

Project Title:
Social Inclusion in Education - Brazil

Project Description:

To implement educational policies for equality in gender, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation in the classroom, by sensitising teachers towards the issues of discrimination and encouraging a positive appreciation of diversity.

Learning Point:

The success of the project can be attributed to having approached it from the point of view of the participants (teachers), considering that they first have to deal with their own preconceptions (prejudice) before being able to deal with discrimination in the classroom.

Organisation:

British Council

Case Study

Approaches:

Advocacy, Exchange, Facilitation,

Themes:

Citizenship, governance and education
Social Justice and Diversity

Scenario:

During a State Visit by President Lula of Brazil to the UK (March 2006), a bilateral MoU in Education was signed by Education Minister Fernando Haddad and the then UK Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly. British Council Brazil was instrumental in agreeing the text of the MoU with GoB.

Areas singled out specifically for collaboration include, inter alia, social inclusion in education, school management and ELT, and all BC education projects will henceforward be informed by the priority areas set out in the MoU. The Social Inclusion in Education project is therefore a key manifestation of the collaboration.

The genesis of this project was an FCO-funded Gender and Development Small Grant Scheme project in the state of Paraíba in 1999, subsequently extended for two further years. In 2001, it was approved by DFID as a HE Link under BC management for another 3 years.

The SPM (Secretariat for Special Policies for Women of the Presidency of Brazil) saw the potential for widening the scope of the initiative to include race and sexual

orientation to help achieve one of President Lula's objectives: introducing issues related to diversity and social inclusion into classrooms and ultimately promoting policy changes in school curriculum. In November 2004 BC ran a seminar in partnership with MEC (Ministry for Education), SPM, SEPPIR (Secretariat for the Promotion of Equality in Race) and Ministry of Justice in Brazil, to share and discuss experience in Brazil and in the UK and to design a new project to take these ideas forward.

Program Activity:

- In November 2005, BC ran a seminar in Brasilia for teachers and Secretaries from 6 municipalities in the North East to introduce the project and pilot the course. Consultants from the UK were Sarah Whitelaw (Head of the Gender and Education Department, University of Leeds) and Heidi Sofia Mirza (Centre for Racial Equality Studies - Middlessex University).
- In February 2006, we commissioned CLAM/UERJ (Latin American Centre for Sexuality and Human Rights, at State University of Rio de Janeiro), to develop course content; a decision was taken to introduce a distance education element to promote greater project reach.
- In March 2006, 50 course tutors were selected to deliver modular training which was enthusiastically received by participants. A helpline was established for teachers.
- The project was then presented by Ricardo Henriques, Secretary for SECAD (Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity, from the Ministry for Education), the Minister for Women's Affairs Nilcéa Freire, the Minister for Race Matilde Ribeiro and the Director British Council Recife at the National World Education Forum, which took place in Nova Iguaçu, state of Rio de Janeiro. The audience of 200 professionals came from all over the Americas.
- Because of the interest in the project at the highest levels of government, a second MoU was signed in the presence of President Lula on 24th May, 2006 between the BC, the 3 Ministries involved, the 6 Governors and 6 Mayors of the municipalities.
- The pilot course for 1,200 teachers working with 12-14 year took place from 1st May to 30th September, 2006. It was both face-to-face and on-line (DE), delivered with the collaboration of SEED (Secretariat for Distance Education/MEC). An innovative feature of the course is the involvement of children's families, working with social workers, psychologists, and educators, to promote the deconstruction of prejudice and discrimination.
- The Course was evaluated in November, by 120 participants of the Course, including teachers, trainers and government officials. It was considered a success, and the Government has decided to roll it out to 30,000 teachers (in-service training), as well as turning it into a 360 hour specialization Course for teacher trainers at the Federal Universities.

The Course/Project was presented at the Institute of Education, London and at the Gender and Education Association's International Conference, in Dublin Ireland, in March 2007.

Analysis:

The Course was undertaken by 1052 teachers from 6 municipalities in Brazil: Salvador (BA), Maringá (PR), Porto Velho (RO), Dourados (MT), Niteroi (RJ) and Nova Iguaçu (RJ).

Despite a few 'teething' problems, the Course was considered a great success. There were altogether only 18% drop-outs (the acceptable average of drop-outs in an on-line course is considered by Brazilian parameters to be 35%). Each participant received a mark, judged by their participation in the virtual forum, their writing up of diaries, and projects they produced at the end of the course, with suggestions for classroom activities.

The Brazilian Government considered this one of their greatest successes re diversity during President Lula's first term, and has recommended the roll-out to teachers across the country in 2007. President Lula continues to consider it a priority and will guarantee its continuation. Apart from the innovation of the course content, it has also been considered a model for other DE Courses.

Parallel to the DE Course, which works with teachers already in the classroom (in-service training), another important achievement is that the Ministry for Education has transformed the content into a 360 hour specialisation course, offered as part of the official syllabus in all Federal Universities across the country, in the teacher training courses. The project has influenced public policies and education reform.

Sources and Links:

Clam website

<http://www.clam.org.br/publique/cgi/cgilua.exe/sys/start.htm?sid=49>

British Council website

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/br/brasil-education-partnership-gender-diversity.htm>

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