

Bee the Solution - Newsletter 12, October 2017

By Chrystel Vert-Pré

ALL ABOUT THE PROJECTS

The newsletter articles are inspired by the situations that we have encountered while working on the projects. In addition to those articles, we are also writing more specifically about each project that we are working on.

We want to tell the stories of the people we are trying to help: about the individual we have met, how we came across each other, what was the seed of the project, how the projects are coming together...

We will sometimes link to those stories in the Newsletter, but you can read them @ www.projects.beethesolution.org

TOPICS OF THE MONTH

[CALL FOR IDEAS/INPUT.....](#)

In the last newsletter, we defined [education](#) as a start to a series about education. The main definition we highlighted was:

Education is about **acquiring knowledge.**

Education is about **gaining an understanding.**

Education is about **getting instructions, guidance.**

Before going any further, we would love to hear from you about **YOUR** definition, view and/or understanding of **EDUCATION**... It is a very topical question as Education is a major development goal and we hear a lot about it on Social Medias. We also have our own views of the importance and definition of education that we will share as we go along.

Now, you might be biased by our initial thoughts - maybe we should have done this before, but we wanted to have some sort of common ground to ask the questions below and gather your views...

Based on the above definition, for **you**:

- *What is education? (especially if you disagree with the previous [article](#)...)
- *What is the place of schooling in education?
- *How one can gain education?
- *What is the right to education?
- *Why is education important (or not...)?

Give your opinion on all or some questions in the comment below (public) or by email to info@beethesolution.org - we will compile answers and build on it.

Share the questions with your friends - the more answers, the better overview we can have!

For inclusion in the November newsletter, please let us know by **27 November 2017**.

But, no worries, we will welcome later answers and add in further editions.

[Sustainable Development Goals](#)

SDGs or Sustainable Development Goals might be a familiar term for some or a far away notion for others. In view of our series on Education, we wanted to give a short overview of what SDGs are and what they mean for all of us.

“The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.” [UNDP: United Nations Development Programme](#)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The SDGs followed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)... Both set of goals were set by the UN members states to tackle worldwide issues.

The MDGs were launched in 2000 to make global progress on poverty, education, health, hunger and the environment and were to be achieved by 2015. In 2015, there was great advance in the achievement of the MDGs. Upon review of all achievements and the areas that still needed work, new development goals were set to carry on the momentum: the SDGs were defined, with a target of 2030.

From the 8 Millennium Development Goals, targets are more refined and we now have 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs approach every area of life, with targets ranging from health, food and water to life on land and below the sea, going through education, gender equality or climate.

All the SDGs and full details for each of them can be found on the [UN website, Dpt of Economic and Social Affairs](#).

We will look at the Sustainable Development Goal #4, which is the one directly related to Education in a series of articles, starting with its definition in this [edition](#).

[Sustainable Development Goal #4 - Education](#)

The Sustainable Development Goal #4 tackles the need for (**quality**) education at all levels - from school children to adulthood. It emphasizes full inclusion, with regards to gender but also age, disabilities, income or any other ground that can lead to discrimination:

“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”

For full details of the education goal #4 as well as progresses, check the [dedicated website](#) from the UN.

We just want to provide here high level details and have highlighted key points of the targets, aimed to be achieved by 2030. We will use these [high level highlights](#) throughout our future editions.

In essence, the goal focuses on:

- **quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education**
- **free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education**
- **affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education**
- **relevant skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship**
- **eliminate gender and other disparities**, including adapting the facilities for inclusive environment
- **ensure literacy and numeracy as well as knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development**

Community Challenge: Being a community...

One of my guiding principle is that we work better together than alone - as we say in French "L'union fait la force" (Together we are stronger). And one of the pillar of Bee the Solution is that **communities** can help themselves.

One of the "issues" that I did find sometimes (often...) is a lack of unity within community. There is a lot of competition between people and this somewhat hinders the ability to rise in many occasions.

I do not want to generalise, but this is the generality of what I see. I do know of communities that work together. But the ones that have been placed in my path are most times not united, working against each other rather than with each other... This is maybe why they have been on my road... I do not look for specific places, it has mainly been through people I have met or the road I have taken. There must be a reason.

One of my primary focus from there is to explain the concept of unity. To explain how working together can take us a step further and how working against each other can take us a step backwards. This is the first step to start a project together: get the community to understand their interest in walking in the same direction as one.

We believe what we want to believe and we do what we think is best: I do not set to change cultural views. I believe that in many case, I am not trying to change the "old" culture but rather the "new" culture that arose from possessions - everyone want what their neighbour has and will step on him to get it first. In the end, instead of growing and rising together, some communities hinder each other and go down together. As someone in a community did mention as a reason why his community is struggling: "People here pull each other down."

I have seen the example of a community craft market that was robbed by one member of the community. This meant the end of that market and the community was now back to "harassing" tourists, ten at a time. This attitude makes the tourists annoyed with all and generally they just leave without buying. And the stealing was not even about getting more money... only for the sake of stealing.

I have seen villages where people do not want to buy solar panels for lights in the evening: they could afford one of the small, cheap panels available. It is not so much a question of money. They do not want it because if you buy a panel in the community, it is very likely to be stolen the very next night by someone from the community (and again, not necessarily because of lack of money from the neighbour..).

To try and explain how working together can help and how the current attitude can be counter-productive, I use the following analogy, to make it easier to understand the concept as people can picture it as something they know.

Two people want a fruit from the top of the tree - they are at least 3 situations:

1. One climbs the tree on its own, and the other is watching, waiting for its turn. They will make it but it will not necessarily going to be easy and it will take time.
2. They are fighting to be there first and prevent each other to climb. One will eventually make it (and this is not even sure) but it will take more time and efforts than if he had been alone. The second will either also make it, taking even more time or he will not make it at all and will be in even worst shape than before (crushed to the ground).
3. They work together. One is helping the other to get 2 fruits (one for each). They will get the fruits faster and it will be easier for both.

How is your community?

[Why do we need to be on the ground? Part 7- Demonstration \(Continued\)](#)

We already mentioned the need that most of us have to learn through visual aid, more importantly through [demonstration](#).

A lot of people cannot learn through a book or written instructions. We often need/want visual aids. Think about the booming of step-by-step photo-instructions on the internet, and even more about the ever increasing numbers of video tutorials on Youtube. But even with pictures or video on the internet, some do need a “physical” demonstration. One of the reason is back to the access to internet (which we have touched upon when talking about [communication lines](#)): either for cost, practicality or “education”.

But there are also other reasons for demonstrations: some teachings cannot be done with mere words or drawing/pictures over a sms or email (or whatsapp or messenger or whatever form of communication we have nowadays). One reason can be the mastering of the English language (from both sides) but also the complexity of the teaching. Sometimes it is only a perceived complexity, but this prevents from learning/teaching.

There is also the “issue” of local environment: not one size fits all - and so, whatever we want to teach or demonstrate needs to be adapted to local conditions and culture. And we cannot adapt if we do not know well what is the current environment. We also sometimes test and try the general framework and adapt depending on the initial results. And this is not possible from 8'000 km away.

Some examples from our experience highlight the demand/need for face to face presence on the ground.

When I first did the [cooking demonstration in Zimbabwe](#), this was because I was asked to show people during my previous stay. When I did, I took pictures of all the steps, wrote the instructions and posted them... but before I even left, I was asked to come back and teach (demonstrate) to more groups on site... no matter how I can give those recipes, there is a demand for a face-to-face demonstration. Most people will just not follow the step-by-step internet instructions.

During the same demonstration, it was because of the success of the [Mango Atchar](#) that we (I) decided to try with another local ingredient ([kapenta](#)). It could have failed... but it was a success! We adapted to local environment, which we would not have thought about should we have been away.

When I went back to [Tanzania](#), it was not just to bring the drawings for the cooker: I could have emailed them over from anywhere in the world (they are actually available in French on the internet)... I understood the drawings, I could explain what was needed, I could make a small mock-up to help with the visual, I could go around to find a production place and negotiate costs... I could also help with fixing the original cooker... At the same time, I also tried to teach how to do all this.

None of this would be possible when sitting in an office thousands of kilometres away.

But then, some might wonder why there is this need... we do have a few ideas to answer this question and we will talk about them in future editions.

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Find all our newsletters in pdf format @ www.newsletter.beethesolution.org

To make sure that you receive our monthly newsletter, sign up on the website, for the English and/or the French edition: www.newsletter.beethesolution.org

FEEDBACK

Please do not hesitate to contact us @ info@beethesolution.org.

Feel free to send us feedback. We are open to suggestions and comments. As we are still young and learning, we value your opinion even more than usual and are very grateful for it.

Let us know about what you want to see in the Newsletter, which projects you are interested in, any ideas you have for a project.

Have a safe month ahead

Chrystel, (Maya), Odile, Hélène and Jean-Louis