



Photo: Silvia Voser

WORKING AREA EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The interventions in the working area “Education and Culture” aim at contributing to empowerment and sustainable development through quality education and cultural activities. To serve this end, Helvetas focuses on vocational skills development, basic education and artistic work and exchange, mainly for young people and children.

In our view, it is essential to link basic education with vocational skills. Skills training should be practice and demand oriented, directly leading to income. In 2009, the working area comprised 28 projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Educational aspects, however, are included in all Helvetas projects.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a key factor for empowerment and improved access to (self-) employment. One out of seven of the young people is without employment (UNESCO, 2010). Especially challenging is the fact that the number of young job entrants is even expected to grow in the coming years. Ensuring that young people have access to a high-quality professional education is an indispensable element of poverty eradication and reduces violence and crime by young people.

Most developing regions have made progress towards universal primary education, but some 72 million children are still out of school (UNESCO, 2010). Therefore, the fulfilment of the MDG 2, "Achieve universal primary education", is crucial. Enrolment, however, is only half the battle. Dropping out and a generally poor quality education mean that many of those who do attend school fail to obtain the skills needed. It is estimated that about 759 million adults are illiterate (UNESCO, 2010). These figures stand as major barriers to eliminating poverty and attaining sustainable development.

INTERVENTION AREAS

Helvetas wants to contribute to empowerment and economic and social development through quality education and artistic work. Therefore, it focuses on the following intervention areas:

- **Basic education**
- **Vocational skills development**
- **Artistic work and exchange**

It appears essential to link basic education with vocational skills, e.g. by including literacy and numeracy as elements in vocational trainings, wherever feasible. Furthermore, it is important to link skills training with the labour market, e.g. with needs-based trainings and placement efforts.

BASIC EDUCATION

Helvetas focuses on the basic learning needs of any person, be it children or adults. Therefore, its interventions can focus on primary and secondary level as well as on adult education:

- **Quality enhancement of basic education**
 - Teacher education & training
 - Support in school administration and capacity building
 - Participatory curriculum development
 - Modern pedagogical and didactical approaches
- **Increased access to basic education**
 - Literacy, numeracy training (as project component)
- **Improvement of national education systems**



Teacher Training Programme (Tanzania), supporting the Tanzanian Teacher Union in order to enhance the teaching quality. The aim is to further educate two expert teachers in each primary school who are training their fellow teachers. Until 2009, almost 2000 teachers have been trained.

Support to Teacher Education (STEP, Bhutan): The major challenge basic education was faced with was the critical shortage of teachers. Therefore, assistance in teacher education was a priority of the Swiss support (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Helvetas). It covered construction of schools and teacher education facilities and support to improve the teaching quality and the capacities of the education administration. Today, almost 90% of all children in Bhutan go to school and enjoy a quality education.

Basic education

Increased availability and quality

Vocational skills development

Increased availability and quality

Artistic work and exchange

Empowerment
Income generation
Sustainable economic and social development

VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

For people in rural areas, access to skills trainings is often low, but highly important in order to acquire practical competencies to perform an occupation. Vocational skills development is usually a modular, competency-based approach, preparing people for the formal and informal sector, the latter being of increasing importance. Interventions should be highly demand and practice oriented, leading to income generation and (self-) employment. Overall, the main aims are:

- **The enhancement of training possibilities** leading to (self-) employment
- **The quality improvement of trainings:** modularization, participatory curriculum development, capacity building in school administration, innovative approaches (e.g. mobile trainings in villages, outcome financing), access to information and communication technologies
- **The improvement of national vocational education systems,** wherever feasible. In several partner countries, Helvetas has been invited by the government to participate in the configuration of education systems.

Photo: K.Schneider



Agricultural Training (FORJA, Guatemala), offering vocational training for young farmers in order to carry out their own business. FORJA covers an apprenticeship on a farm, combined with classes at the training centre, and the implementation of a business project with a microcredit.

Employment for Youth (EYF, Nepal), funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the UK Department for International Cooperation, offers mobile, short-term training in more than 20 trades. It aims at reducing youth unemployment and is strongly practice and labour market oriented. Overall, more than 15'000 people were trained between 2003 and 2008. 85% are gainfully (self-) employed after training.

Tourism Skills Training in Rural Areas (T-STAR, Kyrgyzstan): The project supports the skills development of hotel staff in the main tourism regions of Kyrgyzstan and is funded by LED. It has the aim to generate income for qualified hotel personnel in rural areas and therefore to contribute to the economic development in the region.

ARTISTIC WORK AND EXCHANGE

Support of artistic work and exchange shall promote

- **Awareness-building,** contributing to civic education and socio-political changes
- **Income generation:** Helvetas supports artists to make use of market potentials for arts and handicrafts.
- **Artistic exchange, diversity of cultural expressions**



Photo: B. Kruspan

Cultural Activities Project (CAP, Mozambique), funded by Merry Trust, aims to strengthen the dignity, self-confidence and -reliance by supporting artistic expression. The interventions are based on initiatives of young artists. It promotes the establishment of a cultural platform to bring artists, private sector and government together.

FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE & CHILDREN

Helvetas focuses on socially and economically disadvantaged people in developing and transition countries. Special attention is directed to an equal inclusion of men and women. In projects in education and culture, Helvetas generally collaborates with governmental and private service providers, education authorities, schools, NGOs and enterprises. Young people, in order to get a professional education, children, in order to profit from a quality basic education, and educators, trainers and artists shall mainly profit.

SUSTAINABILITY – A KEY ISSUE

Wherever possible, Helvetas works through local partners and promotes local knowledge. Generally, Helvetas avoids taking over the functions of local actors and the government. An important aim is also to achieve financial sustainability. In most cases, the target group, being disadvantaged people, is not able to pay for the total training costs. Therefore, education offers can not be self-financed by the clients, but it is important to achieve a broad financing (by the private sector, government and public), wherever feasible, resulting in a broader ownership. Finally, Helvetas is very conscious about the long-term perspective needed for changes in education systems.



Photo: Silvia Voser

Radhika Maka, a mother of two girls, took part in the Advanced Electronics Training, offered by the NGO SKILL and supported by Helvetas, in 2004. The 27 year old woman grew up on a farm in Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu valley. Before she got married, her parents rented a room of their house to an electronics technician and the young woman became fascinated by the work he was doing. She loved watching him repair broken TVs. She says:

“ When I heard about the Electronics Training from my friends it did not take me long to decide that I wanted to participate in the four-month training. Now I run an electronics repair and maintenance shop in Bhaktapur with my husband who was trained by SKILL as an electrician. ”

CONTACT

For more information please contact education@helvetas.org or consult the website www.helvetas.org. The full version of the Helvetas Strategy 2008 – 2012 of the Working Area Education & Culture is available at http://www.helvetas.org/wEnglish/competencies/working_area_strategies/resources.asp?navid=12

Literature: Unesco (2010). Education for All. Global Monitoring report.