

Non-Formal Primary Education

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The idea behind the non-formal primary education plan is to involve local communities and experienced and less experienced NGOs in the administration and day to day functioning of primary level schools. The NGOs will run these schools under their own guidance for the main part particularly in those presently under-served areas.

It is hoped by involving NGOs and local community minded people in supporting and even planning and executing non-formal programmes it may be possible to reach 'over age' students who were deprived of the opportunity for primary level education and in particular reach the girls. In addition it is hoped that through the good services of the NGOs it may be possible to develop a good variety of school-based programmes to help the very poorest in the community, with particular emphasis on the girls.

Support for such a programme will probably be forthcoming from suitable donors such as SIDA and the Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation. Some of the programmes so envisaged are school feeding programmes, provision of school uniforms, teaching aids etc. NGOs and local communities are free to design their own programmes and are not confined to tried programmes only. The only criteria for any programme seems to be that it should make the idea of school more attractive to students and be also instrumental in keeping them in school, once enrolled.

This last aspect seems to us to be the crux of the matter for without incentives few members of the poorer section of society have the motivation required to keep their children in school, at least up to Class Five, lack of funds being the most serious constraint yet in our world. Some little education is a must for everyone, which is a basic human right. Let us hope this is a step in the right direction.