

Social Integration in Action:

Stories from the Grassroots



NGO Committee for Social Development

Preface

In the spring of 2009, the NGO Committee for Social Development, in collaboration with the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), commissioned a survey on social integration/inclusion which would be the priority theme of the 48th session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development.

The Survey elicited 190 responses from 62 countries. The attached report

“Social Integration in Action – Stories from the Grassroots”

is a summary of these responses and includes a selection of fourteen examples of the best practices of social integration/inclusion.

We hope that you will find this report useful to your work and to the policy outcome of the forthcoming Commission for Social Development. If you need any additional information or would like a more detailed presentation/discussion of the report, please contact Tahirih Naylor, Chair, NGO Committee for Social Development at ngosocialdevelopment@gmail.com

Executive Summary

As preparation for the 48th session of the Commission for Social Development, the NGO Committee for Social Development, based in New York, with the collaboration of the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, initiated an online survey of NGOs to find best practices of Social Integration/Inclusion. 190 responses were received from 62 countries.

In addition to a description of best practices, the survey also asked NGOs to identify barriers to social integration/inclusion and recommend policies that might enhance social integration/inclusion.

The most frequently stated barriers were lack of education, gender discrimination and poverty. Limited access to education for children sets them on a path that quickly results in social exclusion. The same lack of access to education for adults eliminates an opportunity for individuals to become an integrated and participating member of society.

Despite the implementation of laws to remove gender discrimination, being female remains a barrier to social integration/inclusion.

The result of living in poverty is a vicious downward spiral of a lack of access to healthcare, housing, and other social services. Living in poverty also tends to exclude the individual from the most obvious escape route – employment. Other barriers included low levels of social protection, disparity of wealth, stigma, poor governance, and lack of opportunities to participate in policy making and being a migrant.

Policy recommendations to enhance social integration emphasised that responsible societies respect and care for the most vulnerable individuals and understand the importance of including everyone in the social fabric. Economic progress and social progress must go hand-in-hand and the respective policies should reflect this partnership. The provision of universal education is essential to social integration/inclusion, as are specific policies and programmes that remove the continuing discrimination against women.

Policies that address full employment and decent work, and the income it provides, are fundamental building-blocks for social integration/inclusion. The term employment must be widened to include everyone's livelihood, whether paid or not. For those who are not able to generate enough income from their livelihood, an acceptable level of social protection must be provided to ensure everyone shares the benefits of a productive society. All policies must be underpinned by a legal framework that protects the rights of the individual and prevents discrimination of all types. Responsible societies who put social integration/inclusion as a top priority understand that implementation of policies to achieve their objectives will result in a better society for all.

Attached to this report is a selection of fourteen of the best practices of social integration/inclusion from the survey. These programmes all contain at least four or five essential characteristics: they benefit the larger society, as well as the direct recipients; they are community-based; they are sustainable; they are reproducible; and beneficiaries are actively

involved in the programme and are not just recipients. These examples and many others demonstrate that social integration/inclusion is not a vague concept, but an achievable and desirable accomplishment which NGOs around the world are implementing on a daily basis.

Introduction

This report is the fruit of a survey carried out by a number of direct-service provider non-governmental organizations in preparation for the Forty Eighth Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development. The report synthesises the input of 190 responses which provides a synopsis of barriers to social integration/inclusion, recommendations to enhance social integration/inclusion and provides a selection of some of the best practices.

The United Nations Commission for Social Development meets annually in a two-year cycle to follow up on the agenda of the ‘*Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action 1995*.¹’ The first year in the cycle reviews effective practices in the field, and the second then elaborates lines of policy. The theme for the current two-year cycle is ‘*Social Integration*’ which was named as one of three pillars of Social Development at the World Summit held in Copenhagen in 1995.

The Report of the Secretary General for the Copenhagen Summit defined the objective of social development in general and social integration in particular as the creation of “a society for all”.

*Social integration is the process of building the values, relations and institutions essential for the creation of such an equitable and dynamic society, where all individuals, regardless of their race, sex, language or religion, can fully exercise their rights and responsibilities on an equal basis with others and contribute to society*².

The report further discusses that the concept of social inclusion, sometimes equated with social integration, has been used with increased frequency, both in intergovernmental debate and in policy making. It is sometimes thought that the concept of inclusion better reflects the goals of social justice and equality, especially in the context of achieving “a society for all”. Social inclusion is often seen as an action Governments can take to create more integrated societies.³

On the eve of *Copenhagen +15*, the NGO Committee for Social Development collaborated with the United Nations Non Governmental Liaison Services (NGLS) to survey Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across the world through an online consultation on ‘*Good Practices for Social Integration*’.

Almost 100 civil society organizations from 62 countries participated in the process and contributed their success stories in creating an enabling environment for an inclusive society. The good practices embrace a wide range of populations, including: people living in poverty, women, children, youth, older people, indigenous peoples, migrant populations, ethnic minorities, and people living with disabilities. The social issues they work to overcome are many. In spite of today’s many crises, civil society organizations have demonstrated that a ‘society for all’ is indeed possible.

¹ World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995

² E/CN.5/2009/2

³ *ibid*

In addition to a description of best practices, the survey also asked respondents to identify barriers to social integration, and suggest recommendations of policies that might enhance social integration based on their experience in the field. This report summarises the input from the survey in five sections.

In this first section, this introduction provides a context for the survey in relation to the Commission for Social Development 2010 and to the Copenhagen Declaration of 1995. Next, a summary of the barriers to social integration which were most frequently mentioned in the survey are cited. Thirdly, the criteria that were found in some of the outstanding best practices and might be used to evaluate programmes aimed at social integration/inclusion are identified. Fourthly, a summary of the recommendations of policies to enhance social integration are reported.

In the final section, the addendum of this report contains fourteen of the best practices of social integration/inclusion. These offer examples of the outstanding service of NGOs around the world.

The NGO Committee for Social Development expresses its appreciation to all those who contributed to this consultation process: the UN NGLS for assisting us with their technical guidance; all the civil society organizations who responded to the survey; translators who helped us collate responses which came to us in six languages; our own Committee members and other NGO Committees working at the United Nations Headquarters in New York for engaging their constituencies.

Our hope is that this publication will be used widely to serve as a tool to advocate for policies that will enhance the promotion of socially integrated societies and thus enabling a life of dignity for every human being.

Barriers to Social Integration

The responding organizations identified many barriers to social integration. The three most frequently cited barriers to social integration were lack of education, gender bias and inequality and poverty

Limited access to education at all levels cements people in a trajectory of social exclusion. Respondents indicated that lack of educational opportunities for children impedes integration. This is an obstacle for many groups – children experiencing homelessness; those with disability; immigrant children; children in dysfunctional families; those caught in child labour, prostitution or trafficking. In other situations school fees are a significant barrier and keep children out of school. The barriers of low levels of educational attainment and high illiteracy rates of adults in marginalized populations were also cited as major exclusionary factors to both integration and participation in society.

Women and children, especially those living in poverty, were identified as particularly vulnerable groups who experience marginalization and social exclusion. Indeed, being female is a barrier to social integration. Gender inequality, gender stereotyping, male domination, patriarchal attitudes or abusive cultural practices were reported as barriers to social integration by many respondents.

I find that one of the main barriers to social integration is the deep-seated cultural misunderstanding that women are inferior to men. (Survey Respondent)

In addition to education and gender bias, respondents named poverty and its many accompanying conditions as significant barriers to social integration. These conditions include minimal or no access to healthcare, housing and other social services. Lack of shelter and adequate housing are factors that militate against social integration. In all regions respondents indicated that when social protection measures are absent, poorly provided or at a distance, social inclusion is compromised.

Respondents report that social exclusion is often compounded by a lack of investment in social infrastructure and a lack of poverty eradication strategies. The surveys further indicated that individuals and groups who live in poverty and lack financial and personal resources may experience other conditions that lead to exclusion: family violence and breakdown, child neglect and violence, addictions and engagement in illicit activities.

Other barriers related to poverty are unemployment and underemployment. These are issues in both developing and developed countries. Not only do unemployment and underemployment often lead to poverty, they are also inhibiting factors in families' capacity to engage in the social life of the community. In particular unemployment is a significant barrier for youth and contributes to their isolation and disaffection.

Underpinning poverty and low investment in social protection is significant disparity of wealth. The gap between rich and poor was listed as contributing to social exclusion and social disintegration. Macroeconomic policies, including lack of fair trade policies, were identified as

contributing to social exclusion. Explicitly, and by implication, respondents named inequities arising from globalisation as barriers to social integration for people living in poverty and in the global south.

Being a migrant was seen as a significant barrier to social inclusion in the majority of the regions surveyed. Surveys indicated that migrant exclusion is linked to undetermined legal status, absence of workers' rights, unjust wages and exploitative labour practices. Inadequate language services for migrant populations and the difficulty of dealing with government bureaucracies were also stated as barriers to the inclusion of migrants.

Some respondents noted that excluded groups often internalise society's label of inferiority; thus a modest number of responses identified the attitudes of excluded groups as a barrier to their own integration. In addition to feelings of inferiority, a few organizations noted that among the excluded, bias against subgroups - especially women and girls - also impedes social integration. Low self-esteem and a lack of personal resources to confront situations in the absence of social assistance contribute to the experience of alienation.

Stigma and discrimination were named as important impediments to social inclusion. Many types of stigma were mentioned--stigma due to caste or class or stigma as a result of disabling conditions, for example, having HIV/AIDS or mental illness. Multiple forms of discrimination – gender, racial, religious – and population groups who experience discrimination – indigenous, the elderly, the homeless – were instanced.

Aspects of the relationship between citizens and the state can also militate against social inclusion. Of major concern was the lack of participatory processes in both developing and developed countries. Respondents reported that there are minimal fora where grassroots members can participate in decision-making. Obstacles include centralised government structures that preclude rural and distant citizens' engagement, limited multi-lingual information about government services and technological barriers.

Failure to recognize the right of all to participate in decisions which affect their lives and failure to promote regeneration and empowerment of local communities [is a barrier]" (Survey respondent).

Barriers arising from poor governance were also raised as matters of concern. A range of connected factors was listed: weak government structures; absence of government policies; corruption in the parliament, local government and in government service delivery; a lack of transparency; and, political instability.

Other groups who are already marginalised – homeless people, indigenous communities, ethnic minorities, disaffected youth, dysfunctional families and older persons, as well as those living in an armed conflict zones – experience even greater exclusion in societies which lack the political will, policies or resources to address these issues.

Some respondents drew attention to moral and ethical deficits that create barriers to social integration. These were expressed as a loss of basic values, having little experience of positive

human and social values, an absence of spiritual sensitivity and a low level of moral consciousness.

Obstacles are obvious when focus is on differences in people instead of similarities and where there is competition, fear and greed. Discrimination is another great obstacle. (Survey respondent)

Best Practices for Social Integration

The 190 best practices described in the survey responses were examples of the selfless and heartening work performed by thousands of people in countries around the world. In examining the best practices for social integration/inclusion, outstanding examples were found to contain most or all of five criteria:

1. **The best practices benefit the larger society as well as the direct recipients.** The programmes provide direct help to those in need, and in many cases re-engage others in their local community. In addition those providing help were role models for others around them.

They are now able to produce enough fish, groundnuts, beans, cassava and soy to be self-sufficient and thereby demonstrate that they are a contributing sector of their local community. (Survey Respondent)

2. **The best practices are community-based.** The majority of the examples involved local organisations providing support to members of their communities who, for a variety of reasons were socially excluded. This predominance of grassroots community work cries out for government policies that support local community activities.

Little by little, the meetings provided a forum for the very poorest in the community to express their hopes and needs, thus beginning to bridge a gap that had existed between them and the rest of the community and the emergence of a community project. (Survey Respondent)

3. **The beneficiaries are actively involved in the programme as participants not just as recipients.** People in need may seek help, but most are willing and eager to participate in the process and welcome an opportunity to improve their circumstances. Recipients and providers both understand that a simple handout is a one-time “Band-Aid”, which is only of temporary help. What is needed is help and support that enables recipients to progress by themselves.

Deciding together and working together for poverty eradication helped them to transcend mind-sets of untouchability that casteism represented. (Survey Respondent)

4. **The best practices are sustainable.** People providing support had been involved for many years and the programme were ongoing. If sources of funding were needed, there were often revenue generating activities embedded in the programme to ensure it would be self sustaining. In the very best programmes, these revenue-generating activities were undertaken by the recipients of the programme benefits.

In the first project, 2600 micro credit loans have been made to 80% of the members with not one credit default. (Survey Respondent)

5. **The best practices are reproducible.** The concept for the initiative as well as its implementation are simple and easy to replicate and their benefits a natural result. Usually the programme could be reproduced in another local community within the country. Some of the best programmes are reproducible across countries.

We set up four libraries ... good lights were put in and the libraries were attractive so that the children loved to come for help. (Survey Respondent)

These five characteristics provide a road map of the type of projects that are successful in the area of social integration/inclusion and that should be supported by policy makers, legislators and all those who are dedicated to social integration/inclusion.



VIVAT International

Recommendations to Enhance Social Integration

Promoting the value of respect for human life in all peoples and cultures, based on the conviction that an authentic people is one that knows how to respect and care for the most defenseless and fragile life, is fundamental to social integration.
(Survey respondent)

Many surveys reflected the above view of an inclusive society understood in its broadest and most inclusive terms. The responses refer to the inclusion of a range of people in society: women, persons with disability, migrant populations, indigenous peoples, homeless or other marginalized groups. The realization of authentic people-centered societies requires the commitment of individuals, businesses, statutory organisations and governments to create policies and actions that ensure inclusion and respect diversity.

Respondents urged governments to take active steps to ensure equal rights for all. Surveys highlighted the need for policies that link programmes of social protection, social and human development, and the creation of jobs and income. Programmes need to be introduced and delivered in a decentralized and participatory manner and ensure that people remain at the centre.

Governments need policies and legislation that promote gender equality and have zero tolerance for violence and exploitation of women and girls. Strategies recommended to governments that will empower women and promote social inclusion are:

- listening to women
- creating partnerships
- addressing cultural barriers
- ensuring access to education for women and girls
- addressing the feminisation of poverty.

Governments need a breadth of educational policies and programmes to ensure social inclusion:

- universal primary education
- access to secondary education
- special education training for staff working with people with disabilities
- education of staff of statutory bodies dealing with marginalized populations
- citizenship education

Governments are urged to recognize that a foremost requirement of an inclusive society is that everybody – both individuals and groups - has sufficient income to live in dignity and be able to fully participate in society. Policies and programmes are needed to ensure:

- the right to decent work and full or adequate employment
- the provision of social income with social protection
- the protection of trade union rights
- access to housing, healthcare, social services and education
- maintenance of public services and the delivery of these in an integrated manner
- prioritising of social finance in national budgets

Governments are urged to implement just and humane immigration laws as this is a significant means of promoting social integration. Policies are needed to:

- address the discrimination and xenophobia in the migrants experience
- ensure the provision of language services
- uphold the human rights of migrants
- ensure that each person has legal identity

Governments are asked to ensure social integration by implementing legislation and education programs that address the discrimination and stigma that are obstacles to social inclusion. Policies and programmes need to address:

- gender discrimination
- discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic and cultural background
- stigma because of disability or HIV/AIDS status
- discrimination resulting from customary practices

Governments are recommended to implement strategies that increase local participation as strategic priorities for social inclusion:

- by using participatory democratic processes
- by training grass-roots leaders
- by involving citizens in the decisions that affect their lives
- by building partnership with all stakeholders including NGOs.

Governments are called to recognize civil society organizations as key partners in providing services and in building social integration:

- by seeking their grassroots knowledge in developing policies and programs for social inclusion
- by strengthening their work through financial support.

Governments are called to evaluate national and macroeconomic policies on the basis of their impact upon marginalised populations as it was acknowledged by some respondents that economic policies can increase social exclusion and exacerbate social disintegration. A global economy that provides for the well-being of all, not just benefit and profit for a few, is needed. Respondents indicated that social integration will happen when economic progress is combined with social progress.

Governments are called upon to uphold and protect human rights for all citizens by ensuring good governance and the elimination of corruption. Respondents urged that governments be representative, accountable and responsive to people's needs. Governments need to be proactive in ensuring access to justice, public safety, fairness by the judiciary and police and adherence to international rights and responsibilities. They emphasized these principles and processes as key to fostering the common good and laying the foundations for peace, security and social integration.

Social exclusion is seen as a vicious circle. If you can't cover the basic necessities, it is complicated to be motivated to study; if you don't have a roof over your head,

it will be difficult to work and so on. Therefore, social integration is about creating a cross-cutting policy, that is, one which has provisions for joint action related to: education, employment, housing, and which guarantees a system of minimum wage—as a starting point, not permanent, so as not to foment accommodation or dependence on social assistance. This would transform a vicious circle into a beneficial circle. (Survey respondent)



VIVAT International

Addendum to the Report

Selected examples of best practices of social integration/inclusion

The NGO Committee for Social Development appointed a working group to review the input from 190 respondents. This group selected a representative sample of the best practices of social integration/inclusion based upon 7 criteria. Each of the programs/projects:

- Benefit the larger society in addition to the direct recipients.
- Are community based.
- Are participatory, actively involving the beneficiaries.
- Are sustainable.
- Are reproducible.

In addition, as a group, the examples selected are:

- Reasonably representative of the geographic input of the survey.
- Representative of the majority of the social development themes identified in the survey.

The review yielded the 14 examples which are included in this addendum

Wherever possible, the working group retained the original language of the survey respondents in order to include their 'voice' and to maintain authenticity.

The Insan Foundation Trust, Pakistan

Mission

The Insan Foundation struggles for the rights of disadvantaged children, women and other deprived groups of Pakistan. With national and international commitments and the principles of gender equality in view, the Insan Foundation protects, supports and promotes negotiated peace, through capacity development, research and advocacy, technical assistance and practical demonstration.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

The Insan Foundation has been working with Afghan refugees for the last seven years in Quetta and Balochistan. We hired young Afghan boys and girls for the educational program on sports. The main reason for hiring only Afghan staff was to build their own capacities so that by the time they get back to Afghanistan they will have concepts and skills like communication, gender analysis, conflict resolution, health and community development. In this way, the young Afghan refugees extend their newly gained knowledge and understanding to a wider population in Afghanistan. At the same time, working with the Afghan refugees helps local people in Pakistan deal with their own social problems of gender discrimination, conflict resolution and community development.

These young boys and girls were from different communities, classes and clans and they had little interaction with Pakistanis. As our program was long term and we did not directly contest their beliefs in the beginning, the change took place gradually. Even the most rigid young boys who had stereotypical images of women, the Hazara community and the Pakistani people changed into totally different personalities. They came to know about human rights, women's rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child for the very first time. During the workshops in the beginning they even do not want to interact with girls. We conducted highly interactive and activity based residential workshops away from their hometowns in which they had enough time to interact with different groups and also to reflect on their behaviours and attitudes. We encouraged them by giving different incentives like small amounts to continue their formal education each month. This programme could be initiated in other refugee centres where young people can be encouraged to take leadership roles in their host community in specific areas such as sports.

Clann Credo, Ireland

Mission

Clann Credo designs and promotes innovative social finance products and services, contributing to inclusive prosperity and developing social capital in a way that benefits the whole community.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

Clann Credo with its partners the International Presentation Association and Speedpak are working to help the long term unemployed return to work. Speedpak specialises in providing contract packaging services and storage solutions to industry. Speedpak is a unique commercial company as it also provides training and work experience opportunities to local long term unemployed people in Dublin's northside. Speedpak was established in Northside Dublin in 1995.

In its endeavors to help the long term unemployed the partnership noted common difficulties for workers - when unemployed for long periods, workers lost skills, the discipline of work, the discipline of time and most often their self-confidence. Now Speedpak acts as a transition phase in the work life of its people. Speedpak utilises integrated training programmes to help to get long term unemployed people back into the workforce, providing actual work experience in a fully fledged commercial and supported environment.



UNANIMA International

Neighbourhood Community Network, India

Mission

The mission is to ensure deeper and credible democracy by creating structures for people to have an effective and on-going say through neighbourhood parliaments and their multi-tier global federation guided by principles of smallness of size, numerical uniformity, subsidiarity, recall scope and convergence. It sets before itself the task of organizing one million neighbourhood parliaments in the world in five years. The Neighbourhood Network Community has also started neighbourhood parliaments of children.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

We began our activities in the late 1970s by organizing neighbourhood forums of about 30 families each in Kodimunai, a coastal village in Tamilnadu, India. Women who were excluded from decision-making bodies in these villages came in big numbers to these neighbourhood forums. Gradually the neighbourhood forums discussed women's participation in village decision making bodies, which were generally males only. Eventually the women dominated at the village decision-making bodies!

The State of Kerala, India has 184,000 neighbourhood groups of poor women. The neighbourhood groups are territorially organized and hence necessarily inclusive, transcending caste (racial), religious and ideological exclusions. Deciding together and working together for poverty eradication helped them to transcend mind-sets of untouchability that casteism represented. (www.kudumbashree.org) We have also established neighbourhood parliaments of children of about 30 families, each with its own child prime minister and child ministers for health, finance, environment, education, child rights, etc.; these get federated at the levels of the village, intervillage, sub-district, district and the state. Here too children of various castes and religions come together, discuss together, plan together and implement together. Tamilnadu-Pondicherry State Parliament of Children won this year's UNICEF-San Marino Alexander Bodini Award for the best child-led organization. For their success stories, visit www.childrenparliament.info

HelpAge International, Vietnam

Mission

HelpAge International's vision is a world in which all older people can lead dignified, active, healthy and secure lives. HelpAge International's mission is to work with our partners to ensure that people everywhere understand how much older people contribute to society and that they must enjoy their right to healthcare, social services and economic and physical security.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

In Vietnam, HelpAge International, together with their local partners, the Vietnam Women's Union and the Vietnam Association of the Elderly, has been operating two projects to demonstrate how older persons can contribute to and be part of their community. In the first project, older persons practice their self sufficiency and demonstrate their ability to generate income that not only supports them but provides financial support for other members of their families. In the second project, the contribution of older persons to the plight of those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS is brought to the attention of the community, recognized, supported and expanded.

Both projects involve the formation of community clubs, 61 in the first project, 67 in the second. The clubs have been formed in both rural and urban communities. With training in social activities, entitlements and self help supported by micro credit, these clubs have taken many members above the poverty level and raised their contribution to the community. In the first project, 2600 micro credit loans have been made to 80% of the members with not one credit default. In the second project, the clubs have reduced the stigma and isolation of members and their relatives who have been infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Many individuals have been reintegrated into their communities and have then become volunteers who go back out into their community and increase awareness of HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention. In both projects the clubs have become self sustainable.

Eva's Village, USA

Mission

The mission of Eva's Village is to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, treat the addicted and provide medical care to the poor.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

Eva's Village began as a simple soup kitchen feeding 30 people on the day that we opened. Twenty-seven years later we feed anywhere from 900 to a 1000 meals a day both in our soup kitchen and to the 250 residents in our programs. It was soon realized that feeding people was not enough, so we opened shelters for the homeless. Today we have a men's shelter with 40 beds, a women's shelter with 36 beds and a residence for homeless and addicted mothers and their children. Presently we have 30 families living in our Hope Residence.

We then expanded into transitional housing for all of the populations we serve. After the shelters were opened we saw that many of our residents had addiction problems and today we have both in-patient and out-patient programs that serve hundreds of people annually. We then realized that the lack of affordable health care was a problem and we now have one of the 5 free clinics in the State of New Jersey that offers free medical and dental care to the poor. This clinic is run totally on volunteer medical professionals. We still felt our mission was not complete so we are presently building a 51 unit apartment house of affordable housing. We feel that this will bring our mission to the poor full circle, from homelessness to providing safe, clean and low-income housing to those we serve. All of these programs help our clients integrate into society and live productive lives once again.

Association Civil Apoyo Familiar, Peru

Mission

We are a non profit organization, sustained by Christian values, that promotes in populations of poverty and extreme poverty within Chimbote, the betterment of their living conditions. We orient peoples' development of capabilities through the promotion of education, health, human rights and social services to build up their self esteem and human dignity.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

We have tried for years to get the government to provide more jobs for the people. Nothing was working. We finally met with teachers in our area and found out that children were flunking or abandoning school at a rate of 40% in grade school and 60% in high school. We set up four libraries around the barrios and bought school books for the children who could not afford them and hired tutors to help them with their homework. Many of the mothers also could not read or write. Good lights were put in and the libraries were attractive so that the children loved to come for help. We started a reading program for the children giving prizes when needed.

The fallout rate has been reduced to 5% in the grade school and 8% in the high school. We have classes for parents. Two psychologists are available to help solve behavioral problems in the home. Instead of working with the older drug addicts, we are concentrating on the younger siblings with a prevention program.

Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Thailand

Mission

Work closely with those who are deprived and marginalized and respond to needy persons wherever our members are present. Attend to the needs of individuals and groups and be responsive to the socio-economic, cultural, and political realities of each location. Become involved at the social level to identify and address factors which contribute to poverty. Engage in a broad range of services which advance justice and peace. Collaborate with all those who defend the rights of the deprived.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

In our first year on the Thai-Myanmar border, we regularly visited 45 Muslim families whose children collect garbage and beg in the market to help their parents earn a living. We gathered the children together and taught them English & Thai languages. After class we visit their families and the sick people.

Later, through an organized mothers' group, we rented a house in the area for the children's classes and brought in volunteers to teach arts, music, arithmetic, Burmese language, health care with integrated value formation. The parents, many of who were illiterate, met once a week for adult education. Speakers were invited for basic health care, human rights and updates on the new labor laws of the country.

In our fourth year, in agreement with the Muslim Religious leader and the parents, classes in the rented house were discontinued and more than 50 children were referred to different Burmese Learning Centers in order to integrate them with non-Muslim migrant children of other races from Myanmar. This year 2009, our fifth, we were able to enroll 15 of these children, from ages 10 – 14, in the Thai Buddhist Temple School: 7 in Kindergarten III, 5 in 1st Grade, 1 in 2nd Grade and 2 in 3rd Grade.

People do not call them street children anymore. They can communicate with their simple Thai language and greetings. With their Thai student ID card, they are free to go around the marketplace without being apprehended by the police, unlike their other friends who remained in their own clan.

Miriam Center for Migrant Workers, South Korea

Mission

The mission is to assist women from foreign countries, chiefly Asia and Africa, who come to Korea for marriage or to earn a living by finding employment. Assistance focuses on helping them to preserve their dignity, receive respect, and fair treatment according to the labor laws. To state it negatively, the mission is to help protect these women from abuses, exploitation, unhealthy living conditions and cultural conflicts. In summary it is to provide these migrants with services and opportunities to lead a fully human life (during their time) in Korea.

Particularly, in the case of foreign women married to Korean men, it is to help them with problems in the family and adjust to the social expectations of their husbands' families and of Korean society.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

The following are services provided by a skeleton staff at the Miriam Center aided by a large quota of volunteers:

- Counseling for a variety of personal issues
- Direct intervention: with employers, language translators
- Provision of language classes
- Introduction of volunteer legal assistance, medical services
- Mentoring- volunteers who form a one-on-one relationship, especially for foreign wives
- Education: group counseling, Korean culture, women's health, women's rights (violence, sexual harassment), leadership training, information regarding assistance available through churches, NGO's.
- Formation of clubs or other organizations for those with similar problems such as foreign wives
- Provision of entertainments, site-seeing, sports activities, cultural trips, celebrations for workers' national holidays.
- Networking and collaboration with other similar organizations for sharing help and experience
- Annual retreats for those who are interested in sharing & deepening their spiritual and religious experiences.
- Home visitation to migrant workers and those women married to Koreans.

Club de Madrid, Kazakhstan

Mission

Socially cohesive or “Shared Societies” are stable, safe and just, and are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

A Shared Society is at ease with itself and the diversity of its members’ cultural, religious and ethnic identities. It recognizes and values these identities and their interdependence as strengths, working creatively with each other and with the wider global community to solve common problems and to promote respect for human dignity and release human potential.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

In 1995 under the initiative of President Nazarbayev, the Assembly of the Nations of Kazakhstan (ANK) was established as a consultative – advisory body directly affiliated to the President of Kazakhstan, the chairman of the Assembly. The ethnic groups are represented in the Assembly as follow: German (49 members), Kazakh (40), Korean (36), Tatar (29), Slav (27), Chechen and Ingush (26), Azerbaijani (23), Uighur (21), Russian (20), Ukrainian (19), Jewish (18), Polish (16), Turkish (14), Greek (12), Armenian (11), Byelorussian (10), Dungan (10), Kurd (8), Uzbek (8), Cossack (6), with the Turkmen, Bulgarians and Dagestanians having four members each, and the Kyrgyz and Tajik three members each, the Karachaev, Balkarian, Chinese, Chuvash and Karakalpak two members each, and the Assyrian, Czech, Baltic nations, Georgian, Osetian, Lezgin, Iranian, Buryat, Hungarian and Romanian one member each.

Between 1995 and 2008, The ANK held 14 sessions to discuss the enhancement of National Unity and inter-ethnic harmony in Kazakhstan. The first constituent session of the ANK (March, 1995) was entitled “For the peace and consent in our common house”. The Fourteenth and latest session was held in October 2008 about "The Country’s Force is in People’s Unity".

The ANK conducts many projects, events and conferences on the local level in cooperation with small ANKs established in each province in Kazakhstan. For example, regional festivals of friendship of people are held regularly to share publicly different ethnic celebrations. The small ANKs work on the implementation of the language balance policy on the local level, according to which every ethnic group should learn freely its original language through the Sunday schools.

The small ANKs in the provinces have an annual signing event where the leaders of political parties, heads of religious organizations and national cultural centers gather to sign a document on maintenance of public stability and interethnic consent.

According to the recent constitutional reform, the ANK was given new status and has nine deputies in the Majilis, the lower house of Parliament. All legislative acts adopted by Parliament will from now on undergo additional scrutiny for their compliance with the criteria of interethnic reconciliation, tolerance and equality.

Sisters of Notre Dame De Namur, Democratic Republic of Congo

Mission

The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur is a congregation of Catholic Sisters founded in France in 1804 to serve the needs of the poor, especially women and children. Traditionally most members worked in formal education (kindergarten through university), although today they are also involved in a wide range of informal education projects, adult literacy, primary health care, rural development, direct services to the poor, advocacy work for justice and peace. The most relevant line of the organisation's mission statement is: "Women . . . working with others for justice and peace for all."

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

We have schools and dispensaries – mostly in rural areas – which we maintain all year round in spite of our very limited resources. As far as is possible we try to provide quality service to all. One of the most important factors is strict accountability and financial administration. In the Bandundu, which is a very impoverished region of the country, we work with a local group to involve youths who are not in school to learn agriculture and fish pond maintenance. They in turn demonstrate for the larger population how they can become self supporting through their own efforts and by improving their techniques. They are now able to produce enough fish, groundnuts, beans, cassava and soy to be self-sufficient and thereby demonstrate that they are a contributing sector of their local community.

The local population now organises itself to maintain the roads so that the lorries of merchants can get to the market to purchase their crops and produce. All of this has greatly benefited nutrition in the region. It has given the population the opportunity to have some monetary income which has enabled them to take care of their most basic needs: health, nutrition, education of their children.

Our organisation continues to try to raise the people's awareness of what they themselves can do to improve the health and education in the area. Gradually we are seeing a marked change in their mindset. We want to extend our efforts even further to reach more people.

International Movement ATD Fourth World, Bolivia

Mission

To eradicate extreme poverty and social exclusion in the global north and south. To encourage societal change that promotes dignity and the fulfilment of human rights for all. To reach the most socially excluded people and promote their participation in the lives of their communities and nations. To invite people from different backgrounds to unite in a joint effort to tackle exclusion and poverty. Projects are initiated and evaluated in partnership with people living in extreme poverty.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

The following example is an illustration that if a programme does not take the poorest members of the community into consideration from the outset, it will be very difficult to include them at a later stage, and the gap between the poorest and the rest of the community is likely to grow.

In an impoverished Aponto neighbourhood of Coroico, Bolivia, the only source of public water was the stream. Access depended on land ownership and for its poorest inhabitants - the majority of whom earn their living by washing other people's clothes – access was dependent on the unpredictable authorization from the local landowners. Monthly meetings were organized between the town hall and parish of Coroico and the people of Aponto. Some households, ashamed of their living conditions, did not feel comfortable to participate in the large meetings.

An architect and ATD Fourth World members visited them in their homes, enabling them to understand the importance of a new facility. Little by little, the meetings provided a forum for the very poorest in the community to express their hopes and needs, thus beginning to bridge a gap that had existed between them and the rest of the community. This facilitated the emergence of a community project .

After two years of project assessment and fundraising, ensuring all community members were fully engaged, construction began of 'Las Lavandarias': a laundry facility with four washing stations, a public toilet, and an open social pavilion overlooking the laundry space.



VIVAT International

International Presentation Association, Zambia

Mission

The International Presentation Association (IPA) is a network of the various congregations of Presentation women throughout the world. We are committed to bringing forth a sustainable society founded on respect for the earth, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace. The mission of IPA is to speak and act in partnership with others for global justice especially in issues related to: Women and Children, Indigenous People, Environment/Sustainable Living and Human Rights

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

In the Cheshire Home we work with disabled children regardless of color, race or faith and provide the environment necessary for each individual's physical, mental and spiritual well-being. We believe that each person, whatever her or his disability, is a uniquely valuable individual and that disabled people should have personal freedom to pursue their aspirations and take their own place in society. We use a holistic programme to enable children to live as independent a life as possible, intervening as early as possible so the children have an excellent chance of walking. We cater to the rehabilitation of physically challenged children through surgery, physiotherapy and education.

The Home provides free service to those children undergoing the rehabilitation programme. Our target group is children with physical disability from birth to 16yrs. We take care of a maximum of 60 children and 15 mothers and babies each term. Thrice a year orthopedic surgeons from Lusaka come to the Home and children are reviewed and assessed and operations performed as necessary. After care takes place in Cheshire Home and we provide whatever is necessary for the surgeries. As soon as the child is able to walk well he/she is discharged but reviewed on a 6 monthly basis for 2 years. Cheshire Home also runs Outreach Programmes. An Outreach Worker and Physiotherapist visit local Rural health Centers to provide advice and help.

Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Italy

Mission

Work closely with those who are deprived and marginalized and respond to needy persons wherever our members are present. Attend to the needs of individuals and groups and be responsive to the socio-economic, cultural, and political realities of each location. Become involved at the social level to identify and address factors which contribute to poverty. Engage in a broad range of services which advance justice and peace. Collaborate with all those who defend the rights of the deprived.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

Among the families served:

A family formed of a Latvian mother and a Bangladeshi father, with children born and raised in both countries. After various routes they came to Rome. The mother and children lived the first 2 years in Casa Famiglia. Later on a family reunion is attempted and materializes. They are now self-employed and are also mediators with their countrymen as well as maintaining ties with their native country with the publication of a newspaper.

A daughter of Slavic Gypsies, who was a witness to violence and was trained to beg in the streets, was able to go to a beauty school, gain confidence and, more importantly, acquire the ability to live her daily life.

A family from Ghana, both laureates, with two children endured three years of labour, but had a drive to be themselves. Now they work both in factories enjoying a life like others and are well integrated.

A girl from Latin America arrives to complete her studies and has an unwanted pregnancy. Nevertheless she accepts the pregnancy and eventually delivers a set of twins.

Cork Social Housing Forum, Ireland

Mission

To raise awareness of Social and Affordable Accommodation issues and to lobby the government and policy makers at local and national level with a view to enhancing accommodation provision in Cork City and City hinterland area.

Example of Best Practice to Enhance Social Integration/Inclusion

Inadequate supply of appropriate social housing is a barrier to social integration. The supply of social housing is not meeting the need. Preliminary findings indicate that in 2008 there were over 55,000 households on the Local Authority Assessment of Social Housing Needs. The over reliance on the market economy to provide housing has not addressed the needs of those who are most vulnerable in society.

The Cork Social Housing Forum intends to fulfill their mission by identifying and highlighting inadequacies in accommodation provision to policy makers, including the Housing and Community Services Strategic Policy Committee. To this end in 2008 and 2007 the Forum made submissions to the Cork Area Strategic Plan Strategy 2001 – 2020; the Joint Housing Strategy Review 2008; and the Cork City Development Plan 2009-2015. As well as the submissions, members of the Forum met with the then Lord Mayor of Cork to discuss the submission.

In addition the Forum launched a research document: Building on Reality: A Report on The Trends in Social Housing Demand and Supply in Cork City and Cork South County . A Roundtable Discussion event was held based on the research. Representatives were invited from Cork City Council Housing Department, Cork County Council Housing Department, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Auctioneers, Developers, Mortgage Providers, Social Housing Providers, Medical and Psychiatric Practitioners, Solicitors, Letting Agents, Community Welfare Officers and Landlords.

Local Government Section 48 of the Local Government Act 2001 requires local authorities to establish Strategic Policy Committees. They consider matters connected with the formulation, development, monitoring and review of policy that relate to the functions of the local authority and to advise the authority on those matters. Since 2006 the Chairperson of Cork Social Housing Forum has represented the Cork City Community Forum on the Housing and Community Services Strategic Policy Committee.

N.B.

Note on methodology and limitations of the Survey on Social Integration

The survey on social integration was conducted to gain insights from people involved in working directly in the field on issues related to social exclusion. The intent was to gather an array of good practices and to solicit the views and experiences of respondents on their practice-based recommendations for policies and interventions to enhance social integration. The survey was not conducted as a scientific research project; no sampling methodology was used and the results cannot be generalised to civil society groups universally. Nonetheless, the opinions, recommendations, and especially the practical examples provide valuable data to inform policy. While not scientifically representative, responses were received from all regions of the world and from diverse service settings.



VIVAT International



NGO Committee for Social Development

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