

**Education Community of Practice, Second Resource Group Meeting
March 15th 2007
New Delhi, India**

The Education (ED) Community of Practice (CoP) held its second Resource Group (RG) meeting to plan the Community's course of action for the year. Prof Mungekar, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India chaired the meeting. The goal of the meeting was to 1) review the Community's performance 2) clarify Solution Exchange (SE) structures, mechanism and modalities (e-discussions, actions groups, and e-consultations), and 3) decide on the Community's priorities.

Mr. Amit Kaushik, Resource Person and Moderator of the Education Community outlined the agenda of the meeting. He was followed by Mr. Steve Glovinsky, Advisor, Solution Exchange, who briefed the members about the role of the Resource Group in taking the agenda of the ED Community forward. He indicated that the RG serves as the centre of the Community, a voluntary network serving as its steering group. As "development influencers", he stated that members of the RG use the CRs as a strategic entry point to decide what the next step is and then move forward.

Along with the Query-CR format, he explained that SE has additional services like 1) e-discussions, 2) action groups, and 3) e-consultations which require a convener, someone whose job it is to take the issue forward and do something with it, either resulting in a publication, action research pilot, strategy or proposal, and feedback for consideration.

Dr Minja Yang, UNESCO Representative and Director, UNESCO New Delhi Office then briefed the group about SE and outlined some of the challenges of education in India. She stated that SE could be an effective means of discussion and dissemination since India is large, and experiences are diverse in every corner of the country. Dr Yang expressed the strong view that the ED Community needs to go beyond the scope of intellectuals and reach people at the grassroots, and stated that it would be her endeavour to link UNESCO's regular activities, including its support to teacher education, to SE.

Prof Bhalchandra Mungekar, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India delivered the keynote address. He stated that he had been a part of the Visioning Workshop at Agra in 2005 and saw the potential of SE in improving the delivery of education. Prof Mungekar touched upon various issues such as learning levels, one-teacher schools, teacher absenteeism, need for separate schools for girls, teacher training and the gender gap. He felt that SE could serve as a common learning process and stressed the importance of UNESCO in provoking people to think and value the objectives of Education for All (EFA).

Prof R Govinda of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration provided an outline of some of the priority issues in Education for consideration of the Community. Referring to CREATE's three zones of exclusion namely, lack of initial access to schools, drop-outs and low levels of learning in schools, Prof Govinda felt that SE had enabled debate on contemporary issues, policy and information. He suggested that it was now time for SE to go down to the field and take a pro-active approach.

Discussion of Future Plans and Course of Action

Participants discussed the list of topics, offering their opinions and suggestions. Although conveners for action projects were not immediately identified, some of the issues that were highlighted included the following:

- The many definitions of quality, which pose problems for enforcement
- Need to reiterate the non-negotiables such as caste-based discrimination, exclusion, etc
- Infrastructure and other inputs are secondary to a good schooling experience
- The associated costs of upper primary schooling which is not free, and needs greater support
- Poor salaries of teachers in the country
- Inadequacies of teacher training

With regard to SE and its future course of action, members suggested:

- Need to facilitate an online chat with eminent development practitioners in the field
- Roping in IIT graduates, students from IIM, CRC co-ordinators, etc.
- Need for greater coverage of SE in the East and the North East
- Greater dissemination of the Consolidated Replies
- Backing up discussions with documents, evidence, field studies etc.
- Larger face-to-face meeting of the members of the Community

Members of the Group also agreed that some of them would get back to the Resource Team with suggestions for projects that could be taken up in the near future.

List of Participants

Dr B L Mungekar, (Chair) Member, Planning Commission, Government of India.

Dr Minja Yang, UNESCO Representative and Director, New Delhi, India.

Mr Samphe Lhalungpa, Chief, Education Section, UNICEF, New Delhi

Dr Madhav Chavan, Director Programmes, Pratham India Education Initiative, Bombay.

Prof R Govinda, Senior Fellow, National University of Educational Planning & Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi.

Dr Nalini Juneja, Fellow, National University of Educational Planning & Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi.

Arun Kapur, Director, Vasant Valley School, New Delhi.

Dr Shantha Sinha, Secretary, MV Foundation, Hyderabad.

Dr Shabnam Sinha, Programme Officer (Education), IL & FS Education Technology, Mumbai.

Ms Anjali Noronha, Senior Fellow, Eklavya, Bhopal.

Ms Vimala Ramachandran, Education Resource Unit, New Delhi

Ms Annie Koshi, Principal, St Mary's School, New Delhi.

Ms Nishi Misra, Principal, Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar.

Mr Partha Roy, Former Deputy Director (Programmes), CINI-ASHA, Kolkata.

Mr Steve Glovinsky, Adviser, Solution Exchange, UN Country Team in India, New Delhi

Mr Amit Kaushik, Resource Person & Moderator, Solution Exchange, UNESCO, New Delhi

Ms Sagarika Gnanaolivu, Research Associate, UNESCO, New Delhi

Ms Gitanjali Sah, Research Associate, ICT for Development Community, Solution Exchange, UNESCO, New Delhi

Ms Rituu B Nanda, Research Associate, AIDS Community, UNAIDS, New Delhi

Ms Komal Khanna, Business Development Specialist, Solution Exchange, UNDP, New Delhi