Boosting professional reflection and change in pre-schools in central Vietnam

Blog

Early childhood education

Nomad, minority and migrant education

Process-oriented child monitoring as a catalyst for teacher professional development

Quality teachers play the most important role in improving children’s learning outcomes. VVOB – education for development works alongside teachers in ethnically diverse districts in Vietnam to make sure every child benefits from quality education.

Well-being and involvement of all children

This is Phuong. Phuong is a teacher in a pre-school in Nam Giang, a district in Quang Nam province in the central part of Vietnam. It is an area with many ethnic minorities. Children in this area experience many barriers to learning and participation at school. Twice a year, Phuong applies process-oriented child monitoring in her classroom.

She observes signs of well-being and involvement in her learners. This enables her to estimate their level of participation and learning. “Who is doing well? Who is at risk of not learning?” are just a few questions she asks herself.

Phuong identifies the main barriers to learning and participation experienced by the children in her class with low levels of involvement and/or well-being. Phuong reflects about actions she can undertake to mitigate these barriers to learning. By doing so, she increases equity and care in her classroom.

Enabling school environment

Phuong learned these skills from Hoa. Hoa is a member of a core group consisting of representatives from the provincial and district education department and selected teachers and school leaders. Hoa and her colleagues train teachers like Phuong in process-oriented child monitoring among other things.
The professional development does not stop after the training. Hoa and her team visit schools and coach teachers on the practical implementation of the trainings in the classroom. Hoa also helps school leaders to think of how they can best support teachers to apply these new approaches. Hoa brings teachers together to jointly reflect on their classroom observations and subsequent actions. She is their companion on this journey of intensive learning.

**Partnership for capacity development**

Hoa and her team – the core group – are part of VVOB’s programme that seeks to overcome barriers to learning in central Vietnam by developing teachers’ capacities.

The core group first learns more about process-oriented monitoring and action points to improve well-being and involvement of all children. They then took a closer look at more specific barriers to learning, such as barriers related to gender, environment and ethnic diversity.

Secondly, the core group members look at how they can make teacher professional development more effective, and how it can be more school-based.

**Effective teacher professional development system**

“How can partners improve their capacity development of teachers?” is a central question in VVOB’s work. Process-oriented child monitoring is a catalyst for developing professional reflective practice to better cater to the needs of all children and widening the scope of the learning opportunities offered to all (Korthagen, 2001). When teachers share their questions, evidence and thinking with each other, they build collaborative expertise (Hattie, 2015). Developing a reflective practice and building collaborative expertise can help teachers to better cater to the needs of all children.

This process requires encouragement and nurturing by actors other than teachers alone. School leaders and education officers play a crucial role in recognising expertise and supporting collaborative reflective learning within and between schools.

As part of the capacity development trajectory offered by VVOB in Vietnam, education officers engage in deep reflection on the effectiveness of their teacher professional development system and take steps to improve it. Encouraged by the experiences of Phuong and Hoa, VVOB and partners will continue to facilitate systemic change.

**Focusing on equitable access**, Vietnam managed to achieve high preschool participation, with over 92% of 3-to-5-year-old children enrolled in preschool. However, inequality in developmental outcomes remains a concern, especially for disadvantaged ethnic groups.

VVOB – education for development strengthens education systems worldwide. Quality education is key to achieving a more equitable world for all.

VVOB Vietnam and the Ministry of Education of Vietnam have joined forces to improve the performance and effectiveness of preschool teachers in disadvantaged, ethnically diverse districts in three central provinces (Quang Nam, Quang Ngai and Kon Tum) in its BaMi programme.