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The teacher as a policy implementation and policy generating figure

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In 2007, 25 teachers conducted Action Research (AR) in collaboration with the Department of Research and Development of the National Institute of Education (NIE). They were required to observe and reflect on their classroom role to identify problems that need remedial measures for better classroom practices. Teachers were also guided to develop action plans to suit their perspectives and school environments. The impact of implemented action plans were assessed against qualitative criteria. Later they inductively identified theoretical underpinnings on five themes (Peace and value, Risk and disaster, Second language, Psycho-social care and Remedial teaching) based on which GTZ planned educational activities. Resource persons from the NIE guided the teachers on the conduct of action research and experts on five themes attached to GTZ provided content advice. Teachers visited the NIE on three occasions to get ideas on AR and the five themes and resource persons visited schools to break the ice in the minds of the teachers in conducting AR. During the research process, teachers displayed different types of innovations in teaching (Eg: planning lessons in modified ways, seeing performance of students with different perspectives, taking help from parents to upgrade learning of the child, developing innovative teaching aids). Further empirical data were collected to prove their innovations and as a result, in the process of AR, data based judgmental classroom practices were improved (e.g., using student diary notes to prove their feeling and self understanding of lessons). Multifaceted initiatives of interventions (e.g., guiding mothers to improve the quality of writing of primary school children; using first five minutes of a lesson creatively) based on data collected for AR as well as teachers' thought processes (e.g., moral principles for teachers) independent of the existing curriculum framework of textbook and TIM were identified. These innovations were used to develop classroom / school based policy papers by teachers themselves. As a result culture friendly classroom practices, curriculum innovations and modifications were suggested to the national level centralized curriculum as policy options. Due to AR reporting, the research writing skills of teachers were developed and oral presentation skills too were upgraded. Teachers confirmed the importance of action research cum reflection in self-development and in implementing centralized curriculum creatively at the grassroot level.

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