

lecture

in=ain in ain in ain ain ain
alain la main un copain du...
le père d'alain
le matin, le père d'alain fait... la pâte
avec la farine et la levure. il... à la main.



Learning to read the world

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ICCO works in developing countries together with people and organisations dedicated to achieving a just and sustainable world.

This cooperation has had a great impact. Access to basic needs such as water, health care, education and food has improved. Many people earn a better living or have received micro-credit to set up their own businesses. In many countries human rights are now better protected.

But we are not finished yet. Lack of water, malnutrition, poor health care, human rights abuses and unfair trade still occur on a large scale. This is unacceptable. A better world is possible but we cannot achieve it on our own.

We therefore support organisations and individuals who are working in their own ways to build a humane exist-

ence. We do this with respect for local contexts and in close cooperation with our partner organisations.

Do you share our ideals? Would you like to join us in working toward a more just world? ICCO offers support opportunities for individuals, foundations, companies and young people. To learn more about how you can help and become an active partner in international cooperation, go to www.icco.nl.

ICCO is the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation. It was founded in 1965 and currently supports more than 900 partner organisations on every continent. Its work is carried out in close cooperation with Kerk in Actie.

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1 Introduction

Education is a source of personal and social development and it is essential for building and maintaining a peaceful society. Schooling builds self-confidence and makes people more independent and resilient. It offers knowledge and skills that last a lifetime. However, despite all of the international agreements on education – such as the Millennium Goals – about 72 million children still do not attend school. A large proportion

of them are involved in child labour and most are girls. Moreover, about 774 million people are still illiterate, most of whom are women. ICCO and Kerk in Actie are contributing to efforts aimed at making quality education accessible to everyone. We do this together with Edukans and Prisma, with whom we have formed an alliance. This education policy is part of the operational plan 2007-2010.

2 Analysis

Throughout the world, great strides are being made in education. The percentage of children with access to education has increased in recent years and more and more children are also attending school longer. In many countries, especially in the developing world, education has improved significantly and girls are beginning to catch up with their male peers. In the twentieth century more adults learned to read and write than ever before. Despite these advances, however, many countries offer insufficient or only very low-quality education. Some of the most important problems involve:

- Literacy rate: It is expected that 86% of adults will be able to read and write in the year 2015. This is only a slight improvement over the current 82%. The differences between countries are staggering. The literacy rate in Burkina Faso, for example, is only 29%.
- Access to education: 72 million children – mostly girls – do not attend school. 70% of them live in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. One third live in conflict areas.
- Inequality: Lack of education is a problem affecting mostly children in conflict and post-conflict areas, refugees, orphans, children of marginalised indigenous peoples and those who are homeless, involved in child labour, or handicapped. Girls also receive fewer opportunities than boys. Large differences in educational opportunities exist between urban and rural populations and between ethnic groups.
- Completion of education: Since the introduction of free basic education, an increasing number of children have started to attend school, but many eventually drop out.
- Attendance: Children who are enrolled at schools do not always attend.
- Results: Children who attend school do not necessarily learn anything, and what they learn is not necessarily relevant.

Causes

Why do so few children attend school? And if they do attend, why is the quality so inconsistent? There can be a number of reasons for this.

- The education does not correspond to the children's needs, for example because it is conducted in a different language or is too academic.
- There are too few well-trained and motivated teachers.
- Parents and children have little influence on what is being taught and therefore lose interest in schooling.
- School is too expensive due to the costs of materials, school uniforms and transportation. And the most rudimentary tools needed to teach are not available: a good building, teaching materials, furniture and sanitary facilities. The learning environment is not safe or child friendly. Cultural factors limit access to education, especially for girls.
- At various levels education is hampered by a lack of political will and broken promises. Money does not filter down from the national level and local governments are not always capable or motivated to fulfill their responsibilities. Education is not a priority for the international community.
- Too little national and local input. Donors still set the agendas. This does not stimulate national and local governments to hold themselves accountable to their own citizens.
- The education sector is not always set up to be goal-oriented. Education systems are characterised by excessive bureaucracy and uncoordinated efforts spread across various ministries. Education is further hampered by high costs, mismanagement and corruption. Competence is also lacking with respect to planning, monitoring and accountability.

The consequences

Well-educated people are generally healthier, better paid and more capable of standing up for themselves and their communities. This is particularly true when education is provided to girls and women: children of educated women are healthier and often attend school themselves. Children who do not attend school, on the other hand, get caught in a vicious circle. Those growing up in poverty usually have to help provide for their families. They have no time for school. They do not get any training and

are thus prevented from obtaining a better-paying job. If this circle is not broken, these children will not escape from the situation in which their parents grew up. In a world that places more and more value on information and knowledge, uneducated people will be left farther and farther behind. Without quality education, it is more difficult to exercise human rights, such as participation in political and cultural life. Without schooling, children, young people and adults cannot become literate about the world they live in.

3 What is ICCO doing to help?

ICCO supports extensive education programmes in eleven countries. All together, the alliance members work in the following seventeen countries:

| Continents | Countries |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Africa & the Middle East | Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Southern Sudan, Uganda, Angola, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal |
| Asia, Eastern Europe & Oceania | India, Albania* , Indonesia (Papua), Thailand |
| Latin America & the Caribbean | Peru, Bolivia |

*Support to Albania-program will be gradually phased out by 2010.

The bulk of our work takes place in sub-Saharan Africa. Outside of Africa, emphasis is placed on education for marginalised peoples and education for work. The education programmes have five specific focal areas:

- **Literacy:** Improvement of the quality of education for young people and adults, so that they master basic skills such as reading and writing.
- **Education and work:** Tailoring the structure and content of education to the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to earn a living.
- **Education and hiv/aids:** Through education we are contributing to the prevention of hiv/aids, and we want to support plans to limit the negative effects of the pandemic on education.
- **Education in conflict or post-conflict areas:** We provide support for education in conflict and post-conflict areas and promote education as a means toward achieving human rights and peace.
- **Education of marginalised peoples (such as pastoralists in East Africa and indigenous peoples in the**

Andes): Promoting the right to relevant and quality education for marginalised peoples, who have to be involved in developing and maintaining their own education system.

At the end of 2007, ICCO was financing about 300 education projects, including nearly one hundred in Africa, seventy in Asia and Eastern Europe, and twenty in Latin America.

Seventy-three projects currently receive support through Impulsis – a joint bureau set up by Edukans, Kerk in Actie and ICCO for funding of private initiatives. Project activities include establishing alternative education, functional literacy programmes, curriculum revision, improvement of training programmes and working conditions for teachers, strengthening school management, distribution of school breakfasts or lunches, provision of access to modern technologies and support for knowledge exchange networks.



4 Education policy up to 2010

Two important international agreements are focusing on improving the state of education in the world: Education for All and the Millennium Goals (especially numbers 2 and 3). The goal of both agreements is to have all children attend school by 2015. With its education programme, ICCO strives to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Mission

Our education programme is an investment in the development of individuals and communities. Together with them, we want to achieve the following:

- Access to quality basic education for children who are still being left behind.
 - Increase in the number of children (especially girls) who complete primary school.
 - Improved relevance and quality of basic education, including literacy and professional training.
- Objectives:**
- Applicable solutions developed by local organisations to achieve relevant and quality education.
 - Strengthened claim making power of target groups (access to information as well as research, advocacy and lobbying skills).
 - Increased public support in the Netherlands for and involvement with education in developing countries, stimulated in part by opportunities to act offered to Dutch people who contribute to Education For All and the Millennium Goals.
 - Initiation of, participation in and support for national and international campaigns and lobbying activities aimed at achieving education for all.
 - Optimisation of a platform for development and dissemination of knowledge.



4.1 Strategy

The alliance has adopted the following three strategies:

- **Direct poverty alleviation:** increased access to relevant quality education through feasible, affordable and sustainable local solutions.
- **Civil society building:** strengthening the capacity of local actors to develop, implement and promote feasible, affordable and sustainable local solutions to create access to relevant and quality education.
- **Lobbying and advocacy:** initiation of and support for national and international campaigns and lobbying to translate the universal right to free, quality education into guaranteed access to education.

The objectives are realised through capacity development, lobbying, provision of financial and technical support and the creation of linkages between various stakeholders. The alliance links the education theme to other main programmes, such as democratisation and peace building, or economic programmes. Imple-

mentation takes place with and through local organisations, which play a main role as:

- Service providers that supplement government efforts with a rights-based approach;
- Innovators that develop new ideas and applications to enhance the quality of education;
- Informed critics and advocates that focus attention on the government's performance and lobby for free, accessible and quality education.

Programmatic cooperation

Education is an important responsibility of the government and society. Based on this principle, we work together with civil society organisations, NGOs, religiously inspired organisations and local governments on the improvement of education. In addition to the traditional partner organisations, we also approach donors and knowledge institutes. Through this multi-stakeholder approach we contribute to an efficient, well-coordinated effort and link existing local plans together with new initiatives.

Rights-based approach

We follow a rights-based approach. This means that we make people (organised in parents' councils, youth or women's groups, community boards) aware that they have rights, which they can petition their governments to respect. Formal and informal education is an essential tool for learning about human rights and for taking responsibility for personal and community development. The objective of the rights-based approach is also to make governments uphold the international treaties and conventions they have signed and to encourage them to improve education in their countries.

Local solutions

Programmes can only be successful if communities are allowed to identify problems and are supported in developing solutions. The alliance does not impose western models of education that do not fit the specific circumstances and developments of individual countries and regions.

Formal and alternative education

Basic education can be gained through the formal system or through alternative routes. The government should recognise non-formal education by means of quality controls, diploma recognition and provision of financial support. ICCO wants to contribute to an education system with a range of modalities (both formal and non-formal) that guarantees access to relevant, quality education to all children and young people, including those who are difficult to reach or who are outside of the mainstream culture. They need education that will provide them with the skills and competences required to develop their own potential and participate in a rapidly changing society.

Accountability

Investments in education are more fruitful if internal accountability mechanisms function well. Citizens, civil society organisations and the media play a key role in holding those responsible for education (national and local governments and others) accountable. Schools must also be accountable, not only to their financiers, but also to parents, students and the community.

Gender and hiv/aids

In accordance with Millennium Goal 3, equal opportunity for women and men is a cornerstone of our education programme. We are working to promote this idea, systematise good practices and lobby governments to pay more attention to the unequal relationship between women and men. Human rights and hiv/aids also receive extra attention in the education programme.

4.2 Capacity development

The capacities of direct stakeholders and the organisations that represent them are crucial for quality education. These stakeholders have to force the authorities to act and at the same time take action themselves. The development of their capacities is therefore integrated throughout the programme. Capacity development of local actors ensures sustainable education development and is therefore a core element of the programme. Good planning, monitoring and evaluation are essential for the improvement of one's own interventions. Monitoring and evaluation, studies, training and workshops all take place together with our partners. The financing of umbrella organisations, consortia and networks that lobby national governments as well as the organisations that fall under them, combined with the objective of strengthening institutional capacity and innovative projects has proven to be effective.





Knowledge networks

The alliance takes part in various knowledge networks in the North and the South, and especially between the two. It works together with the IS Academy and with specialised research institutes, such as IREWOC. ICCO is a member of the Knowledge Platform for Basic Education and takes part in its working groups on Education for work, Education in conflict areas, Education and hiv/aids and Quality of education. The objective of these working groups is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between Dutch NGOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and knowledge institutes.

4.3 Public support and lobbying

Politicians can make a great difference in ensuring that everyone goes to school. After all, the government creates the conditions for a good education system, makes demands on quality and monitors compliance with these

demands. It also gives civil society the space to fulfil its own responsibilities. Lobbying and advocacy make up an important part of our programmes because they are necessary to achieve breakthroughs at the political level. At local, national and international levels we support our target groups in promoting their interests. Governments are thus stimulated to fulfil their national and international commitments, work towards providing education for all and take into account the position and characteristics of marginalised groups. With respect to lobbying, we distinguish between the advocacy efforts of local organisations vis-a-vis their own governments and the lobbying of international donors and NGOs carried out by local organisations or northern alliance members. Our own lobbying and campaigning efforts are undertaken preferably in cooperation with others. Lobbying related to the theme of education and hiv/aids is carried out via Educaids.

4.4 Cooperation within other themes

The Operational Plan for 2007-2010 is divided into three main themes: Democratisation and Peace Building; Sustainable, Fair Economic Development and Access to Basic Services, the latter of which includes education. The education programme is also linked to the other themes where this is necessary and useful.

Access to Basic Services

In addition to education, this theme consists of food security, water, hiv/aids and health care. The education and hiv/aids themes are especially intertwined, because the epidemic has had a disastrous effect on education: many teachers are sick and frequently absent, and many others have already died. The children are therefore receiving fewer lessons than before. Young people are also vulnerable to contracting hiv and aids. Education and good counselling can help prevent new infections. The combination of education and hiv/aids prevention therefore offers many opportunities for the international community. ICCO is a co-founder of Educaids, a cooperative alliance of Christian organisations in the Netherlands (Edukans, Prisma, ICS, ADRA and ZZG) (www.educaids.nl) that want to focus more attention on the issue of education and hiv/aids in Africa.

Sustainable, Fair Economic Development

The goals in this main theme are to strengthen the position of workers, producers and rural households and promote socially responsible entrepreneurship. Within the education programme, ICCO pays special attention to 'Education for Work', which focuses on improving the economic position of underprivileged young people. This takes place through training programmes, courses, internships and employment counselling. Participants learn skills that they can use to improve their incomes, either in the formal or informal sector. This requires not only quality education but also a supportive environment that includes opportunities for profitable work (employment-directed education in itself does not create jobs), opportunities (such as credit) to support entrepreneurship and supportive laws and regulations.

Democratisation and Peace Building

The theme 'Education in conflict or post-conflict areas' is closely linked to this main theme. Wars are obstacles to education and development. In times of war only very few people can go to school or learn a profession. When peace does come, it is difficult for a population that has had little or no education to rebuild the

country's economic and social structures and sustain democracy. Education is a right, even in periods of crisis and reconstruction. It is an important tool for limiting the psychosocial damage that wars and conflicts cause and for processing traumas. It is also a way to focus attention on relevant themes, such as promoting healthy behaviour, safety, the environment, hiv/aids, peace, human rights and conflict resolution. Education contributes in a constructive way to the building of a nation: by promoting the transfer of skills, effective social relations, less polarisation (the us vs. them mentality), and the development of a culture of dialogue. In South Sudan and Uganda, ICCO strengthens civil society in order to contribute to the development of a strong education system.

ICCO also conducts research (in cooperation with the alliance partners) into relevant themes, such as the links between education and religion, education and the worst forms of child labour and education and accountability.



5 Financing and other programmes

To give an idea of the programmes ICCO supports, a few are described below.

Peru

Together with Edukans, ICCO supports a programme directed toward better education for the highland Indians of southern Peru. Although participation and involvement are highly valued in their own Quechua culture, these people have for centuries suffered from poverty, social inequality, marginalisation and discrimination. The Peruvian education system is designed to teach urban children and does not reflect the realities of these indigenous groups. There is a great demand for high-quality education that fits their culture and lifestyle, is relevant in the local context and conducted in their own language. Eight Peruvian partners in the Ruta del Sol programme promote education as the motor of rural development. Ruta del Sol is working in four regions in

the Peruvian highland: Cusco, Apurímac, Huancavelica and Ayacucho. Ruta del Sol believes that good education starts with community involvement. This is also reflected in the government's decentralisation process, which hinges on local participation. Leaders and committees are being trained so that they can push for better education. This joining of forces has also been effective in lobbying the Peruvian Ministry of Education. The Peruvian organisations participating in the education programme are CADEP, CESIP, EDUCA, Fe y Alegría, Foro Educativo, NER-A, TAREA and Red educativa del Cusco. The exploratory and planning stages of this programme have served as a model for similar processes in other countries.

Mali

ICCO is implementing a cohesive, multi-actor education programme in Mali. 70% of Malians above the age of 15 cannot read or write. ICCO directs its efforts to non-formal education, especially literacy training. The multi-actor programme was based on an analysis of the education sector and was established to achieve the following objectives:

- Expansion of literacy, reduction of the inequality between men and women and between regions (in Bamako, Segou, Mopti, Tombouctou).
- Improvement in the quality of non-formal education (especially literacy training).
- Strengthening of the implementation capacity of organisations that work on non-formal education at local and regional levels.

This involves counties, parents' councils, NGOs and governments. Strategies: Collective policy for advocacy and for holding the government accountable; linking various stakeholders in order to lobby more effectively and in-

crease quality; and financing and strengthening of literacy programmes. One of the partners involved in this programme is the Association des Femmes Educatrices du Mali (AFEM). AFEM organises literacy lessons in Bamako in areas where there is no formal education. Among the pupils are girls who come from the rural areas to work in the city as household help. Their salaries are low, they work hard and some are abused by their employers. AFEM helps them learn to read and write; but they are also taught that they have rights and how to gain access to health centres. The programme also provides information about health and HIV/AIDS. The lessons focus on income-earning skills so that the girls can support themselves. AFEM expects to reach 5580 girls in the period 2008-2010. In three other regions (Tombouctou, Mopti and Ségou) another 2160 pupils will be considered for 24 literacy classes per region. The various activities in the programme contribute to the goal of giving young people and adults equal access to quality education and improving adult education by 2015, especially for women.



South Sudan

In 2006 the Dutch Donor Forum was formed with the purpose of facilitating the implementation of a programme called "Support for Basic Education in Upper Nile State, South Sudan". The Forum included ICCO Alliance, Oxfam Novib and the Division for Education in Development of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme's underlying intention is to explore how different partners can collaborate and reinforce each others' work.

The programme aims at contributing to an inclusive, relevant, learner-friendly and empowering basic education system for Upper Nile State that also serves in support of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The expected end-results regard improved service delivery in basic education through accessibility for all with quality, gender equity and conflict transformation is built-in in the approach. Plans for 2008-2010 cover a.o. activities like construction of learning spaces, teacher training for teachers/head teachers,

training-of-trainers in literacy training, and involve government stakeholders as well as Civil Society Organisations in the development of quality education in UNS. Linking and learning (a.o. on girls education, parental support in education, trauma counselling, and education for mobile communities like pastoralists (making use of interactive radio) is an important component in the programme through building up a networking group within Southern Sudan and across the borders.

The programme was designed in close cooperation with national and state-level Ministries of Education Science and Technology and local actors and will work at the interface of local government and civil society. It is being implemented in close consultation with government authorities and in partnership with identified local, national and regional civil society organisations. The main focus in Upper Nile State is on the counties Maiwut and Naser.



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