

NGO advocacy and quality education in developing countries

Zhao Zhonghua

Programme Director, Save the Children UK in China

It is perceived that, whilst development NGOs have secured worldwide small-scale successes, they have not achieved significant changes in the systems and structures that determine the distribution of power and resources within and between societies. As a result, their impact on the lives of poor people remains limited. Both for the sake of effectively helping as many people as possible and for the sake of securing their own survival and development, international development NGOs (IDNGOs) have been using 'advocacy' as an approach to influence government policy and practice in developing countries. While globally, access to quality education is still not a reality for children in developing countries, so the policy and practice of education in those countries are intensively targeted by IDNGO advocacy activities. Through a specific and previously unpublished case study from China, this presentation explains how a child rights IDNGO, namely Save the Children UK, used a practical advocacy approach, with a very modest total budget to achieve significant change in the way that minority children are taught in schools, in the way that training is delivered to teachers, and in the way that schools relate to communities. Further more, the schools are delivering better educational results, which has been a major factor in generating government enthusiasm for the project and the desire to extend its reach to other parts of China.

Reading materials:

- Edwards M. and Hulme D., 2004: 'Making a Difference: scaling-up the developmental impact of NGOs-concepts and experiences' in in Edwards M. and Fowler A. (eds): *The Earthscan Reader on NGO Management*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd.
- Molteno M. et al, 2000: 'Towards Responsive Schools: supporting better schooling for disadvantaged children --- case studies from Save the Children'
Free download at:
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/towardsresschoolsedpaper38.pdf>
- Qian T., 2005: '200 International NGOs in China: 'Directory reflects China's Growing Internationalization'. *China Development Brief*.
www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com/node/103 (July 10, 2007).