



THE EDUCATIONAL APPROACH OF ENFANTS DU MONDE *The Pedagogy of Text (PoT)*

"Every child has a right to a quality education"

In order to implement this vision, Enfants du Monde has developed educational programmes for several years in partnership with state authorities and local organisations. The aim is to put forward an effective approach together, to obtain results which will eventually have an effect at national level.

What Enfants du Monde offers is a tried and tested teaching approach developed since 1987, called the *Pedagogy of Text (PoT)*.

In order to achieve far-reaching and lasting changes in the improvement of the quality of education, PoT is applied to all levels of the education chain, i.e. in schools offering a basic education to children, adolescents and adults, in the continuing education of teachers and facilitators as well as in the high-level (Masters) training of teacher trainers (at the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso since 2003, at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala since 2012, and at the University of Antioquia in Colombia from 2009 to 2012).

PoT enables the following education problems – often present in developing countries – **to be addressed:**

- parents do not always send their children of school-going age to school, in particular their daughters;
- education is not well adapted to local circumstances;
- education does not use or makes little use of local languages for teaching;
- teachers are often under-qualified;
- educational material is inadequate;
- absenteeism and school drop-out rates are very high;
- the academic success rate is very low.

PoT is a teaching and learning approach which enables children, adolescents and adults to acquire knowledge adapted to their needs and then use this knowledge to make an impact on their surroundings. PoT uses the learner's empirical knowledge (what he already knows) as a basis for comparison to scientific knowledge which he will acquire (what he must be taught).

As opposed to traditional methods, which are often rigid and far removed from the child's daily life, PoT encourages the pupil to actively participate during class and propose his own solutions to problems. PoT thus enables children not only to acquire knowledge as such, but also "to learn to learn", i.e. to develop learning mechanisms in a critical manner without limiting oneself to the simple act of memorising knowledge.

The name of the approach comes from the importance given to texts in the education process. Through "useful" texts (for example, a how-to guide for fertilisers, a bankbook, a letter to public services etc.) the pupil learns not only to read and write, but also to study mathematics, social science and natural science.

Some implementation examples of the PoT approach:

- **Teaching is adapted to the needs and circumstances of the local population:** in Burkina Faso for instance, children not only learn to read and write but attend classes on animal and crop farming. In addition, timetables are adapted so that the child goes to school in the morning while in the afternoon he or she can help her family (grazing animals, working the fields, drawing water etc.).
Outcomes: since schools listen to families and adapt the way they run to local life, parents are prepared to send their children to school. The school drop-out and absenteeism rates are very low. Teaching is hands-on and allows children and families to improve their living conditions and come out of poverty.
- **Teaching places the pupil at the centre of the learning process:** pupils are involved and encouraged to actively participate in class and to suggest problem-specific solutions instead of simply learning off by heart. This is a critical element in creating the desire to learn.
Outcomes: the academic success rate is high and pupils acquire abilities, knowledge and essential skills which will be useful to them in continuing to learn and in building their lives.
- **Teaching is bilingual and inter-cultural:** in Guatemala for instance, classes for Mayan children take place in Spanish and Q'eqchi (the Mayan language) and take the Mayan culture (medicinal plant use, Mayan customs etc.) into consideration.
Outcomes: thanks to bilingual teaching, children learn more easily and the success rate is high. Interculturalism increases Maya children's chances of developing in their community and fitting into Guatemalan society more easily. The Ministry of Education has officially recognised these bilingual schools, supporting them financially and extending the model initiated by Enfants du Monde to other schools in the country.
- **In schools which Enfants du Monde supports, at least 50% of pupils are girls:** non-schooled girls are more exposed to poverty than boys and have fewer chances of improving their social and economic circumstances.
Outcome: an educated woman generates a double dividend since on one hand she is able to improve her living conditions, while on the other hand she can give a better education and health to her children.
- **The Enfants du Monde schools give a second chance:** children between the ages of 9 and 13 who have never been to school or left school too early receive a basic education for 4 years. This enables them to then go to a public secondary school or perform an apprenticeship.
Outcome: children face a better future, are able to improve their living conditions and help their families.
- **Teachers receive good training:** the Universities of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso and Antioquia in Colombia offer a Masters in PoT aimed at teacher trainers. These very trainers then regularly organise ongoing PoT training for teachers and facilitators.
Outcome: the overall quality of teaching improves with all the positive outcomes mentioned above.