UNPACKING THE DISCOURSES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION/INCLUSION
UPPINGHAM, 22-24 February 2001

SUMMARY REPORT

Participation

A total of 30 participants took part in the Seminar. In addition, eight persons from the locality were invited to join the group for the reception and dinner. See lists attached. A gender balance of 18 women, 12 men was achieved. Overseas participants were 10, from Pakistan, India (3), Ethiopia (2), Argentina (1), USA (2), and South Africa. This level of participation was possible because of a grant received from CfBT for international participants. We also had a participant from UNESCO Paris and from Norway. Donor and agency participation was represented by IIZ-DVV, Education for Development, and IEC. DFID Social Division and Education Division were both represented. As in other years, a special effort was made to include younger participants, many of them post-graduate students. Five participants fell into this category.

This year several participants with UK experience were invited to match that of those with developing country experience. Although we were unable to obtain participants from DfEE and the Prime Minister's Social Exclusion Unit because of short notice, we did have several persons whose experience was confined to or included work on basic education in the UK - Sander Meredeen, Dr Jean Barr, Dr Diana Coben, Juliet Millican, Deryn Holland. Both Professor Barton and Professor Street have extensive experience of work in the UK. A major input session was devoted to the UK experience. In addition, an innovation this year was a session on a project in the USA which added greatly to our discussions. In this way, there was much bridging of developing country and Western/Northern contexts.

PROGRAMME

An introductory paper was prepared by Dr Arjan de Haan of DFID on the discourses of social exclusion/inclusion. This was circulated to all participants by e-mail and elicited four responses before the seminar met. The Seminar started by looking at the general issues before taking case studies from India, Latin America, USA, UK, South Africa etc to see how far the discourse of social exclusion/inclusion is a useful tool both for analysis and for planning/implementation.

OUTCOMES AND FOLLOW UP

Since the aim of the Seminar is not to come to any generally agreed opinion but to allow all the participants to engage with the topic and come to their own conclusion, no final agreed statement will be issued.

The Prime Minister's SEU and the DfEE SEU suggested that we should have a

meeting with their staff and others in London to discuss the issues raised since they were unable to participate. This meeting was held early in 2002.

FINAL REPORT ON UPPINGHAM SEMINAR 2001
Julia Betts

Unpacking the discourses of social inclusion/exclusion

Conference rationale.

The Uppingham seminars are held yearly in Uppingham, Rutland. They bring together theorists, practitioners and policymakers from different countries, to offer a rare informal opportunity for exploring questions of social theory and policy. Dilemmas such as the discourses of inclusion and exclusion hold increasing importance in today's rapidly-changing and increasingly globalised world; they impact on questions of 'development', and on practice and processes in both North and South.

The discourses of social inclusion and exclusion have become powerful tools in shaping Western social policy today. They are used to potent effect by policymakers, politicians and practitioners alike, to push often political agendas in the name of 'social equality'. Yet while the discourses gain momentum they still remain largely unproblematised; their adoption as a neutral 'reflector of social condition' often masks powerful ideological assumptions and agendas. Questions such as who is excluded, when and how; who does the excluding, and who labels who, still remain largely unaddressed in their employment.

The 2001 Uppingham Seminar aimed to redress this concern by unpacking some of the assumptions on which the discourse rests. Participants from a range of disciplines, and from many different parts of the world, met to share experience and expertise, to compare conceptualisations and perceptions, and to share ideas and understandings.

The broad range of perspectives and specialist knowledge present created a rich, wide-ranging and varied debate.

Two key questions provided an initial guiding focus for discussion:

1. Is the discourse of social inclusion / exclusion a useful tool for analysis?
2. Does it lead to a programme of action?

Discourse as politics: how is it used?

A background paper by Arjan de Haan provided a beginning context for the discussion. Arjan traced the historical development of the discourse and raised questions such as: the multidimensional nature of deprivation, the location of the discourse in Southern debates, the wide range of interpretations of the

term, and the issue of responsibility. His paper concluded by focusing on one of the key questions of Uppingham and of social theory today; does a gap exist in the development debate for these discourses?

Addressing these questions we noted that in modern usage, the shift has been made from 'otherness' in the past to current emphases on 'the included' and 'the excluded'. An emphasis on 'diversity' has moved the discourse beyond its previous 'deficit' and 'deprived' frameworks.

But examples from the governance of South Africa and Britain make us think hard about how, why and by whom these discourses are used. What meanings and agendas lie behind their employment? Discourses of inclusion often hide shades of integration, co-option and control. The Lapps in Norway, for example, found themselves incorporated into mainstream Norwegian society under the guise of inclusion - yet this constraining of diversity represents a powerful gesture of control by the State. Through political activism, the Lapps eventually gained their own government and political representation. Their striving for, and succeeding in, determining their right to diversity presents a challenge to their co-option by the dominant agenda.

Who? - the stories of delegates from different countries revealed different understandings of the role and power of the discourses of inclusion and exclusion in current social thinking. Those from the countries of the North were familiar with the current highly prevalent use of the discourse - for example the fact that in the UK, all government departments now have social exclusion units. The discourses have become a 'mantra' which 'give a cloak of respectability' (Alan Rogers) to programmes and policies which claim inclusion as their aim, while concealing a political and ideological agenda. But those from the regions of the South reported that that the discourses were not common in their experience, with the 'poverty' discourse providing a much more powerful frame. The World Bank focus, as in much of the development discourse, remains that of poverty rather than social inclusion / exclusion.

Why? - The question then for those from all regions, is why have these discourses become dominant in the North now? What social shifts have taken place that questions of inclusion and exclusion have come to the fore in Western thinking? Globalisation and the neo-liberal agenda, the new world order and the new work order all provide a context in which social inclusion and exclusion provide reference points for an ever more divided society, with knowledge being produced within this changing context. Thus the question becomes not just 'who is asking the question' but 'who is doing the defining?' - who declares the categories, who defines who as included or excluded? More alarmingly, is the 'bringing in' of the notion of exclusion to people's lives a way of manipulating policy and people for political, social and / or economic ends?

What purpose? - The question for delegates from both North and South, then,

is what purpose can these discourses serve? They do at least provide a mechanism for identification. And while people categorised as 'excluded' by the dominant discourse might not place this label on themselves, participants from these countries agreed that people are highly conscious of being deprived from access to institutions and resources, social and economic. Yet identification in itself is a dangerous thing; the South needs to do its own diagnosis of its problems, rather than merely implementing the strategies defined by others, according to external decisions about who is 'included' and who is 'excluded' (Rosa Maria Torres). The central question is, then, who defines the mainstream society? Who claims power as their own, and accordingly constructs those outside their networks as 'excluded'?

How? - Social inclusion / exclusion are constructs of discourse - 'a way of looking at the world'. They therefore create a 'discourse community', united by a common purpose (Alan Rogers). The discourses are created from or by interests. But it is not possible to distil them from the powerful political context in which they are both produced and applied; their uttering and usage - their bringing into the world - contribute to the surrounding processes and perpetuation of social change. In some Western agencies, these discourses are being used as a means for pushing the agenda towards a more dynamic vision of poverty (Arjan de Haan). Thus the issue of access, a central axis of the inclusion / exclusion debate, becomes significant again.

A critique of the discourses

In response to the opening paper, some critiques of the discourse as it is currently used were made by Anna Robinson-Pant, Alan Rogers, Roy Williams, Julia Betts and Jon Lauglo. While it was agreed that social exclusion doubtless exists, and the discourses help to explain some of the processes by which inclusion and exclusion operate, it is complex and more contested than their common usage implies. These critiques provide a framework for unpacking the discourse; they are grounded in empirical experience and reflect the Seminar's concern to link theory with policy and practice.

The discourses are an imported concept to the South, but despite this are used by funding agencies to powerful effect, as in World Bank analysis of the Voices of the Poor.

It is fundamentally arrogant to have one group assuming the right to define the rest of society.

- The discourses are excessively 'static' - they do not capture the dynamism or complexity of people's lives or identities. They divide people into two dichotomised groups - oppressed and oppressors, included and excluded - but can we really polarise the North and the South in this age of globalisation, or events and processes at a more micro level? The discourses do not account for movement within these two groups.

- They focus on outputs, rather than allowing for a more dynamic process of analysis.

- They lack the dimension of agency which e.g. Sen's concept of freedoms allows, or the question of choice - for example people's self-exclusion.

- They promulgate the dangerous assumption that 'social integration' is the desirable norm.

- Equally dangerously, they disenfranchise those whom they seek to help.

- They unify, rather than problematise, the 'included' or the 'excluded'- they cannot account for discourses of human rights and the recognition of indigenous cultures and practices.

- They do not allow for acknowledging different agendas - what happens when the wishes and agendas of the excluded clash with the ideals of the powerful / included?

- They run the risk of creating the 'echo effect', where people either internalise a vision of themselves as the lowest rung of the ladder, or employ the discourses creatively to achieve some of their own goals.

- They can stigmatise people.

The question for discussion, then, is how far do these objections hold true for other experiences in other parts of the world? And how much of a framework do they offer for unpacking the discourses of inclusion and exclusion?

In the light of the concerns expressed above, a framework for analysing the discourses was offered by Brian Street:

- A normative model; which takes a univeralist, individualistic, deficit and compensatory view, which carries attendant dangers of co-option and control.

- An analytic model: which takes a relational, holistic perspective, with the emphasis on social processes and explanation; this frame emphasises questions of agency and power.

Within these frames lie the complex tensions and interrelationships between:
policy < > theory
access < > transformation
homogeneity < > diversity

These should not be seen as dichotomies but as dynamics; the points of

intersection between them require deconstruction and exploration. For example, assuming diversity as desirable raises the question of hierarchy and the privileging of knowledge.

We may apply these lenses to the particular question of literacy, which plays a powerful role in issues of social inclusion and exclusion. A normative view of literacy takes a deficit vision; it emphasises measures and targets and assumes 'literacy' as an autonomous entity. An analytic model on the other hand, challenges the autonomous vision, emphasising relativity and process, ideology and power, diversity and variation. Surrounding this construction stand the dilemmas and tensions of policy and theory relation; how do they interconnect? What can each draw from the other to enhance thinking and understanding?

In seeking to unpack the discourses, therefore, we need first to identify parameters for discussion via some key questions which will enable us to throw a clear light onto the discourse and guide our theoretical thinking. Those proposed at Uppingham were:

· 	Are/How are the discourses used in different contexts e.g. South Asia, Latin America?

· 	Do the discourses of social inclusion/exclusion add anything to the debate of poverty analysis? Or do we need to seek more creative ways in which to use them?

· 	What about access/social transformation? How do these constructs fit with inclusion/ exclusion?

· 	What about voice? - Whose interests are being served by the discourses of inclusion/ exclusion? Is it just a hegemonic tool?

· 	What practical solutions can the concept of social exclusion contribute to institutional reform in the South, so that the poorest of the poor can be reached?

It is important too to explore what role events such as the Seminar can play in addressing the debate. One aim of Uppingham was obviously to expand our own thinking, to clarify our minds even we do not reach agreement. Given the increasingly dominant nature of the discourses, one central aim of such multi-country, multi-experience meetings is to create spaces for critique, opportunities for problematising. Could Uppingham offer this?

Applying the discourse

Taking the policy / theory link above, then, what is the fit between our theorising and practice? In the light of considerations about how and by whom the discourses are used, how do they fit our knowledge of practice and policy? And conversely, how does experience shape our thinking?

Case studies from South Africa, Nepal, Central and Latin America, India, the US and Britain helped illuminate our thinking. The purpose of the case studies was to explore experiences from across the world through the lens of the inclusion / exclusion discourses, and to see whether this current conceptual framework fits these cases; to strive to identify dominant discourses, and to open up some space for critique.

The questions and framework above provided the grounding parameters for discussion. From both these guides, and from the discussion of experience, a series of axes emerged which offer a conceptual framework and 'way into' exploring empirical experience from a theoretical perspective. These are as follows:

1. access < > transformation

2. co-option < > subversion

3. innovation < > mainstreaming, and questions of upscaling

4. problematising 'exclusion'; does it truly represent the situation?

5. the issue of formalisation and the commodification of knowledge in the context of globalisation. N

The case studies showed how the current conceptual framework of inclusion / exclusion largely does not fit experience in these contexts.

South Africa (Cathy Kell)

The group heard about Winnie Tsotso, an ANC organiser living in a South African Township, who has many different identities - as a mother, a wife, a member of the Baptist Church, the manager of a soup kitchen, and as a political worker - and who is also a beginner learner in night school. By looking at her situation from the perspective of changing discourses in South Africa today, Winnie's situation and experience shed light on several of the questions outlined above.

Since 1994, literacy in South Africa has been accompanied by a rhetoric of expanding policy and provision. Simultaneously, processes of standardisation, commodification and literacy have been taking place - literacy has become increasingly formalised, in a deficit model. Normative claims are being made about what literacy can 'do' for people. Social exclusion certainly existed under Apartheid. But Winnie's experience reveals more complexity than a simple dichotomised model, as we may see by looking at her situation through the lens of literacy.

In one domain stands Winnie, with her multiple identities, capabilities and agendas; her daily engagement with literacy practices and processes - the

reading of identity cards, the complex negotiation of letters and forms. In a second, distinct domain stands the 'standardisation' of literacy, with its normative claims and its characterisation of Winnie as 'illiterate', lacking, in deficit. These two domains barely, if ever, meet. Winnie is excluded from the domain of the dominant discourse ironically by the discourse itself; by her very classification as excluded. She goes to night school but does not attend for very long, in part because of the disjunction between the formalised processes in the school and the complexity and diversity of her literacy needs and practices in her life outside the school.

This scenario is further illustrated by Cathie Kell's research into letter-writing in South Africa. Learners were taught, in formalised classes, to write letters according to set formats - an example of the 'standardised' domain of literacy. Such letters were intended to be sent through the formal postal system. But outside the classes, intricate processes of letter-writing went on, older practices which were less formalised constructs - and informal social networks passed these letters around the country, by bus, just as they have done for years. Thus, just as in Winnie's case, we see that the two domains remain distinct.

The issues here are of co-option, control and commodification. In the light of the new work order, and processes of globalisation, social inclusion is becoming co-opted as a mechanism for engaging people into the forces of the State. Meanwhile, however, people are consciously excluding themselves, turning to their own social networks and practices to pursue their livelihood strategies. We see here the issues of agency and freedoms touched upon above. Yet this is no simple dichotomy either; Cathie Kell spoke of the sense of yearning among people for precisely the kind of standardised, commodified literacy with which they found it so difficult to engage by going to classes. Thus people consciously resist their own co-option, but recognise the power that literacy possesses as a commodity - as a 'sign'. In this South African context, then, literacy holds exchange value, it operates as a currency, or certification, a finding which is echoed by experience in Namibia (Ute Papen).

Literacy then in this context is something to which people long for access, as the framework above suggests. Yet the questions here are complex: access to what exactly? And according to whose agenda? The people who occupy the lower domain long for the commodified literacy of the State, but not necessarily to the same end - for them it is a currency with which they can barter their way more effectively through their own determined lives. For the State meanwhile, it is a mechanism for co-option and the constraining of diversity. Thus the access question of the normative framework collapses into the question of transformation; people seeking, nonetheless via mechanisms of access, to transform their own lives through the resources made available to them.

The discourses of social exclusion and inclusion as they are commonly used therefore do not capture the complexities of this experience and situation; they mask the vast gap between problematic commodification and standardisation on the one hand - 'inclusion' - and Winnie's life and practices on the other - 'the excluded'. Moreover these discourses conceal issues of co-option and control - and also perhaps of choice. The question, then, is can those of us who are the included, in that we have the luxury of access to the dominant discourses, create space for critique? - that is, can we build room for critiquing the discourses of access today?

Nepal - (Juliet Millican, Brian Street, Anna Robinson-Pant)

The Nepal Community Literacies Project, which is DFID-funded using Education for Development / CfBT expertise, has been in operation since 1993. The project aims to promote the use of literacy in part through supporting the production of appropriate materials, so that these are more accessible to people with little experience of print literacy.

The project has existed in the middle ground in a dialogue between an education focus and a development focus. It seeks to bring together literacy acquisition and use in this area of intersection. This locus has been brought about by experience with previous projects; those which take an exclusively 'educational' approach have often encountered rejection by users, due to schooling's perceived infantilizing elements (eg, adults sitting in rows, reading Janet and John).

Literacy methodologies such as REFLECT have been critiqued for an excessive focus on method rather than on aim and content. A constructivist reversal of the norm where people are taught to fill in bank credit forms can be achieved by engaging learners in designing their own forms, based on their actual needs and preferences. Similarly, in Bombay slums, a literacy curriculum emerged from women learning to write what they wanted to in shop complaints books.

Yet inevitably, process-based projects face difficulties since, by seeking continual evolution and responsiveness, they often do not reach definite conclusions or outcomes. This dilemma can be addressed by locating education not as the 'end' of the project but rather as a means of addressing the community's needs. So for example micro-finance projects give communities control and decision over whether and how to spend their money, and food aid offers recipients a choice, over whether to prioritise their children's schooling and therefore sell their food allocation.

Yet a balance arguably needs to be struck between a project always responding to what its 'beneficiaries' want, on the one hand, and assisting them to move towards what the project planners feel is needed, on the other. Development projects need to both to raise participants' awareness and also to increase their abilities to achieve the goals they become aware of.

Deryn Holland proposed a framework for conceptualising this dilemma:

Consciousness Conscious
Incompetence Conscious
Competence

Unconscious
Incompetence Unconscious
Competence

Competence

In terms of the exclusion / inclusion discourses, we must remember that deprivation is multidimensional, and that deprivation is not synonymous with exclusion. While talk of exclusion and inclusion implies states or categories of people, that of excluding and including reminds us that it is processes and systems which are the focus.

'Development' projects themselves can become institutions which include / exclude certain groups. In the case of the CLPN, the key mechanism of selecting partners at central and district level through a bidding process meant that groups with prior experience of writing proposals, liaising with funding agencies etc. had an advantage - and thus greater access. Moreover, the strategy of working through NGOs rather than directly with 'communities' also set off processes of inclusion / exclusion which CLPN could not influence. These processes were influenced by the project's objective of focusing on those already involved in community development projects. There was therefore little challenge to the existing processes by which people were 'included' or 'excluded' in development institutions (Anna Robinson-Pant).

Inclusion of one group may also lead to exclusion of another (e.g., the greater social inclusion of educated second generation Somali immigrants in Norway leads to reduction of their respect for their elders, who then lose status. The elders thus need literacy / language support to regain their included status). Yet we must not forget that voluntary self-exclusion by individuals is different from the systematic and involuntary exclusion of groups. Some women for example may say they don't need to understand all the details of official printed forms - only to know enough to be sure they are not being cheated. Another member of the group can act on their behalf. Moreover, people expect to progress vertically up a hierarchy to achieve the assets of those in higher socio-economic groups, so the threshold of felt 'exclusion' is moveable and fluid.

Central and Latin America (Rosa Maria Torres, Joanie Cohen-Mitchell, Sheila Aikman, Julia Betts)

Accounts from Mexico and El Salvador (Rosa Maria Torres) also revealed some of the dilemmas and contradictions around the discourses of inclusion and exclusion. The EDUCO programme in El Salvador for example, as with a similar programme in Mexico, reveals the dominant discourses around teachers as experts, as well as some of the monolithic constructs placed around the 'school' as a mechanism for 'inclusion' [co-option] into the formal system. Again, these reflect indications of the processes of the commodification of knowledge. In both these two educational experiences, a marginalizing of the discourses of heterogeneity and diversity is taking place, along with a co-option of innovations into the formal sector. In Guatemala, these tensions are also highlighted through the lens of different conceptualisations of literacy - funders and implementers have different agendas from participants, a finding echoed in El Salvador - and through language issues in particular, a question also of primary importance in the Peruvian Amazon, where the concept of 'intercultural education' is employed to mask agendas of homogenisation and control. In El Salvador, a story of how people co-opted the discourses of the State and those of the 'popular sector' cleverly and creatively, in pursuing their own strategies and agendas, revealed issues of agency and power. Co-option of the discourses goes on among those labelled 'excluded' by the dominant discourse too, and thus labels of 'included' and 'excluded' do not capture people's capabilities and creativity, experience also echoed in Guatemala.

Thus the discourses of exclusion and inclusion as it stands in current usage do not fit the Central and Latin America contexts described here; these places are not oversimplified loci of oppression but rather echo the multidimensionality of poverty mentioned in the background paper. Dichotomised discourses of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' cannot not capture the tensions and complexities of these contexts; analysis needs more relational and holistic models, particularly in the light of increasing globalisation. Issues of access are again collapsed into those of transformation, not just at the policy level but at the micro, too. The homogeneity of the normative discourse clashes with the diversity of these experiences, viewed in the differing agendas and aims between different groups. The policy / theory dichotomy is well encapsulated here too, in a debate about quality, and different conceptualisations of what constitutes 'success' - numbers and outcomes in the normative frame, versus social experiences and enhanced agency in the analytic.

How then can policy-making relate to the theoretical knowledge emerging from fine-grained study; that is, in terms of inclusion and exclusion, where do curricula and teaching fall on the continuum of inclusion, co-option and control? The experiences discussed here suggest that discourses of inclusion and exclusion hold relevance to the Central and Latin American situation but that they also present great danger in their co-option by powerholders to project ideological messages.

The United States (Tim Cohen-Mitchell)

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) seeks to bring entrepreneurship skills to youth all over the United States and globally. Experiences and involvement with the Young Entrepreneurship Society (YES) in the economically depressed town of Orange, Massachussets were recounted. The Young Entrepreneurs Society aims to revitalize rural and economically challenged communities through youth entrepreneurship - providing an alternative or parallel 'mini' MBA. The YES board of directors brings together business executives as well as YES graduates, parents, school board members and others - representing the community from which they have risen.

Tin Cohen-Mitchell himself went to 'NFTE University', NFTE's teacher training programme, on a scholarship; he received free training and a starter teaching kit and came back to teach entrepreneurship courses in Orange. After teaching several courses for ages 13-32 he found himself becoming involved in referring students to jobs, helping budding entrepreneurs and mentoring fledging businesses; this became in short a vocation.

The NFTE course needed to be adapted to suit the ground reality in Orange which had suffered the damaging consequences of globalisation. As one example, dozens of small businesses had closed shop and laid off workers when Walmart came to town. YES -Orange decided to teach its students to beat Walmart at its own game by finding those niche segments that Walmart could not service, and then to become for themselves the best in the business in those particular areas of opportunity.

While Tim wrestled with the challenges of the YES programme, the harsh reality of Orange and the many moral and social issues confronting the programme everyday, he also saw success in the many lives that were saved in the sense of the newly found self-worth of self-made entrepreneurs and YES graduates. The practical examples given by Tim illustrated the challenge of overcoming exclusion against all odds - through sheer effort, faith and investment in people.

Yes the question still remains: by training young people in the ways of business, and by creating enterprises at the grassroots level, are we 'buying into' and thereby perpetuating the very system that creates the poverty and exclusion in the first place? There is a distinction between large-scale corporate capitalism and small-scale enterprise at the community level; large firms often profit through capital extraction from peripheral communities - investing only in their own facilities and in the salaries of the local minimum-wage workers who run them. They are generally controlled from outside the communities they serve and can be seen as depleting local social capital. Small, locally-owned firms that meet local needs - primarily through services rather than commodities - may build relationships within the community as a matter of course, increasing social capital, and, if successful in satisfying local needs, can generate an income for entrepreneurs. Certainly, this bringing of marginalized people into the economy as owners is a form of 'inclusion'. However, the

question remains: "inclusion at what cost?" As was asked in a plenary at Uppingham: "Can one dismantle the master's house (the destructive elements of the economy) using the master's tools (business skills)?" (Tim Cohen-Mitchell).

India: Legal Literacies (Nivedita Monga)

Legal Literacies is a programme in Central India which provides information and knowledge about rights under various laws. It emerged from people's lack of awareness of their rights to compensation in the case of being displaced, and seeks to build on existing experiential knowledge. It employs texts, films, posters, workshops and role-plays to cover 24 legislations; labour laws - compensation and maternity for example - civil laws, untouchability, the rights of the police, marriage and rape for example.

The experience has shown some interesting conclusions for the inclusion / exclusion debate. Firstly, the aim of programme was conceptualised as 'participatory citizenship' rather than as 'social inclusion', thereby revealing a different kind of discourse; is encouraging people to take advantage of their rights a different form of the continuum of social inclusion / co-option / control - or is it resistance against formalisation? Secondly, the organisers initially decided against including non-literate groups - but this caused resistance, in that people who could not decode the texts for themselves wished to acquire them for status reasons, and to allow their own social networks to decode them. Just as in the South African case above, then, print literacy here is perceived as a currency, or sign. So the question becomes one of how far, for these people, this is the acceptance of commodification - or is it a more subversive process, a taking advantage of a sudden access to resources in order to pursue one's own agenda? Thirdly, welfare models of 'provision' to the 'excluded' come undone when people's demands take over. For example, the laws to be taught were chosen initially by the experts, who then had to modify their choice according to demands articulated by people in the communities.

This case also highlighted, as in those above, the failure of the social exclusion dichotomy to incorporate a recognition of agency. Two women who had never been to school and were therefore classified as the 'excluded' showed that they were both competent and confident in negotiating the complex mechanisms of the State - in acquiring a gun and paying bail respectively. Therefore, people without the commodified 'skills' advocated by the State are still participating socially, they themselves are subverting the dominant discourses, rather than being co-opted by them, whether these be the discourses of social inclusion / exclusion, oppression or liberation, or the formalisation / informalisation of the South African case above.

In this case, then, the access / transformation dilemma is seen as less a dichotomy than a dynamic - access is offered and transformation is taking place, in daily lives and social processes. The Government of India stamp on

the texts offered by Legal Literacies provides legitimacy, which the people then subvert through the strength of their group, which is heterogeneous, comprising different aims, understandings and agendas.

In terms of commodification, this project works against this, striving to create space for diversity and difference. Yet in policy terms, the innovation < > mainstreaming question could present a dilemma - as with the Nepal case study above, the pressures to commodify are far greater in upscaling. The effects of globalisation are a powerful force here: knowledge can be viewed by the powerful as a commodity which can be measured, rather than as a process - and therefore quality control mechanisms be put in place. Care must be taken if such programmes are not to blur under pressure into forces for commodification of knowledge, and thence become mechanisms for control in themselves.

Bombay Literacies (Sujata Khandekar)

The Bombay Literacies project began as a Freirean-inspired literacy project, which used a play to reach out to community youth. The key four stakeholders comprised: India's National Literacy Mission, NGOs, the community youth responsible for taking the play out into the communities and the people themselves.

This experience provides an interesting commentary on the discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Firstly, as with the Legal Literacies experience outlined above, the 'implementers' preconceptions of literacy changed as the project reached out to communities. What they perceived as the 'benefits' of literacy' - which used a classic deficit or empowerment model, and therefore had its own conceptualisation of 'inclusion' - were not shared by the people, who were more concerned about its impact on their own livelihoods and livelihood strategies. Thus the people had their own views about what constituted inclusion and about literacy as a mechanism for this - and whether or not they chose this mechanism as part of their livelihood strategies. Moreover, as described in many of the experiences above, people already had their own, clearly-defined literacy capabilities. One class for example sought to train people to read a bus timetable - but a lady replied that she had no need of this, she was already more than capable to taking the bus all over Bombay. So people determined their own responses to their 'exclusion'.

Therefore, Bombay literacies, responding to the demands of its consumers, became a development programme rather than a literacy programme. Yet in policy terms, does this mean that literacy, as a mechanism for social inclusion of whatever form, should be collapsed into 'development'? If we are to consider literacy as a tool for 'empowerment', a deeply problematic term, what does this imply for our visions of social inclusion or the next steps in the other direction on the continuum, participation / voice / liberation?

United Kingdom (Diana Cobden and Deryn Holland)

In many contexts of the North, the discourses of social exclusion / inclusion have become a response by welfare states to restructuring under neo-liberal economic policies. In England and Wales, the Basic Skills Agency forms a powerful part of the New Labour deficit discourse on skills and labour markets. Language such as 'national disgrace' has led to distrust between teachers, parents and researchers, and created a high shame factor. Meanwhile, research agendas have been skewed into trying to identify the extent of the problem rather than in problematising the problem itself.

Just as in many of the other contexts described here, a strong tension exists between the widespread use of figures to label people as 'excluded' - much as Winnie Tsotso forms part of the broad group of 'excluded' in South Africa - and the debate about what constitutes literacy and numeracy - the social practices of these. Similarly to the case studies above, numeracy in the UK has high 'exchange' value, and a dissonance exists between this ideological construct, which forms a powerful part of the social inclusion discourse, and people's private numeracy practices. In England and Wales, formalised literacy and numeracy have become badges of acceptability, and for those outside the discourse, stigmatisation follows.

Assessment-led policy thinking is also a part of this deficit framework; the current political agenda is target-led, aiming to exert control over people's acquisition of literacy and numeracy. A powerful body of evidence-based policy supports this, without actually problematising the nature of the evidence itself. Yet this accountability model has meant that exclusion of the most vulnerable is actually increasing, with groups at the bottom - the disabled, nomads or gypsies, those with learning difficulties or social problems - suffering 'unwantedness' - where doctors, insurance companies, schools, learning agencies reject them because they will negatively affect performance results and outcomes. They thus become 'excluded' from the global system by the very discourse itself.

While workplace-based training is moving away from such assessment-led directives, placing a greater emphasis on work-based performance, mentoring and coaching, skills development goes largely unrecognised in the increasing formalisation of education. Knowledge is being generated within the new work order, yet equivalance is an unrecognised part of the inclusion / exclusion debate. There are moreover dangers in an commodification / outcomes-based approach to inclusion where inputs are not accordingly in place - this allows for placing the blame away from delivery (the role of the State) and onto the individual.

In this context, then, the discourses of inclusion and exclusion form a powerful part of political rhetoric, yet the policy developments which are informed by them are themselves in danger of excluding. Diversity and difference are being

constrained through an emphasis on performance and results; the informal and the formalised domains remain apart. Globalisation is creating added pressures for skills and knowledge development in the powerful economies of the North, yet these processes are taking place amid tendencies towards increasing homogenisation, co-option and control.

DFID's new approaches to literacies and livelihoods (Julia Betts)

Following a conference in Kathmandu in December 2000, the Education and Sustainable Livelihoods Departments of the UK's Department for International Development have been working on building a new approach to adult literacy work, linking literacy with livelihoods. This approach seeks to contextualise literacy within the livelihoods of the poor, and to move away from a 'literacy for literacy's sake' approach into a more 'literacy comes second' model, where literacy is perceived as part of wider communication strategies, and is integrated into other development initiatives.

The new approach is based around 6 principles of sustainable livelihoods which bear considerable relevance to the discourses of inclusion and exclusion debate:

1. *Building on people's existing assets and capabilities*. We have seen from the experiences outlined above that people have their own highly-developed strategies for managing their lives; assuming people as 'socially excluded' in a highly dichotomised model cannot take account of these capabilities. Literacy for livelihoods seeks to explore first of all what these social processes and assets are - how do people manage their own inclusion? and how do they cope with their exclusion by institutions / mechanisms? - before considering what role literacy can play in enhancing them.
2. *Holistic*. Literacy should not be seen as an isolated, autonomous 'skill' - as part of the formalisation and commodification processes outlined above - but rather as part of wider social processes. It needs to be integrated, as communication, into other social development work - into enterprise development and health initiatives, into agriculture and infrastructure programmes. The key question is: how can literacy help people to enhance their livelihoods? This may involve taking literacy out of its existing 'education-only' box, and striving against the inclusion = formalisation discourse.
3. *Micro-macro links*: Literacy for Livelihoods seeks to build connections between the micro < > macro though a recognition of people's own agency. Access and transformation are central to the process; how do people see literacy as providing access to shape their own transformation? How can links be built between the 'informal domain', where the private practices of literacy and numeracy of stand, and the 'formal' domain, which operates at a more macro level? And how can mainstreaming innovation avoid the processes of commodification disscused above? The policy < > theory debate is also relevant here; it is

crucial to learn from experience, to build links rather than exacerbate dichotomies.

4. *Dynamic*: exploring the relevance of inclusion / exclusion discourses to the contexts described here has highlighted the significance of context and the importance of recognising diversity. Literacy work needs to be contextualised within the livelihoods of the poor; it must be responsive and flexible, recognising multiple identities, agendas and capabilities if it is to avoid dangers of co-option and formalisation, and be able to create links between informal practices and the potential resources of the formal domain.

5. *Sustainable*: All too often in the past, 'stand-alone' literacy work has shown poor tendencies to be sustained. Integrating literacy into people's livelihood strategies, into their striving to realise their own choices and freedoms - rather than labelling them as 'included' or 'excluded' and requiring an 'injection' of literacy accordingly - is more likely to embed literacy in the long-term into people's social processes and practices.

6. People-centred. The discourses of social inclusion and exclusion categorise those who are 'excluded' as existing in a state of oppression. Rather than assuming such a dichotomised vision, Literacy for Livelihoods looks to recognise and explore the vulnerability of people in marginalized contexts, and to see what contribution - in a context-specific way - literacy can make to their social protection, as in the Legal Literacies programme described above.

Literacy for Livelihoods looks to learn from the experiences of others such as those at Uppingham, and to build context-specific responses accordingly. The discourses of inclusion and exclusion as they are currently used do not fit our experience; we look rather for greater emphasis on diversity, interaction and transformation, for a recognition of ideology and agency and the multidimensionality of poverty.

Conclusion

Events such as Uppingham provide not only a context for sharing experience and developing understanding, but also - since most of those present work in the dual domains of thinking and practice - a valuable chance to enhance the intersections between theory, policy and practice. Uppingham provided an opportunity for opening assumptions to question, for creating space for critique.

We have learned from the above that the conceptual framework of inclusion and exclusion - construed and employed as it is currently within the North - does help explain some of the processes by which inclusion and exclusion operate. Without it these processes might escape our view. We are certain that exclusion exists, but the current usage of the discourse is neither prevalent in the South nor captures the complexity of contexts, processes and events. Indeed, it is being employed to mask ideological agendas. We may in fact present it as masking a continuum of ideologies:

liberation - participation - co-option - control.

When then is the alternative? The dominant discourse in the South is that of poverty; yet does this too really capture the existence of agency and diversity that we have seen above? Can a 'poverty' discourse really encapsulate what happens when women say that they already know how to read the bus signs, or demand knowledge of other aspects of the law? And what of the processes of formalisation and commodification described with such emphasis in every case above - how can they fit into a scenario of micro-level diversity?

Perhaps one response might be to shift the discourses away from one of limitations and constraints, of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion', 'oppression' and 'liberation'. That is, while seeking to build on access and the potentialities that the formal domain - and by extension globalisation - can offer, to place transformation, rooted in people's own agendas, capabilities and visions, at the heart of our policy and thinking. To incorporate a vision of diversity while not abandoning a recognition of the forces of homogeneity, and of the powerful links between these two domains. While inclusion and exclusion may present a useful tool for identification of situation and processes, the discourses of freedoms and choices, of livelihood strategies and channels of communication, may be more helpful to us at this stage than the constraining of people into dichotomised categories.

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