Basic Education
A Vision for the 21st Century

Innocenti Global Seminar
Summary Report

UNICEF International Child Development Centre
Spedale degli Innocenti
Florence, Italy

Prepared by
Maggie Black
Basic Education
A Vision for the 21st Century

Innocenti Global Seminar
Summary Report

UNICEF International Child Development Centre
Spedale degli Innocenti
Florence, Italy

Prepared by
Maggie Black

UNICEF
United Nations Children's Fund
INNOCENTI GLOBAL SEMINAR

BASIC EDUCATION
A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

25 October - 3 November 1998
Florence, Italy

SUMMARY REPORT

UNICEF International Child Development Centre
Spedale degli Innocenti
Florence, Italy

Prepared by Maggie Black
**Introduction: A vision for the 21st century**

- The move to rights-based programming  
- The unique character of the Seminar  
- Seminar objectives  
- Seminar activities  
- Development of 'the vision'  
- Emphasis on learning and on time frames

**Part I: Setting the stage**

1. Global trends  
2. Regional trends  
3. Education as a right  
4. The participation of children

**Part II: The promotion of learning: how, what and to whom?**

1. Equity of access and opportunity to achieve  
2. Learning to learn, and to live  
3. The child-friendly learning environment  
4. Financing and managing resources for learning  
5. Early childhood care for development  
6. Adolescents: the case for inclusion

**Part III: The future**

- UNICEF's vision of Basic Education for the 21st century  
- HQ and Regional follow-up  
- In conclusion

**Annexes**

- Annex 1 Seminar Programme  
- Annex 2 Field Visits  
- Annex 3 Participants List
INTRODUCTION: A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

March 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), was held in Jomtien, Thailand. ‘Jomtien’, as the Conference subsequently came to be known, constitutes the landmark moment at which governments of the international community accepted the principle that basic education is critical to human development – for the individual, the community and the nation. The Conference unanimously adopted the World Declaration and Framework of Action to meet the basic learning needs of every child, and adult, and launched a world-wide initiative to achieve this goal.

Since Jomtien, a number of other international forums have provided opportunity for re-commitment to the EFA vision: a world in which everyone is equipped with a basic package of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and has access to learning throughout life, starting in early childhood, and continuing through adolescence and adulthood. Among these occasions were the 1990 World Summit for Children (WSC), which focused on literacy, access to primary schooling and rates of school completion by the year 2000; and the 1995 World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), which reiterated the need for universal and equitable access to quality education as an essential ingredient in the eradication of poverty.

UNICEF, alongside the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank, was a major force behind what could be called the jomtien process: the development of an international vision of basic education, the construction of a wide political consensus around it, and subsequent work with governments and other partners to develop and implement policies in line with their commitments. Since the start of the 1990s, UNICEF has tailored its own programmatic activities in education to support EFA goals for all, and has played an important role in encouraging support for the formulation of national plans of action for EFA and post-Jomtien activities.

At Jomtien, the core of basic education was seen as primary schooling equivalent for all children, including girls, and emphasizing girls’ education. The place of new ways of thinking about primary education was emphasized, and the importance of extending primary education to the school-aged children. In 1996, a UNICEF intervention was launched to address this issue.

However, the review also emphasized the need to invest in ‘second chance’ opportunities for primary school children and adults, and the importance of extending primary education to the school-aged children. In 1996, a UNICEF policy review strategy, ‘Strategies for Basic Education’, recognized its commitment to primary education as the most important component of basic education. To achieve the primary school and primary school alternative learning environments.

Move to rights-based programming

Around the mid-1990s, UNICEF has been progressively adopting an approach to its work based on a human rights rationale, rather than the more traditional needs-based rationale that has dominated much planning thinking since the 1960s. This ideological shift stems mainly from the universal ratification of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which itself reflects the greater attention being given – publically and officially – to rights and democratization issues in general. The exceptionally widespread and rapid acceptance of the CRC has led UNICEF to perceive as its central role the task of helping States Parties fulfill the obligations to children to which they have committed themselves under this international treaty, through traditional programmes and service delivery, as well as through advocacy, social mobilization, capacity building, and legislative change.

The CRC establishes education as a right (Article 28), and States have an obligation to enable children to fulfill that right. There is no pecking order for rights fulfillment: rights are indivisible and equal so that no superior urgency can be claimed to fulfill one right rather than another. Therefore, States Parties to the Convention should take steps to fulfill all children’s rights to education, even though they may be short of resources to do so. National policies which weigh basic education for children in a balance against other social and economic development policies and decide priorities purely on the basis of scarcity and practicality basis are inconsistent with a treaty commitment to children’s rights. UNICEF therefore, sees a need to help states with few resources and poor educational systems to deal with this conundrum in the most effective ways.

However, as mentioned, there are many practical implications of accepting the fulfillment of child rights as the underlying rationale for all its work, including its educational activities. These are still being worked through within UNICEF, and among its many governmental and non-governmental partners and the human rights community.

Nine years have passed since the World Declaration on Education for All was issued at Jomtien, since the World Summit for Children reiterated key EFA goals, and since the CRC entered into international law. Some of the specific goals – universal access to primary school, completion of primary education by 80 per cent of children, reduction of illiteracy by 50 per cent – were originally set to be met by the year 2000. However, despite the considerable efforts made by some governments to pursue EFA, results have been disappointing. Primary school enrolment has risen slightly overall, but drop-out and repetition rates remain high, as do the numbers of those who ‘complete’ the primary cycle without becoming literate; in addition, disparity between the attendance and completion rates of girls and boys remains an enormous problem. Basic education for out-of-school youth has been seriously neglected, and early childhood as a time for organized learning as opposed to unstructured care has received relatively little attention.

As the end of the decade – and century – approaches, UNICEF is deeply involved in a process of reviewing the world-wide situation of children and in its own organizational strengths, and determining what should be the focus of its work beyond the year 2000. This exercise, known as the ‘Tarrytown’ process, has involved detailed self-examination in all UNICEF’s programming areas, including basic education and early childhood care. Governmental commitments to children made at Conferences, Summits or in treaties tend to slip from the political visibility as time goes by, however hard UNICEF and others may try to bring them back into regional or country focus by assessments of progress and other kinds of publicized reminder. Therefore, the main challenge facing UNICEF as the next century dawns will be to re-activate energy and political will behind the fulfillment of unachieved objectives at the heart of the children’s cause – of which Education for All is surely one of the most important.

Against this background, the ninth Innocenti Global Seminar took as
its theme: Basic Education: A Vision for the 21st Century. The Seminar was intended to address the urgent need for improved strategies to achieve EFA, and in addition Seminar deliberations and recommendations were expected to contribute directly to UNICEF's broader Vision for the 21st Century in which basic education will receive a strong emphasis.

The unique character of the Seminar
This was the first time that this UNICEF learning forum, hosted annually by the UNICEF International Child Development Centre (ICDC) in Florence, has addressed a subject of such vast scope, covering the full range of concerns of an entire UNICEF programming sector. More often, the Global Seminar has been seen as an opportunity to open up debate and gain knowledge in a frontier area of UNICEF concern on which little explicit policy yet exists, usually one which lends itself to cross-disciplinary consideration.

The fact that the Seminar was addressing a mainstream UNICEF programming area created a special set of dynamics: notably a much closer relationship between the Seminar outcome and the UNICEF policy development process. As was pointed out by Sheldon Slaefer, UNICEF's Chief of Education, its deliberations were taking place at a time when a number of pertinent organizational and extra-organizational activities were in train. As well as the Tarrytown process, UNICEF was also developing a new Medium-Term Plan; and the 1999 State of the World's Children Report, to be published in December, would be on 'The Education Revolution'. Also underway was the EFA Assessment exercise leading up to 'Jomtien II' scheduled for 2000, in Brazil.

The Seminar also felt keenly the weight of expectation from UNICEF headquarters that whatever educational Vision for the 21st Century it dared to propose should be practical and widely applicable within the framework of organizational priorities now being determined.

Innocenti Global Seminars traditionally include participants from outside UNICEF – from academia and partnerships bodies – as well as from UNICEF Field Offices and Headquarters. Of the 44 individuals taking part on this occasion, one-quarter were external; but as a group, there was a much greater degree of homogeneity in both professional discipline and in professional level than has usually been the case. This was mainly because UNICEF today has quite a large cadre of educational advisers and programme staff at country, regional and HQ levels, and these made up the majority of participants.

Many of the external participants and some resource persons were also so close to UNICEF as to be able to assume a quasi UNICEF persona for the Seminar duration. Given the focus on organizational policy priorities, this was a great advantage for the Seminar as a whole.

Seminar objectives
Certain objectives were established for the Seminar in advance:

- to examine past performance in education on the basis of lessons learnt and to use the findings to sharpen and reinforce UNICEF's and other key actors' focus and efforts in education, including re-orienting priorities and strategies;
- to identify new challenges facing UNICEF and its partners as they enter the 21st century and consider how these influence what these organizations should do in education. This will include attention to new knowledge and practical experience in such areas as learning and with regard to programming from a rights-based perspective;
- to develop an improved understanding of policies, programmes, strategies, and work of UNICEF and other agencies and organizations concerned with children's education;
- to make recommendations and suggest guidance to UNICEF and its partners for policy and programme work at country, regional, and global levels for ensuring the right of all children to quality education and positive learning while they are engaged in educational activities.

The importance with which this latter objective was viewed by UNICEF was underlined by a message sent to the participants by Caro Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director. Recalling that millions of children still lack access to even the most basic form of education, she stated: 'In these final days of the 20th century, we must all commit ourselves to moving forward on our promises to children, including the right of every child to basic education. We need to develop practical policies, programmes and strategies for children's education, both in and out of schools.'

In another message to the Seminar, Sadig Rasheed, Director of the UNICEF Programme Division, commented: 'This is an opportunity for us to reflect strategically on this crucial and challenging area of our work. A time when we are searching in earnest for a unique and impactful role for UNICEF in the area of education, the Seminar should carefully examine our current approaches, examine thoughtfully what worked, and make suggestions on the way forward for UNICEF's programmes and initiatives in this important area.'

Seminar activities
However committed participants might be to the Seminar objectives, save a half working days (of a total of nine days in Florence) is a very short time in which to review experiences from a wide range of different setting around the world in such a vast programming area, and come up with concrete suggestions, globally applicable, for a new way forward. The balance between covering the ground and charting the future was difficult to strike.

As often happens at Innocenti Seminars, there was some difference of view between those who would have liked to have spent more time covering the ground, deepening their existing knowledge, learning about specific case histories and absorbing 'lessons learned', and those who would have liked to have jumped almost on Day 1 to developing the 'new vision'. But a Seminar is not a Seminar unless a majority of the time is devoted to covering the ground. If the existing – admittedly high – knowledge base of the participants had not been added to, any output would have been uniform by the dynamic process of concentrated, collective, in-depth exploration of issues which is what an Innocenti Seminar is primarily about.

No Innocenti Seminar is free of constant debate about its own conduct and scheduling. Some participants queried the value of spending time on field visits to local educational projects as was done on the morning of Day 4. However, acquaintances with the reality of children in school or pre-school, of teaching and learning problems, and of the difficulties of helping youth with special needs, turned out to be a salutary experience. Even when children and their carers are living in a country very different educational resources and capacities from those in the developing world, there are universal characteristics in both problems and response. Seminar have a tendency to become overly theoretical, which field visits help to offset, as well as providing a glimpse into child-related educational issues and the Seminar's host society.

Apart from the morning spent outside, the methodology consisted of presentations on global trends and substantive themes; case studies to provide a basis for analysis of innovations and lessons learned; and group discussions to allow an open dialogue on emerging issues and strategies and approaches. Because of the shortage of time, some subjects which would normally have been handled in plenary were run in parallel sessions with participants split into two or more groups. Conclusions were reported back to plenary, and as much cross-fertilisation as possible between topics was attempted. In this way, a huge amount of territory was covered.

The first two days of the Seminar were occupied with the examination of global and regional trends: specifically, the post-Jomtien and post-CRI...
fluences, and their implications for a new UNICEF vision for basic education based on fulfillment of children's rights as its fundamental rationale. Work was assisted by the paper specially prepared for the Seminar by vid W. Chapman: Educate the Children: Shaping the UNICEF action Agenda into the 21st Century. Chapman provided a bird's-eye view of UNICEF's historical engagement with education, analyzing the particular advantages offered by UNICEF's programmatic approach and centralized organizational structure and noting that UNICEF has long been a significant backers of innovative and alternative approaches in education. However, Chapman's main question: 'After Universal Primary Education, where next?' was met with a resounding: 'Hold on: We're not over yet!'

The following two days of the Seminar were spent on key issues of quality of education — how schools are failing children in meeting their learning needs and what can be done to improve the 'learning environment' and widen access to education, especially for excluded or neglected children. The fifth and sixth days were spent on other core-cutting issues: personal and psychological development throughout the life cycle, from early childhood through adolescence; and key management and reform issues: affordability and financing, decentralization; and educational innovation including via technology and social mobilization.

**Development of the vision**

At a session on 'partnerships for basic education', this left the following two days for the development of the vision. A participatory exercise was developed by the Seminar organizers that so every person had a chance, first, to help identify priority areas to be tackled under the vision; then to suggest content for each area. The priority areas identified were:

- Quality of opportunity
- Essential knowledge and skills
- Learning environments and quality
- Managing and managing resources

Armstrong with the suggestions provided under each heading, six self-styled groups of participants then spent nearly 24 hours fleshing out prospects to present to the Seminar as a whole. A smaller group developed the vision for the vision.

Superficially, any distilled or synthesized 'vision' may read to non-participants as if it could have been written without the concentrated, collective, and in-depth exploration which the previous six days of Seminar input provided. In fact, each word within it has arrived there as part of a mess of several thousand words being aired, exchanged, and put under scrutiny of discerning and argumentative peers. Inevitably, a process of ejection and compromise accompanies such an exercise. Thus the richness of a product is to be found not only in whatever inspirational qualities it contains in the text after several rounds of verbal diplomacy, but in the anxiety of its germination and birth. Participation in the process of articulating such a 'vision' equips all who take part with new ideas to feed into programmes, advocacy campaigns, and policy-making exercises.

The participants in the seminar came up with the following text, to be used as a contribution to UNICEF's vision statement on basic education (a full version is provided in Part III):

**CEF commits itself to the following vision:**

- Children will achieve their right to education, meet their basic learning needs, realize their full potential, and participate meaningfully in it. This will be achieved through access to high-quality, child-friendly learning environments, including:
  - Comprehensive early childhood care
  - Quality primary schools and equivalent education programmes
  - Expanded opportunities for adolescent education, participation, and development
  - Supportive families and communities that enable children to acquire a quality basic education.

In fulfilling this commitment, UNICEF will work within a multi-sectoral framework and undertake long-term, sustained action to accommodate specific cultural, area and country realities.

**Emphasis on learning and on time-frames**

Two features of this 'vision' which emerged strongly from the Seminar deserve special mention. One is the emphasis on learning, rather than on teaching or on education. The concern for progress in children's learning to be the gauge of any educational system's effectiveness — as opposed to their school attendance record or other proxy indicator — is an important re-direction in thinking. Positive as this change may be, it has had an unfortunate effect on the language of discourse. Rarely did participants talk of 'schools'; instead they talked about 'learning environments'. Rarely did they talk about 'literacy and numeracy'; instead, they talked about 'learning tools'. Verbal innovation can be a useful pointer to new thinking; but it can also render familiar concepts obscure. It sometimes appeared that participants looked upon the use of tried educational tools in simple formulations as an anathema for which they feared the same fate as Savonarola — a Florentine fundamentalist monk and self-styled educationalist burnt at the stake in 1498.

The other consistent theme raised especially by participants whose work takes them closest to the classroom, was the need for long time-frames. The nine years since Jongmien may seem a long time compared with a project cycle; or compared with the introduction of such revolutionary technological innovations as lap-top computers, power-point presentations and electronic mail — all of which played an important role in the Seminar. Unfortunately, educational change is not achievable in this way.

To introduce curriculum reform — just to take one example — with all the necessary re-develop of textbooks and teacher's training courses, takes at least five years. The idea that you could pilot a new type of 'community school', and within a short period of time 'go to scale' as if it were a hand-pump or micronutrient supplement, is completely unrealistic. Staffing, training, facilities, materials: these can not be conjured into existence overnight.

Many of the ideas contained in the UNICEF vision — ideas concerning management and structure of educational systems for example — require a very long-term strategy and in-country continuity of organizational purpose and commitment.

Every participant at the ninth Innocenti Seminar used to the full the opportunity they had been given to engage in a period of intense reflection in their professional area of expertise, sharing generously with their peers their own UNICEF and non-UNICEF knowledge and experience. The quality of the work they produced — especially their inputs on priority themes for the vision — was uniformly high. The test of the success of the Seminar deliberations lies not only in whether the Vision they ultimately produced captures the hearts and minds of UNICEF policy-makers. It lies also in whether they left Florence with their own hearts and minds more actively and knowledgeably committed to the vision of Education for All — and to its implementation on the ground.
PART I: SETTING THE STAGE

"Keeping children in school for six years without mastering how to read is an investment in ignorance, not an investment in education."

Gabriel Carron, International Institute for Education Planning, UNESCO.

1. Global trends

The Seminar was fortunate in having Gabriel Carron, Senior Programme Coordinator of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning, to set the stage for the rest of the Seminar content. His presentation reviewed the global situation and major trends relating to education since the World Education Conference took place at Jomtien in 1990.

The Conference had taken place, Carron recalled, soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of bipolarization as the predominating structure of international affairs. This had ushered in a new era in international development and major social, economic and political changes. Carron singled out three forces during the 1990s as having special significance for education. The first was the process of economic globalization, whereby international flows of trade, finance and information are becoming meshed in an integrated market, whose output of goods and services is multiplying daily. The second was the emergence of a knowledge-based society, with skyrocketing numbers of people having access to computers, e-mail, and the global information highway. The third was increasing democratization: two-thirds of the world’s people now live under regimes which have come to power through an electoral process, and in almost every country civil society is flourishing.

These changes hold out great promise of 'development for all' in a world whose barriers - political and economic - are rapidly crumbling. But at the same time, there is an increased danger of marginalization for those who do not get to participate in these processes. The least developed countries - in sub-Saharan Africa, for example - are experiencing a decline in their share of world trade; in absolute terms, the numbers of those excluded from development is growing. The laissez-faire model of development tends to promote this polarity between economic 'winners' and 'losers', with its emphasis on competition, profit, imposition, uniformity and exclusion. The human development model, by contrast, sees the state as having a corrective function, emphasizing solidarity, human well-being, participation, diversity and inclusion.

From the point of view of their implications for educational systems, the laissez-faire development model logically pre-supposed the notion of 'education for selection', whereas the human development model pre-supposed a different objective: 'education for empowerment'. The Jomtien Conference, in Carron's view, had squarely positioned the international community, and the educational community, behind the latter perspective. Education for All - the clarion call of Jomtien - was essentially a call for education for empowerment, and all that had happened in the world since 1990 had reconfirmed the validity of this view. Globalization, the knowledge-based society, and expanding democratization made the vision of Jomtien even more relevant today than in 1990.

Carron went on to remind his audience of the essential characteristics of Education for All set out in the Jomtien Declaration - access, quality, and the acquisition of learning - and the expanded vision of basic education it contained. In terms of content, Jomtien had moved the definition of basic education beyond basic skills, towards empowering the student to meet his or her future personal and social needs. In terms of scope, basic education had been defined as a life-long process, from early childhood to adulthood. In terms of means, the definition encompassed school and non-school settings for education, including formal and non-formal, as well as media and other channels. Finally, the definition had embraced the idea of partnerships for education, between those formally involved with schooling, and others such as parents, community leaders, the private sector, religious groups, trades unions, media, and NGOs.

Despite the richness of the vision, and the post-Jomtien mobilization of activity, actual achievements during the 1990s were mixed. In quantitative terms, there had been only a slight increase in primary school enrolment with gender gaps remaining virtually unchanged; the most one might claim was that the decline recorded during the 1980s when structural adjustment programmes began to bite had been stemmed. Early childhood development had received insufficient attention, especially from government, and in some regions - Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth Independent States (CEECIS) - enrolment of children was in decline. Programmes for adults and out-of-school youth had been seriously neglected: no country in Latin America invests even 2 per cent of its education budget in this area.

Qualitative improvements were also disappointing. Drop-out and repetition rates remain high: in many parts of the world, between 20 and 25 per cent of children leave school between the first and fourth grade. Learning acquisition levels had also remained disappointingly low: in most countries, more than half of children fail to master reading after six years. Some interesting initiatives had been undertaken to make basic education more relevant and encourage children to stay in school. This imparted a sense of encouragement on the one hand, but on the other an equal recognition that quality issues were very far from being resolved.

In fact, among the 'lessons learned' was the hard reality that there were no short cuts available in the field of education. A decade - or rather nine years - which was all that had elapsed since Jomtien was a very short time in which to fulfill the EFA vision. The fact that many governments had taken the agenda seriously and had begun to organize behind it was a sign of better things to come. There was no substitute for the long, hard slog - a fact now better appreciated. There had been a tendency to waste effort on a search for simple explanations of complex local social, cultural and economic dynamics behind typical problems such as high drop-out and repetition rates. This had been a distraction. Such explanations do not exist, any more than do the instant panaceas implied by such a quest. Meanwhile Carron believed, a more important requirement - management reform - had been overlooked. If existing systems were poorly run, how could they be expected to carry out the improvements necessary to reach EFA?

Carron then went on to consider some major trends in education since Jomtien. There is a new interest in moral and cultural education, a reaction to the 'back to basics' approach and instrumental vision of the 1980s. Th
Basic Education, a Vision for the 21st Century

The ‘average school’ does not exist. What does a school in a rural backwater with one teacher and 20 pupils have in common with a city school with all facilities?”

Gabriel Carron, IIEP

Another trend was a focus on underprivileged groups. There was now a greater emphasis on poverty reduction as a development objective; and rationing was widely recognized as having a critical role to play in combating poverty and exclusion. However, attitudes on state financing had shifted, leading to a less emphasis on basic educational entitlements, as ‘free primary education’. Studies showed that in most settings parents are expected to contribute a proportion of costs, if not in school fees then other payments. Whether this significantly influenced drop-out rates is unclear; in many cases, children dropped out because they learned nothing useful. The poor quality of the education made the investment in them parents’ point of view, whereas if the quality had been higher, they might have been prepared to support the expense.

There are many examples of compensatory educational programmes with developing and industrialized countries; evaluation shows that they help some children shed their disadvantage, but rarely lift the whole up. Affirmative action programmes such as the escuela nueva in Colombia and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) had some striking results. Unfortunately, however, most initiatives are all and scattered and ‘scaling up’ seems to present a problem.

The third trend identified by Carron was the movement towards centralized and participatory management – a current theme in all development investment areas. The centralized and top-down model of service planning has lost credibility in the past decade, partly for ideological and partly because it has become associated with bureaucratic exorbitance, inertia and inefficiency. The realities on the ground are complex and diverse, and management systems must be able to respond to the needs of their environment. Decentralization of management aims to bring decision-making closer to those actually responsible for the service – teachers and school managers; and their users – parents, students and communities. It has many advantages, including the stimulation of local involvement and accountability, and the generation of more resources.

However, decentralization is not a panacea and – poorly handled – can create the very opposite of the empowerment approach it is intended to promote. It can, for example, be used as a pretext for shifting the burden of costs onto the community, and thus end up by promoting the exclusion of its poorest members. Then, too, there may be little attempt to make functional the school boards and Parent-Teacher Associations which exist only on paper. It can also lead to the introduction of a market-driven approach, whereby schools are forced to compete with each other for resources based on the basis of tests and performance – a competition heavily weighted in favour of schools in better-off areas. The legal framework for decentralized management is extremely important and is often ignored.

Carron’s stimulating presentation prompted a wide-ranging debate covering issues such as teacher evaluation, public financing of schools, equity, the implications for head teachers of school-based management, and whether the ‘back to basics’ approach was necessarily at odds with the need to impart moral and cultural values. Manzoor Ahmed, previously UNICEF’s Senior Policy Advisor on Education, felt that basic literacy and numeracy skills were a universal educational must; whereas education to promote values ran into the problem of ‘Whose values?’ ‘Whose culture?’ and ‘Whose morality?’ It was important, in his view, not to undermine the basics and to ensure as a first priority that learners had acquired these essential tools – without which further learning throughout life would be hampered. This view was to surface frequently in the Seminar, particularly from those based in countries or regions where school access and quality are still so inadequate that illiteracy remains widespread. Ahmed was among those who lamented the lack of EPA progress since Jomtien. The vision and goals of Jomtien had been sound, but the world and the forces at work in it were constantly changing. The challenge before the Seminar was to search for ways of persuading governments and other partners to do things that they did not do in spite of their Jomtien commitments; and to identify new ways of achieving the same goals and vision.

What was needed in global terms, it could be concluded, was less a new educational vision, than a better strategy for putting it into effect.

2. Regional trends

The UNICEF Regional Education Advisors followed the presentation of the global picture with brief summaries of regional trends. This exercise underlined the difficulty of making generalizations, either of analysis or prescription. However, some common themes did emerge; these included:

- it is important to emphasize ‘access with quality’, not one or the other;
- the globalization and democratization processes give extra force to the need for, and potential realization of, EPA;
- basic education data is inadequate and often misleading;
- there is a need to focus on learning, and on helping learning happen;
- not enough has been done about learning in early childhood or adolescence.

The ‘Delors grid’, of ‘learning’ consists of four pillars:

- learning to know, which covers basic tools such as literacy and oral expression;
- learning to do, which covers competence to deal with life and with work;
- learning to live together, which covers personal relations within the family and community, including conflict resolution and tolerance towards others;
- learning to be, which covers development of artistic abilities, personality, and critical and autonomous thinking;
- these four pillars a fifth could be added: learning to transform others and self which adds a developmental component covering respect for the environment, respect for social solidarity and respect for a non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive world.
Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States: This is a new region from the UNICEF perspective: the Regional Office was established in Geneva in 1996. More importantly, it is a region of immense and rapid change. In 1990, it contained eight countries; in 1998, 27. During that period, the turmoil of post-Communist transition has had a profound effect on educational systems.

Economic problems attendant on the transition are fundamental to everything happening in the region. The only country to have maintained its economic output at an equivalent level to that of 1989 is Poland; most countries’ output is lower by 40 per cent. This has led to fewer resources being available for public sector activities, including education; and it has sharpened inequality between those few for whom new opportunities are available, and the rest, especially the poor. While some children have access to a quality of education not available ten years ago, education has deteriorated for the majority.

“The quality of education has dropped dramatically. Buildings are falling apart. There is no money for heating. In somewhere like Siberia, this has a major effect on attendance.”

Robert Fuderich, UNICEF Geneva

The major trends are as follows:

- The costs of education to families have risen. Fees are now charged for kindergarten, secondary and tertiary education, where this was not the case previously. Textbooks, clothing and shoes—all of which used to be subsidized—must now be paid for; this at a time when incomes are dwindling.
- The quality of schooling has fallen, along with expenditures on education which have declined by as much as 75 per cent. There is a lack of resources for good teaching and learning. Materials and equipment have suffered, but more significant is the loss of teacher morale and commitment associated with lack of pay.
- Enrolment and attendance have dropped, particularly in the less developed parts of the region. In the CIS, 30,000 pre-schools were closed between 1991 and 1995. There used to be near universal enrolment in countries where this has now been lost. Heating of classrooms in winter has become a serious problem, leading to absenteeism.
- Social support for schools is down; fewer children receive health or dental check-ups in school.
- Warfare, ethnic conflict and social unrest have disrupted schooling; this has been a characteristic in at least nine countries.
- Student outlooks are limited by reduced employment prospects; those children who were educated in vocational schools fixed to certain trades and occupations have no prospects now that industry is not state-run.
- Lack of access to basic education for minority groups; exclusion from school of children belonging to the region’s many minorities (some of whom are majorities in other countries) is not uncommon.

Independently of the need for more resources, a major reassessment of educational content was required. Reforms should be introduced to make education more relevant to the future awaiting children in the post-Communist world. Teaching methods, student selection, exam systems, social support, and the respective roles of all parties, state, private and community, needed re-examination. Education in the region could legitimately be said to be in crisis, with many children caught in an ‘access gap’ between falling standards and rising costs.

East Asia and the Pacific: This region has achieved 95 per cent primary school enrolment. However, the figures are somewhat skewed by China’s success in achieving 98 per cent enrolment. Some countries still exist—notably in the Mekong region—where both enrolment and completion rates remain low. The same is true of less-developed areas within countries with high average rates.

The key features of the regional picture were as follows:

- A shift in emphasis from issues of access to issues of quality.
- A demonstrated interest in innovation and improvement.
- A desire to invest more resources in learning for adolescents or in ECCD: UNICEF was tending to support the latter.
- An interest in finding and bringing in those children still out of school, by mechanisms such as national enrolment drives or ‘Days’.
- Focusing within secondary education on protection issues: reducing the exposure of young people to risks such as violence, trafficking, HIV exploitation and prostitution, and enhancing capacity for self-protection.
- The recent economic crisis which had spread from Thailand to other Asian economies presented special problems for the region. In some badly-affected areas, children were dropping out of school; this could be expected to affect more girls than boys.
- Economic globalization was having other, more positive, effects as well. In Malaysia, people were visiting cyber cafes even in small villages, the arrival of the knowledge-based society was palpable. On the other hand, gaps were growing between those with access and those without. Gaps also existed between democratizing societies, and societies still governed by authoritarian or militarized regimes as in Myanmar and the PDR.

Eastern and Southern Africa: The regional presentation on this region focused on five themes:

Globalization: The overall effect of economic globalization in Africa has been to reduce its share of world trade and lower consumption levels. Many countries are so disadvantaged that getting back to a position where they have a foothold in the world economy is a distant proposition. Included in these disadvantages is the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its profound impact on many African countries. In Zimbabwe, for example, HIV may affect over 20 per cent of 15-19 year olds. Given declining incomes, families can afford to spend less and less on schooling, and are less willing to take risks with the scarce resources at their disposal. These ‘risks’ include expenditure on girls’ education.

Government ownership of basic education: Shortage of public revenues has led governments in the region to become rapid converts to ideas of cost-sharing and devolving responsibility for educational funding to local communities. Out of 50 million children of school-going age in the region, 20 million are out-of-school, and governments have effectively abandoned these children by leaving local communities to cope.

Basic information: The net enrolment rate data for the countries of the region is extremely unreliable. Without basic information it is very difficult to develop a sound analysis of the needs—both quantitative and qualitative—in basic education. However, there has been some recent progress in persuading countries to measure learning outcomes, with 13 countries now committed to developing a ‘learning’ assessment system.

Rejection of simplistic solutions (i): UNICEF should not allow itself to be swept along by fashionable approaches or facile assumptions. A case in point was some current interventions in the region intended to address gender disparity. Parity in enrolment is already widespread in some African countries, districts, and schools, and there are cases where parity reduction initiatives have been misguided. Launched with first engaging in an appropriate planning process, or have simply focused on increasing girls’ attendance. Disparity in access, enrolment, retention and performance, curriculum design or textbooks, pedagogical practices in the school or life outcomes should first be identified, and a specific intervention to address these disparities should then be designed. The African Girls’ Education Initiative (AGEI) was well-placed to address the need for appropriate assessment and planning processes in this area.
Rejection of simplistic solutions (ii): UNICEF should not allow itself to be swept along by fashionable approaches or facile assumptions. In every country, there is some current intervention in the region intended to address gender disparity. Parity in enrolment is already widespread in some African countries, districts, and schools, and there are cases where parity reduction initiatives have been misguidedly launched without engaging in an appropriate planning process, or have simply focused on increasing girls' attendance. Disparity in access, enrolment, retention, retention rate and text (disciplinary in the 10 or life outcomes, should first be identified, and a specific intervention to address the disparities identified should then be designed. The can Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) was well-placed to address the need for appropriate assessment and planning processes in this area.

Cross-fertilization: Finally, a plea was made for more collaboration between countries and regions within Africa. The example of an appropriate e-learning technology – the use of slates in primary school as cited – was current in Francophone West Africa and was now being promoted by UNICEF in other sub-Saharan environments.

South and Central Africa: Problems in basic education in the region could be characterized as follows: access and equity of access (especially in Sub-Saharan countries, where gross enrollment is as low as 30% and participation rates even lower); poor quality of infrastructure, overcrowding of classes, and too many under-qualified teachers; negative perceptions of parents about schooling, especially for girls, including the role of the curriculum, and the incompatibility of the timetable with the needs of community life.

"For us to improve access must be accompanied by efforts to increase quality. Don’t go for one and then the other."

Aline Bory-Adams, UNICEF, Abidjan

However, there had been some breakthroughs in the recent past:

Girls' education: Girls' enrollment has increased, on average by 3 cent a year in West Africa as a whole. Greater access and retention is a prominent feature of most national action plans.

Beyond schooling: Interest was developing in other routes than conventional schooling for imparting education; community schools in Chad, Mali were examples of this new trend.

Expansion of the private sector: This was seen as a way of mobilizing extra resources for education; however, private schools, like the formal schools cited above, may siphon off resources from the formal network, and give rise to equity concerns.

Partnerships: Tremendous growth of NGOs as expressions of a civil society has produced more actors for the education sector and more partnership opportunities. Teachers and parents associations have been much more active. The presentation concluded with a summary of lessons learned: pride quality at the same time as increasing access; don't make the mistake of thinking that one can be done after the other. Effective supervision of teachers is crucial if they are to become effective and accountable.

The teachers and learners need motivation.

An emerging challenge is the need to strengthen partnerships and new alliances to complement, rather than substitute for, the actions of the state. The existing structures are very weak, and this means that the top for decentralization is extremely fragile.

For East and North Africa: This presentation began with a round-up of five factors prevailing in the region, including political instability and violence, economic decline due to the slump in oil prices, growing pressure on land and water resources, and increased unemployment.

Specific features of the basic education scenario were as follows:

- Over the last three decades, literacy levels have improved dramatically; but some countries with large rural populations still have high illiteracy levels (Egypt, Morocco, Sudan and Yemen).
- Most countries have female literacy rates 20 percent lower than male; the highest gender disparities in primary enrolment are the same four countries, plus Iraq.
- Of those out-of-school, typical groups included nomadic populations, the displaced and refugees, children with disabilities, working children, and girls.
- Most of the exam systems in the region emphasize rote and passive learning; very few countries (exceptions: Iran, Jordan) have carried out achievement tests to international standards.
- Studies in Tunisia, Lebanon, Sudan and Morocco indicate that learning performance in maths, science, language and social studies is declining.
- Public education expenditure as a share of GNP appears to be declining in the region as a whole.

The proposed future directions for the region included assistance for countries working on EPA 2000 Assessments, and efforts to target the unreached. This would require imaginative data collection to identify who they are and why they are outside the educational system.

South Asia: The South Asian region had taken extremely seriously the whole Jomtien process. All countries of the region had developed national plans of action, and had set out with determination to achieve the goal of universal primary education. Despite the problems, they had also experimented with innovative methods of assessing learning achievements and developed new partnerships.

However, the true progress towards the world Jomtien goals was very difficult to assess, given the existing 'restricted reporting culture'. Because of the way figures are compiled, there is a consistent pattern of inaccurate and inflated figures being offered as surrogates for useful information. Countries as vast as India are compared with others as small as Maldives, with one figure on - for example - enrolment of girls used to characterize the state of affairs in the whole country. An averaged figure for girls' enrolment in a country such as India becomes inaccurate, irrelevant, and may be subject to unhealthy national and sub-national competition and exaggeration, in the course of its calculation. A strong plea was made for an end to this kind of country comparison as a meaningful method of comparing progress.

Other issues raised by the presentation were as follows:

- There had been a shift in UNICEF from focusing on unmet needs and quantitative goals to fulfilling unmet rights. This had led to greater attention to children denied education due to discrimination, patriarchal or familial values, gender bias, conflicts and emergencies, disability, minority status, or other reasons.
- There had been a deliberate shift from emphasis on access to schooling to access with quality. Without attention to 'facilitating conditions' - classroom improvement, teaching quality, learning processes - investment in education will not lead to improved educational outcomes.
- Many South Asian governments have accepted the value of investing in girls' education; many have enacted legislation to move to a seven- or eight-year basic education cycle. Health and life-style issues are also gaining more attention.
- Studies indicate that ECCD should demand much greater attention; there is likely to be much more attention on the early childhood years within UNICEF country programs in the region.
- Teachers training methods need radical overhaul. Too much training is conducted by male instructors who have never operated inside a primary school.
school classroom. The ‘training of trainers’ method, which is meant to create a ‘cascade’ of subsequent in-service training, has proven to be a flawed methodology and should be replaced.

Latin America and the Caribbean: Growth of democracy in Latin America is the backdrop to the educational picture in the region. The consolidation of democratic institutions and the decentralization of decision-making depend on an educated population. Issues of equity have gained in political importance. Large rich-poor disparities, in income and access to services including education, are typical of most countries of the region.

Specific issues are as follows:

- Access: most countries have achieved high rates of access to primary education, with the average at 90 per cent. The major problem is the very high rates of repetition; the regional average repetition rate in all grades of primary school is 30 per cent per year.
- Poor quality: one of the main problems faced by the system is its low quality. Teachers are poorly paid and resources generally are inadequate; the content of schooling is overloaded and irrelevant to the child’s environment; memorization is more often emphasized than comprehension.
- Culture: few efforts are made to help children from indigenous cultures adapt and overcome difficulties – especially of language – they may experience in school. Cultural difference is often not respected by teachers or schools.
- Rural areas: multigrade schools in remote rural areas are often staffed by teachers who have not been adequately trained, nor are the schools adequately equipped. There are no incentives to draw quality teachers to these areas.

"The major problem in the region’s primary schools is the endless repetition. Schools feel responsible for the teaching process, but not for the learning process."

Maria Alice Setubal, UNICEF, Bogota.

The following challenges were identified:

- Increase investment in ECCD, which only reaches 31 per cent of children in the Caribbean, 18 per cent in South America and 7 per cent in Central America;
- Focus on quality of education, to hold out the possibility to students of socially relevant learning in which knowledge, skills, and cultural traditions are all respected;
- Use education as a means of addressing disparities and build equitable and inclusive societies;
- Promote education as a human right for building a society that is peaceful, tolerant, democratic, and participatory.

3. Education as a right

The second day of the Seminar was devoted to the subject of rights. During the past two years, UNICEF has been systematically exploring the policy and programmatic implications of shifting the rationale of all its activities from ‘the fulfillment of needs’ to ‘the fulfillment of rights’. The impetus for this change was partly derived from the rise in the prominence given to human rights associated with the world-wide democratization process. More specifically, the near-universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – itself a product of this trend – had virtually obliged UNICEF to ground its own work in the vision of childhood the CRC contained. The key question examined by the Seminar was in what ways this shift of paradigm affected the practical design, structure and content of educational programmes.

The first presentation on education and rights was by Rana Flowers, UNICEF’s Child Rights Officer. She reviewed the CRC via a vis education pointing to a number of relevant articles, besides the specific Article (No. 28) which establishes a child’s right to education, and Article 29 which addresses the nature, content and quality of education. She also considers the broader meaning of a rights-based perspective, and examined whether the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action were validated or outdated by the rights-based perspective. On the whole, the parallels in tone and content were remarkable.

UNICEF Education Adviser Mary Pigozzi, in a second presentation stressed that, when taken together, the CRC and the Jomtien Declaration are a powerful combination for guiding UNICEF work in education. A number of practical implications emerge. Education systems must become more responsive; they also need to diversify, expand, be more gender-sensitive and flexible; in addition, children should be seen by educationalists and others as both active participants and stakeholders. The obligation of the state in regard to ensuring provision of basic education is clear; and this provides opportunities for UNICEF in terms of supporting expanded partnerships and in facilitating the State’s normative function. In many cases, the philosophical underpinnings of the way the education system is conceptualized and managed needs to change.

The various strands of the rights debate have been frequently rehearsed within UNICEF during the past two years and many features were familiar. Participants drew attention to various changes in their work perceived as deriving from UNICEF’s shift to a rights-based rationale. One was that under the rationale, education was not seen as a survival need and was therefore accorded the same importance as basic health, nutrition and water and sanitation services. Theoretically, education ought to fare better under a rights rationale, and it was the case that UNICEF’s interest in expertise in education had been radically upgraded during the very period in which rights had gained ascendency. However, this might be purely coincidental: the Jomtien process had probably been more influential.

The characteristics of the rights-based approach which have clear-cut practical implications for basic education programmes are as follows:

- Focus on the entire childhood period, from birth to age 18, which implied that UNICEF ought to give more attention to ECCD and learning opportunities beyond primary school age;
- The need to give more attention to the excluded, which means affirmative action on all factors that limit meaningful participation of out-of-school children in education;
- One of the central issues in the rights debate was the concept of child rights, which is central to the CRC.

The CRC and basic education

Article 28 asserts the child’s right to education, and covers the state’s obligations for provision of formal schooling, ‘progressively, and on the basis of equal opportunity’. Primary schooling should be free and compulsory.

Article 29 describes the purposes to which education should be addressed, including physical, mental, and personal development, and life in a free, peaceful and tolerant society.

Some other relevant articles:

- Article 2: Non-discrimination on grounds of race, gender, economic status, etc.
- Article 3: Best interests of the child should take precedence in designing child-related services;
- Article 12: Right to express own views in matters affecting him or herself;
- Article 13: Freedom to give and receive information;
- Article 14: Freedom of conscience and belief;
- Article 30: Right to enjoy his or her own culture, religion, and language;
- Article 32: Freedom from work which interferes with education and other rights.
hard-to-reach children, in addition to mass programmes primarily rected at majorities; emphasis on children’s right to participate, and to have a say in issues affecting them, which implies changes in the educational culture in many settings; emphasis on child protection issues, and the promotion of peace, tolerance, and citizenship in a free society; emphasis on the quality of education, on the nature of what children learn, how they learn and how well they learn enables them to reach Golese and adulthood equipped to realize their maximum potential. There are, however, many philosophical points of debate. Some parents do not believe that the advent of rights signals any major depart in UNICEF education programming, arguing that even if the basis for individual approach may have changed, its content will not differ strikingly. In this perspective, development is development whatever its ratio and the difference between meeting needs and meeting rights is ely academic.

To others, emphasis on rights enhances the importance attached to an dignity, bringing a qualitative difference in meaning to the concept development”. Not only does the rights perspective give urgency to the J to provide all children with access to good quality education—in sum, —but there are important implications for educational processes and t is meant by quality. A commitment to embody children’s rights in all acts of education means that, in many cases, teacher preparation and her actions must change, and educational materials and how they are I must be significantly different. Emphasis on the place of learning as environment promoting children’s rights means that it should be safe supportive of all who are there, free from all forms of harassment, rule, bullying, discrimination, physical violence, and negative influences such as drug peddling. Both adult education and early childhood education, care, and development should also be considered in terms of the ways in which they are sorting children’s rights. Thus, according to many Seminar partici es, a commitment to the Jomtien Declaration and the CRC has implica-far beyond schooling per se.

There was much debate on the question of whether the CRC actually is to impose obligations on governments. Sceptics pointed out that the allows governments to fulfill rights according to their resource posi-tions; there is therefore no absolute obligation fixed on governments by treaty, and they can easily call upon this “get-out” clause to postpone, xample, provision of free universal primary education. Others, by con- , argued that the rights approach gave far more edge to arguments on If of reform, and entitled UNICEF to criticize governments if they d in their commitments. Yet others prefer to use the CRC and the on of childhood it enshrines in a less upfront manner, as a framework policy and a checklist for situation analyses. Banging the drum for ts may be counter-productive in some political and cultural settings.

4. The participation of children

“Much lip service is paid to the ‘voice of adolescents’ and their role as ‘agents of social change’. But if they are to participate, they need something to participate IN.”

Andres Guerrero, UNICEF New York

“In Thailand, we trained government and programme staff in the CRC. But when we asked them: ‘What are you now doing differently, or doing that you didn’t do before, because of the CRC’, they were completely blank.”

Sheldon Sjaeffer, UNICEF New York

Whatever the doubts about whether the advent of rights made a substantial difference to the content of UNICEF’s educational programming, emphasis on “participation” was definitely a new CRC-inspired direction.

The Seminar therefore spent some time examining what child participation might mean in practice. At a philosophical level, participation of children and young people implied that they should be seen as agents of social change, not merely as passive recipients of welfare. Their capacity to fulfill this role, in keeping with their own growing maturity, would depend on opportunities provided by the family, in school, and in the community. Education is one important context in which the capacity for self-expression and other skills and behaviours required for “participation” are learned.

At a more practical level, examples were given of modalities for child participation in school systems. They can be included in disciplinary procedures; their representatives can serve on school boards; the voice of school students can be canvassed in relation to changes in facilities and extra-curricular activities. However, as was pointed out by Andres Guerrero, Education for Development Officer, talk about ‘children’s participation’ is rarely accompanied by practical attention to mechanisms which can allow it to happen. An example of such a mechanism was ‘Voices of Youth’, an online electronic forum developed by UNICEF. ‘Voices of Youth’ has a learning and information exchange purpose, linking young people around the

some languages there is no word for ‘rights’. In many societies, the group is more important than the individual. We need to stop ing the CRC as a legalistic hammer, and use it as a supportive ovement.”

Carol Jaenson, UNICEF Uganda

Broadly speaking, those participants from countries which were ocratizing or which were trying to assert the culture of open debate as of citizenship—such as Brazil and the Philippines—saw the rights such as an opportunity to identify with reformist and progressive es. Those coming from countries where confrontation with traditional es was likely to promote a backlash—such as in the Middle East and Ethiopia—tended to be more cautious. Certainly, there could not be a single view on whether UNICEF would be correct to raise with a government an issue such as corruption; or whether championship of rights was meaningless if there was no readiness to be adversarial.

A number of questions were raised in relation to basic education and child rights, which the Seminar acknowledged as important but to which answers would depend on a given situation:

- The CRC states that primary education should be free, but education does have to be paid for; how will this happen?
- Where countries are without the benefit of law and government, or an area is extremely unstable (e.g. Somalia, Northern Uganda, Southern Sudan), with whom do you discuss ‘fulfilment of child rights’?
- Where children, or a large segment of the child population, are systematically deprived of their rights by government policy (e.g. girls excluded from school in Afghanistan), how should UNICEF react?
- What changes in UNICEF-assisted education programmes can be positively identified as deriving from promotion of child rights?
- Does rights-based programming imply that a minimum standard of quality must be provided? If it is not— for example, in refugee and conflict situations — what recourse can UNICEF take and against whom?
- How can individual and groups rights be reconciled?
- What is needed for the concept of rights to be internalized and acted upon by teachers, parents and all those who care for children?
world and enabling them to listen and respond to each other’s views.

The promotion of participation from a ‘rights’ perspective was the subject of a presentation by Staneala Beckley from UNICEF Pakistan; this is a country where, in her words, ‘rights are new’. The context for a major social and political mobilization effort in Pakistan to promote education was the launch this year of the government’s new educational policy. Major thrusts were targeted at bringing in the unreached; improving the quality of schools and classroom environments; and monitoring learning achievement. A special effort was made to emphasize children’s right to education, and to stimulate the enrolment of millions of children still out of school. Partnerships with NGOs, media, the private sector and religious groups were forged, as well as with government ministries other than education.

A question confronting those planning mobilization activities was: Who is actually responsible for action to identify out-of-school children and enrol them? It emerged that there were many inherently discriminatory practices, keeping children away from school: children without birth certificates were rejected by schoolteachers, for example, as were children of the poor or minority groups. Accordingly, a system endorsing different values had to be put in place, with education departments and schools having assigned roles. In one district in the Punjab, teachers and community leaders went door to door on National Literacy Day to bring in children. The need for birth certificates was rescinded, and 20,000 more children than expected were identified and enrolled.

The focus on education brought about by political and social mobilization had helped to generate evaluations and studies by NGOs and others. These revealed a number of anomalies, according to Beckley. She reiterated the theme, earlier propounded by Jim Irvine of the South Asian Regional Office, that national-level statistics hid as much as they revealed.

The national picture of ‘participation’ in terms of access and quality might be impressive; but if you went down to district and sub-district levels it was possible to find schools which did not contain a single girl; which had walls or even minimum facilities; where teachers were routinely absent and where new teaching materials were locked in cupboards in cases the were made dirty by use. For many children, therefore, schooling was a sentence rather than a liberation.

“On one field visit, they found a school with five classes and one teacher. It then turned out that the teacher was not a teacher, but...had been hired to be there with the children while the two teachers were out selling insurance policies.”

Staneala Beckley, UNICEF Pakistan

The mobilization campaign therefore brought into focus another requirement: ‘rights based reporting’. Apart from the need to disaggregate statistics and use them for monitoring and improving local schools, not proclaiming national coverage achievements, there was also a need to develop systems of measuring the impact of education programmes on children. Tracking out-of-school children and reducing discrimination against minority and other groups was also a ‘rights-based’ requirement. Certain minimum standards should be established and enforced via a building learning environment, safety, and teachers’ attendance and competence.

However, the degree to which children in Pakistan could as yet participate in judging these issues was questionable. They could help monitor attendance, and perhaps also help assess school and classroom conditions. But in a society with a very hierarchical and authoritarian culture.

---

Brazil case study

A case study from Brazil presented by Garren Lumpkin illustrated the way in which social mobilization had been used by UNICEF to promote ‘education as a right’. In Brazil, children’s rights have enjoyed great political currency since they were integrated in the Brazilian constitution in 1988. ‘Mobilization’ has also become well established as part of the political process. The aim of the mobilization process - entitled ‘Wake-up Brazil, it’s time for school!’ - was to establish in the public mind, and especially among government and influential sectors, the perception that education for every child was a national priority.

The main problem associated with basic education in Brazil was a ‘culture of repetition’. It was accepted that poor children did not learn, and instead of blaming the poor quality of the education they received, the response was to expect them endlessly to repeat classes. Only 4.5 per cent of the children who completed the primary cycle in 1992 managed to do so without repetition; 56 per cent of children repeated classes every year. According to UNESCO, this cost Brazil $2.4 billion annually. Meanwhile, lack of public demand and participation meant that there was little political interest in doing anything to improve the situation.

“Mobilization is to stimulate and support a process that requires continual dedication and produces daily results; it is not reduced to organizing an event or convoking a public demonstration. Mobilization is to convince, sharing of views and concepts, to decide and act in search of a common objective.”

Bernardo Torro, Vice-President of the Social Foundation, Colombia, quoted by Garren Lumpkin.

The mobilization campaign involved a very wide range of partners from national, state and municipal levels, within government, NGOs, trade unions, the private sector, foundations, popular movements, the media and the churches. A large number of materials were developed for different audiences. Strong emphasis was placed on mobilization as a process that is dedicated, continual and shapes public consciousness: it was not seen as a one-off, attention-grabbing spectacle. A great number of different activities were unleashed; some states embarked on special initiatives to identify out-of-school children, others set out to eliminate child labour, or dovetail classroom timetables to seasonal agricultural work. Over 1.6 million children were enrolled in school as a result, and actions in many states led to improvements in quality and reduction in the numbers of repeaters.

There was no doubt that in Brazil, the focus on child rights helped generate momentum behind Education for All. Many lessons had been learned about coordinating actions, balancing ‘demand’ and ‘supply’, sustaining momentum, timing events, and bringing a wide range of partners together behind common objectives. Among these partners, children and young people themselves had played a role. In the state of Minas Gerais, for example, community health promoters took the lead in trying to find out-of-school children and seeing what could be done to bring them into school.
children's 'participation' in school management would have to advance slowly and sensitively.

Seminar participants concluded their review of the impact of the rights-based approach on education programming by examining the issue from a regional perspective. The following were identified as some key rights-based concerns:

- Affirmative actions must be taken to bring in children who are excluded, vulnerable, or in need of special protection (Africa, Asia, Latin America).
- Schools should be made more 'child-friendly' (Africa, CEE/CIS, Asia).
- Innovations to involve children in school committees should be piloted; teachers and communities should be encouraged to be participatory (Africa, CEE/CIS, Latin America).
- The concept of child rights should be promoted and explained, including the right to education (Africa, Asia, Latin America).
- Education should be regarded as a tool for empowerment (CEE/CIS, Latin America).

The debate on rights-based programming cannot be said to have provided any definitive conclusions as to the implications for education activity entailed in the shift in UNICEF's underpinning rationale. Everybody welcomed it as a desirable departure from the needs-based, or welfare, orientation for programme interventions. However, the more practical, nitty-gritty implications were difficult to distinguish. Many countries already regretted the hard-to-reach or fought inequity and social exclusion. A number of participants clearly felt that the direction in which their programmes were going had been 'ghostridden had not and would not alter dramatically as result of the new perspective.

There was even a muted sense of impatience with the more abstract aims of linkages between rights and programming. CRC terminology, it is felt, is frequently being used as fashionable window-dressing and priorities that had, in fact, remained the same. For example, initiatives such as the 'child-friendly' learning environment were justified on quality grounds and did not require an appeal to 'rights'. Too much emphasis on rights could upset government counterparts setting some conditions and even prove counter-productive. And if the rights argument was not to be cited in protestations to government about their failure to live up to such obligations as 'free universal primary education', then it was hypocritical to claim that rights were so important?

The debate on the rights basis for programming in UNICEF will run and run. However, an upbeat ending to the debate was provided by Peter Okebukola who summarized its message for the 21st century as: 'The rights approach is the right way to go'.

The role of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

Katerina Tomasevska, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, attended the Seminar as a resource person, and gave a special presentation on her UN role and activities.

A UN Special Rapporteur is not part of the interstate structure of the UN; the person appointed is an outside expert and responsible only to the Human Rights Commission. This status enables the Rapporteur to inquire into sensitive issues in which the State appears to be abusing its power against groups or individuals.

From the human rights perspective, state obligations as regards education are not limited to questions of access to schooling. They could also concern, for example, a state's failure to control the propagation of racism within education or misrepresenting race or ethnicity in textbooks; or cases where governments introduce education on sexual matters in the classroom to help combat HIV spread, but are challenged in the courts by those who regard this as an equivalent to promotion of sexual activity. Article 13 of the CRC, which allows children freedom of expression and access to information, will be cited in defence of their right to education on sexual matters as will Article 24, which guarantees the child's access to knowledge necessary for self-protection.

Tomasevska invited UNICEF to use its influence to draw attention to human rights denials and violations in the context of education. Discriminatory exclusion of children from school or their routine corporal punishment would be classic examples of apparent human rights violations.
PART II: THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING: HOW, WHAT AND TO WHOM?

In the latter part of the 20th century, the role of education has been widely acknowledged as having a major influence over the creation of a harmonious, equitable and productive human society - or of its opposite. Schooling is the context in which children learn not only the 'basics', but many of the values, behaviours and skills that shape their adult futures, in the workplace, at home and in society at large.

This has led to increasing public investment in schooling, more attention to education by policy-makers and the media, and higher expectations from parents and students. It has also led to a much more searching debate about what children should learn, where, and how. In the words of a key UNICEF document which served as a background paper, 'The Global Agenda for Children: Learning', this debate leads swiftly to the conclusion that 'education systems are generally not keeping up with the challenges of today, let alone preparing themselves for the challenges of the new century'.

Having reviewed the basic education scene, globally, regionally and within the framework of child rights, the Seminar then explored the major questions of access, content and management, bearing in mind that deficiencies in educational opportunities for many children in developing societies are profound. As globalization advances and gaps widen between those riding the process and those left behind, repair of these educational system deficiencies will not be enough; fundamental changes will be required in how learning is promoted and provided.

From its exploration, six over-riding thematic issues emerged. These were as follows:

- **Equity of access and opportunity to achieve**
- **Learning to learn, and to live**
- **The child-friendly learning environment**
- **Financing and managing resources for learning**
- **Early Childhood Care for Development**
- **Adolescents: the case for inclusion**

Although this arrangement of topics does not coincide exactly with the arrangement of Seminar presentations and deliberations, it was adopted by the Seminar as the structure for the elaboration of its vision. It is therefore also adopted as the structure for presentation of its key thinking.

1. **Equity of access and opportunity to achieve**

The emphasis accorded by the Seminar to the need to ensure equity of learning opportunities for all children reflected the consensus that access to education is not a fading issue. On the contrary, given the importance now attached to rights-based approaches, there is an imperative to focus on the excluded child - of which millions still exist. Both the case presentations given during the debate on rights-based initiatives had emphasized affirmative action to bring into the classroom children previously excluded by poverty, gender, ethnicity or other discriminatory factor.

Examples of conditions that contribute to disparity and exclusion either within a school environment or in its societal setting were identified by the Seminar as follows:

- **Individual** - gender, health and nutritional status, HIV/AIDS status, and abilities and disabilities.
- **Social** - class, gender, caste, ethnic divisions, health and nutrition, status, parental status, HIV/AIDS, and family size.
- **Cultural** - gender concepts, language, birth order, language, religion, ethnicity, and early marriage.

**Economic** - levels of poverty, child labour and lack of demand.

**Location** - urban/rural/slum divisions, marginal communities, nomads, remote areas and emergency.

**Legal** - birth registration, citizenship and minimum age for employment, early marriage.

**Emergency** - natural or conflict.

**Political** - political systems that do not favour democracy, lack of good governance, governmental instability.

**School factors that push out children** - inflexibility, safety problems, violence, curriculum deficiencies, teacher absenteeism and indifference, and other aspects of poor quality.

Although equity issues must start with the notion of allowing every child access to education, equity issues also include quality issues. If the opportunities afforded to the newly-included are so inadequate or inappropriate that little useful learning takes place, equity will be meaningless. Thus establishing and maintaining quality standards, and paying for them, cannot be divorced from questions of access.

Initiatives to create learning opportunities for children who are excluded from school include those that target children in need of special protection measures: working children, children on the street, children with disabilities, and refugee and displaced children, for example. They also include initiatives to extend schooling to children in poverty-stricken and remote rural areas. One such initiative is the UNICEF-supported Community Schools project in Southern Egypt, one of the country's three most deprived governorates, described to the Seminar by Malak Zaalouk.

The pilot phase of the project began in 1992. The schools were neither non-formal, nor traditional; they used the standard curriculum but delivered it within a non-conventional structure. The community was to be closely involved from the start, not only with management but with staffing: the teachers or 'facilitators' were specially trained young women from the community. The objective was to provide quality, affordable and relevant education for the poor - not specifically a girls' education programme, although girls were targeted for enrolment and completion. School hours were made flexible to enable girls to fulfill other family responsibilities. In addition, quality and learning pedagogies were closely observed, active learning and child-centred pedagogies were critical pillars of the model, and student participation was respected. The children were expected to help plan their own daily timetable and learning activities.

> ‘Girls have become better respected. If a daughter can read the correspondence from a relative in the Gulf, she acquires status. She is beaten less often and is not sent to work with the animals.’
> Malak Zaalouk, UNICEF Egypt

In the pilot phase, only four schools were opened; between 1995 and 1998, a further 20, and between 1998 and 2000, the total is expected to expand to between 100 and 300 schools. Zaalouk emphasized the need to proceed incrementally, on the basis of capacity, demand, inspiration and gradual diffusion of ideas, and not to imagine that creating a 'good model' and rapidly replicating it as widely as possible was likely to work. Real commitment by government and community to a new type of child-
riendly teaching and learning environment had to be cultivated. And results had to be proven too, as indeed had happened: scores in arithmetic and language were high; children had done well in the acquisition of critical life skills; and their health and hygiene behaviour had improved.

There had been a number of spin-offs from the Community Schools project which gave cause for encouragement. The young women “facilitators” had grown in confidence and self-esteem, and many of the materials they had developed for use in class were now being adopted by the Ministry of Education for mainstream use. The communities were taking a much more active role in seeking development opportunities and assuming responsibility for their future fortunes. The Schools could be seen as a kernel of a social movement – a contribution to reform in a gradually secularizing society, and an example of positive alliance between government and civil society.

**Targets for inclusion:**

The Seminar divided into groups to discuss particular problems of providing education for certain groups whose social and environmental living conditions put them at risk: girls, working children, children affected by emergencies and conflict, children affected by HIV/AIDS, and children of minority groups. (Children with disabilities were not discussed, but were considered as one of several other key target groups.) In some of these groups, special case examples were examined.

Girls

In the case of girls in poverty-stricken areas, the situation of many girls excluded from education is generic: there is no special set of circumstances such as flight or conflict which is causing their exclusion. Firmative actions to bring them into school have to recognize the various economic, political, social and cultural reasons that are keeping them away, preventing them from completing school, and tackle these in tandem. In my African and Asian societies, early marriage is a potent reason for failure of a girl to complete primary and go on to secondary school.

Making the classroom more girl-friendly was regarded as important: all girls-only schools were not much liked since the opportunity for children of both sexes to develop respect for the other and negotiate relations is thereby lost. Avoiding the trap of fashionable, donor-driven interventions was also recommended: initiatives should be developed based on their own merit within the whole system, and the needs of all children at different ages are taken into account. The following were also recommended:

- A concerted effort was needed to document programme experience around girls’ education initiatives;
- Dialogue around the issues needs to be developed, to engage decision-makers, build alliances, and enable good approaches to be mainstreamed;
- More resources need to be mobilized for areas of dire need in Africa and Asia, with links with health and ECCD may also help leverage resources;
- Girls’ education should be addressed beyond the primary stage to prevent avoidable drop-out and early marriage.

**Working children**

The group addressing the educational needs of working children started by re-familiarizing themselves with the perceptual shift which has occurred in UNICEF regarding children in need of special protection. The focus today is not on categorizing ‘children in especially difficult circumstances’ but on recognizing that certain conditions - poverty, gender, socio-political collapse - create risk for children. Most working children are making an economic contribution to a household deeply beset by poverty.

Education is seen as a key intervention to reduce and prevent child labour. Educational programmes are needed for children missing out on school; dropping out to go to work; and children who have entirely missed out because they are needed to work at home or for their families. In the first instance, where it is poor, the quality and relevance of schooling needs to be improved in order to attract and keep children who otherwise vote with their feet to leave and do something more useful. Non-formal programmes for working children need to be integrated with the formal system.

The following UNICEF actions were proposed:

- concerted attempts to learn from existing programmes, such as scholarship assistance (Brazil and elsewhere);
- mobilization efforts with trade unions, the private sector, NGOs. children’s movements, mass media, etc.
- the promotion of ECCD to develop the school-going habit, prepare children for school and enable families to encourage and assist children to learn, and after-school programmes for reinforcement;
- active promotion of birth registration so as to enable regulations on schooling and working to be applied;
- the development of strategic partnerships so that interventions can be maximally effective.

**Children affected by emergencies**

The categories of emergency to affect children include man-made, complex and natural disasters. Displacement, within country or across borders, is a common result. In order to determine which children should be targeted, in which age groups, rapid appraisal is needed among emergency-affected populations. This appraisal process should identify the level of education already accomplished and the presence of teachers and caregivers in the affected population.

Systems of education learning environments should be set up as part of the emergency programme; this means registering existing teachers and providing training for other candidates. Such issues as what to teach, the language of instruction, provision of equipment and supplies, and agreement about compensation/remuneration for teachers will have to be addressed.

The following lessons have been learned about providing education programmes within emergencies:

- coordinate effectively with other agencies, and with representatives of the affected community(ies);
- use ‘child-friendly’ teaching methods; do not automatically reprint old texts and apply the old curriculum. Crisis is an opportunity for review;

**Somalia: Where there is no state**

As Geeta Verma constantly reminded the Seminar, there are countries in which the state as an organizational entity has collapsed, and yet services such as basic education are still provided. In Somalia, although the years of conflict saw closure of many schools, 80 per cent survived and have gradually reopened despite the cessation of food aid for teachers. On this basis, a system of community-owned schools is being developed, whose goal is to achieve sustainable community primary education.

The encouraging feature of the Somali experience is that the many non-state entities which have been brought into the process have readily accepted the idea that the community has the central role in meeting the educational needs of its children. Thus, the ‘community ownership’ characteristics so sought after by educational reformers elsewhere are being made a reality, even while standard ideas of the state’s obligations to meet children’s rights to education have had - for the time being at least - to be placed on one side.

Geeta Verma (UNICEF, Nairobi Somalia Liaison Desk, Kenya)
use the skills and talents of adolescents as well as providing them with services for sports and recreation;

- ensure that girls are fully included in educational opportunities as they are usually even further disadvantaged by emergencies.

HIV/AIDS

The group discussing HIV/AIDS gave considerable attention to the need for UNICEF itself to become more concerned about the HIV epidemic and the urgent need to protect children and young people against the virus. Organizational considerations - the need to appoint regional advisors and use intersectoral teams at the country level - were discussed; UNAIDS can do little without extra effort from its UN partners. It was even proposed that doing something about HIV/AIDS should be included in every job description, personal workplan, and performance evaluation.

Since the only strategy for protection from HIV infection is behavioural, educators are regarded as having an important role in promoting responsible attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, UNICEF should promote teacher’s training in life skills and education on sexual matters, and use its relative proximity to the community level in programmatic contexts to help do things that can make a difference.

Migrants and ethnic minorities

UNICEF is lacking in policy regarding children from ethnic minorities. Yet the advent of a new UN Convention recognizing people’s collective rights of identity other than by membership of a nation-state is the most exciting development in human rights activity since the CRC was passed in 1989.

At present, UNICEF is involved in some educational programmes for indigenous minorities in certain countries, and has pioneered some bilingual educational approaches for the early school years. More work needs to be done on developing intercultural educational policies, recognizing the rights of minorities to be ‘different’.

2. Learning to learn, and to live

"It is pretentious for UNICEF to be talking about what children have to be taught, or what the ‘good school’ should consist of. Let’s be realistic."

Andres Guerrero, UNICEF HQ

"We cannot get too involved in what the curriculum content should be. The curriculum is political and culture-specific. Most curricula have ambitious objectives which are not fulfilled in the classroom. Generally, we should be concerned less with the curriculum than with the teacher’s behaviour and what is happening in the classroom."


The ‘quality’ components of basic education were broadly divided into two categories by the process of Seminar discussion: firstly, the content of the educational curriculum and issues associated with what children learn and what they need to learn; secondly, issues to do with the learning environment and whether it is ‘child-friendly’.

The Seminar sub-group which worked specifically on content of education and what constitutes ‘basic skills for living’ reached a useful definition of what the content of learning should be:

This definition was as follows:

The content of learning should provide a foundation to enable all children to fulfill their potential as individuals within their varied cultural contexts. Language and numerical skills are fundamental tools for learning how to learn. Primary school instruction should be given in the child’s first language. When needed, instruction in the official language will be taught as a second language until functional fluency is achieved. At the end of the basic education cycle, all children should be able to read, write, be numerate and express themselves to a nationally specified level, and to solve problems in their daily lives. They should know how to learn, accept change and diversity, live healthy lives and make a positive contribution to the welfare of their families and their communities.

One of the key resource persons on ‘learning’ was Rosa-Maria Torres, previously a senior UNICEF Education Adviser but now Coordinator with IIEP-UNESCO in Buenos Aires. Torres outlined a number of the incorrect common assumptions about learning which educators have been trying to challenge in the post-Jomtien world. These false assumptions are as follows:

1. Learning takes place only, or for the most part, in school. ‘Education for All’ is understood as ‘School for All’, ‘Basic Education’ as ‘Primary Education’, and an ‘expanded vision of education’ as an extra number of years of compulsory education.

2. Learning requires teaching. The assumption is that learning cannot take place without a teacher and facilitator; very little credence is given to autonomous learning, learning through discussion, learning by doing, experiential learning etc. Teacher training is based on the model of the teacher as all-imparting.

3. Teaching results in learning. This is not always the case; however, this assumption leads to labels such as ‘learning difficulties’ with any failure attributable to the student. Teaching is viewed as a simple task, with low status, low salary, etc.

4. Learning only happens to the student. The teacher is not seen as a learner, and initial training is considered terminal.

5. Learning relates mainly to children. Childhood is seen as the appropriate age for learning; the child is a blank slate and ignorant prior to school. All educational indicators are focused on children.

6. Teaching-learning is an adult-child relationship. Many other relationships exist — child-child, youth-child, adult-adult, youth adult — etc. but remain unrecognized.

7. Learning depends on listening to the teacher and reading books. The child learner tends to be seen as a passive recipient of information, with the teacher either providing information verbally, or manipulating it.

8. Teaching and learning are mutually exclusive. Teachers and learners have fixed positions; it is difficult for teachers to recognize that most of what they learn about teaching takes place when they are students.

9. Learning at school is primarily related to content, as in the curriculum. The content of education is largely seen as subject matter, and as information, knowledge, concepts and facts; no inclusion of values, skills, competencies, processes and beliefs.

10. Learning is measured with tests and reflected in scores. Emphasis on measuring learning achievement is usually taken to mean emphasis on standardized tests and national evaluation systems.

11. There is a cause-effect relationship between teacher learning and student learning. What the teacher knows is transferred to the learner’s mind and translated into learning.

12. Learning is the predictable output that results from a given set of inputs. There is a boom of prescriptions in the education field and an increasing use of ‘list logic’; the economic logic of inputs and outputs is increasingly dominating educational reform, with cost-efficiency as the main criteria of ‘educational success’.

It was generally agreed that UNICEF must be more concerned with ensuring that all children learn the basic knowledge and skills required for
Measuring basic learning

Following the Jomtien Conference, three South Asian countries - Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal - successively undertook evaluations to determine to what degree children were acquiring basic learning competencies as a result of the education they were receiving. The experiment was intended to help establish benchmarks for progress towards EFA 2000 and develop a measurable standard for basic education.

Each country established its own view of 'basic competencies', under the headings reading, mathematics, writing and life skills. Bangladesh and Nepal opted for four competencies; Pakistan for eight. In areas such as writing, or mental arithmetic, the task was slightly differently set from country to country. 'Life skills' was a questionnaire on topics such as benefits of vaccination or qualities of drinking water, with the questions varying from country to country.

The results of the studies showed that the connection between school attendance and learning achievement was not guaranteed. In Bangladesh, five years of schooling was needed before a significant proportion of children (46 per cent) 'passed' the learning competencies test; only at six years did the proportion rise to 66 per cent. In Pakistan, children who dropped out of Class 5 did better than those who stayed in, and children who never went to school did better than those in Class 1. In Nepal, 56 per cent of children with 5+ years of schooling managed to satisfy basic education criteria.

The studies may have been somewhat crude, but they did show that access to schooling on its own is meaningless. There is a need to demonstrate that organized learning truly does make a difference, by this type of study or some other.

ving in the new century, but the question of what should constitute the essential package of skills to be provided by basic education turned out to be contentious. Reading, writing, numeracy and the capacity for self-expression are seen by some educators as core skills; by others as enabling skills; some would describe them differently, for example as 'numerical reasoning', 'critical thinking', 'problem solving', and 'learning skills'. Some educators would add to them: physical skills (technical), psychosocial skills (interpersonal), and artistic skills. The designation of 'life skills' or 'skills for living' proved even more contentious. They might include health and hygiene; environmental skills: skills needed to operate a consumer; and information technology skills. The selection would vary depending on circumstances.

Systems of learning assessment provoked similar controversy. Certainly, systems are needed for gauging learning achievement, as well as assessing educational systems themselves. Any system of testing or evaluation has to be matched against a concept of what it is appropriate or relevant for children to learn and teachers to teach. In considering this particular set of issues, the Seminar drew upon the experience of Johanna Crichton, an independent education consultant with considerable experience in CCCE/CIS.

Crichton questioned whether the search for 'relevance' in education - a search as old as educational systems themselves - can ever be owned with success. What is 'relevant' today may be 'irrelevant' tomorrow: very quickly, therefore, the search for 'relevance' may restrict educational content to what is considered useful and practical.

'Confusing education with schooling is equivalent to confusing salvation with the church. There is a connection, but it is not the total answer.'

Johanna Crichton, Independent Education Consultant

She admitted that her prejudice against the search for 'relevance' is influenced by her knowledge of what had happened in the recent past in eastern Europe. In 1991 in Romania, for example, only 4 per cent of secondary school children were in academic education, and 96 per cent were 357 different types of vocational or technical school, so narrowly tied to occupation or specific factory that a child's future from age 14 was determined by location and the demands of national manpower planning. The post-Communist transition, most of these factories and trades have disappeared. Echoes of this case of relevance-gone-mad could be found throughout the states of the erstwhile Eastern bloc.

Crichton identified a recent shift from knowledge-based to competence-based learning, and to a demand for standards in education. Both, in her view, are needed for improving quality to achieve real as opposed to spurious 'relevance'. Children need the capacity to act in accordance with reasonable judgments based on intelligent assessment of relevant evidence, and the capacity to be self-reliant in the exercise of effective freedom in a changing world.

UNICEF's role in curriculum development or curriculum reform has not always been clear. If the organization is to become more active in this field, it will have to document examples of successful activity, develop more expertise in promoting curriculum reform processes, raise additional resources for this area, identify appropriate institutions, build new partnerships and generally take on all the necessary challenges incumbent on a higher profile in this area.

3. The child-friendly learning environment

One of the key themes of the Seminar was the need to provide an enabling environment for learning, in terms of its design, management and the range of activities which takes place within it. The essential characteristics of an enabling environment for learning were identified during the course of presentations and discussions as follows:

• the environment should be accessible for all children in all circumstances;
• it should be gender sensitive;
• it should be physically attractive;
• there should be space for recreation, play, leisure and expression;
• the environment should facilitate learning achievement;
• there should be student participation - not just in active learning but in school management;
• the environment should be free from violence (including corporal punishment), intimidation, discrimination and emotional abuse;
• there should be safety from, and awareness about, disease;
• students should be safe from sexual harassment and exploitation;
• students should be safe from environmental hazards and safe disposal of waste and safe water should be available;
• counselling should be available to address children's social, emotional, and psychological needs;
• the use of information technology and the media should be encouraged.

This concept of the child-friendly learning environment was explored in a number of presentations, including those by Rosa-Maria Torres and Johanna Crichton, since not only the material character of the school but the attitudes of teachers and managers have an important bearing. There is a need for social transformation away from hierarchical and patriarchal assumptions about knowledge and learning, which implies changes in teacher train-
ing as well as in school management systems. Creating a more child-friendly learning environment, with quality inputs and processes, is critical to the retention of children (especially girls) in school.

"There are different concepts of the child-friendly school. WHO primarily emphasizes physical and mental health and safety; others would add the element of joy and psycho-social support. Then there is the rights-based and child-centred perspective. And many educators would want to include the quality of learning; if the school is not pedagogically effective and "learning-friendly", it is not "child-friendly"."

Sheldon Shaefeer, UNICEF New York.

The importance of this concept in the perception of the Seminar led to further work, and an expanded version of the determining characteristics of the rights-based, child-friendly school was developed by a sub-group of the Seminar. The child-friendly learning environment was defined as one that does the following:

1. Reflects and realizes the rights of every child: the school monitors and promotes the rights and well-being of every child, both inside and outside the institution.
2. Sees and understands the whole child, in a broad context: is concerned with what happens to children before they enter the school (i.e. their readiness, nutritional status, social skills), and once they have left the classroom, back in their homes, communities and workplace.
3. Is child-centred: encourages creativity, participation, self-esteem, self-confidence, psycho-social well-being; promotes child-centered teaching-learning methods, and puts the needs of children first.
4. Promotes quality learning outcomes: encourages children to think critically and express their opinions; helps children master essential learning skills, and values of peace, democracy and respect for diversity.
5. Provides education based on the reality of children's lives: ensures that curriculum content responds to the learning needs of individual children and objectives of the education system.
6. Is flexible and responds to diversity: meets differing circumstances and needs of children.
7. Acts to ensure inclusion, respect and equality of opportunity for all children: does not stereotype, discriminate or exclude on the basis of difference.
8. Promotes physical and mental health: encourages healthy behaviours and practices.
9. Provides education that is affordable and accessible: especially for children and families most at-risk.
10. Enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment and status: ensures that teachers have sufficient pre-service training, and in-service support.
11. Is family-focused: attempts to work with and strengthen the family, and helps children, parents and teachers establish harmonious relations.
12. Is community-based: strengthens school governance through a decentralized, community-based approach involving parents, local organizations and civil society.

The following were identified as the programme implications for UNICEF in giving more attention to quality learning environments and learning processes:

**Leadership**

Quality learning implies that educational programming will take place with enlightened leadership including the committed participation of those who decide on resource allocation. This leadership would be constantly evolving through in-service training and supportive spaces for reflection. This leadership should exemplify the learning ethos - acknowledging the contribution of all.

**Resources**

More resources, as well as better use and/or targeting of resources, to achieve a quality learning environment must be allocated; these include human, financial and in-service training for self-improvement. This is true not only within the countries where we work but also within UNICEF at all levels. Creating a learning environment is a staff-intensive process which requires involvement at all levels, i.e., policy dialogue, creating partnerships and networks, capacity building, and models that are carefully built, evaluated and documented, to go to scale.

**Intersectorality**

Quality learning implies intersectorality and collaboration. It is commonly understood now that learning is interrelated with other health and environmental issues. Learning must be promoted with those other physical, economic and political conditions. This does not happen in a linear fashion but rather in an integrated and interactive process.

**Commitment**

Quality learning requires a long-term commitment. This commitment is not only a leadership commitment but one of the whole agency. Programmes should be based on sound analysis and assessment and not driven by fads and funds.

**Evaluations**

Quality learning implies that there will be more evaluations and a formative account of lessons learned to inform the system. These evaluations should reflect how those innovative interventions have impacted the broader systems of education.

**Partnerships**

Quality learning requires expanded partnerships; partnerships that would include NGOs, civil society and the private sector. We must empower and build capacity of partners - parents, communities, children themselves.

**Communication and dialogue**

Quality learning requires dialogue across the different levels of the organization and with all partners, as well as listening to them with respect -- contributing to and learning from our partners.

**Mental health**

Staff morale is essential for creating a learning environment in the organization. Dignity of staff should be respected. All parts of the organization should have a clear understanding of what is urgent, important and necessary.

4. **Financing and managing resources for learning**

The twin themes of financing basic education and managing basic education were each given systematic attention during the Seminar. On the financing side, the Seminar drew upon contributions from Peter Buckland of UNICEF HQ, author of a paper: *Making quality basic education affordable: What have we learned?* and from Mark Bray of the Comparative Education Research Centre in the University of Hong Kong, and Carolyn Winter from the World Bank.

The debates about financing and management reform take place in a climate in which the idea that ‘free’ education can be provided universally is gradually being abandoned in some regions. Although Article 28 of the CRC enjoins states parties to ‘make primary education available free to all’, the resources for universal free basic education are simply not available in many countries. UNICEF and others have come to acknowledge that, in order to help pay for education, civil society can and should mobilize contributions; but because this often works in favour of the already relatively privileged and well-off sections of society, care should be taken that it is done in a way that promotes equity and protects the disadvantaged. The
Centralization of management sought by reformers in order to promote a better quality, more participative and community-involved schooling system implies participation by the community in financing as well as in other areas. Indeed, parents have proved time and again that they are prepared to contribute towards schooling if the investment is worthwhile in their respective improvements in the quality of schooling and some enhanced role or private sector contributions may effectively go hand in hand.

Key financing and management issues were addressed in the form of questions which participants invited to debate. Some of these were as follows: Should UNICEF promote fee-free education at primary and secondary level and if so how does it think schooling should be financed? Is it within UNICEF's remit to discuss with government such issues as the method of public financing for education? And, where it exists - corruption? In its own funding policies for education and given the target of equitable access, should UNICEF focus on the hard-to-reach who will otherwise be ignored, or do the extra costs of educating the hard-to-reach mean that the majority must be served first? What can UNICEF do to support successive decentralization of management authority to districts, communities and schools? How can systems, and school heads, be made accountable within the decentralized set-up? Given that school heads can become new tyrants, should systems be as powerful as centres?

The group who addressed these issues articulated a three-part vision for UNICEF activity to respond to these issues, and identified appropriate pragmatic actions: promoting the improvement of management capacities at all levels within education systems, especially in the context of decentralization processes; ensuring that the State fulfils its responsibility for the mobilization, allocation and management of resources for learning in an equitable and effective manner; promoting the empowerment of families and communities to help fulfill the right of children to education.

Declaring the improvement of management capacities should be done within a process which sets out to decentralize authority, accountability and sources to communities and schools. A participatory process is needed to articulate the roles and responsibilities at the various levels (national, state, province, district, community, school).

It is especially important to focus on improving school- and community-based capacities. Decentralization requires strengthening central and strategic or provincial capacities as well, notably to support activities at the school level; but the primary strategy should entail the strengthening of school/community level managers in the following areas: data collection, management and use of technical skills and knowledge communication and mobilization skills planning.

In preparing for decentralized approaches and management reform, considerable capacity building of managers and policy makers at all levels will be needed. Basic educational management training, for ministry and NICEF staff, on issues related to decentralization, should therefore be a high priority.

Mobilization, allocation and management of resources
Better management of educational resources requires situation analysis within countries with an in-depth cost and finance focus, against which effectiveness and impact can be determined. There needs to be clear understanding of national budget allocations, and the existing choices that national and local governments are making in terms of allocating money for basic education. Such analysis needs to be disseminated, in a manner which is understandable, at all levels of society as a means of advocacy.

Analyzing what are actual costs and budgets of education, on the national and local level involves conducting research on opportunity costs and cost burdens: What are they, who is required to pay and in what manner, how can they be quantified, and what is their impact on access and quality? Such studies must also examine positive deviance, with analysis of opportunities costs in terms of why some families and communities are still able to educate their children.

There is a need to refocus priorities on issues of real costs and equitable financing rather than on traditional budget analysis of programme activities. There is a need to look more broadly at education sector programmes; analyses should encompass higher, primary and other parts of the education system rather than just on accounting and budgeting of UNICEF supported activities. This requires capacity building for UNICEF staff and allocation of technical assistance to country offices as required.

Monitoring systems or special tracer studies are required that track children as a means of comparing fund allocation to performance and the impact on learning.

Efforts should be made to share experiences and successful models of decentralized management approaches and equitable financing strategies between and within countries. These will include conducting research studies to show the impact of decentralized management on learning outcomes and system performance. This process of informed advocacy will allow strategies to be based on facts and experience, not just on wishful thinking.

Within programmes, there is a need to ensure equity and a fair distribution of resources, based on the analysis of opportunity costs and cost burdens. Strategies to balance incentives, varied levels of public finance support, and resources raise at the community level should be based on a detailed analysis of specific areas and communities.

The need for mechanisms to coordinate inputs from all levels (ministry, district authorities, communities/schools) and from donors should be recognized. This also involves knowledge accumulation and dissemination between public and civil society and donors.

There is also a need for advocacy of policy shifts within the Banks, and with policy makers among counterparts, to support equitable resource allocations for basic education. Such advocacy can rely on dissemination of research findings, on cooperation between counterparts and on the use of the CRC as a lens for policy analysis.

Finally, the Seminar participants recognized that UNICEF itself needs to address issues relating to financing education, recognizing that there has not been equivalent donor support for education as compared to other sectors. In an extra-mural session, a senior representative of the UNICEF Geneva Regional Office met field-based UNICEF education officers to discuss the potential for fund-raising for education among the UNICEF National Committees.

'Schools get new rules'

On the very day that the Seminar discussed decentralization of management structures in education systems, the Italian press announced a 17-point plan to give schools more independence from the central educational authorities from year 2000. The aim is to reduce bureaucracy. The plan allows schools the freedom to determine their own schedule, their own extra-curricular programmes and field trips. The newspaper item concluded: 'Schools may have to struggle to make sense of the new plans for increased autonomy'.
Decentralization and community involvement

Various examples of educational reform and devolution of management responsibility to local level were cited during the course of group discussions. Some of the key presentations were as follows:

1. Lebanon (Mona Nabhan, Lebanese American University): National revision of educational administration and school administration to revive and improve public schooling, including new rules for the participation of citizens and municipalities in developing local schools.

2. Laos and Cambodia (Anne Dykstra, UNICEF): Cluster schools have been developed to utilize resources to the maximum. The group of six to nine schools in a vicinity shares teaching and learning materials, facilities and staff so that access and educational quality of all the schools in the cluster is improved. The model implies a degree of decentralization and local participation in management.

3. Madagascar (Suzanne Allman, UNICEF): The revitalization of primary schools under a UNICEF-assisted programme involves the community engaging in a diagnosis of its problems and committing itself to a 'community education contract'; this is based on a Malagasy tradition known as DINa. These DINa contracts commit the community to enrol all children in school, and set up a Parents Association which collects funds for books, school supplies and sometimes school renovation.

The empowerment of families and communities

UNICEF should provide support for the development of school-based improvement plans with community and family inputs, in order to allocate resources to schools on a rational basis and ensure their proper utilization. Such plans should include the level of control over resources, with accountability mechanisms, to be placed at the school/community level. Such a strategy entails establishing mechanisms for direct financing to schools.

5. Early childhood care for development

There has been an increasing level of recognition within UNICEF that the early childhood period should not simply be seen as a time when care is needed to ensure child survival, physical growth and protection from disease, but that care is similarly needed to promote essential psycho-social and cognitive development. Olivier Brasseur, Director-General of the International Centre for Childhood and the Family in Paris, suggested that UNICEF has still not fully grasped the important role of education in early childhood; an educational as well as a care element is needed to underpin early childhood development, without which the rest can easily collapse. There has also been a tendency in some UNICEF offices to interpret the post-Jomtien emphasis on primary education as a simultaneous de-emphasis on education at the pre-school age - which should instead be seen as an additional focus of concern.

Early childhood care for development (ECCD) has been subject to a great deal of definitional reassessment, including the period it covers (which can be considered as up to school-going age, which in some countries is as late as eight, or even include the early years of school-going). Some of the key proponents within UNICEF of integrated programming for young children aged 0-8 now prefer to describe this area as ECC for Survival, Growth and Development; the definition the Seminar reached was as follows:

*Early Childhood Care for Development is a comprehensive and integrated approach that prepares children for life and learning, and enables caregivers to respect, protect, facilitate and fulfil the rights of the child to survival, growth, protection, development and participation. ECCD is child-centered, family-focused, community-based, society-supported, and globally advocated. ECCD might take place within the family, within the community, within a pre-school; it forms part and parcel of a holistic view of the child, of basic education, and of human development generally. Emphasis should not be on the ideal ECC package, universally prescribed, but on the principle of multi-disciplinary approaches matched to problems and possibilities.*

A presentation by Fený De Los Angeles Bautista of the Community of Learners Foundation (COLF) in the Philippines illustrated how ECCD has played an important role in the rehabilitation of the Aeta community whose ancestral homes were destroyed by the 1991 eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. The initial COLF programme established home-based early childhood care of children aged 0-3 and their parents; for children in the 4-6 age group, ECCD was provided in centres. In the second phase of the programme, the above 7 age group were also targeted, together with their parents, in home-based education programmes. Thus the health, nutrition and educational needs of the small child, the pre-school child, the school-aged child and the parents were all addressed.

Livelhood activities were also developed as part of the parent education programme, leading eventually to the formation of cooperatives. These involved vegetable gardens, animal-raising, and other income-generating activities of a mainly home-based and agricultural variety. As the programme progressed, more and more parents and local people were

Going to scale with educational reform

In a presentation on new opportunities in education, Johanna Crichton reflected on the obstacles that prevent educational reforms from achieving progress. Crichton claimed that insufficient information is one of the main barriers to 'scaling up'. These barriers are often inherent in the design of reforming projects.

Faulty assumptions include the notion that the major constraint to improving educational systems is lack of money or lack of technology. There is also an illusion that projects can be standardized and transferred across a large number of beneficiaries. Crichton believes that lack of achievement in educational change can often be attributed to the lack of grass-roots demand for education to be different. Reforms, in order to work, must be demand-driven, well-understood locally and meet a perceived need; they must engage the efforts of stakeholders. Sustainability must be built in from the start.

Reform itself, Crichton continued, should not go to scale. Taking reform to scale arbitrarily violates some of the very conditions for success: locally felt need, local leadership, local accountability. What is needed, therefore, is replication of the conditions for success, meaning the stimulation of local debate and local demand. Reform is risky, painful, and slow, and will only work when people want it to work. It can only go to scale when the conditions for success themselves go to scale.
6. Adolescents: the case for inclusion

"CRC education rights are not just for 6-10 year-olds. The goal is basic education for all, not just primary education for primary-school age children."

Manzoor Ahmed, UNICEF Tokyo

Adolescence is the period of life in which the child is making the transition to adulthood. It is therefore a pivotal period, but because it is one in which the physical vulnerabilities of childhood have passed, it has often been neglected by service providers. However, new attention has been brought to the health and development needs of adolescents and youth by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the high proportion of HIV (and other STD) infections in young people. There is also more widespread realization of the numbers of children under the age of 18 (the outer limit of childhood according to the CRC) in need of protection from exploitation, abuse, or other kinds of rights deprivation.

The failings of the primary education system do a great deal to contribute to disadvantage and vulnerability among youth and adolescents. Over five years, at least 130 million children enter adolescence who have never enrolled in primary school, and a further 150 million drop out early from primary school. Of these adolescents, two-thirds are girls; most are in serious or extreme poverty; a large proportion belong to ethnic, linguistic or cultural minorities or are in remote and inaccessible areas; many are working children. The consequences of this failure are profound and include a severe wastage of human resources, an inter-generational perpetuation of poverty and underemployment, and an enhanced possibility of crime, violence and social unrest.

Jomtien had anticipated an expansion of basic education for adolescents and youth, and a halving of illiteracy by 2000, but little has been done. Most effort had gone into primary education, and although it is essential to move towards Universal Primary Education (UPE), this still leaves enormous unmet needs among adolescents without functional learning and life skills, and without the skills necessary to enter the employment market. A fuller picture of the situation of adolescents in the local setting, and a proper analysis at country and sub-national level are needed as a preliminary to a remedial strategy. Some of its major characteristics should include:

- diversified and accelerated ‘second chance’ or ‘bridging’ programmes through flexible approaches;
- links with vocational/skill development opportunities;
- responsiveness to learning needs of youth in respect of social responsibilities, preparation for adult roles, and other appropriate life skills;
- capacity-building for teachers and others such as social workers, police, and juvenile justice personnel who work with adolescents/youth;
- allowing for cultural expressions, creativity and leisure needs of young people;
- recognizing the capability of young people to participate in and contribute to their own self-realization and development of their communities and societies;
- harnessing young people’s creativity and energy for social change in the community and the family, and as role models/mentors for younger children;
- recognizing the need for support, understanding, and coping skills to deal with pressures and tensions adolescents face in a period of physical, social and emotional transition;
- addressing the special needs of young people caught in various special circumstances such as armed conflict, abandonment, displacement, institutionalization, including the need for ‘safe spaces’;
- sensitizing young people, both boys and girls, to gender stereotyping and ways of counteracting gender discrimination.
Operatori di strada (street operators)

One of the field visits was to encounter 'operatori di strada', young outreach workers who work with Italian 'street youth'. Their job is to make contact with teenagers who are living a close-knit, peer-based life outside the mainstream of society. This can happen at the age at which they have finished compulsory schooling and left school, but have no purpose in life and no place to go. They become alienated from society, and tend to form their own hidden groupings.

The fear of parents, and of society, is that they become involved in drugs, become pregnant or father children, or get into other types of trouble for which they need help, but have no means of obtaining it. The outreach workers make contact with the groups, and try to build up their trust and confidence as a starting-point for counseling.

Although superficially the situation of this 'street youth' seemed different from that in many developing countries, in fact they had a lot in common; a sense of alienation, their own peer groups, codes and ways of life and, in some cases, drug or alcohol abuse. The difficulties faced by those offering services in gaining their trust are also extremely familiar.

In order to promote the range of activities described above, UNICEF would need to develop a number of strategies, drawing upon its existing experience with programmes addressing adolescent needs. A better understanding of the situation of adolescents and youth should be developed, by collecting specific age- and gender-disaggregated data. The capacities of adolescents themselves, and their own ability to plan and manage programmes should be utilized, in keeping with the spirit of participation and the CRC. Partnership relationships with appropriate NGOs and other organizations would be needed, especially to work on such issues as educational reform and re-integration of youth in schooling systems.

UNICEF could foster advocacy for the group as a whole to help offset the negative and threatening images associated with adolescents in many environments, both at national and international level; this could include covering young people above age 10 or 12 as a specific group in flagship publications such as the State of the World’s Children Report.

A concerted effort to mainstream adolescent concerns in UNICEF's own organizational priorities was needed. Commitment to this neglected group requires that UNICEF's own structures for addressing programme concerns contain within them the capacity to develop intersectoral and integrated strategies focusing on adolescent needs.
ART III: THE FUTURE

described in the introduction to this Report, the last two days of the Seminar were primarily spent in an intensive participatory exercise to promote the UNICEF vision of Basic Education for the 21st century.

The six themes used as the framework for the discussion and for Part II of this Report were first identified by an exercise in which participants made ten proposals. All participants were then asked to make specific suggestions of subjects to consider under the six headings; these were written up on flip charts during an extended session. Armed with these suggestions, six content groups then went off to draw up a set of proposals under each topic. The distillations of Seminar deliberations they produced can be seen achieving something close to consensus about UNICEF's future priorities on basic education, and all their reports have been heavily drawn upon in the compilation of subject material in Part II. However, they cannot be seen as stand-alone documents with comparable formats to which full Seminar approval has been given; thus they are not reproduced in full in this Report.

While the six content groups were exploring their themes, a smaller group set out to draft an overview of the UNICEF vision. This overview was to serve as the individual groups and to the Seminar as a whole for feedback and critique to all thematic areas. Thus it can be seen as the key statement to emerge from Seminar discussions. It has subsequently been used as the basis for further discussion by the UNICEF Education Team. This is the aim in full, as developed at the Seminar:

ICEF's vision of Basic Education for the 21st century

The Seminar on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the adoption of the basic education articulated in the Declaration on the Right to Education for All, and the 1995 UNICEF Strategy for Basic Education, in partnership with governments, other UN organizations, bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, and civil society, UNICEF brings it to the following vision:

All children will be able to fulfill their right to education, meet their basic learning needs, realize their full potential, and participate meaningfully in society. This will be achieved through access to high-quality, child-friendly learning environments, including:

- comprehensive early childhood care
- quality primary schools and equivalent education programmes
- expanded opportunities for adolescent education, participation, and development
- supportive families and communities that enable children to acquire a quality basic education.

The fulfillment of this commitment demands the following actions:

- Sustaining good quality, comprehensive care for young children, leading to their full development, through support to families and care providers of integrated, community-based programmes
- Sustaining access to and completion of good quality primary education through schools and equivalent education programmes, especially for girls and for those living in conditions that contribute to disparity, discrimination, and exclusion
- Sustaining expanded opportunities for adolescents to (1) acquire basic education when they have not received it; (2) continue to learn, with attention to life skills and preparation for adult roles; and (3) participate in society and contribute to its development;
- Ensuring that children acquire essential learning tools to obtain the knowledge, skills and attitudes critical to their own future, the well-being of their families, and their constructive participation in society;
- Enabling families and communities to help fulfill the right of children to education through greater participation in planning and managing educational programmes.

In fulfilling this commitment, UNICEF will work within a multi-sectoral framework and undertake long-term, sustained action to accommodate specific cultural, age, and country realities.

More specifically, operating from a rights-based approach, UNICEF will work to:

- Build and improve management capacities at all levels of education, especially in the context of decentralization and democratization processes;
- Assist the state to fulfill its responsibility for the mobilization, allocation, and management of resources for learning in an equitable and effective manner;
- Expand and enrich learning opportunities through the media and the use of new communication technologies;
- Develop and enhance processes of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of learners, programmes, and education systems.

HQ and Regional follow-up

During the final session of the Seminar, participants met within HQ and regional groups to identify particular actions and emphases they would pursue within programmes as a result of the Seminar discussions and the inspiration it had provided.

At the headquarters level, there was a strong commitment to rediscovering and revitalizing the Education For All movement. This required clarifying the concepts of basic education, as well as a well-defined stance on what UNICEF would and would not do, followed by an exercise in advocacy throughout the organization to explain and build capacity around the new corporate strategies. This would need good communications, liaison with UNESCO and other multilateral partners, and high-level support inside and outside the organization for intersectoral planning around the different EFA components.

Regional and country follow-up plans for work both within UNICEF and externally varied, depending on local situations and challenges; however, they also shared certain features:

- An intention to use the Mid-term review process to disseminate topics and ideas emerging from the Seminar; for example, in the Americas, 12 country MTRs were scheduled for 1999 and this was seen as a major opportunity to mobilize internally around an expanded vision of EFA.

- Emphasis on a concerted effort to identify, document and disseminate 'best practice' and 'lessons learned' on the six key theme areas. This will help regenerate interest in EFA, and point UNICEF's own efforts, as well as those of governments and donor partners, in practical directions.
Recognition of the need to remedy the paucity of accurate data about the situation (educational and other) of all children from 0-18 (not limited to primary-school-going children). The requirements of end-of-decade reporting, especially for EFA 2000, may provide special opportunities to get together a comprehensive, disaggregated situation analysis of children 0-18 at the subnational, national and regional levels. This was specially emphasized as necessary by the Asia and Middle East UNICEF teams.

A new emphasis on early childhood care for development, which received considerable attention in all regional follow-up reports. Also emphasized was the need to move from sectoral to multi-sectoral approaches; ECCD with its concern for the 'whole child' is particularly relevant in this context, as noted for Asia, Africa and CEE/CIS. Asia staff also noted the need for documented evidence on the impact of ECCD programmes for middle childhood, and for extra staffing and resources to give ECCD the attention needed. Africa staff felt that a year might be needed to reflect, gather data and look at experimental programmes.

Participation of adolescents was similarly noted as requiring an extra effort; areas where UNICEF is already active with youth can be mapped and documented. A clear intention was expressed by some regions (notably the Middle East and Africa) to broaden the focus on youth beyond HIV/AIDS and healthy life-styles.

Both the situation analysis and monitoring processes were felt by all regions to need to include indicators relevant to ECCD and adolescents; studies of youth and education could be undertaken in partnership with youth organizations, according to priorities developed by them (the Americas).

All regional groups underlined the need for country projects to develop networks and share information, using all available opportunities to promote an expanded agenda for basic education, among UNICEF offices and their many national and international partners.

Defining the child-friendly school was a concern for all regions; CEE/CIS was one of the regions which felt that each country office needed to develop its own definition of the child-friendly school and learner-friendly environment. Evaluations should stress quality issues more than they had in the past.

There is a widespread need to develop creative ways of identifying and reacting the excluded and hard-to-reach; this was especially underlined in the follow-up proposals from the Americas and the Middle East. Distance education solutions and use of the media needed to be tried out in the latter on an experimental basis.

One of the closing themes of the Seminar was that of partnerships for Education for All. Peter Okebukola of Lagos State University reminded the participants of the 'gains and pains' of partnership: the better use of shared resources and ideas on the one hand, and the difficulties and tensions that can occur — between UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank for example — on the other. Okebukola distinguished between traditional and strong partnerships, such as those with governments, international organizations and education authorities; average-strength partnerships, such as those with NGOs and the media; and partnerships which tended to be weak, such as those with universities, research institutes, political parties, learners, and teachers unions. Universities in particular had much to contribute in research, development of materials, model building and piloting new approaches.

Partnership will undoubtedly be a growing theme for the 21st century and the key issues identified by Okebukola included a mix of improving existing partnership modalities and opening new windows of partnership with the non-traditional groups. Each situation will require its own partnership arrangements, from the conceptualization stage through to project completion: there can be no general formula. Partnership, he insisted, was 'situation specific'.

In conclusion

A report of this kind cannot cover comprehensively the range of ideas and experience explored over the course of eight days. Many presentations were given — on innovative projects and special studies, on applying new Information Technology to the service of basic education, to which justice has not been done. Each participant was able to derive stimulation from many different sources, each of which enriched the opportunity to reflect in a concentrated fashion on how to advance the cause of Education for All.

The many syntheses in this report cannot adequately reflect the depth of group and individual thinking about a vast area of UNICEF's work. The importance of education in the UNICEF portfolio has grown since Jomtien, and is reinforced by the increasing organizational focus on fulfillment of child rights. Without the knowledge, information, personal enrichment and empowerment that organized learning can bring, the fulfilment of other child rights will continue to remain distant. Education for All, as a major goal for humankind, will receive a new injection of energy in the run-up to Jomtien II in the year 2000. Many participants returned to their country offices and organizations much better prepared to play a role in preliminary activity for that event.
**ANNEX 1 – SEMINAR PROGRAMME**

**Wednesday, 28 October**

**Morning**  
**Learning, education and schooling**  
Learning and learning environments.  
Learning, basic education, and schooling.  
Why is there an increasing focus on learning and what does this mean in practical terms?  
What is the range of learning environments about which we should be concerned?  
How do we facilitate children’s learning in all sectors?  
What do we know about the characteristics of environments that facilitate the foundations of lifelong learning?  

**Case Study:** “Community school project in Egypt” - Malak Zaalouk  
**Key resource person:** Rosa María Torres  
**Other resources:** UNICEF Working Group on Learning

**Afternoon**  
**Content, processes and outcomes of basic education**  
Why relevance must be part of the definition of quality.  
Evolution of the concepts of “life skills” and “peace education”.  
Learning to affect one’s future and to build better societies.  

**Presentation:** “Learning achievement and issues of quality in the primary classroom” - Cliff Meyers  
**Key resource person:** Johanna Crighton

**Thursday, 29 October**

**Morning**  
**Field visits** – see Annex 2  
Discussion of field visits.  
Discussion of findings, observations and lessons learned.

**Afternoon**  
**Who learns: making the ‘unreached’ a priority**  
An overview of the particular circumstances of five groups of children, followed by group work. Five groups will be convened to discuss lessons learned, programmatic implications and strategic opportunities related to one of the special risk groups defined here.  
**Girls - Dominique Tallet and Barbara Reynolds**  
**Working children - Alec Fyfe**  
**Children of ethnic minorities, migrants and immigrants - Manuel Benza Pfluecker**  
**Children affected by emergencies, including conflict (internationally displaced persons and refugees) - Geeta Verma**  
**Paper:** “Childhood affected by HIV and AIDS” – Rana Flowers  
Followed by a plenary session to allow groups to integrate and synthesize their findings.  
**Key resource persons:** UNICEF participants

**Friday, 30 October**

**Morning**  
**Foundations for learning and for adulthood**  
Two concurrent sessions followed by one hour in plenary.  
1. Early Childhood Care for Growth and Development:

**Session 1**  
**Key resource persons:** Rana Flowers and Mary Joy Pigozzi
New conceptualization of ECCD.
Lessons learned for effective intersectoral work.
Programmatic implications in support of the early years of children’s lives.

Case Study: “Community-based ECCD for minority children in the Philippines” - Feny Bautista
Key resource person: Olivier Brasseur

2. Adolescence and the transition to adulthood:
Adolescents as a neglected group.
Special opportunities and risks associated with adolescence.
Learning for self-sufficiency.
Programmatic implications in support of the adolescent years.

Presentation: “Adolescents and youths: educational strategies for the neglected and vulnerable” - Manzoor Ahmed
Key resource person: Elaine Furniss

Afternoon Taking the next steps
Making education affordable and financing it:
Overview of cost and financing issues.
Examples of cost saving approaches, including but not limited to, efficiency issues and how they were financed.
Going to scale - institutionalizing cost-savings in education systems.

Presentation: “Cost and financing of education: what have we learned?” – Peter Buckland
Key resource person: Carolyn Winter

Saturday, 31 October

Morning Taking the next steps (continued)
Two concurrent sessions followed by one hour in plenary.
1. New opportunities for education:
   Promising innovations: assessing if and how to take them to scale.
   Using technology to increase access and improve quality.
   Linking with other sectors using advocacy and social mobilization.

Case Study: “DINA school programme in Madagascar” - Suzanne Allman
Key resource persons: Johanna Crighton and Rosa María Torres

2. Improving management:
   School-based management and greater school autonomy.
   School-based quality improvement.
   Multi-grade teaching, cluster schools, etc.
   Parent/Teacher associations.
   Community Involvement.

Presentation: “Educational reform in Lebanon” - Mona Nabhan
Key resource person: Sheldon Shaeffer

Monday, 2 November

Morning How can we have more and better impact?
A summary presentation including:
Main issues raised in the Seminar.
Major recommendations proposed by participants.

In plenary, participants consider how some of the lessons learned during the Seminar may be applied to effective implementation of the emerging agenda.

Afternoon Partnerships for Learning
In groups participants examine the potential roles of various partners in moving forward a new education agenda. Partner:
identified in the Seminar include:
UNICEF and multi/bilaterals
Governments
NGOs
Universities and research institutions
Schools
Community groups
Teachers’ unions
Monitoring bodies
Private sector, including business
Parent/teacher associations

Joint presentation: “Creative partnerships for EFA” - Peter Okebukola, Mary Joy Pigozzi, Kadayapreth Ramachandran

Tuesday, 3 November

Morning Developing a preliminary action plan
Building on work of the previous day and on the outcomes of earlier sessions, identify a series of action steps.
Recommendations for the following areas:
Policy
Strategy
Programme
Research and knowledge development

Afternoon Outline of specific plans for dissemination of key outcomes of the Seminar.
Identification of actions that need to be carried out by different actors to follow-up from the Seminar within UNICEF.
ANNEX 2 - FIELD VISITS

CENTRO ARABAM
A day-care centre with facilities for children and adults. Among the various activities of this centre, one of the main features is that while the children are introduced to the nursery, parents, grandparents, babysitters or others attend workshops on various subjects relating to child care. Parents and carers participate to a great extent in the activities of the centre.
Location: Bagno a Ripoli.

GAZZI LETTURA
A public library with a 'child-friendly' section; extensions of the library exist in various schools. Librarians are specially trained and children participate in the initiative.
Location: Bagno a Ripoli.

ERATORI DI STRADA (STREET OPERATORS)
An initiative mainly involves outreach groups who look at the situation of children at risk. This is an attempt to foresee situations and to intervene to prevent potential risk situations before they occur.
Location: Bagno a Ripoli.

AGGIORNAMENTO DOCENTI (TEACHER TRAINING)
The municipality of Bagno a Ripoli carries out a particular type of teacher training which is in line with innovative teaching methods and the subjects taught. Emphasis is placed on children's participation and early childhood development.
Location: Bagno a Ripoli.

SCUOLA PESTALOZZI
This school is famous for its history of children's participation, particularly with regard to the environment and curricula.
Location: Florence.

SCUOLA PAOLO UCCELLO
This is one of the few schools in Florence which has a large number of immigrant children and children from ethnic minorities.
Location: Florence.

Participants, organizers and the UNICEF International Child Development Centre would like to thank Luigi Remuschi, Carlo Testi, Giovanni Franceschi, Anna Tocchini and all staff at the centres visited for their help and cooperation.
ANNEX 3 – PARTICIPANTS LIST

Manzoor Ahmed
Director
UNICEF - Tokyo
Japan

Suzanne Allman
Project Officer, Education
UNICEF - Antananarivo
Madagascar

Bujar Basha
Director
Institute for Pedagogical Research
Albania

Staneala Beckley
Senior Project Officer, Education
UNICEF - Islamabad
Pakistan

Manuel Benza Pflucker
Consultant
UNICEF - La Paz
Bolivia

Maggie Black
Rapporteur
Oxford
United Kingdom

Aline Bory-Adams
Regional Education Adviser
UNICEF WCARO - Abidjan
Cote d’Ivoire

Olivier Brasseur**
Director General
Centre International de L’Enfance et de la Famille
Paris
France

Mark Bray
Director
Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong
China

Peter Buckland
Senior Adviser, Education
UNICEF - New York
USA

Nigel Cantwell*
Senior Project Officer
UNICEF ICDC - Florence
Italy

Gabriel Carron**
Senior Programme Co-ordinator
UNESCO - Paris
France

Johanna Crighton**
Education Consultant
Cambridge
United Kingdom

Frank Dall
Regional Education Adviser
UNICEF MENARO - Amman
Jordan

Ferny De Los Angeles Bautista
Executive Director
Community of Learners Foundation
Manila
Philippines

Anne H. Dykstra
Project Officer
Education, Child and Community Development Section
UNICEF - Bangkok
Thailand

Rana Flowers*
Project Officer, Child Rights
UNICEF - New York
USA

Robert Fuderich
Monitoring & Evaluation Adviser
UNICEF - Geneva
Switzerland

Elaine Furniss
Senior Adviser, Education
UNICEF - New York
USA

Alec Fyfe
Project Officer, Child Protection
UNICEF - New York
USA

Andres Guerrero
Programme Officer, Education
UNICEF - New York
USA

Wahed Hassan
Senior Adviser, Education
UNICEF - New York
USA
Sheldon Shaeffer*
Chief of Education
UNICEF - New York
USA

Alan Silverman*
Human Resources Officer
UNICEF - New York
USA

Perseveranda So
Project Officer
UNICEF - Manila
Philippines

Dominique Tallet-Brasseur
Project Officer, Education
UNICEF - N'Djamena
Mauritania

Katerina Tomaseski**
UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education
United Nations
Copenhagen

Rosa Maria Torres**
Coordinator, Area of Management of Educational Innovations
IIPE-UNESCO
Buenos Aires
Argentina

Nurur Ullker
Social Research and Education Officer
UNICEF - Ankara
Turkey

Yoshitaka Uramoto
Senior Programme Officer,
Planning and Advocacy
UNICEF - Jakarta
Indonesia

Geeta Verma
Chief, Education Programme
UNICEF - Nairobi
Kenya

Carolyn Winter**
Human Resource Specialist
World Bank
Washington D.C.
USA

Malak Zaouk
Chief, Education
UNICEF - Cairo
Egypt