does not that make education vulnerable to political intervention and influence?*

A: (Reyes): The problem with the Philippines is that policies change with the President, and 10-year plans change with the change in the presidency. New local governments are elected every three years. Politicians are thus pressured by constituents to bring about concrete changes in a short time. Therefore, they have short-term agendas.

Short-term solutions may be bad for long-term goals.

(De Jesus): One reason our curriculum became so congested was due to politicians who introduced additional subjects. Educational and political goals are sometimes contradictory. That cannot be helped.

Q: *(Dr. Chiam Heng Keng, Commissioner, Human Rights Commission of Malaysia): I want to touch on equalizing opportunity to education. You mentioned the preschool law. Have you thought of bringing down the 10-year program even lower [to younger age groups]. Early childhood education is going to help equalize opportunity because students of different social conditions do not get equal opportunities later.*

A: (Reyes): We have the law, but the problem is getting funding. Early childhood education has an advantage: it is easier to correct negative behavior at age 5 or 6 than later.

(De Jesus): I agree with Mr. Reyes that we should go easy on pushing mandatory preschool. The problem would be to fund it. We should prioritize correcting the problems of the basic education to improve the quality of primary school students entering the secondary level. Maybe we should offer a baccalaureate year to improve students going into secondary school.

Q: *(Cambodian participant): I have two questions. First, how can you involve stakeholders in improving the delivery of quality education? Second, how do you ensure accountability for financial matters in schools?*

A: (De Jesus): Education is so prized that the community is always ready to improve it. It is always in the interest of private companies and businesses to contribute to education because it lessens costs of training. We have built-in measures to trace accountability.

Q: *(Enrique Torres, Education Network): Is there a way for Congress to inhibit the President*

from appointing politicians to the leadership of the Department of Education?

A: (Reyes): It is always difficult to handcuff the appointive powers of the President. Not in our present Constitution.

Q: (Dr. Purificacion V. Quisumbing, Chairperson, Philippine Commission on Human Rights): *Are there laws that would push the implementation of human rights education? Is functional human rights literacy included in Department of Education's priorities?*

A: (De Jesus): I feel that we should move away from legislative courses of action. The department must work with very limited resources and it must address so many concerns. Unfortunately, we must prioritize some over others. My priority at this time is to promote basic literacy. We still have millions of people who cannot read and write, and given the resource limitations, we have to address this pressing concern.

• *Plenary Session 3*

UNESCO Bangkok Associate Expert for Quality of Primary Education Hildegunn Olsen outlined the problems inherent in the mass delivery of basic education. In mass education, certain communities and groups are bound to be marginalized and excluded. But the Dakar Framework of Action changes the perspectives on delivering education and sensitizes governments and policymakers on the need to eliminate all forms of exclusion in education.

Parallel Discussions on Substantive Issues

On day 2, following the presentations of the UNESCO Bangkok resource persons, the participants formed small groups for in-depth discussions on the four substantive issues of human rights education.

Participants were grouped into three clusters. Country representatives were divided into two clusters to allow individuals more involvement in discussion. Since each participant had different specializations, they could explore the core human rights and education issues from different perspectives. A third cluster was comprised of Philippine participants to generate a Philippines-specific assessment of the status of human rights education in the country. The group assignments were as follows:

Workshop 1	Cambodia, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines
Workshop 2	Cambodia, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines
Workshop 3	Philippines

Each cluster tackled all four substantive issues. Sheldon Shaeffer recommended trigger questions to catalyze the discussion. The catalyst questions were:

<i>Overcoming exclusion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can governments systematically identify patterns of exclusion and discrimination in their education systems? In other words, how can they identify the size and location of groups/individuals excluded from school due to discrimination—including discrimination not yet globally forbidden, such as discrimination against non-citizens and HIV infection? • In general, where do governments in the region stand in relation to the four stages in the extension of the right to education to excluded populations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of education as a right? • Access to, but segregation within, education? • Assimilation toward integration? • Adaptation to diversity?
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child-rights approach insists that all obstacles to entering school, and to learning in school, be identified and removed—in other words, that education be adapted to each child rather than forcing the child to adapt to whatever education may be available. In the region or in your country, what are the most common obstacles to children entering school and to learning in school? What can be done to overcome these obstacles? • What do governments need to do to include children excluded because of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minority/ethnic group status, • disability, • birth (i.e., citizenship)?
<p><i>Universalizing access to free and compulsory education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it realistic to expect governments to ensure free primary education? What strategies can governments promote to eliminate school fees and reduce costs that keep children out of school? • To whom should compulsory education laws be directed? Who should be compelled to ensure that children go to school—children, parents, or the government? • What must the government do to ensure that all education institutions (state, private, religious) comply with prescribed standards—e.g., to ensure conformity of all schools with universal human rights standards?
<p><i>Improving the quality of education and access to work-related skills</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure minimum quality standards throughout the country, governments should assess existing conditions, define standards, and identify the process by which these standards are implemented and monitored. What must be done to help make this happen? • Generally, in the region, to what extent are teachers' labor rights recognized? What are the obstacles to this recognition? How can these be overcome? • To what extent do education systems ensure that content promotes human rights—e.g., through human rights education, values education based on respect for diversity, etc.? What can be done to make education more supportive of these rights? • What needs to be done and might be done to ensure that children are able to use their mother tongue in the first stages of education? • What can be done to ensure that the length, quality, orientation, and content of education are adequate for subsequent income generation (e.g., promote nonformal education for skills development, ensure that the minimum age of employment is matched by the minimum number of years for compulsory education)?
<p><i>Achieving gender equality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to ensuring adequate data to identify remaining disparities between boys and girls' enrollment in school, what must be done to encourage governments to examine the entire legal and traditional/customary status of girls and women, which may make it difficult to achieve genuine gender equality? • What must be done to ensure that the Dakar goal of gender equality by 2015 is achieved (e.g., in relation to textbook stereotyping, teaching-learning processes)?
<p><i>Constraints to adopting a human rights approach to the achievement of EFA</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major constraints/obstacles/challenges to realizing the right of children to education—to harmonizing laws, policies, and practices with international conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the family level? • at community level? • at government/ministry level? • What can be done to overcome these constraints and meet these challenges?

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS OF GROUPS ONE AND TWO

<p>Identify patterns of exclusion and discrimination in the education system</p>	<p>Cambodia</p> <p>Some exclusion exists, but data identifying these excluded groups is lacking. Migrant children illegally move across the borders of Vietnam and Cambodia. Belonging to poor families, they hire out themselves as laborers. Orphaned children and children of prisoners cannot go to school. No data is kept on migrant groups.</p>	<p>Timor Leste</p>	<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>Malaysia</p> <p>Schools are not supposed to exclude any group, but children from ethnic minorities sometimes experience exclusion.</p>	<p>Myanmar</p> <p>Large groups are being displaced. The children of these transient groups are excluded from school. Census figures do not reflect data on these transient groups and their children.</p>	<p>Thailand</p> <p>Some civic groups care for poor children. Thailand has home schools. There are three systems of education: formal, informal, and nonformal. Children are encouraged to go to the human rights office to complain about rights violations. Discrimination is being reduced, but the quality of education is still poor.</p>	<p>Vietnam</p> <p>Disabled children are excluded from school. Many children drop out from school and become street children. Night classes for street children are organized, but these children are too tired to learn.</p>	<p>Philippines</p> <p>Participation is high, but it is hard to identify the disabled. Indigenous people are excluded from schools because they have no birth certificates. Local governments could identify the disabled. Prison convicts can avail themselves of nonformal education. Children of prisoners are excluded from schools. They are socially stigmatized, excluded, and ignored. Isolated ethnic groups are not reached. Wide disparities exist in some areas (Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, Cebu, Davao). Disaggregating data may help identify displaced children.</p>
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Sources of data	Cambodia A single source is insufficient. Multiple sources should be integrated into one system. Census, education ministry, other agencies, commune councils, local governments, schools. Civil society can help collect data.	Timor Leste	Indonesia provides insufficient data on access to education. Data is outdated. National Bureau of Census, schools. Data is collected from households, not from schools. "Discrimination" should be defined.	Malaysia	Myanmar Governments are not capable of gathering data. Some have yet to acknowledge and recognize the problem. First step is to identify excluded children and groups in all areas.	Thailand Inhabitants of the community.	Vietnam	Philippines
Types of data needed	Census—children with birth certificates; schools and education ministries. Data on children of prisoners from the prisoners themselves. (Some children of prisoners are born in prisons.)							
In general, where do governments stand in relation to the four stages in the extension of the right to education to excluded populations?	The right to quality education is provided in the Constitution. The government is trying to abolish school fees in primary and lower secondary education but teachers still charge fees. All citizens are entitled to 9 years of free education. The government recognizes the right to education but has problems with enforcement and capacity.	The reconstruction effort is massive but hasn't gone far enough.	Education is free and compulsory. Parents will be sent to prison if they do not send their children to school.	The right to education is recognized but there are different categories of exclusion. Children with special needs are recognized.	Provided in the constitution.	Problem of quality of education.	Elementary education is free and compulsory. Secondary education is free but not compulsory. Education is a right.	

Access to, but segregation within, education	Cambodia Access is limited for marginalized minorities. Sometimes they cannot afford the fees and are afraid to go to school, or drop out. Little action has been done to end segregation.	Timor Leste They are not able to go to school due to lack of money. The government is doing its best to provide access to education.	Indonesia	Malaysia Next year, all schools will use the preschool curriculum, Malay as the national language and English as the second language, and the same national curriculum throughout the country.	Myanmar Attempts are made to assimilate children of people with HIV/AIDS. Children of minorities are systematically excluded by discouraging the use of their mother tongue in schools.	Thailand Discrimination still exists. International declarations should support education laws.	Vietnam	Philippines There are different schools for the physically handicapped but not all cities have them.
Assimilation toward integration	One textbook for all areas; bilingual medium of instruction.	Portuguese is the medium of instruction in all schools; the curriculum is imported from Portugal.	Many students of different religions study in schools.	Schools can choose what kind of books they want to use.	The curriculum is progressive. Children from refugee camps are helped to study with Thais.	The new basic education curriculum is used in all public schools but private schools have the option of using it or their own. The language of instruction is bilingual (English and Filipino), for public and private schools.	In some schools, instruction is given in the children's own language for grades 1 and 2.	There are four curriculums for each group of children. Textbooks are being prepared for each group.
Adaptation to diversity	There is no money to set up special schools.							

	Cambodia	Timor Lesle	Indonesia	Malaysia	Myanmar	Thailand	Vietnam	Philippines
What are the most common obstacles in the region/country to children entering school and to learning in school?	Lack of schools and qualified teachers and poverty are the main obstacles in Cambodia, as are natural disasters, an inflexible calendar and timetable, weak management, limited education budget, a school environment that is not so different from the home, and lack of government and teacher commitment.	People do not see the value of children going to school.	Some schools are very remote. Poverty is widespread. The government budget is small. Uniforms are also sometimes not available or affordable.		Primary education has direct and indirect costs (textbooks are sold at a high price. Textbooks are lacking. Many children have no textbooks. The relevance of the textbooks to the level of the child is an issue. Many children drop out before finishing primary school.	The structure and culture of the school can be a problem: uniforms are expensive, distribution and drinking of milk in schools are forced on children who are not used to drinking milk, discipline is military-like, children are not respected, children have no right to say what they would like to receive or reject.	In poor areas (mountainous, remote, flooded districts/provinces), poor students learn in poor schools, under bad conditions, with bad teachers. Bilingual education not implemented.	Admission policy requires birth certificate for school enrollment so children without birth certificates cannot enroll. Schools are lacking. Children who work cannot go to school. Classrooms, school buildings, and facilities are lacking.
What can be done to overcome these obstacles?	Reform the school administration. Provide play areas.	Conduct campaigns to promote the value of education.	Establish a national coordinating forum for implementing Education for All (EFA). Increase income of parents. Reduce the costs for families, e.g., by providing scholarships to deserving children in public schools.		Share the cost of education with the community. Use more child-centered teaching-learning practices. Issues regarding the school should be clarified.	Schools should be warm and not like a military camp.	There should be teachers who can speak both languages.	Review school policies in areas with different conditions. Schedule vacations during harvest time. Establish a high school in every town. Provide basic literacy and non-formal accreditation and equivalency for out-of-school youth and adults.

UNIVERSALIZING ACCESS TO FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION								
	Cambodia	Timor Leste	Indonesia	Malaysia	Myanmar	Thailand	Vietnam	Philippines
Is it realistic to expect governments to ensure, primary education free of school fees and other costs that keep children out of school? What strategies can governments promote to eliminate school fees and reduce other costs that keep children out of school?	The government should add support such as scholarships and prohibit the collection of school fees.		The problem is not the school fees but the other fees. It is not realistic to do universalized education now.	All these are dependent on the government budget. In Malaysia, the government provides free education but schools still collect fees.				Collection of school-related fees such as for the Boy Scouts is voluntary.
What the government must do to ensure that all education institutions (private, religious) comply with prescribed standards	Establish an effective monitoring system. Make recommendations based on standards. Publish the rules, public awareness of the law is important.			Involve the community		A children's health indicator is needed. Accessibility to the media.		Private schools are more or less autonomous, unlike public schools.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO WORK-RELATED SKILLS								
	Cambodia	Timor Leste	Indonesia	Malaysia	Myanmar	Thailand	Vietnam	Philippines
<p>To ensure minimum quality standards throughout the country, governments should assess existing conditions, define national standards, and identify how they are to be implemented and monitored. What must be done to help make this happen?</p>	<p>Meet with stakeholders. Increase cooperation between civil society and the government. Build the capacity of the people who set education standards. Involve all stakeholders in the policy study. Implement regulations.</p>		<p>Compare past experiences with other countries. Set international standards. Launch a national campaign to persuade parents to encourage their children to study harder (using media, organizations, etc.).</p>		<p>Standards are related to the norms made by the Human Rights Committee. Quality is related to relevance. In Myanmar, quality education is expensive.</p>	<p>The Office of Quality National Standards was set up. People are encouraged to monitor and evaluate the educational system.</p>	<p>Focus is on universalizing lower secondary education, making education efficient, improving quality of education, innovating teaching methods, using information and communication (ICT) in education, developing assessment tools, conducting in-service and pre-service teacher training, providing quality education to all students.</p>	<p>The Department of Education has bureaus for elementary, secondary, and nonformal education (NFE). Each has a manual of operation. A 1990 national survey found four major weaknesses: irrelevant and out dated institutes of teacher training; very high drop-out rate; and no monitoring and evaluation. Senate and Congress tried to resolve them by creating the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). Training courses offered are based on the needs of the area. Curriculum is developed with participation of industry representatives.</p>

<p>To what extent are teachers' labor rights and right to form trade unions recognized? What are obstacles to this recognition? How can these be overcome?</p>	<p>Cambodia The Cambodian government does not protect the rights of teachers. Politics must be separated from education. Freedom of teachers is restricted.</p>	<p>Timor Leste</p>	<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>Malaysia</p>	<p>Myanmar</p>	<p>Thailand The government is concerned with civil or public participation, setting of political standards, and political interference in getting teacher licenses.</p>	<p>Vietnam</p>	<p>Philippines Teachers organize themselves into associations in the regions and at the national level. Teachers are more empowered. They can speak out.</p>
<p>To what extent do education systems ensure that content promotes human rights, e.g., through human rights education, values education based on respect for diversity, etc.? What can be done to make curriculums and content more supportive of these rights?</p>	<p>Schools should give students more freedom. Student participation should be encouraged. Children should learn about human rights. Human rights should be incorporated into various subjects.</p>			<p>Human rights education is not a separate subject but incorporated into other subjects.</p>		<p>Put media education in the curriculum. Human rights should be part of every subject. Link the society with the school. Raise social awareness of students.</p>		<p>Human rights education is found in the new basic education curriculum; graduates of NFE can now enroll in the formal school system after being accredited. The nonformal education curriculum contains competencies comparable to that of the formal school system.</p>
<p>What more needs to be done to ensure that children are able to use their mother tongue in the first stages of education?</p>	<p>The government should have strong commitment to this.</p>			<p>Use the child's first language.</p>	<p>Regarding livelihood skills, a lot of stereotyping still exist in textbooks and in the teaching process.</p>	<p>Speaking English is encouraged.</p>		<p>The first language of students is used as the medium of instruction.</p>

<p>What can be done to ensure that the length, quality, and content of education are adequate for students to get jobs after they leave school (e.g., promote NFE for skills development, ensure that the minimum age of employment is matched by the age, minimum number of years for compulsory education)?</p>	<p>Cambodia Establish a youth development policy.</p>	<p>Timor Leste</p>	<p>Indonesia Shift from focusing on the curriculum to output.</p>	<p>Malaysia Subjects such as bricklaying, cooking, and carpentry are taught in schools.</p>	<p>Myanmar</p>	<p>Thailand Students learn about the subject but are not taught how to use the skills.</p>	<p>Vietnam Ensure that everybody has life skills. Build vocational and technical schools.</p>	<p>Philippines High schools offer technology and home economics classes. Elementary schools teach technology and livelihood. Non-formal education focuses on alternative learning, and takes place in several venues such as companies, schools, etc. There is a child labor program.</p>
<p>ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY</p>								
<p>In addition to ensuring that adequate data are available to identify disparities between boys and girls' enrollment in school, how can governments be encouraged to examine the general legal and traditional/customary status of girls and women,</p>			<p>There are no laws against discriminating by gender. A special ministry attempts to improve the role of women in the family and economy.</p>					

<p>which may hamper achieving gender equality?</p>	<p>Cambodia</p>	<p>Timor Leste</p>	<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>Malaysia</p>	<p>Myanmar</p>	<p>Thailand</p>	<p>Vietnam</p>	<p>Philippines</p>
<p>What can be done to ensure that the Dakar goal of gender equality is achieved by 2015 (e.g., in relation to textbook stereotyping, teaching-learning)?</p>	<p>Try not to stereotype textbooks being used. Teachers should know the goals of Dakar.</p>		<p>Bias is against ethnic culture rather than gender. No serious problems exist regarding equal access to education among genders. There should be more government-sponsored policies to ensure gender equality. The teaching-learning process should be democratized, e.g., systems should be nonmonopolistic, scholarships should be offered to teachers who want to be trained.</p>		<p>Link countries' reporting systems on follow-up activities of countries.</p>			<p>Integrate gender sensitivity training to preservice and in-service training of teachers.</p>
<p>CONSTRAINTS ON ADOPTING A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH TO ACHIEVEMENT OF EDUCATION FOR ALL</p>								
<p>What hinders realizing the right of children to education and to harmonizing laws, policies, and practices with international conventions?</p>								

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the family level 	<p>Cambodia</p> <p>Poverty—families do not see the importance of education. Role of women in Cambodian society—women must stay at home to care for the children. Measures are lacking to promote the role of women.</p>	<p>Timor Leste</p>	<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>Malaysia</p>	<p>Myanmar</p>	<p>Thailand</p> <p>There is no sense of belongingness to the community.</p>	<p>Vietnam</p>	<p>Philippines</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the community level • At the government level 	<p>The commune council is passive in education. There are regulations and laws, but the problem is in implementation. Laws are in English. Management of the education system is poor and money is not spent properly.</p>						<p>Resources are inadequate to meet all the needs of the people.</p>	<p>Poverty is a problem at all levels. Women are perceived as weak. The government is complacent with regard to enforcing standards.</p>
<p>What can be done to overcome these obstacles?</p>	<p>Family. Promote understanding of the importance of education. Education should not only be given to children but to the parents as well, especially women. The role of media is important.</p>					<p>Schools should be closer to the community and families. Thailand has barefoot teachers, and even teachers who go to on horseback.</p>	<p>Invest more in education.</p>	<p>Develop volunteers to become barefoot teachers or "para-teachers" and NFE mobile teachers. Strengthen NFE accreditation and equity of the Department of Education. Rally</p>

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS OF GROUP THREE

OVERCOMING EXCLUSION	
How can governments more systematically identify patterns of exclusion and discrimination in their education system? What kinds of data are needed to make this possible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Barangay</i> (village) databanking in coordination with National Commission for Indigenous Peoples, Department of Education (DepEd), Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) • Inventory of NGO programs • Profile of excluded sectors, including income status
Where do governments in the region stand in relation to the four stages in the extension of the right to education to excluded populations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is education recognized as a right? Yes. • Is there access to, but segregation within, education? Access to education is good. Segregation occurs outside the capital city and urban centers, but not in rural areas. • Is the attitude assimilation towards integration? Mainstreaming programs are in place but there is no framework to address multi-culturalism. • Is there adaptation to diversity? Mechanisms are not in place.
What are the most common obstacles in the region/your country to children entering school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some schools in barangays are not complete. Multigrade classes are held where less than 15 students enroll. Solution: Alternative learning system (e.g., for street children), approval of the bill on distance learning for the secondary level.
What are the most common obstacles in the region/your country to children entering school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Lack of confidence in multigrade schools Solution: Advocacy, awareness campaign. • Capability of teachers to handle multilevel classes Solution: Teacher training, continuous training in handling multigrade classes. • Lack of teachers in remote areas Solution: Rationalization of teacher deployment and utilization. • Parents pressure daycare centers to teach reading, writing Solution: Coordinate, involve daycare centers in early child education. • High incidence of out-of-school youths, child labor, early pregnancies, street children, juvenile delinquents Solution: Expansion and strengthening of alternative learning systems. • Natural and human-triggered disasters Solution: Inclusion of an education component in disaster management efforts.
What are the most common obstacles in the region/your country to children entering school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Solution: Use of the lingua franca and bilingual method of teaching. • Substandard quality of some private nonsectarian schools Solution: Review/strengthening of accreditation processes of schools at all levels. • Inadequate facilities Solutions: Provision of more facilities; strengthening of public-private partnerships, e.g., adopt-a-school program. • Mismatch between subjects taught and teacher preparation Solutions: Provision of teacher training in content, including in the use of "creative arts," learner-centered approaches; review/revision of teacher recruitment procedures. • Health-related problems Solutions: Provision of integrated health services to pupils in partnership with private and government organizations, and local governments, capability enhancement for parents and caregivers.

UNIVERSALIZING ACCESS TO FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION	
<p>Is it realistic to expect governments in the region to ensure primary education that is free of school fees?</p> <p>Are there other costs?</p> <p>What strategies are used?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a school (with strict guidelines for implementation) in partnership with institutions. • Maximizing interagency collaboration to protect children. • Setting up a monitoring system with sanctions and incentives. • Training school administrators for income-generating activities. • Requiring school divisions to list sponsors and prioritize school needs. • Expanding education management information system (MIS) to include rights-based concerns of children.
<p>Who should be compelled to ensure that children go to school—children, parents, or the government?</p> <p>What must the government do to ensure that all education institutions (private and nongovernment) comply with prescribed human rights standards?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government: “Truant officers.” The government should provide proper environment for education, and provide funding/subsidy. • Parents: They should know their obligations, enforce sanctions, motivate their children, and provide a support system. • Promote awareness of relevant international covenants, including that of the rights of children and teachers. • Monitor compliance and impose sanctions.
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO WORK-RELATED SKILLS	
<p>What must be done to help ensure effective assessment/compliance with minimum quality standards?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain a strong database. • Establish effective monitoring and evaluation (require regular reports, conduct visits, set minimum standards/indicators). • Address problems (e.g., lack of classrooms, funds). • Synchronize all systems of accreditation to ensure quality. • Formulate short-, medium-, and long-term plans with defined targets and indicators.
<p>To what extent are labor rights and trade unions recognized? What are obstacles to this recognition? How can these be overcome?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many laws, poor enforcement. • Need to review, harmonize, and update existing laws to make them more relevant and consistent with international covenants. • Need to harmonize laws and rules for public and private school systems, e.g., right to unionize/strike. • Participation of key stakeholders (including teacher and student organizations) in policymaking.
<p>To what extent do education systems ensure that content promotes human rights? What can be done to make curriculum and content more supportive of these rights?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of human rights education into curriculum and in-service programs • Training of teachers in integrating a rights-based approaches to classroom management
<p>What more needs to be done to ensure that children are able to use their mother tongue in the first stages of education?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand implementation of lingua franca policy in all schools, such as in elementary grades 1 and 2.

What can be done to ensure that the length, quality, and content of education are adequate for students to get jobs after they leave school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening skills for lifelong learning. • Close collaboration between the school system and industry. • Promoting information on technology, home economics and livelihood. • Setting up a two-track high school: vocational/ technical and academic. • Encouraging formation of cooperatives and other entrepreneurial activities. • Setting up a high school apprenticeship program.
ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY	
What must be done to encourage governments to examine the general legal and traditional/ customary status of girls and women, which may make achieving genuine gender equality difficult?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on and involve specific cultural communities and address discriminatory practices. • Evaluate entitlements and family practices. • Support all efforts to eradicate worst forms of child labor. • Monitor and assess compliance with international commitments readdressing barriers, identifying benchmarks, and setting targets. • Eliminate gender stereotyping in books and all forms of mass media.
What can be done to ensure that the Dakar goal of gender equality is achieved by 2005?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture gender concerns in educational MIS. • Evaluate the impact of use of gender-sensitive textbooks and other information management system. • Review deregulation provisions and accreditation processes (to promote rights-based approach, gender equality).
CONSTRAINTS ON ADOPTING A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH TO ACHIEVING EDUCATION FOR ALL	
What are the major constraints, obstacles, and challenges to realizing the right of children to education? At the community level? At the government/ministry level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty. • Dysfunctional families. • Ignorance of parents and other household members about child rights. • Need to teach child rights in the local cultural context. • Communities unaware of about human rights, especially child rights. • Corruption. • Negative values. • Politics (e.g., constant change in leadership). • Lack of political will to implement and enforce laws, policies, and programs on child rights.
What can be done to overcome these obstacles? At the community level? At the government/ministry level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of parents and other household members. • More advocacy thru tri-media. • Community education on child rights. • Counseling, organized family support system, and school-based crisis center. • Strengthen internal systems/procedures in government (focus on accountabilities). • Operationalize policies on child rights at all levels. • Train teachers on child rights. • Fix the term of office for heads of educational institutions. • Convene the National Coordinating Council on Education to ensure better articulation between and among education agencies. • Make culture an essential component in education. • Ensure that education serves as a catalyst to integrate marginalized groups. • Develop stronger linkages between the formal learning institutions and organizations that provide alternative learning strategies (e.g., Earth Savers' Dream Academy, which focuses on integrating culture in the education of marginalized groups).