

Children, disabilities and well-being: Preliminary research in New Delhi, India

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Purpose of the Preliminary Research

From August 29 to September 14 2008, Alexandre Apsan Frediani (DPU) and Jean Francois Trani (Leonard Cheshire) were in New Delhi coordinating a workshop together with the NGO Project WHY, that provides after-school classes to children from low income neighborhoods and support for children with disabilities. The objective of the workshop was to run a preliminary research on the well-being of children involved in Project WHY with the aim to test a series of participatory research tools and identify areas for further research. Apart from the academic interest, we also hoped to contribute to the work of Project WHY.



Picture 1: Workshop Participants



Picture 2: Card Game

Methods

Together with workshop participants, it was devised four activities which were implemented during the workshop: SWOT analysis with staff and managers of Project WHY; and photo exercise, card game and snake game with the children. There were three SWOT sessions with teachers and managers of Project WHY, where a lot of progress was made on the communication among staff members of the NGO. Twenty-six children participated in the photo exercise. The pictures revealed the intimate world of children. Then, group activities facilitated by a card and snake game addressed the ways in which Project WHY impacted on children's well-being.

Conclusions

On the one hand, the tools were effective in revealing impacts of Project WHY on the well-being of children. On the other hand, it was quite difficult to generate theoretical discussions. Nevertheless, there were interesting reflections emerging from practice, and it was identified areas that needed to be investigated further. The experience allowed tools to be refined while unfolding the challenges and limitations of applying such methods. At the moment a research proposal among the two departments is been finalized on the role of community based organizations in supporting people with disabilities in squatter settlements in India, South Africa and Brazil.



Picture 3: Photo mapping