



# Welcoming Diversity in the Learning Environment

Teachers' Handbook for Inclusive Education

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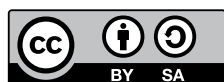


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# S H O R T S U M M A R Y

## **Welcoming Diversity in the Learning Environment: Teachers' Handbook for Inclusive Education**

This teachers' handbook is intended to serve as a practical resource to help teachers and teacher educators to gain understanding of the multiple issues of inclusion in their day-to-day work and acquire competencies that facilitate inclusive pedagogy. The handbook is comprised of nine modules – each of which presents the conceptual discussion of key topics related to inclusion and diversity and features some promising case studies, instruments and approaches. It also provides a framework for ensuring learning continuity in the wake of crises and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and deals with a range of topics aimed at building the capacities of teachers and teacher educators for recovery and resilience in education systems in the COVID-19 context.



*“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed”*

# Welcoming Diversity in the Learning Environment

Teachers' Handbook for Inclusive Education

# Foreword

Teachers play a central role in shaping children's lives and constitute a critical force for a nation's socio-economic and cultural transformation. Teachers are the key to quality education. Hence, the saying goes: 'The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers'. Much education research has demonstrated that teacher quality is the single most important determinant of a child's learning achievement. The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action recognizes the centrality of teachers as it asserts that 'teachers are the key to achieving all of the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda.' If SDG 4 is to become a reality, it is imperative that countries invest in enhancing the quality of their teaching forces. To this end, the Education 2030 Framework for Action seeks to 'ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported'.

'Leaving no one behind' is the core, transformative pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This principle underscores the importance of equity and inclusion in quality education, which means that each child is able to exercise his/her right to education and benefit from educational processes. As the global discourse focuses on inclusive and equitable quality education for all, countries need teachers who can play a key role to ensure equity and inclusion. Teachers' role is critical in instilling inclusive and equitable education for all and, therefore, they must be well trained on inclusive attitudes and competencies through proper pre-service and in-service teacher training. In order to meet the diverse needs of learners, teachers require training on how to adapt the classroom environment, lesson plans and assessments for students of different ability levels and from marginalized groups. Teacher training should also build the capacities of educators to identify and support learners in most need of help, especially in early grades when marginalized students are at risk of leaving school due to underperformance or other reasons.

Five years into the implementation of the 2030 global agenda, we are in a different world. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a serious global crisis and countries, both developed and developing, risk the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 4 targets. The pandemic has profoundly disrupted education systems worldwide. UNESCO statistics show that at one point 1.6 billion students in more than 190 countries were out of school, with over 100 million teachers and education personnel impacted by closures and lockdowns. The pandemic has exposed and further deepened pre-existing education inequalities and it is always the marginalized and vulnerable groups, girls, and children with disabilities who are hit the hardest when crises occur. While the immediate global attention is to shift from disruption to mitigation and recovery with the potential to reduce inequalities, in the long run the key challenge for countries is how to build more resilient and inclusive education systems. It has become clear that at every stage of crisis or emergency, teachers' role is important. The health of a nation's education system depends on the overall health, well-being and professionalism of teachers. It is in this context that the *Welcoming Diversity in the Learning Environment: Teacher's Handbook for Inclusive Education* has been developed, with the goal to help teacher educators to gain understanding of the multiple issues of inclusion in their day-to-day work and acquire competencies that facilitate inclusive pedagogy, principles and practices. Apart from the conceptual discussion of key topics related to inclusion and diversity, this handbook presents case studies, instruments and approaches, which can also be referenced by teachers and trainee teachers. Inclusive education is deeply rooted in the right to education for all students, regardless

of background, ability, gender, ethnicity, linguistic background, or other socio-economic status. It is our hope that this handbook will empower administrators, teacher educators, teachers, parents and learners to work together to address the causes of exclusion and promote greater inclusivity for all students to ensure quality education for all.

As the COVID-19 pandemic is reshaping education with a 'new normal' becoming a reality, it is important to note that traditional forms of teaching and learning are neither possible nor sufficient to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners. In the new normal, teachers must embrace the values of diversity, equity and inclusion in their work more than ever and be able to adapt their pedagogy to the new realities. This handbook also provides a framework for ensuring **learning continuity** in the wake of crises and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic through multiple approaches within the means of the country. It deals with a range of topics related to building teacher educator and teacher capacity for recovery and resilience in education systems in the COVID-19 context. I hope that this publication will be helpful in supporting teacher educators and teachers in making learning possible in an inclusive and equitable manner in the most difficult circumstances created by COVID-19 and other emergencies.



Shigeru Aoyagi

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We would like to express our deep gratitude to the two authors of this publication. The original content, consisting of Modules 1–8, was written by Ian Kaplan, Director of the Enabling Education Network or EENET. It was informed by the key findings of UNESCO's in-depth reviews of inclusive education in pre-service teacher education systems in eight countries in the Asia and Pacific region, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. In relation to the COVID-19 education response and recovery, Min Bahadur Bista developed Module 9 and updated the earlier modules to support the inclusion of all learners during times of crisis.

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Lastly, we would like to warmly thank everyone who contributed their case studies to this publication. The case studies showcase promising practices regarding inclusive approaches to learning in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Palestine, South Africa, Tanzania and Thailand.

# Acronyms

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>IEP</b>	Individualized Education Programme
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>OBEC</b>	Office of the Basic Education Commission
<b>PBL</b>	Project-Based Learning
<b>PLC</b>	Professional Learning Community
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SENCO</b>	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
<b>TTC</b>	Teacher Training College
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UDL</b>	Universal Design for Learning
<b>UNCRC</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>UNCRPD</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund



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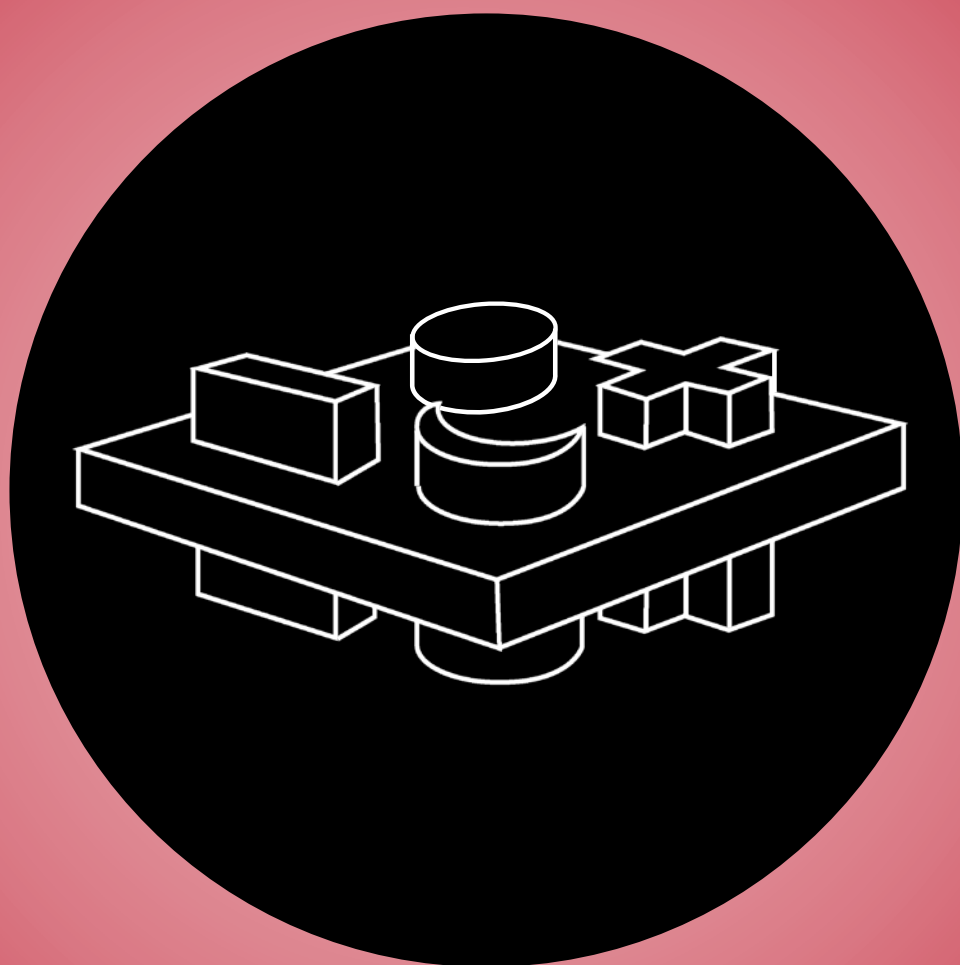
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# MODULES



# MODULE 1

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CONCEPTS



## 1.1 Introduction

This module begins by defining a range of inclusive education concepts which suggest a broad definition of inclusion but also place special emphasis on perhaps the most intractable factor in exclusion – that of disability. It concludes with a discussion of the implications of inclusive education for your work as a teacher educator or teacher.

## 1.2 What is inclusive education?

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has experienced unprecedented disruptions in all aspects of life, including education. As a result, the international promise of an inclusive and equitable quality learning has been out of reach for hundreds of millions of children, particularly for the vulnerable and marginalized. The landscape of education has changed, and teachers need to learn new sets of competencies and attitudes to deal with these new and unfamiliar circumstances. This module will set the agenda for discussing what role teachers can play in ensuring learning continuity for all as education systems seek to respond to and recover from crises and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Inclusive education** aims to gradually change the whole education system so that every pre-school, school, college, vocational training centre or other education setting and every teacher is able to welcome students from all backgrounds (linked to ability, gender, poverty, ethnicity, linguistic background, or other socio-economic status) and provide them with a good quality education alongside their peers. This means that inclusive education is deeply rooted in the concept of the right to education for all – a right, to be further explained below, which is decades old and enshrined in a wide range of international instruments. In addition, inclusive education is an essential component of attempts to promote greater social cohesion in what seems to be an ever more divisive and dissonant world.

Inclusion is a commitment that each child – regardless of his or her background or ability – has the right to receive a good quality education.

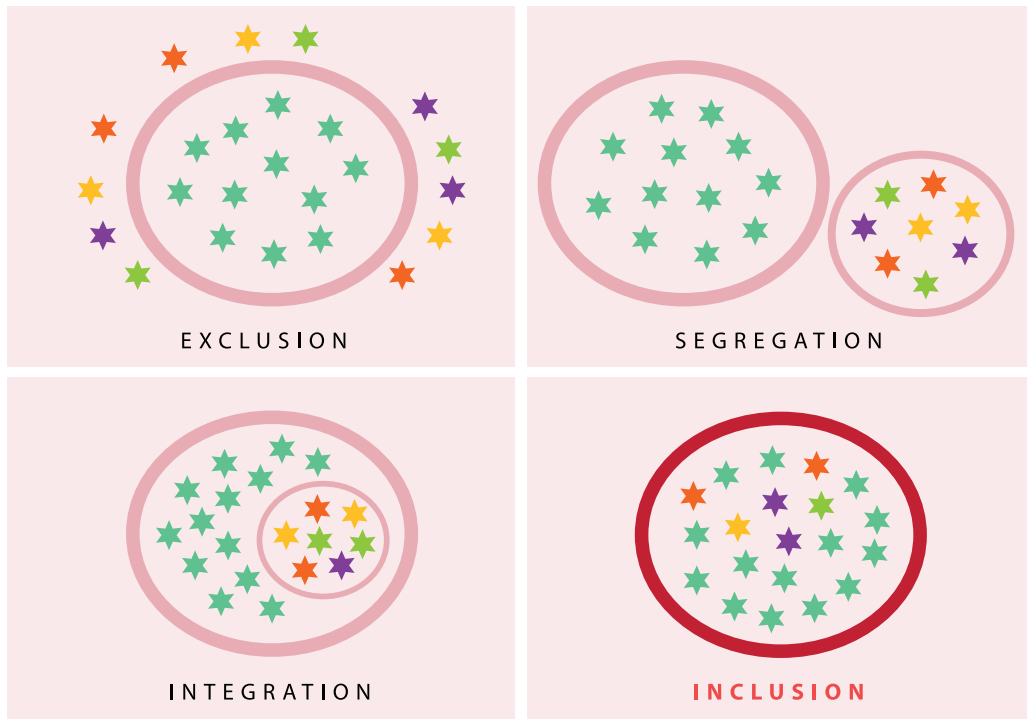
It is a belief that each child is able to participate in and benefit from his or her participation in learning processes that welcome all learners. The philosophy of inclusion advocates the creation of an education system that responds to the needs of all children in a common learning environment. It is helpful to understand the concept of inclusion by comparing it with other related concepts such as exclusion, segregation and integration.

**Exclusion** occurs when children are denied and/or deprived of access. Some schools do not allow children with disabilities or children from so-called low-caste groups to enrol or register based on their disability or background. During the COVID-19 pandemic, children were not able to go to school, forcing them to be excluded from learning. These are examples of exclusion although the exclusion resulted from different reasons.

**Segregation** takes place when separate provisions of learning environment are created for different categories of learners. For example, in some countries children with disabilities attend special schools and outside the regular environment of learning. In some countries that have a market-based model, schools are segregated between public and private schools, the former serving the masses, while the latter serve the children of affluent families. There are also instances of segregation of schools where even within the public school system there are schools of low quality offering education to the children of the poor and schools of high quality providing education to the affluent. In some countries, teachers use ability-based segregation, a system that assigns and divides students in groups based on their test scores or abilities. Student ability is used as a basis for segregating children physically and in some cases low-ability group children are taught with different sets of textbooks.

An **integrated** learning environment is one that places children of all categories and needs in a uniform learning setting. In what are often called mainstream schools, children are placed together without modifying the conditions of schooling to address different learning needs.

**Figure 1: Diagrams illustrating the four concepts of exclusion, segregation, integration and inclusion**



Source: Adapted from: <https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/inclusive-classrooms>

For example, children with disabilities may be allowed to attend a regular school but without the making of any provision of individualized support to facilitate their learning.

**Inclusion** is what is most desirable. It involves a transformation of the school, not only in its physical environment but in all aspects of learning such as curriculum, pedagogy, learning strategies, assessment, and teacher training, among others. An inclusive system, for example, values diversity and tailors learning according to the physical, mental or intellectual development needs of the learner. Figure 1 illustrates the four concepts.

The term inclusive education began to be used by organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) as more satisfactory than terms such as mainstreaming and integration. These terms often led to a learner's physical inclusion in the classroom but continued exclusion from learning; the child with disabilities had to adapt to the context and needs of the school rather than the school adapting to the context and needs of the child with disabilities. The term

inclusive education, defined as both physical inclusion and inclusion in learning, began to be seen as one useful to support the education of a wide range of learners – beyond disabilities – excluded from the system: girls, children of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and children living in remote regions or in extreme poverty. Thus, inclusive education theory now says that learners are generally excluded because of problems in schools and structural inequalities in the larger system – not because of problems with the learners or their families.

For instance, exclusion happens because the school is too far from the home (rather than that children live too far from a school), or because the school does not use the home language of the learners (rather than that the learners don't understand the language used in the school) – or because teachers have negative attitudes or use a limited range of teaching methods, or because the curriculum is not flexible to the needs of certain learners. The solution is to change the way the mainstream education system works so that it can accommodate all learners.

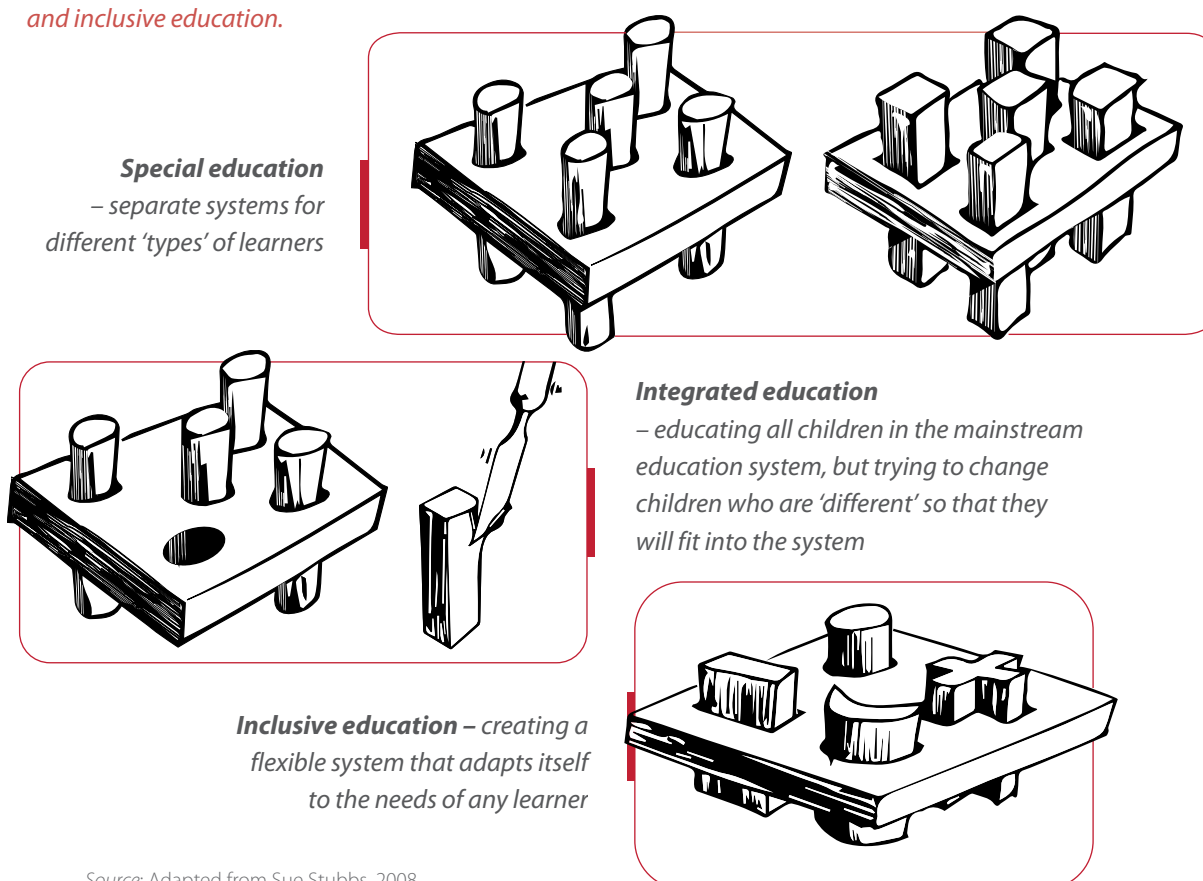
Based on this concept, at a local level, inclusive education is mostly about developing an attitude of flexibility and problem solving – enabling school administrators, teachers, educators, parents, and learners to work together to identify and solve the causes of exclusion. But inclusive education also involves flexibility throughout the entire education system. This means that changes need to be made in curricula, teaching and learning materials, learning assessment, teacher education and school design to ensure that everyone can receive a relevant and good quality education in their local, “regular” pre-school programme, school or college.

Often, there is a tendency to use the concepts of integrated education and special education or special schools synonymously. Essentially, they are not the same as inclusive education.

Here is why: As described earlier, integrated education focuses on getting learners from marginalized groups into mainstream schools. However, integrated education tends to believe that it is the condition of the learner or his or her family that causes exclusion – it is their fault that the child is not learning and therefore fails and drops out of the system. So, the solution in integrated education is to try to change or cure the learner so that the learner can fit into the existing education system. With an integrated education approach, the education system itself does not change, so learners may still face exclusion in the future. This is very different from inclusive education, which shifts some of the blame for failure to the school and to the wider education system which, in effect, push children out by not adapting to their particular needs.

**Figure 2: Diagrams of special/segregated education, integrated education and inclusive education**

*These diagrams show the differences between special/segregated education, integrated education, and inclusive education.*



Source: Adapted from Sue Stubbs, 2008.

**Special education** creates separate education systems for different types of learners (e.g., special schools or special units or classes within mainstream schools for learners with disabilities). Special schools and units may offer such learners a chance to receive an education, but they perpetuate segregation. Often special schools risk violating other important rights. For example, residential special schools may violate a child's right to stay with his/her family and to grow up with his/her peers; or they may be places where the right to freedom from abuse is violated.

In summary, inclusive education is not just about making sure all children enrol in and attend school. It is also about ensuring that they are participating and learning and that they are achieving to the best of their ability, academically and socially. That is why inclusive education is an ongoing process. We do not just need to make an effort to ensure that marginalized children can access school and are welcome in it – that is only the first step. We need to make sure everyone is actively engaged in lessons and other activities and feeling a sense of achievement. If we don't, they may end up getting "pushed out" of a system unwilling or unable to adjust to their needs.

It should be emphasized that inclusion and equity are core parts of quality education and they are inseparable. Education of low or no quality is equal to no education. One key feature of the global education agenda, as represented by the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and/or Education 2030 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. SDG 4 will not be achieved without inclusion, and inclusion is meaningless when it does not meet quality standards. Both inclusive education and SDG 4 recognize education as a fundamental human right. Teachers need to understand this dynamic relationship between inclusion and quality education. They should aim to achieve quality, not just for a few but for all.

### 1.3 Inclusive education is more than just disability

There is a common misunderstanding that inclusive education is entirely (or mostly) about the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools and classrooms. Focusing on the inclusion of learners with disabilities is vital, as they are typically the most marginalized and excluded group in education and society.

However, at its heart, inclusive education is about access to good quality education for all, not just for learners with disabilities. Inclusive education should be widened to include all learners regardless of their background, identity and ability. It is about making education meaningful for and accountable to everyone. It is also about the social and economic value of educating learners together – from diverse backgrounds and with different needs, strengths, abilities and disabilities – and therefore highlights that everyone has a responsibility towards inclusion, and everyone has something to contribute to achieving it.

That said, teachers need to recognize that implementing inclusion education is a complex process, including for the reason that a child can experience multiple factors of exclusion at the same time. This is often called *multisectionality*. It is important to understand how multiple identities can exist at once in a person. For example, being a girl child with a disability and belonging to a low caste group or poor family brings more oppression and stigma and can lead to multiple layers of exclusions, both in the society and the learning process.

Teachers who are trained to recognize and support children with different needs can make a difference. However, around the world we face a lack of good quality teaching and learning. The way forward is to focus on improving access to and the quality of education for all learners, while ensuring that additional, more specialized support is available for those who need it. This is known as a 'twin-track' approach to inclusive education. The twin-track approach will be discussed more in this Module and in Module 3.

## 1.4 What is 'disability'?

### The difference between 'disability' and 'impairment'

Although the definition of inclusive education has expanded to address all barriers to education, this handbook will pay particular attention to what is an especially difficult barrier to inclusion – that of disability. To understand what is meant by 'disability', it is useful to understand 'impairment'. An impairment is something that a person is born with or gets later in life. It is: 'an injury, illness, or congenital condition that causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference of physiological or psychological function'.<sup>1</sup> This means that an impairment can be physical, psycho-emotional, biological, or chemical, or a combination of these.

Impairments can be anything from diseases, and the impact of diseases on human bodies and their functioning, to missing limbs or organs, to the existence of harmful chemicals in the brain, and many others. Equally, impairments can have many different causes including genetics, trauma and injury, other environmental factors or any combination of these.

A **disability** '...is the result of negative interactions that take place between a person with an impairment and her or his social environment'.<sup>2</sup> A disability is therefore not caused by an impairment but by the social experience around the impairment – it is the result of the relationship between a person's impairment and his/her social environment'.

#### Example

**If a person cannot walk due to a condition or injury affecting his/her legs, this is an impairment. It becomes a disability if it prevents him/her from accessing something in his/her environment. For example, a young girl whose legs are paralyzed wants to go to school**

in her community. Her local school is on a hill far from her home and is built on two levels. The top floor is accessed via stairs, and teachers are not willing to organize lessons on the ground floor for her classes. These social and environmental factors (the school's location, design and management) mean the girl cannot access her local school – therefore she has a 'disability'.

However, if the girl has a wheelchair or other mobility device; if there is a school close to home which is physically accessible (e.g., built on one level, with entrance ramps, wide corridors and doorways, handrails, smooth paths, and disability-friendly toilets); and if the head teacher and teachers are willing to make any accommodation needed to welcome her to school, then the girl – although still with an impairment – would be better able to access school and the impact of her physical disability would therefore be reduced.

Less visible is the example of a child with dyslexia – a condition still poorly understood and underdiagnosed in many countries but which leads to difficulties in reading fluently and accurately and therefore puts a child at risk of being labelled a 'slow learner' and unable to keep up with his/her peers. In this case, what might be needed are changes in the classroom and learning environment with fewer distracting stimuli, adjustments to teaching materials (e.g., different fonts, size and layout), more systematic and multisensory teaching methods, and the use of audio materials and hands-on experience linked to his or her reading.

## 1.5 Models of disability

Although inclusive education is not just about learners with disabilities, the origins of the move towards inclusive education are strongly linked with disability activism. It is therefore important to analyse the concept of disability. This concept is complex and contested, but in simple terms there are four important models of (or approaches to) disability – the medical, charity, social and human rights models.

### 1.5.1 Medical and charity models of disability

Historically, in many contexts, disability has been considered primarily a medical issue, with a focus on curing or fixing impairments. As a

1 Disability Studies, Leeds University (p.1). N.D. 'Northern Officers Group - Defining Impairment and Disability'. <https://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/library/Northern-Officers-Group-defining-impairment-and-disability.pdf>.

2 Ibid.

result, people with disabilities have tended to be viewed as deficient because of their impairments. They have been labelled and defined by their impairments and what they cannot do rather than what they can do. Often, the classification, identification, and 'treatment' of people with disabilities have therefore been in the hands of medical professionals. People with disabilities were not usually considered able, qualified, or worthy to participate in this process.

A **medical model** approach focuses mainly on what is 'wrong' with a person and not on what they want, what they need, and what they can do. It implies that people with disabilities do not fit into society (or education) and need to be cured or fixed so that they do fit. If people with disabilities cannot be sufficiently changed to fit into mainstream society, the medical model approach confines them to the edges of society (e.g., segregated in special schools).

There is a more sympathetic definition of the medical model, however. This would argue that the existence of special education is therapeutic or leading to a more specific learning environment combining learning opportunities and therapy/medical treatment. Special schools often claim that they are more capable of preparing students for a later role in society, informed by specialist knowledge and expertise, and not neglecting the specific medical needs of students. By doing so, special education does not intentionally or explicitly exclude students from later, more inclusive lifestyles, except for some cases where (groups of) students are labelled as having severe support needs or needs for lifelong support.

Although it more often creates the effect of social exclusion than intended, the medical paradigm (i.e., special schools) does not intentionally 'confine people to the edges of society' as a definite lifestyle but rather 'neglects the social consequences of segregation by putting medical treatment first, even if this excludes people from meaningful life tasks and peer activities'.

Similarly, the charity model of disability views people with disabilities as deserving pity and being incapable and thus needing charitable

help. This help is usually determined and delivered by people without disabilities.

The medical and charity models both take a deficit approach to disability. They view people with disabilities as having, or being, problems and as being less able or not deserving to participate fully in education and in wider society. They locate the problem within the individual and not within society.

### 1.5.2 The social and human rights models of disability

Partly in response to dissatisfaction with the medical and charity approaches to disability, the **social model** evolved. It presents disability in social, not medical or scientific terms, indicating that our views and understandings about disability are constructed, or shaped, by society. This model highlights that a person with a disability is an individual defined by many different characteristics, not just by one's disability. The model focuses on reshaping society to better include people with impairments rather than focusing on 'fixing' their impairments.

Increasingly, the social model is discussed as being a **human rights model**, stressing that all humans have rights and that all rights apply to all humans, with and without disabilities.

People with disabilities are rights holders and decision-makers in their own lives. The social and human rights models focus on what a person can do and on removing barriers to participation so that people can reach their full potential and have their rights realized.

It is important to note that the social model is not anti-medicine. Advances in medicine, medical knowledge, and technical support are very important aspects of inclusion as they can help support people with disabilities to participate fully in education and society. Social and human rights approaches to thinking about disability therefore do not dismiss the importance of medical and rehabilitative support for people with disabilities. Instead, they see

medical needs and support as one aspect of disability, but not the only aspect nor the aspect that most defines the person.

Like other crises and emergencies, COVID-19 caused a population-wide experience of exclusion affecting entire societies. Typically, exclusion is experienced by small sub-groups of a population. Many of the day-to-day experiences of people with disabilities have not been experienced by people without disabilities.

**One important lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that disability is largely a socially constructed phenomenon. The fact that COVID-19 forced everyone to be physically and socially isolated means that one can draw parallels between the COVID-19-imposed 'disability' that everyone experienced and the struggles of people with disabilities worldwide.**

For many people with disabilities, especially in developing countries, daily isolation, marginalization, and exclusion is part of their normal routine and day-to-day life. Family embarrassment, stigma, lack of literacy, dearth of communication, and limited mobility discourage many people with disabilities to have any sort of contact with the outside world. During the pandemic, people who had to remain under lockdowns and closure for a long period of time went through similar experiences to those long experienced by people with disabilities. To counter these constraints, countries around the world worked out alternative systems of conducting their people's lives. It was noted that when the whole society is affected, barriers to inclusion or barriers that prevent daily tasks can be tackled. Using the same logic, if governments take actions to work on the barriers experienced by people with disabilities, they too can be solved. The COVID lesson suggests that disability is not about impairment, it is a phenomenon that is constructed by the society.

In summary, the social and human rights models of disability form the basis of inclusive education, and we can extend this social thinking beyond disability to address all aspects of diversity

and difference; for example, a girl is excluded from learning because she does not speak the language of instruction (usually the national language). Rather than blaming or penalizing the girl for not fitting in, the school could instead support her by using her mother tongue as her initial language of literacy and then helping her use her literacy skills to be able to learn in and master the language of instruction.

## 1.6 What does inclusive education mean for me as a teacher?

Inclusive education is not such a big challenge as you might think. It does not mean you have to become an expert in disability. You do not have to know how to diagnose certain conditions.

You do not have to be an expert in gender or race equality or a speaker of a minority language. Rather, guaranteeing inclusive education primarily requires good quality teachers who:

- value and welcome (rather than merely tolerate) difference and diversity**  
Difference and diversity form the basis of any society and these are reflected in the composition and dynamics of the learning environment. Inclusive teaching strategies ensure that all students are valued, welcomed, respected and supported. Tolerance is not enough to be an inclusive teacher. A teacher who is inviting, welcoming and willing to demonstrate an appreciation for diversity and differences can create an inclusive learning environment.
- take the time to get to know and understand their students**  
Teaching is a human act. Being inclusive and impactful as a teacher is not possible without knowing and understanding students. Therefore, it is important that efforts are made to get to know students. It is simply not enough to know their names and background characteristics. Teachers need to dig deeper to understand students as individuals and as learners. Have empathy and try to consider things from others' perspectives (e.g., how does a child feel who



is being teased by classmates because of poverty or disability, or how does a parent with little education feel when coming to a school for the first time to meet the teacher?)

- **are observant** and can recognize when a student is experiencing problems. Observation is a very important skill every teacher should have. Through proper observation, teachers find out about their students' interests, strengths, behaviours, mindsets, and attitudes. There is a popular saying that the teacher's observation skill is similar to that of a driver who is driving a vehicle in heavy traffic. Teacher observation should move beyond noticing the physical aspects and body movements of students to understanding the tone, mood, atmosphere, relationships and other psychological factors around them. Knowing the hidden part of the classroom is key to achieving inclusion.
- **are problem solvers**, who think critically and identify when something is not working well in class and who strive to find ways to improve their teaching methods and materials and the learning environment.
- **are flexible and open-minded** so they can change their opinions and ways of thinking and working based on what they observe and experience within the constantly changing context of their school and given their students' varying stages of development. Related to this is the ability of teachers to adapt the learning environment, instruction, assessment and resources to meet learners' needs. Students' physical, educational, psychological and developmental needs change in times of crisis situations so teachers' flexibility, adaptability and open-mindedness will enable them to handle difficult circumstances.
- **are pro-active** and willing and able to ask other people for advice and ideas (e.g., talking to parents about their children's abilities and needs and asking colleagues if they have relevant experiences).

- **are learners**, always keen to learn and try out new ideas, different teaching methods, and what other teachers are doing in case they have useful teaching techniques that could be borrowed and adapted.
- **are networkers** who realize that they cannot deal alone with every challenge that every child faces, so they find out which other staff or specialists are available to provide help and advice. Networking fosters both the personal and professional growth of teachers. Establishing a professional learning network for teachers is especially important as it helps them acquire new teaching strategies, share curricular resources, strengthen partnerships and connect with parents, students, teachers, and administrators.

Many education systems around the world have initiated the practice of setting up professional learning communities (PLC). Many teachers have historically worked in relative isolation. In recent years much research has shown that teacher collaboration plays a critical role, not only in teacher development but also in instructional improvement. A professional learning community consists of a group of teachers that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching practice and the learning achievement of students. It involves a systematic process of teacher engagement in analysing and improving the teaching process and student learning. It is much more than a staff meeting or group of teachers getting together to discuss something. Key elements of PLC are shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, and collaboration (Stoll, et al. 2006).<sup>3</sup>

As a teacher, it is important to look around for any appropriate networking event. There might be different types of networking opportunities in the district or country. In many countries, teachers typically join teacher unions which act to advocate for the protection of teachers'

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<sup>3</sup> Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A. et al. 2006. Professional Learning Communities: A Review of the Literature. *J Educ Change* 7, 221–258. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-006-0001-8>.

rights. There might be subject-based associations of teachers developed for professional development. The level of membership can be local, national, regional or global. In recent years, technology allows teachers to create and join social networking sites. Memberships are free in most education-oriented networking sites and many give access to teachers from around the world. It should be noted that the digital option of networking should never substitute for the in-person means of networking. Both are useful.

There are many different things you can do to make your class more inclusive. Actions to improve inclusion can be divided into **two main categories or 'tracks'**. It can be useful – when thinking about how to solve an inclusion challenge – if you try to create one solution from each track.

The two tracks are:

1. **the individual track** – supporting individual learners with their specific needs and empowering them as rights holders; responding to individual needs for learning support, rehabilitation, health, or social services.
2. **the system track** – changing policies, practices, and attitudes at the education system and school level; removing barriers and ensuring the delivery of quality, child-centred education that supports the presence, participation, and achievement of all children.

As a teacher, you probably spend quite a lot of time trying to help individual learners with their needs. Your actions can help them to do better in class or enjoy coming to school more. But sometimes it may not be enough to focus just on individual children. Sometimes broader action is needed.

For instance, you notice that a child is struggling to learn because his/her family is very poor, and the child comes to school hungry every day. You might try to help the child's family find a way to access a service where food or credit is available. This would be an important way to help the individual child at that particular time.

However, you can also try a 'system track' solution. You might realize that many children in your school are too hungry to learn properly. You can

work with your head teacher and colleagues and find other local people who want to help. Together you can plan a school feeding programme, where children can have some free food every day at school. This is a system-level solution that may help more children attend, participate, and achieve in school – now and in the future.

Some system-level actions might be too 'big' for you to implement directly, but a group of teachers can still be powerful. For instance, you can make individual-level changes for a child in your school who has a mobility impairment (e.g., linking them and their parents with a local rehabilitation clinic that provides mobility devices). If the school is inaccessible, you may also be able to make some small system-level changes, such as changing the timetable so the child can have all their lessons in a ground-floor classroom.

But as a group of teachers, you probably will not have the power to make big infrastructure changes to the school that are expensive and require experienced labour. Instead, you can lobby the decision-makers in the local education office or your community and put pressure on them to allocate more money toward improving school accessibility.

## 1.7 Why should I strive for an inclusive class?

Inclusive classrooms include and support all children in receiving a quality education. An inclusive classroom begins with the premise that each child is able to participate equally in the learning process and should receive the support needed to succeed.

Inclusive education is an important ingredient for **making society more inclusive and less discriminatory**. If all children grow up experiencing inclusion and diversity within their school, they are more likely to understand the importance of ending or preventing discrimination in their community and country.

Discrimination is a cycle. Children are born into a world where people are prejudiced and discriminate against other people from particular groups or

backgrounds. As children grow up, they start to believe that this prejudice and discrimination are normal, so they do it too. Then the next generation is born and the cycle keeps going.

Your inclusive class will have children from different groups and backgrounds in it – all learning, participating, and achieving together. This is a very important tool for breaking the cycle of prejudice and discrimination so that everyone in society can have their rights fulfilled. Your inclusive class will be part of building a more inclusive – and therefore a more equitable, just, and cohesive – society. Creating an inclusive learning environment does not happen overnight. It is an ongoing commitment and involves the continued learning of teachers to become more inclusive and adopt inclusive pedagogies.

On a practical level, an **inclusive class brings benefits for everyone**. Diversity in society is not something to be viewed as a problem, but is rather a resource that brings together all sorts of different experiences, ideas, and skills to make the society stronger. The same is true for your classroom. Children can learn from interacting and working with each other as much as they can learn from the teacher or a book – so a diverse class means more and different learning opportunities for the students. In other words, inclusive education is not only important for those usually excluded, but also for those always included, who can learn the value of diversity and difference. Children develop acceptance and understanding of one another's personalities, talents, strengths, and differences through interactions.

Inclusive teaching, as already mentioned, is good quality teaching. This is likely to help more students participate in lessons and achieve to the best of their ability. It creates high expectations for all. This in turn means better results – whether in terms of academic grades or in terms of children learning skills for a productive life in the community. As a teacher,

it is more rewarding and motivating when all of your students are joining in and achieving something every day.

Inclusive education is increasingly becoming a legal obligation. International instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, call for the inclusive education of people with disabilities. Many countries also now have national education policies that focus on achieving inclusive education. We look at a range of these instruments dealing with inclusion in Module 2.

### **What is inclusive teaching in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which has forced schools to adopt remote instruction?**

During the pandemic, many countries have relied on technology to ensure learning continuity. Depending on their resources and capacity, some have adopted high-tech solutions, while others have chosen low-tech, traditional options such as radio and broadcast media. The digital divide that exists between learners further reinforces learning divides. Marginalized and vulnerable learners, especially children with disabilities, girls, refugees, migrants, internally displaced people (IDPs), and children from low-income households, are at a higher risk of exclusion in these circumstances. The issue of inclusion becomes even more problematic when teachers are not adequately trained on how to apply inclusive pedagogies in the context of remote instruction.

The shift from school-based learning to remote instruction has also brought a shift in the role of parents. The provision of remote, home-based instruction was likely to increase educational and socio-economic inequalities as many children from disadvantaged families may have had little or no learning support from their parents and less resources to study. The issue of inclusive teaching in times of COVID-19 will be further examined in Module 9.

## Questions for reflection

- Using the four concepts of exclusion, segregation, integration and inclusion, analyse where your school stands in terms of achieving inclusion. What efforts has your school made to achieve inclusion? What barriers has it faced in realizing its objective of becoming an inclusive school?
- How are people with disabilities viewed by the society? In general terms, which model of disability (medical or social) is dominant in your local community?

### 1.8 Activity | When I was a student

#### ■ Introduction

It can sometimes be difficult to consider how our students feel and experience school. It is easy for us to forget how we felt when we were young and in school. But our own experiences of schooling can be very important – both positively and negatively – in shaping our approaches to teaching. This activity will encourage you to reflect on your experience of being a student and how that experience informs your teaching.

#### ■ Participants and materials

You can do this on your own, although it is better if you can do it in a group with your colleagues. Sharing and discussing your experiences is a valuable aid to learning and changing practice and becoming a reflective teacher – which will help you to be an inclusive teacher. All you need for this activity is a quiet space and a pen/pencil and paper, or a computer.

#### ■ Part 1

Individually, reflect on your experiences of school as a student. Think of an example of a teacher and what he/she did that was most positive and meaningful for you in your school experience. Write a short story about this experience (a page or less is fine). Avoid general statements such as 'my teacher was good'. Instead give as much

specific detail as possible – if your teacher was good, what do you mean by that? How did they show their goodness to you?

*In writing your story, consider:*

- What happened with that teacher/teaching experience?
- What was it about that teacher and their teaching that meant so much to you?
- How did this experience make you feel?
- Describe the characteristics of that teacher. Was the teacher patient with you, or did he/she listen to you? How? Did that teacher give you extra support or encouragement?
- What impact did the teacher/teaching experience have on your life?

If you have done this with a group of your colleagues, sit together (in a circle if possible) and share your experiences. Take turns reading your stories aloud. Discuss whether there are any common or shared experiences between your stories. Someone in the group can take notes. Do any of these positive experiences influence your own teaching? If so, how? If not, how could this happen in the future?

#### ■ Part 2

- Now repeat what you did in Part 1, but this time, reflect

on, write about, and discuss a negative experience of a teacher/teaching.

*Consider:*

- What was negative about this for you? What didn't you like?
- How did this teacher/teaching experience make you feel?
- How has this affected your life – in school and beyond school?
- If you could talk to that teacher now, how would you advise them to do things differently?
- How can reflecting on this experience influence your own teaching?

If you can, again sit together and share your experiences. Encourage people to read their stories, but don't insist that everyone read. Discuss whether there are any common or shared experiences. Do any of these negative experiences influence your own teaching? If so, how? If not, how could this happen in the future? Are you a better teacher because of that experience – or do you now replicate it in your own classroom?

Thinking about difficult childhood experiences can be upsetting. Offer colleagues plenty of praise and reassurance for sharing and give people time to do something relaxing afterwards.

# MODULE 2

## KEY INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



This module:

- explains important definitions, such as 'convention', 'declaration', 'framework', etc.;
- gives a brief explanation for each instrument as well as some commentary in boxes.
- highlights specific areas of each instrument which relate to inclusive education.
- provides major highlights of international guidelines and frameworks for education response, recovery and resilience during and beyond COVID-19

## 2.1 Introduction

No single international instrument deals with inclusive education as a whole. However, various key international declarations, conventions, frameworks and statements cover different aspects of inclusive education. And every country in the world has ratified at least one of the instruments mentioned; this means that all States have the responsibility to provide inclusive education and must be held accountable. Teachers do not need to know this information to be inclusive – but it can help to have the main points if you want to remind decision-makers of their obligations.

## 2.2 Glossary

**Convention** – an international agreement between countries. These are usually developed by the United Nations or other international organizations. Governments that ratify conventions must incorporate them into their own laws and make sure that these laws are applied and respected. This means that a convention is legally binding for any sovereign state or other organization which signs up to it.

**Treaty** – an agreement made by countries and other organizations (such as international organizations) under international law. A treaty may also be known as an (international) agreement, protocol, covenant, convention, pact, or exchange of letters. A multilateral treaty is a

treaty that has been agreed on by at least three sovereign states or other parties.

**Ratification** – a confirmation by a party (such as a sovereign state, or organization) of a treaty, act, agreement, or convention that the party has previously signed. The treaty, act, agreement, or convention is not fully valid or enforceable by law until it has been ratified.

**Declaration** – a non-binding set of principles (that is, it is not a legal obligation). Declarations are often agreed upon by a group of sovereign states (and other organizations such as the United Nations) and intended to provide a set of goals and aspirations which can be used by states and other organizations as a basis for developing policies and laws.

**Recommendation** – a suggestion, or set of suggestions intended to guide and influence the policies, laws and practices of a country, organization, or institution. International recommendations are often based on principles agreed to by a group of countries and organizations.

**Constitution** – a set of fundamental principles or established precedents used to govern a country or an organization. Constitutions concern different types of organizations, including countries, companies, and unincorporated associations. A constitution defines the principles upon which a country or organization is based and the procedures through which laws are made. Some constitutions, especially written constitutions, also act as limiters of national power by establishing lines which a country's rulers cannot cross, such as fundamental rights.

**Law and regulation** – a binding rule or set of rules that a country or another organization uses to regulate the actions of its members. Laws may be enforced through the use of penalties.

**Statement** – a clearly defined spoken and/or written expression about specific issue(s). The United Nations or other international organizations often make statements about principles related to human rights and education. These are used to define and clarify

the organizations' intentions and aspirations. Statements are not legally binding.

**Policy** – a document which outlines the principle(s) that a government, organization, or institution will use to guide its decisions and formulate its laws. A policy can be considered as being a 'Statement of Intent' or a 'Commitment' by which a government, organization, or institution can be held accountable.

**Act or Political Statement** – used to refer to any communication intended to influence a decision by a political party or government. The term is used to describe negotiated statements such as "The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education."

**Development Strategy** – a plan made by a government, organization, or institution to guide the development of its policies and practices towards particular goals or objectives (e.g. towards inclusive education).

**Framework** – the organizational structure which is used to develop a system or concept(s).

## 2.3 How does this work in practice? An example

The UN worked with a group of national governments and international organizations to develop a set of principles from which a set of rights that the world's children and young people should be entitled to were developed. This convention is known as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC has now been ratified by most of the world's countries. Countries that ratified the UNCRC have used this to create **development strategies** and **frameworks** from which their national policies about children and young people have been developed (for example relating to children's right to education). Alongside national **policies** (which state that all children should have access to primary education) countries have also developed **laws** to ensure that the policies are put into practice.

## 2.4 Key international instruments<sup>4</sup>

The main international instruments relating to inclusive education are summarized in this section, with some extracts.

### 2.4.1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 1948

**The drafting and signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represented a historic coming together of 48 countries in agreement of basic principles about the rights for all humans to a safe, healthy life with freedom and dignity.**

**The Declaration identifies education as a human right and calls for the right to a free, basic education for all. Developing a 'Universal' declaration of human rights was a way of recognizing that human rights must be a global responsibility and exist above any national, religious and cultural beliefs, norms, and laws.**

### ARTICLE 26

**(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.**

Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

<sup>4</sup> For more complete texts of these instruments, see Annexes.

## 2.4.2 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education: 1960

**The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education is a multilateral treaty which UNESCO adopted in 1960 and which came into force in 1962. The Convention forms the basis of what later became UNESCO's 'Education for All' programme. The Convention sets out what the UN refers to as 'the principles of equality of opportunity and of treatment in education'. The convention addresses many different forms of discrimination in education including discrimination based on gender and religion. It also addresses the rights of minority groups to use, teach, and learn in their own languages.**

### ARTICLE 1

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term 'discrimination' includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying {stopping or making invalid} or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular:
  - (a) Of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level;
  - (b) Of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard;
  - (c) Subject to the provisions of Article 2 of this Convention, of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or
  - (d) Of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man.
2. For the purposes of this Convention, the term 'education' refers to all types and levels of education, and includes access to education, the standard and quality of education, and the conditions under which it is given.

### ARTICLE 3

In order to eliminate and prevent discrimination within the meaning of this Convention, the States Parties thereto undertake:

- (a) To abrogate {do away with} any statutory {legal} provisions and any administrative instructions and to discontinue any administrative practices which involve discrimination in education;
- (b) To ensure, by legislation where necessary, that there is no discrimination in the admission of pupils to educational institutions;
- (c) Not to allow any differences of treatment by the public authorities between nationals, except on the basis of merit or need, in the matter of school fees and the grant of scholarships or other forms of assistance to pupils and necessary permits and facilities for the pursuit of studies in foreign countries;
- (d) Not to allow, in any form of assistance granted by the public authorities to educational institutions, any restrictions or preference based solely on the ground that pupils belong to a particular group.

### ARTICLE 4

The States Parties to this Convention undertake furthermore to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which, by methods appropriate to the circumstances and to national usage, will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment in the matter of education and in particular:

- (a) To make primary education free and compulsory; make secondary education in its different forms generally available and accessible to all; make higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity; and assure compliance by all with the obligation to attend school prescribed by law;
- (b) To ensure that the standards of education are equivalent in all public educational institutions of the same level, and that the



conditions relating to the quality of the education provided are also equivalent; (...)

(c) To provide training for the teaching profession without discrimination.

#### ARTICLE 5

The States Parties to this Convention agree that:(...)

(c) It is essential to recognize:

- The right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities.
- Schools of minorities must be maintained.
- Depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their
- own language should be provided, unless:
  - (i) This right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating in its activities, or which prejudices national sovereignty;
  - (ii) That the standard of education is not lower than the general standard laid down or approved by the competent authorities; and
  - (iii) That attendance at such schools is optional.

#### 2.4.3 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: 1979

**The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), is, as UN Women explains, 'often described as an international bill of rights for women.' CEDAW defines and addresses discrimination against women in many of its forms, including discrimination in education and health.**

#### ARTICLE 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- a. The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
- b. Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
- c. The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging co-education and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;
- d. The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;
- e. The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;
- f. The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
- g. The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;
- h. Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

#### 2.4.4 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: 1989

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted in 1989 and came into force in 1990. It defines children as human beings with their own rights, some of which (such as the right to play) were not previously specified in human rights conventions. The UNCRC is very important as it addresses children's rights to education, health, privacy and protection against all forms of abuse.**

**These rights are linked and form a basis for inclusive education for all children.**

**A basic tenet of the Convention is that it is every child's right to receive a quality education and develop his/her full potential with reference to the following definitions:**

**Potential: Having basic possibilities and capabilities if facilitated with opportunities.**

**Quality education: Education that is child centred (rather than curriculum centred), is addressing physical, social, emotional and intellectual interests, potentials and needs, considers diversity as enriching, promotes activity, reflection and problem solving and focuses on sharing rather than competing.**

#### ARTICLE 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years (...).

#### ARTICLE 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

#### ARTICLE 23

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

#### ARTICLE 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need; (...)
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

#### ARTICLE 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- (e) The development of respect for the natural environment. (...)

#### 2.4.5 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention: 1989

**The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO convention 169), is an International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention which sets out specific rights for indigenous peoples. Among other rights, the Convention addresses indigenous peoples' right to education that recognizes and is relevant to their traditional knowledge, cultures, languages and histories.**

#### ARTICLE 27

1. Education programmes and services for the peoples concerned shall be developed and implemented in cooperation with them to address their special needs, and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations.
2. The competent authority shall ensure the training of members of these peoples and their involvement in the formulation and implementation of education programmes,

with a view to the progressive transfer of responsibility for the conduct of these programmes to these peoples as appropriate.

3. In addition, governments shall recognize the right of these peoples to establish their own educational institutions and facilities, provided that such institutions meet minimum standards established by the competent authority in consultation with these peoples. Appropriate resources shall be provided for this purpose.

#### ARTICLE 28

1. Children belonging to the peoples concerned shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong. When this is not practicable, the competent authorities shall undertake consultations with these peoples with a view to the adoption of measures to achieve this objective.
2. Adequate measures shall be taken to ensure that these peoples have the opportunity to attain fluency in the national language or in one of the official languages of the country.
3. Measures shall be taken to preserve and promote the development and practice of the indigenous languages of the peoples concerned.

#### ARTICLE 7

(...)

2. The improvement of the conditions of life and work and levels of health and education of the peoples concerned, with their participation and cooperation, shall be a matter of priority in plans for the overall economic development of areas they inhabit. Special projects for development of the areas in question shall also be so designed as to promote such improvement. (...)

#### ARTICLE 26

Measures shall be taken to ensure that members of the peoples concerned have the opportunity to acquire education at all levels on at least an equal footing with the rest of the national community.

**ARTICLE 29**

The imparting of general knowledge and skills that will help children belonging to the peoples concerned to participate fully and on an equal footing in their own community and in the national community shall be an aim of education for these peoples.

**ARTICLE 30**

1. Governments shall adopt measures appropriate to the traditions and cultures of the peoples concerned, to make known to them their rights and duties, especially in regard to labour, economic opportunities, education and health matters, social welfare and their rights deriving from this Convention.
2. If necessary, this shall be done by means of written translations and through the use of mass communications in the languages of these peoples.

**ARTICLE 31**

Educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and particularly among those that are in most direct contact with the peoples concerned, with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history textbooks and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples.

**2.4.6 World Declaration on Education for All: 1990**

**The World Declaration on Education for All builds on previous declarations and conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It calls for primary education to be made accessible for all children. The Declaration, as UNESCO notes, ‘...reaffirmed the notion of education as a fundamental human right and urged countries to intensify efforts to address the basic learning needs of all.’**

**The Declaration is an important part of the foundation of the global movement towards inclusive education and constitutes an agreement made between 150 sovereign states and 150 governmental and non-governmental organizations.**

**Meeting Basic Learning Needs:** Every person – child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.

**Shaping the Vision:** To serve the basic learning needs of all requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an “expanded vision” that surpasses present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices.

**Universalizing Access and Promoting Equity:** Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults.

**Focusing On Learning:** Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development – for an individual or for society – depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities, i.e. whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values.

### **Broadening the Means and Scope of**

**Basic Education:** Learning begins at birth.

- The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling.
- The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems.

### **Enhancing the Environment for Learning:**

Learning does not take place in isolation. Societies, therefore, must ensure that all learners receive the nutrition, health care, and general physical and emotional support they need in order to participate actively in and benefit from their education.

### **Developing a Supportive Policy Context:**

Supportive policies in the social, cultural, and economic sectors are required in order to realize the full provision and utilization of basic education for individual and societal improvement.

### **2.4.7 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families: 1990**

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1990. Article 30 of the Convention protects the basic right of each migrant child to education.

#### **ARTICLE 30**

Each child of a migrant worker shall have the basic right of access to education on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Access to public pre-school educational institutions or schools shall not be refused or limited by reason of the irregular situation with respect to stay or employment of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the State of employment.

### **2.4.8 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs: 1994**

**The Salamanca Statement built on the World Declaration on Education for All to more specifically define, address and call for inclusive education. A total of 92 sovereign states and 25 international organizations joined together to hold the World Conference on Special Needs Education during which the Salamanca Statement was developed.**

**The Salamanca Statement is an important advancement and defining document in the movement towards inclusive education. It addresses education policy and practice calling for all children (regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language, ability/disability, social class, health situation, etc.) to have access to education in regular schools within their communities.**

**The Salamanca Statement includes a 'Framework for Action' which states that 'inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights'.**

### **Statement**

2. We believe and proclaim that:

- every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning, every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,
- education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,
- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,
- regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of:

- combating discriminatory attitudes,
- creating welcoming communities,
- building an inclusive society and achieving education for all;

Moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

3. We call upon all governments and urge them to:

- give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems
- to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties,
- adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise, develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries having experience with inclusive schools, establish decentralized and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special educational needs,
- encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organization of persons with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes concerning provision for special educational needs,
- invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies, as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education,
- ensure that, in the context of a systemic change, teacher education programmes, both pre-service and in-service, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools.

### Framework for Action

3. The guiding principle that informs this **Framework** is that schools should accommodate **all children** regardless

of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include:

- disabled and gifted children,
- street and working children,
- children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, and
- children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

These conditions create a range of different challenges to school systems. In the context of this Framework, the term 'special educational needs' refers to all those children and youth whose needs arise from disabilities or learning difficulties. Many children experience learning difficulties and thus have special educational needs at some time during their schooling. Schools have to find ways of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. There is an emerging consensus that children and youth with special educational needs should be included in the educational arrangements made for the majority of children. This has led to the concept of the inclusive school. The challenge confronting the inclusive school is that of developing a child-centred pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. (...)

4. (...) It assumes that human differences are normal and that learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process. A child-centred pedagogy is beneficial to all students and, as a consequence, to society as a whole. (...)

It can substantially reduce the drop-out and repetition (...), while ensuring higher average levels of achievement. (...) Child-centred schools are, moreover, the training ground for a people-oriented society that respects both the differences and the dignity of all human beings.

6. (...) Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights. (...)
7. The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, (...)
10. (...) Experience, moreover, suggests that inclusive schools, serving all of the children in a community, are most successful in eliciting (*stimulating and bringing about*) community support and in finding imaginative and innovative ways of using the limited resources that are available.
18. Educational policies at all levels, from the national to the local, should stipulate that a child with a disability should attend the neighbourhood school; that is, the school that would be attended if the child did not have a disability. (...)
27. Promote people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through the provision of basic education, lifelong education, literacy and training, and primary health care for girls and women;
30. Ensure equal access to and equal treatment of women and men in education and health care and enhance women's sexual and reproductive health as well as education;
32. Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people;

#### 2.4.9 Beijing Declaration of the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference on Women: 1995

**The Beijing Declaration of the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference on Women established a 'Platform for Action' which set out a series of specific goals and strategies to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. The Platform for Action calls for the removal of '...all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making'.**

**The Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action was adopted by 189 sovereign states. These documents focus on 12 'critical areas of concern' for women, including 'education and training' and have been subject to review every five years since 1995.**

#### 2.4.10. Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and Recommendations: 1999

**The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and Recommendations (also known as Convention 182) mandates the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour including slavery, child trafficking and prostitution. The Convention and Recommendations are very relevant to education, because child labour is a major cause of children's exclusion from education. Even when not directly excluding children from education, child labour negatively impacts on the quality of education working children have access to.**

#### Convention

##### ARTICLE 3

For the purposes of this Convention, the term the worst forms of child labour comprises:

- c. all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage {*a kind of slavery*} and serfdom {*a kind of slavery*} and forced or compulsory labour, including forced

or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

- d. the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit {unlawful} activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- e. work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

#### ARTICLE 6

1. Each Member shall design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour.

#### ARTICLE 7

2. Each Member shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time-bound measures to:
  - a. prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour;
  - b. provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration;
  - c. ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour;
  - d. identify and reach out to children at special risk; and
  - e. take account of the special situation of girls.

## Recommendations

2. The programmes of action... should aim at, inter alia *{among others}*:
  - a. identifying and denouncing the worst forms of child labour;
  - b. preventing the engagement of children in or removing them from the worst forms of child labour, protecting them from reprisals and providing for their rehabilitation and social integration through measures which address their educational, physical and psychological needs;
  - c. giving special attention to:
    - i. younger children;
    - ii. the girl child;
    - iii. the problem of hidden work situations, in which girls are at special risk;
    - iv. other groups of children with special vulnerabilities or needs;
  - d. identifying, reaching out to and working with communities where children are at special risk;
  - e. informing, sensitizing and mobilizing public opinion and concerned groups, including children and their families.



### 2.4.11 The Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All: 2000

**The Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All, builds on the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All. Ten years after the Declaration, it recognized that the goal of primary education for all had not yet been achieved (with an estimated 13 million children still without access to primary education in the year 2000). The Dakar Framework reaffirmed the commitments of sovereign states and other organizations to achieving primary education for all, and clearly defined six more specific and measurable goals for education to be achieved by the year 2015:**

- Goal 1** Expand early childhood care and education
- Goal 2** Provide free and compulsory primary education for all
- Goal 3** Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults
- Goal 4** Increase adult literacy by 50 percent
- Goal 5** Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015
- Goal 6** Improve the quality of education

#### ARTICLE 3

We reaffirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term:

- An education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be.
- It is an education geared to tapping *{using and encouraging}* each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.

#### ARTICLE 6

Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalization. Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency.

#### ARTICLE 7

We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:

- i. expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- ii. ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- iii. ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes
- iv. achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, (...);
- v. eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, (...);
- vi. improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

#### ARTICLE 8

To achieve these goals, we the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:

- meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities
- {disasters} and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict;
- implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which
- recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
- implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the
- HIV and AIDS pandemic;
- create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments (...);
- enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers.

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- iv. achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, (...);
- v. eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, (...);

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- implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV and AIDS pandemic;
- create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments (...);
- enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers.

#### 2.4.12 Millennium Development Goals: 2000

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were developed during the Millennium Summit of the UN in the year 2000 and comprised a set of eight goals all UN member states were expected to achieve by the year 2015. The goals were:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- To achieve universal primary education
- To promote gender equality and empower women
- To reduce child mortality
- To improve maternal health
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To develop a global partnership for development.

The MDGs in their focus on education, health, gender equality and poverty reduction were important to the movement towards inclusive education.

#### 2.4.13 UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities: 2006

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was the first human rights convention of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and addresses the rights of persons with disabilities. The UNCRPD is recognized as establishing the first legally binding, international set of minimum standards for the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

The Convention addresses a range of human rights. Following the ideals as outlined in the 1948 Convention on Human Rights, people with disabilities are given the same rights as non-disabled people to participate in education and in political, social, cultural and economic affairs. If people with disabilities need support to overcome a barrier to participation (e.g. in voting, learning, working), this support must be provided.

Article 24 specifies the right of people with disabilities to inclusive education at all levels (lifelong education). Sovereign states are responsible for ensuring that all necessary support and accommodations are provided (for example, making schools physically accessible to children with disabilities and providing accessible materials, such as textbooks in Braille). Along with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNCRPD is one of the most important conventions for inclusive education.

#### ARTICLE 5: Equality and non-discrimination

- States Parties recognize that all persons are equal before and under the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law.
- States Parties shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds. (...)
- In order to promote equality and eliminate discrimination, States Parties shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided.

**ARTICLE 7: Children with disabilities**

- States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children
- In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child
- shall be a primary consideration. (...)

**ARTICLE 9: Accessibility**

1. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life (...). These measures (...) shall apply to, inter alia {among others}:
  - a. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
  - b. Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.
2. States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to:
  - a. Develop, promulgate {spread} and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public;
  - b. Ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;
  - c. Provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities;
  - d. Provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signs in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms;
  - e. Provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public; (...)

- f. Promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;
- g. Promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost.

**ARTICLE 24: Education**

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:
  - The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the
  - strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity; the development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
  - Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:
  - a. Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability; (...)
  - b. Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live; (...)
  - c. effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:
  - a. Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
  - b. Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community; (...)

#### 2.4.14 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: 2007

**The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples reaffirms indigenous people's rights, including their rights to education, health, employment, language, culture, identity and traditional lands/ territories (which are often a key aspect of indigenous peoples' culture, religion and identity). Although the Declaration is not legally binding, it calls for the end to discrimination for indigenous peoples. It encourages sovereign nations and other parties and organizations to work alongside indigenous peoples in promoting and supporting their access to human rights and development on their own terms. The right to preserve, develop and transfer indigenous knowledge and knowledge practices between generations of indigenous peoples is an important part of their right to education and is addressed in the Declaration.**

#### ARTICLE 4

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

#### ARTICLE 11

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

#### ARTICLE 12

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

#### ARTICLE 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

#### ARTICLE 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

#### ARTICLE 15

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.
2. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

#### ARTICLE 21

1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia {among others}, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

2. States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

#### ARTICLE 22

1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

#### ARTICLE 31

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property rights over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

### 2.4.15 Sustainable Development Goals: 2015

Building upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in September 2015 as a universal agenda with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by both developed and developing countries by 2030. It needs to be noted that in contrast to MDGs, the SDGs are applicable

uniformly to all countries and the SDG agenda has been significantly expanded in terms of its scope as compared to the earlier global agenda. Beyond the poverty focus of MDGs, the SDG agenda sees economic, environmental and social dimensions as integral parts of sustainable development. At the heart of the 2030 agenda are the P5s: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships.

Sustainable Development Goals	
 <p><b>1 NO POVERTY</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p>	 <p><b>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</b> Reduce inequality within and among countries</p>
 <p><b>2 ZERO HUNGER</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</p>	 <p><b>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</b> Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p>
 <p><b>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p>	 <p><b>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</b> Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p>
 <p><b>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</b> Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</p>	 <p><b>13 CLIMATE ACTION</b> Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p>
 <p><b>5 GENDER EQUALITY</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p>	 <p><b>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</b> Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</p>
 <p><b>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</b> Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</p>	 <p><b>15 LIFE ON LAND</b> Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</p>
 <p><b>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</b> Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</p>	 <p><b>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</b> Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>
 <p><b>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p>	 <p><b>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</b> Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</p>
 <p><b>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b> Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation</p>	

**Education 2030: Incheon Declaration: 2015**

Adopted at the 2015 World Education Forum in Incheon (Republic of Korea), this Declaration defines a framework for action for the implementation of SDG 4. UN agencies and 160 countries expressed their commitment towards transforming their education systems to make them more equitable and inclusive by focusing efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.

The Framework recognizes education is at the heart of the 2030 for Sustainable Development

and essential for the success of all SDGs. Recognizing the important role of education, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights education as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4) and also includes targets on education under several other SDGs, notably those on health; growth and employment; sustainable consumption and production; and climate change. The new education agenda's focus on inclusion and equity – giving everyone an equal opportunity, and leaving no one behind – signals another lesson: the need for increased efforts especially aimed at reaching those marginalized or in vulnerable situations. All people,

**Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets**

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

<b>4.1</b>	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	<b>4.7</b>	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
<b>4.2</b>	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	<b>4.a</b>	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
<b>4.3</b>	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	<b>4.b</b>	By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
<b>4.4</b>	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	<b>4.c</b>	By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States
<b>4.5</b>	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations		
<b>4.6</b>	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy		



irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status, should have access to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

The principles informing this Framework are drawn from international instruments and agreements. These principles include:

- Education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right. To fulfil this right, countries must ensure universal equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and learning, which should be free and compulsory, leaving no one behind.
- Education is a public good, of which the state is the duty bearer. Education is a shared societal endeavour, which implies an inclusive process of public policy formulation and implementation. Civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, communities, families, youth and children all have important roles in realizing the right to quality education. The role of the state is essential in setting and regulating standards and norms.
- Gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education for all. Achieving gender equality requires a rights-based approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education:

### **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (11 July 2018)**

15.f Provide inclusive and equitable quality education to migrant children and youth, as well as facilitate access to lifelong learning opportunities, including by strengthening the capacities of education systems and by facilitating non-discriminatory access to early

childhood development, formal schooling, non-formal education programmes for children for whom the formal system is inaccessible, on-the-job and vocational training, technical education, and language training, as well as by fostering partnerships with all stakeholders that can support this endeavour

- 16.i Promote school environments that are welcoming and safe, and support the aspirations of migrant children by enhancing relationships within the school community, incorporating evidence-based information about migration in education curricula, and dedicating targeted resources to schools with a high concentration of migrant children for integration activities in order to promote respect for diversity and inclusion, and to prevent all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance
- 18.e Invest in human capital development by promoting entrepreneurship, education, vocational training and skills development programmes and partnerships, productive employment creation, in line with labour market needs, as well as in cooperation with the private sector and trade unions, with a view to reducing youth unemployment, avoiding brain drain and optimizing brain gain in countries of origin, and harnessing the demographic dividend
- 29.h Protect and respect the rights and best interests of the child at all times, regardless of their migration status, by ensuring availability and accessibility of a viable range of alternatives to detention in non-custodial contexts, favouring community-based care arrangements, that ensure access to education and health care, and respect their right to family life and family unity, and by working to end the practice of child detention in the context of international migration

## Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD): 2016

### ARTICLE 24: Education

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:
  - (a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
  - (b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
  - (c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:
  - (a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;
  - (b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
  - (c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
  - (d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
  - (e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.
3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:
  - (a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
  - (b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;
  - (c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.
4. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.
5. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

32.i Promote school environments that are welcoming and safe, and support the aspirations of migrant children by enhancing relationships within the school community, incorporating evidence-based information about migration in education curricula, and dedicating targeted resources to schools with a high concentration of migrant children for integration activities in order to promote respect for diversity and inclusion, and to prevent all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance

### Report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees/Global Compact on Refugees (13 September 2018)

#### 2 Education

68. In line with national education laws, policies and planning, and in support of host countries, States and relevant stakeholders will contribute resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality and inclusiveness of national education systems to facilitate access by refugee and host community children (both boys and girls), adolescents and youth to primary, secondary and tertiary education. More direct financial support and special efforts will be mobilized to minimize the time refugee boys and girls spend out of education, ideally a maximum of three months after arrival.
69. Depending on the context, additional support could be contributed to expand educational facilities (including for early childhood development, and technical or vocational training) and teaching capacities (including support for, as appropriate, refugees and members of host communities who are or could be engaged as teachers, in line with national laws and policies). Additional areas for support include efforts to meet the specific education needs of refugees (including through “safe schools” and innovative methods such as online education) and overcome obstacles to

their enrolment and attendance, including through flexible certified learning programmes, especially for girls, as well as persons with disabilities and psychosocial trauma. Support will be provided for the development and implementation of national education sector plans that include refugees. Support will also be provided where needed to facilitate recognition of equivalency of academic, professional and vocational qualifications.

### Global frameworks and guidelines in relation to during COVID-19 and beyond

In the wake of COVID-19, the UN system and its allies have issued a number of frameworks and guidelines to guide the response and recovery process in education. The bottom line of all these frameworks is: children's right to education is not to be compromised. Education should continue even in the most difficult times of crises. Learning never stops. The international frameworks take the perspective that within a human rights framework, responses to the pandemic should not jeopardize children's right to education. Four overarching principles guide the COVID-19 response and recovery work among UN agencies. These principles state that (i) education should be **available** to everyone by guaranteeing the right to free and compulsory education to all; (ii) education should be **accessible**, meaning that no barrier should stand in the way to receiving education; (iii) education should be **acceptable**, meaning that public education should meet minimum standards and conditions for quality; (iv) education should be **adaptable**, which calls for adapting the school system to the child, not the child to the system. The importance of these principles, which are popularly known as 4A principles, should be recognized at all times. Their importance is particularly great during crisis times, not only for the sake of equality and equity but also for efficiency.

### Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education

(Right to education: impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the right to education; concerns, challenges and opportunities, Human Rights Council: 2020)

- .....
- (a) Limitations imposed upon the right to education should strictly comply with the conditions set out in article 4 of the Covenant, article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant provisions of the international human rights law framework.
  - (b) Governments and other stakeholders should integrate the “4As” framework (Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability) as policy guides throughout the education system at all levels, including at school level.
  - (c) States should develop emergency education preparedness within national education systems globally and train educational planners at all levels. These plans should be based on guaranteeing the right to education for all and the “4As” framework.
  - (d) States should create an institutional mechanism for crisis and disaster planning and management. Such mechanism should function at an important decision-making level and be decentralized in its implementation, ensuring that relevant decisions are adopted at the local level in cooperation with local stakeholders, for example when it comes to the reopening of schools.
  - (e) All States should, as a matter of urgency, adopt special, targeted measures, including through international cooperation, to address and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups, as well as communities and groups subject to structural discrimination and disadvantage. In many contexts, this will mean prioritizing the most accessible, ‘low-or-no-tech’ approaches in distance learning, as well as adopting measures such as moratoria on the payment of school fees, providing cash transfers to families, and ensuring delivery of food and other social services to vulnerable children during the crisis.
  - (f) Bearing in mind the particular importance of the right to education to children, children’s rights must be given special attention and priority by decision-makers.
  - (g) Special emphasis should be placed on the equal importance of the right of every girl and every learner with disability to continued education, in accordance with guidance developed by OHCHR in this respect, as well as of other marginalized or vulnerable children or learners, including migrants and children in humanitarian contexts.
  - (h) The deployment of online distance learning (together with radio and television), should only be seen as a temporary solution aimed at addressing a crisis. The digitalization of education should never replace on-site schooling with teachers. A thorough reflection is needed on the place and content of digital education, its meaning and efficiency, and its impact on the health and education of children and other learners.
  - (i) The introduction of distance learning tools must be accompanied by improved content quality adapted to local contexts and in particular local languages, as well as effective and on-going training of teachers and learners. It should not consist of uniform content and must provide scope for

## Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education

(Right to education: impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the right to education; concerns, challenges and opportunities, Human Rights Council: 2020)

teachers' and learners' inputs, pedagogical differentiation depending on the level and capacities of learners, as well as academic freedom and creativity.

- (j) Governments should consider the massive arrival of private actors through digital technology as a major danger for education systems and the right to education in the long term. They should ensure, including through the adoption of appropriate regulation, that this will not lead to the capture of limited public resources for education by commercial entities seeking to profit from the crisis, the collection of learners' and teachers' data or advertising towards children and youth. Education and learning solutions should be developed as a public good, without commercial or other restrictive licenses that threaten the enjoyment of the right to education and deepen inequalities.
- (k) States should give effect to their obligation under article 2 of the Covenant to devote the maximum of their available resources to achieve progressively

the full realization of the economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to education. This requires States to enhance their domestic resources mobilization, especially through progressive tax policy. The Special Rapporteur underlines in this regard the crucial importance of consolidating public education systems and of prioritizing the provision of free, public education of the highest attainable quality, in accordance with the Abidjan Principles (principle 34).

- (l) Taking into consideration the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights, as well as of the sustainable development goals, the response to the crisis must be multidimensional and multisectoral and action based on a continuum between education, health, housing, food, employment and essential social services.
- (m) If, in exceptional circumstances, retrogressive measures are taken in relation to the right to education, States must ensure that any such measure is in accordance with applicable human

rights law and standards. States that are providing international assistance and cooperation must not adopt, support, or require impermissible retrogressive measures with regard to the right to public education.

- (i) Countries should further be supported with adequate aid for their public education systems to ensure that the crisis will not lead to an increased privatization and commercialization of education.
- (ii) States should use their voting powers in international financial institutions to alleviate the financial burden of developing countries in combating the pandemic, with measures such as granting these countries different mechanisms of debt relief, including debt cancellation.
- (iii) Donors should meet their commitments to localization, ensuring that local and national organizations are funded to respond to the crisis – recognizing

### Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education

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| <p>their local expertise and ability to reach marginalized populations.</p> <p>(iv) States should ensure the rights of teachers and other education workers, in the public and the private sectors, during and after the crisis, in particular their rights to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work, to form and join trade unions of their choice, to social security, including social insurance, and to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (articles 7, 8, 9 and 12 of the Covenant).</p> | <p>(v) All States and business entities should ensure preventative and precautionary measures are in place to protect and ensure the right to health, including mental health and well-being of every education worker and learner, especially at the reopening of educational institutions. Special attention should be paid to those at particular risk.</p> <p>(vi) Good relationships and mutual trust between governments, teachers, associations and trade unions of teachers and other education workers, as well as parents and</p> | <p>communities, should be established, both at the national and local levels.</p> <p>(vii) A lessons-learnt exercise should be undertaken to continue to foster the role of parents and families in the schooling of their children.</p> <p>(viii) As a longer-term measure, the role of educational institutions to develop the psycho-emotional competencies of all persons and the resilience of societies should be enhanced and taken seriously.</p> |
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## United Nations Recommendations for education during COVID-19 and beyond: 2020

### *Recommendations for preventing a learning crisis from becoming a generational catastrophe*

#### Recommendations

Preventing a learning crisis from becoming a generational catastrophe requires urgent action from all.

Education is not only a fundamental human right. It is an enabling right with direct impact on the realization of all other human rights. It is a global common good and a primary driver of progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals as a bedrock of just, equal, inclusive peaceful societies. When education systems collapse, peace, prosperous and productive societies cannot be sustained.

In order to mitigate the potentially devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and stakeholders are encouraged to pursue the following policy responses:

#### **SUPPRESS TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS AND PLAN THOROUGHLY FOR SCHOOL REOPENINGS:**

The single most significant step that countries can take to hasten the reopening of schools and education institutions is to suppress transmission of the virus to control national or local outbreaks. Once they have done so, to deal with the complex challenge of

reopening, it is important to be guided by the following parameters: ensure the safety of all; plan for inclusive reopening; listen to the voices of all concerned; and coordinate with key actors, including the health community.

#### **PROTECT EDUCATION FINANCING AND COORDINATE FOR IMPACT:**

The pandemic has pushed the world into the deepest global recession in living memory which will have lasting effects on economies and public finances. National authorities and the international community need to protect education financing through the following avenues: strengthen domestic revenue mobilization, preserve the share of expenditure for education as a top priority and address inefficiencies in education spending; strengthen international coordination to address the debt crisis; and protect official development assistance (ODA) for education.

#### **BUILD RESILIENT EDUCATION SYSTEMS FOR EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:**

Strengthening the resilience of education systems enables countries to respond to the immediate challenges of safely reopening schools and positions them to

better cope with future crises. In this regard, governments could consider the following: focus on equity and inclusion; reinforce capacities for risk management, at all levels of the system; ensure strong leadership and coordination; and enhance consultation and communication mechanisms.

#### **REIMAGINE EDUCATION AND ACCELERATE CHANGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING:**

The massive efforts made in a short time to respond to the shocks to education systems remind us that change is possible. We should seize the opportunity to find new ways to address the learning crisis and bring about a set of solutions previously considered difficult or impossible to implement. The following entry points could be to the fore of our efforts: focus on addressing learning losses and preventing drop-outs, particularly of marginalized groups; offer skills for employability programmes; support the teaching profession and teachers' readiness; expand the definition of the right to education to include connectivity; remove barriers to connectivity; strengthen data and monitoring of learning; strengthen the articulation and flexibility across levels and types of education and training.

## Mission: Recovering education in 2021 (UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank)

**Mission objective:** To enable all children to return to school and to a supportive learning environment, which also addresses their health and psychosocial well-being and other needs

### Three priorities:

#### Priority 1

All children and youth are back in school and receive the tailored services needed to meet their learning, health, psychosocial well-being, and other needs.

- Enrolment is back to pre-COVID levels.
- All schools provide comprehensive services to recover learning losses and to promote well-being.

#### Priority 2

All children receive support to catch up on lost learning.

- All schools provide remedial education.
- All schools incorporate social-emotional learning into their teaching.
- All schools incorporate digital technology to improve foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

#### Priority 3

All teachers are prepared and supported to address learning losses among their students and to incorporate digital technology into their teaching.

- Teachers are prioritized for vaccination.
- All teachers receive training or other support to incorporate remedial education approaches and social-emotional learning into their pedagogy.
- All teachers receive training or other support to deliver remote instruction.



**Save the Children, UNICEF, INEE, Plan International, Humanity and Inclusion and FCA (Finn Church Aid)**

**Learning Must Go On:**

Recommendations for keeping children safe and learning, during and after the COVID-19 crisis (August 2020).

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Continue learning: Even with schools closed, learning must continue. Governments, donors and partners must support schools and teachers to develop emergency distance learning materials and activities accessible to all children, particularly the most marginalized.
- Protect well-being: Physical, mental health and psychosocial support should be fully integrated into educational responses.

- Address needs of marginalized children and youth: School closures should not further exacerbate educational inequalities on the basis of gender, poverty, disability, ethnicity, religion, geographic location and more.
- Support the specific needs of children and youth affected by conflict, humanitarian crises and forced displacement: Quality education can play a critical role in mitigating the harmful impact of crises on children's well-being and supporting their recovery.
- Support teachers and parents: The response should consider the

importance of protecting the well-being and economic security of teachers and parents.

- Strengthen education systems in preparation for school reopening: Government health authorities should decide when schools reopen and all educational authorities should adhere to the Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools.
- Maintain and increase financing: Increased funding will be essential to support the continuation of learning for all children, including marginalized groups.

**2.5 Activity | Teachers' knowledge of policies and laws**

**■ Teachers to discuss**

- Do you know what your country's policies and laws are that deal with inclusive education?
- Do you know what your school's policies are which deal with inclusive education?
- Can you think of any international policies we have reviewed, and school or national policies which affect education?

## 2.6 Reflecting international commitments in local policies

This module has highlighted some of the key international instruments that deal with inclusive education. These instruments have been used to develop different policies and laws at the national level in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Policies do not only exist at the international, national, provincial and district levels – but there are many policies that affect inclusive education which are also at the level of individual schools. These

lower-level policies should support the policies that national governments have signed up to.

For example, many schools have attendance policies. If these policies are very rigid (e.g. if students are only allowed to attend school if they are there exactly on time in the morning), they may exclude children who are late to school because they have to work in the mornings, or have long distances to travel to school, or can only walk slowly. A school with a flexible policy on attendance will be more inclusive than a school with an inflexible, rigid attendance policy.

### 2.7 Activity | Improving local policy

#### ■ Read the excerpt from Article 3 of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs.

##### ARTICLE 3

The guiding principle that informs this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include:

- disabled and gifted children,
- street and working children,
- children from remote or nomadic populations,
- children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other marginalized areas or groups. These conditions create a range of different challenges

to school systems. In the context of this Framework, the term 'special educational needs' refers to all those children and youth whose needs arise from disabilities or learning difficulties.

- Many children experience learning difficulties and thus have special educational needs at some time during their schooling. Think about the list of different types of children listed in the excerpt.
- Which of these types of children are already in your school? Are they included in terms of participation and achievement?

- Which children are in your local community but not yet included in your school?

Now, list the policies which already exist in your school to ensure the inclusion of the different types of children mentioned above.

What is missing? Whose needs are not considered? How can the policies be improved? Come up with a list of new or improved policies for your school/s to ensure the inclusion of all children that are present in your school community. Think about policies which address attendance, learning and assessment. How could you get these policies taken up?

# MODULE 3

A TWIN-TRACK APPROACH TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



This module:

- **Defines each facet of the twin-track approach in education**
  - The system track; and
  - The individual track
- **Applies this concept to a classroom context**

### 3.1 Introduction

In Module 1, we discussed the differences between the social and medical models of disability. We also introduced the idea of the ‘twin-track’ approach to inclusive education – the system track and individual tracks – which we discuss further in this module.

‘Inclusive education is more in tune with the social model of disability which sees the system as the problem. The school and the education system as a whole are enabled to change in order to meet the individual needs of all learners’.  
(Miles, 2000<sup>5</sup>).

The social model is important for understanding the theory and practice of inclusive education, but because disability is understood as a complex experience, even if all social barriers are removed, a person with a disability might still be excluded because of the nature of his/her impairments. In other words, if the system changed to become more inclusive, this does not mean that inclusion will automatically happen. In relation to disability, an example is when a school is made physically accessible and welcoming in order to enable children with physical impairments to attend. But the children may not attend if they and their families do not have support and resources such as necessary therapies, assistive devices, sufficient income, and positive attitudes towards education and their child.

The social model includes respecting the learner’s right to appropriate support and resources. This is why education sector reform alone is not enough – other sectors such as health and social welfare need to be involved, together with communities and families. Inclusion works best for children with disabilities where there is also a community- based programme (e.g. community-based rehabilitation or CBR where all relevant actors work together to mitigate the challenge of disability at the local level).

In order to achieve full inclusion, like a train moving smoothly on two tracks towards its destination, two approaches working towards the same goal are needed, these are:

- **focus on the system** – identify and seek to overcome barriers to inclusion for all learning found in the local context and culture and, if possible, in broader policies and practices. It involves mainstreaming of disability inclusion in all aspects of the system so that barriers are removed to allow children with disabilities to participate and benefit from the learning process.
- **focus on the learners** who are vulnerable to being excluded and work to realize their rights to support and resources in their families, communities and learning environments. It mainly involves targeting the individual child by providing interventions and services to meet his or her specific needs.

It needs to be emphasized that mainstreaming (system focus) alone is not sufficient to ensure no one is left behind. It is important to both change the system and support the individual learner.

5 Miles, S. 2000. Enabling Inclusive Education: Challenges and Dilemmas. In: A Symposium on Development Policy entitled ‘Children with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of the Child’. Bonn, Gustav Stresemann Institute. October 27-29.

Figure 3: The twin-track approach



### 3.2. The twin-track approach – more effective work, not more work

The two tracks in the twin-track approach to inclusive education are not entirely separate – if they were, it would understandably be overwhelming for a teacher to have to manage the needs of the majority of learners and then separately provide specialized support to learners with additional needs.

With the twin-track approach, the tracks are linked together, supporting the same 'train'. What this means in practice is that the 'system' track will support the needs of all learners, and the 'individual' track will provide for any additional support needs. It is key here not to assume that a focus on individual needs means that each learner must be taught individually; all learners will have some of the same needs, and many learners will share most of the same needs; therefore, they all benefit from being taught together.

For example, let's take a school timetable: a flexible timetable with many opportunities for breaks and also opportunities to adapt lesson plans to fit emerging needs or issues is something that can benefit all learners, as well as teachers – this is the 'system' track. On the 'individual' track, some learners in a classroom may need additional breaks or 'time out' from class work. The teacher can provide such 'individual' opportunities for learners without

disrupting the teaching/learning or having to abandon the 'system' track. The two tracks are actually working together.

The term 'twin-track' is often misused to refer to special education running parallel to the regular system. It is not meant to describe a segregated system where there are two systems, one for children with disabilities and the other for children without disabilities. The relevance of the twin-track approach is even more significant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. An effective response to COVID-19 requires a twin-track approach. During crisis situations, whatever remote learning arrangements are planned, it is important to plan with an inclusive lens in mind. When the learning is planned to take place away from physical classrooms, it needs to be ensured that every child, regardless of his or her disability status, is able to access and participate in the learning process. A twin-track approach should inform the design and execution of all stages of education response such as relief, recovery and resilience. Its strength lies in combining system strengthening measures through mainstreaming and meeting the specific needs of different groups of people through targeting.

The following highlights some of the key aspects of inclusive education that fit with each of the two tracks.

### 3.2.1 The system track

- **a flexible curriculum** – for example, flexibility in adapting lessons, integrating subjects, developing and using local resources, creating local content, and implementing timetables. A flexible curriculum has been a necessity as schools have transitioned to remote/hybrid learning amid COVID-19. Flexibility allows both teachers and students to adapt to ever-changing circumstances in the crisis or emergency situations. Local freedom is important for teachers who need to tailor to the student's needs in the changing circumstances. A customized curriculum offers the flexibility one needs so that if things go beyond one's control or change abruptly, it is possible to make necessary adjustments.
- **inclusive policies at the school/classroom level** for example, attendance policies (e.g. flexibility so that children who must travel long – and sometimes unsafe – distances to school are not penalized for arriving to school late, or missing some days); policies on discipline – the use of positive discipline rather than corporal punishment; policies which mandate for mixed ability groupings of students (as opposed to 'streaming' – the separate teaching – of learners with different ability levels); positive engagement with parents/ families; the use of inclusive assessment (this is discussed further in Module 7). Schools' own practices at times can be exclusionary. Problems rooted in the education systems that are likely to exclude some need to be properly identified and fixed.
- **inclusive environments** – for example, learning environments that are designed based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles which mandate accessible, safe, comfortable and flexible schools, classrooms and play areas should be accessible to all children including those with disabilities, with comfortable temperatures, good lighting, ergonomic design, and the availability of safe, clean and accessible water and toilet facilities.

In remote learning contexts due to COVID-19, it is particularly important to implement UDL principles while designing learning interventions. UDL is a framework designed to provide all learners with an equal opportunity to learn in inclusive learning environments through flexible instructional approaches. The aim is to reduce barriers in order to maximize learning. As opposed to one-size-fits-all, single solutions, UDL offers flexible approaches that are customized and adjusted to meet the specific needs of individual learners. Since remote learning options are often not accessible to children from marginalized groups, UDL can be a promising approach to instruction that has the potential to maximize learning experiences and minimize barriers for all children, including children with disabilities.

- **inclusive practices** – for example, the use of differentiated teaching methods (discussed further in Module 5); policies which promote cooperation, coordination and collaboration (as opposed to competition) amongst teachers and learners (e.g. teachers working and planning together to support each other); development of locally relevant teaching/ learning resources;
- **inclusive resources** (discussed further in Module 4) – for example, teaching/ learning resources which are locally relevant, engaging for learners, adaptable, culturally and gender sensitive, and, where possible, in the mother tongue(s) of the students.

### 3.2.2 The individual track

- **flexible policies** – for example, in the absence of a school built on universal design principles for children with disabilities, ensuring that classes for learners with wheelchairs are conducted in classrooms on the ground floor;
- **additional support** – for example, in the absence of a strong mother tongue literacy policy, using mother tongue orally to help explain the curriculum to students who have not mastered the language of instruction; additional teaching hours provided to children with delays/difficulties in reading or

mathematics or those who have missed parts of the school curriculum because of lengthy absences; in the absence of assistive devices, seating children with sight and hearing impairments at the front of the classroom

- **support staff** – for example, making available assistant teachers, mentors, physical therapists, counsellors, and other specialized support staff (e.g. those who have training and experience in supporting learners with disabilities). Many low-income countries cannot afford to hire specialized personnel. In emergency situations, countries often face the shortage of trained personnel. In countries where there is an integrated or well-coordinated system of services, it is easier to acquire services as compared to a system where services are compartmentalized and provided through stand-alone arrangements. In systems where support staff is in short supply, parents, community members and volunteers are called in for support. Efforts are made to build resilience and self-reliance in local communities. It is necessary to ensure the effective use of available human resources. It needs to be ensured that decent working conditions are provided in all settings and situations. Some systems use transformative strategies to upgrade the talents of available workforce. Most of all, in emergency settings it is important to optimize the motivation, satisfaction, retention, equitable distribution and performance of staff members
- **resource centres and/or rooms in schools** – for example, providing areas in schools which can provide a calming environment to learners with socio-emotional challenges (e.g. hyperactivity and autism) and where learners with special needs can receive additional support and instruction individually or in small groups outside of the classroom (these are discussed further in Module 7). As the school started providing home-based distance learning due to the pandemic, it was apparent that the most vulnerable students, including those with disabilities, were at risk of dropping out of education or at risk of not

receiving appropriate learning atmosphere at home. In particular, meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities is a challenge as they require additional services and technologies to facilitate learning. In developing countries, home-based education was almost impossible due to the lack of trained personnel and resources. These children lacked the opportunity to adhere to their individual learning plans. In such situations, resource centres/classes played a key role in supporting the home-based learning of children with special needs. To be able to provide specialized services to children with disabilities both at home and at their school, the resource centres/classes should be adequately staffed with trained personnel and be equipped with necessary resources.

- **specific resources to support learners' needs** – for example, providing assistive devices (i.e. to support the needs of learners with disabilities) such as hearing aids and large print and Braille books, and resources (e.g. textbooks) in non-dominant languages.

It is both inevitable and desirable that there is overlap between the two tracks in this twin-track approach.

As can be seen from the lists above, many aspects of inclusive education benefit all learners regardless of who they are, their backgrounds, or their individual needs and strengths. For example, teachers who vary their teaching methods and activities (e.g. by using a combination of group work, active learning, individual study, and teacher instruction) and provide additional support where and when needed are likely to engage most, if not all, learners in a classroom. This is the basis of the twin-track approach.

Following is one of the first of several case studies which demonstrate more clearly major issues discussed in these modules.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The case studies used in this handbook have been edited for the purpose of clarity and brevity.

## □ CASE STUDY 1

### Making the twin-track approach work in the classroom

Ms. Ketthavong is a primary school teacher in a small school in a mountainous part of Lao PDR. She has 30 children in her Grade 3 class. Ms. Ketthavong has recently attended a workshop on inclusive education, and this has helped her to better understand and support the needs of all of her learners.

She recognized **that there were some things she could do in her classroom that would improve the learning environment for all of her learners – the ‘system’ track in the twin-track approach to inclusive education.**

In the past, she sat the children in rows and spent most of the time in the classroom lecturing them. Now she **has a more flexible approach to seating and to teaching.**

Sometimes she sits with the children on the floor, sometimes they sit together in a circle, sometimes they sit in small groups, and sometimes they sit in rows. She also varies her teaching now, doing many more games and activities with her learners. Sometimes she reads to them or tells them stories and gets them to act out the stories.

Sometimes she has them draw or make decorations that fit with what she is teaching. Usually during one lesson she will do at least two or three different activities and have the children stand and sit in several different ways.

Since Ms. Ketthavong has been working in this way, she has noticed that her learners are more interested in coming to class and more engaged with the learning – sometimes they don’t want to leave her class even when the lesson is over! She has seen that the changes **in the way she teaches and organizes her classroom seem to have benefitted all of her learners.** However, she still has two boys in her classroom who struggle to stay focused and are quiet during independent work.

They also have some trouble completing assignments and seem to work more slowly than the other learners in the class. Although the boys are fully engaged in the activities where they get to move around the classroom, they really struggle to sit and focus during more quiet times.

Ms. Ketthavong realized that the two boys who find it difficult to focus and complete assignments

would need some additional, individual support – the ‘individual’ track of the twin-track approach.

Although she knew she wouldn’t have time to sit and work with the two boys independently for the whole lesson, she managed to organize it **so she could work with them together** during times when the other learners were doing individual work or quiet reading. **She also gave them extra time to finish their classwork.** Sometimes if they were really struggling to focus, she would let the boys run around outside the classroom for a few minutes (but she did this in a structured way, letting other teachers know, and having the boys run back and forth across the school grounds five times and timing themselves to see how quickly they could do this). **Ms. Ketthavong also arranged some time to meet with each of the boys individually, between classes, or after school to work with them on their classwork. She also arranged meetings with the boys’ parents to discuss the situation with them and support them in giving their boys some help with their homework.**



### 3.3 Activity | Contexts, barriers, and solutions to exclusion

#### ■ Read the following scenario

The local school has worked hard to become inclusive. The teachers are well-trained and child-focused, the environment is accessible and welcoming, the curriculum is flexible, there is good hygiene and sanitation, and children themselves participate actively in making the school an enjoyable, friendly and productive environment.

However, it is clear that there are still children in the local community who do not attend school.

- One child is from a marginalized group, has never been to school, comes from a very poor family, and speaks a language that is not the main language of instruction at the school.
- Another child has had polio, has difficulty in walking, has never been to school, and sits at home doing nothing, afraid to go out in case of being called names.
- Now, list the policies which already exist in your school to ensure the

- inclusion of the different types of children mentioned above. What is missing? Whose needs are not considered? How can the policies be improved? Come up with a list of new or improved policies for your school/s to ensure the inclusion of all children that are present in your school community. Think about policies which address attendance, learning and assessment. How could you get these policies taken up?

The facts/context/barriers to attendance and participation in education		How to overcome the barriers
<p><b>School barriers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School costs (fees, uniforms, books, etc.) are too expensive for many families.</li> <li>• Schools texts and the teaching-learning process use the national language which is not understood by many of the children or their families.</li> <li>• Teachers who do not know the local language cannot communicate with families; most communication with parents is in written form, using the national language.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Home barriers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families cannot afford the costs of schooling. For older children, there are also opportunity costs as children in school cannot work to support the family income.</li> <li>• Children are unable to learn in a language they do not understand. Their parents (often illiterate in any language) can neither understand what their children are learning in school nor help their children with their school work. Therefore, in many cases, parents have little confidence in relating to the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the school per-pupil operational costs – or at least targeted subsidies to poor families – to ensure that fees and other expenses are reduced or eliminated.</li> <li>• Provide free books or a system of borrowing or sharing books.</li> <li>• Eliminate the requirement for school uniforms or reduce the number and cost of such uniforms.</li> <li>• Provide initial literacy in the mother tongue or at least use the mother tongue orally in class to assist in learning the school language.</li> <li>• Recruit teachers from the local linguistic community; train teachers to handle the transition from the home to the school language.</li> <li>• Help parents to understand what their children are learning in school with frequent parent-teacher meetings.</li> </ul>

The facts/context/barriers to attendance and participation in education		How to overcome the barriers
School barriers	Home barriers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools often have no flexibility in their yearly calendars or their daily timetables.</li> <li>Schools are located too far from where the children live, and going back and forth to the school can be both risky and costly.</li> <li>Schools and teachers have little experience with, and sometimes little tolerance for, difference and diversity; they prefer a class which is homogeneous by age, socio-economic status, ability, etc.</li> <li>Schools give preference and more attention to boys than to girls.</li> <li>The school does not express confidence or have high expectations for children of marginal groups. Children have no self-confidence and poor self-image.</li> <li>Schools are unable or unwilling to accept children with delays and disabilities.</li> <li>Schools are inaccessible for such children (e.g., no ramps and many classrooms on an upper floor) and there are no assistive devices or additional support to help.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are needed for work and to care for siblings. This requires a different calendar and timetable from the school.</li> <li>Homes are too far from the school, and families have no resources to provide needed transportation.</li> <li>Families may not trust or have confidence in a school with teachers from outside the community who use a language they don't understand and don't understand or respect how their children are different.</li> <li>Families see less reason to educate daughters than sons.</li> <li>The child is not motivated to learn by the family which often does not understand the value of schooling and see that their children are not valued by the school.</li> <li>Families are ashamed of their children with disabilities and/or believe that they will not be safe in school or cannot learn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain small schools in remote villages; use multi-grade teaching if there are not enough teachers of classrooms; provide transportation for children living far from the school.</li> </ul>

It is worth making a similar table for your school/classroom environment. This can be a useful way of helping you analyse the inclusion issues in your own context.

### Barriers to learning in the context of COVID-19

There have been limited studies to examine the learning barriers of students during the time of the pandemic. The abrupt transition to remote learning was a new experience for many education systems. In most education systems, teachers' limited capacity to support learning was noted to be one of the major challenges to online learning. In addition, the most frequently encountered barriers experienced by students were difficulty adjusting learning styles, having to perform responsibilities at home, and poor communication from educators.

Lack of physical space conducive for learning and mental health difficulties were also common. A lack of availability of a fast and reliable internet connection was a bigger concern than either device ownership or technical aptitude. The pandemic caused psychological stress among students, making it difficult for them to focus on studying. They expressed feelings of anxiety, burnout, loneliness, homesickness, grief, and hopelessness. Students were worried about online assessments, and delays in completing their studies because of disruptions and the safety of their families. A study undertaken by Baticulon et al.<sup>7</sup> (2021) identified the following barriers to online learning.

7 Baticulon, R.E., Sy, J.J., Alberto, N.R.I. et al. 2021. Barriers to Online Learning in the Time of COVID-19: A National Survey of Medical Students in the Philippines. *Med.Sci.Educ.* 31, 615–626. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-021-01231-z>.

<p><b>Technological barriers</b></p>	<p>Lack of devices or limited access to gadgets                      .....                      Unreliable, slow, or no internet access                      .....                      Lack of technical skills, including digital literacy skills                      .....                      Issues with the online learning platform</p>
<p><b>Personal barriers</b></p>	<p>Difficulty adjusting learning styles                      .....                      Mental health difficulties                      .....                      Physical health issues                      .....                      Practical concerns</p>
<p><b>Domestic barriers</b></p>	<p>Limited space conducive for studying                      .....                      Need to fulfil responsibilities at home                      .....                      Conflicts within the family                      .....                      Financial distress within the household                      .....                      Need to work for extra income                      .....                      Lack of basic needs</p>
<p><b>Institutional barriers</b></p>	<p>Administrative issues and lack of organization                      .....                      Poor communication between learners and educators                      .....                      Inadequate skills of educators                      .....                      Poor quality of learning materials                      .....                      Gaps in knowledge and skills from current teaching methods                      .....                      Excessive cognitive load                      .....                      Limited opportunities to interact with peers                      .....                      Policies and practices that neglect student welfare</p>
<p><b>Community barriers</b></p>	<p>Mobility restrictions due to community lockdown                      .....                      Power interruptions                      .....                      Socio-political concerns</p>

Source: Baticulon et al. 2021.

Some studies noted that children with disabilities faced severe learning constraints in contrast to children without disabilities. Lack of accessible materials and trained personnel was one concern. In some rural parts of developing countries, children could not access TV or radio broadcasts, let alone an internet connection. Lack of resources at home was a major concern. Parents were not able to support children with their studies. This was particularly the case for

children with sensory impairments (blind and deaf), given the general lack of knowledge of Braille and sign language. Many times there was no contact between the family and the school or the teachers. Studies have shown that the pandemic exposed and further reinforced the pre-existing vulnerabilities to educational disadvantage in developing countries and that gender, poverty and disability intersect to deepen these education inequalities.

# MODULE 4

CURRICULUM, MATERIALS AND RESOURCES



This module:

- Identifies challenges and barriers to making curricula inclusive
- Provides strategies to produce inclusive materials and resources
- Discusses possible curriculum response, that is inclusive, to counter stigma and discrimination prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic against certain groups of students

## 4.1 Introduction

Many people think that 'curriculum' refers to the syllabus or specific subjects that are taught in school. But curriculum is much more than a list of subjects – it has to do with the overall organization of teaching and learning. Curriculum is the structure that teachers depend on to teach. Curriculum is guided by values and principles.

In schooling, a curriculum is made up of the content of what is taught. But it is also the way content is organized, the way it is taught, and the way learning is assessed. Materials and resources are also a part of the curriculum: they are tools to help the teachers engage learners. Curriculum can be thought of as an umbrella over all parts of teaching and learning.

## 4.2 Curriculum

A curriculum typically consists of four core components. First, it defines the curriculum *objectives* to be achieved by the students. The objectives represent the standards or benchmarks that the learners should aim to achieve. These objectives are developed based on the national and local needs, learners' needs, educational philosophy and a range of other factors. The curriculum objectives are underpinned by the values that envision the society a nation intends to create and the type of citizens it wants to prepare. Second, it identifies the *contents* which are represented by the

knowledge, skills and attitudes that the learners should actually acquire through organized learning experiences. The contents and learning experiences should be in alignment with the objectives. Third, it involves the **organization of learning experiences** by which contents are organized and sequenced in proper order for delivery. The organization of contents is typically done in a logical, holistic and developmental manner. The organization of knowledge follows the principle of simple to complex or known to unknown in consideration of learners' developmental level. Finally, the fourth component of curriculum involves **assessment** by which it is determined whether the objectives have been met.

Teachers often feel the curriculum is something they have no control over. The expectations that they are responsible for their students mastering the curriculum objectives can feel like a burden for some teachers, particularly in contexts where the curriculum is very complicated, rigid, or overloaded. For example, a curriculum that includes twenty different subjects that are expected to be taught at the primary level can be overwhelming for schools and individual teachers. Teachers are often afraid to make or suggest changes to the curriculum. However, even with a rigid curriculum, there are often spaces and opportunities for teachers to interpret, adapt, and make connections between different parts of the curriculum (e.g. different subject areas). Teachers who want to promote a more inclusive classroom are constantly looking for these opportunities and using them to improve the quality of teaching. These teachers advocate for changes in whatever ways they can.

To do this, teachers need to be able to look at and analyse their curriculum clearly and critically. Here are some basic questions you can use to begin analysing your curriculum,<sup>8</sup> these questions focus on the first instance on any biases shown in the curriculum:

.....  
 8 Kaplan, I. and Lewis, I. 2013. Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education – Advocacy Guide 1 –Introduction. Bangkok, UNESCO, Pg. 9-10. <https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/sites/default/files/learning/document/2017/1/221033e.pdf>.

- Overall, is the curriculum responsive to issues of difference and diversity found in a society? If not, what evidence of discrimination is there?
- Does the curriculum get reviewed by people who understand issues of equality and non-discrimination and also the social, cultural, and economic diversity of their own society? Is this diversity then reflected in the curriculum?
- Are teachers trained and supported to recognize and deal with any discrimination and biases that may still exist in the curriculum?
- Are teachers given opportunities to confront and reflect on their own possible discriminatory and biased attitudes and values?

### 4.3 Challenges and barriers to inclusion in the curriculum

There is a range of specific challenges and barriers to inclusion that may exist in the curriculum, as well as potential strategies and solutions for overcoming these. Here are some of the challenges and barriers you might encounter, with possible solutions:

#### 4.3.1 Challenges

##### **Bias and discrimination in the curriculum**

A bias is a prejudice; it may suggest something unfairly negative about an individual or group, perpetuate a stereotype, or favour one group over another. Discrimination, similarly, treats individuals or groups unfairly and unjustly.

Many national curricula have some biases and discriminatory aspects (e.g. in regard to language, gender, and religion) which work against inclusive education. These biases may be found in teaching and learning materials, instructional practice, or school policies (e.g. which are gender biased or biased against ethnic and linguistic minorities) and include:

- gender stereotyping (e.g. promoting the stereotype that women are best suited to do domestic work and take care of households

instead of working outside the home or that boys are better in mathematics and science)

- bias against ethnic and linguistic minority groups
- bias against people with disabilities
- bias against rural communities and economically poor communities
- bias against sexual minorities (e.g. stigmatizing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people).

It should be noted that biases and stereotypes can be both explicit and implicit. While explicit biases can be visible and noticeable, it is difficult to detect implicit or hidden biases. Curriculum materials need to be carefully examined for possible biases and discriminations. UNESCO Bangkok's GENIA Toolkit<sup>9</sup> provides guidelines for analysing school curricula and teaching and learning materials for biases and stereotypes. Ultimately, it is the role of the teacher to question curriculum materials if they are free from biases and stereotypes. As soon as they discover any biases in the text materials, it's best to confront it right away. At times, despite their good intentions, teachers' own implicit biases and stereotypes can cause unfairness and discourage diversity in education.

In many parts of the world, the pandemic triggered social stigma and discriminatory behaviours against people of certain race/ethnicity, class and religion believed to have caused or transmitted the COVID-19 virus. Stigmatized groups are particularly vulnerable during pandemics as they may be subjected to stereotyping, harassment and bullying. As a response to the pandemic, teachers should transmit factual information about the disease and ensure that no child is subjected to any kind of stigma and discrimination. Sharing accurate information and science-based facts about COVID-19 can help diminish students' fears and anxieties about the disease and

9 UNESCO. 2019. Gender in Education Network in Asia-Pacific (GENIA) toolkit: promoting gender equality in education. Bangkok, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370875>.

enhance their ability to cope with its impact. Beyond their everyday teaching, teachers should set an example through their tone, language and behaviours concerning how one should treat others during moments of disagreement or tension. An atmosphere should be created that not only detects when such acts occur but also addresses them instantly. The entire school system should work together to protect the school against hate, bias, and discriminatory behaviour. This can be achieved by defining the school's norms, taking early action, and teaching inclusive values and attitudes.

### **An overloaded curriculum**

Some curricula require schools and teachers to teach multiple subjects and sub-topics with relatively little time for lessons (e.g. 30 or 45 minutes per subject). The end result is often quantity over quality, especially when subjects are taught independently of one another. This can put tremendous pressure on teachers and students and often means that diverse teaching and learning methods to include all students are not supported. Both teachers and students find the overcrowding of curriculum undesirable in that it affects the quality of teaching and learning and may result in shallow exposure to learning.

More time for covering the foundation of each subject thoroughly and slowly will mean a better quality of learning. An overloaded curriculum runs the risk of not paying enough attention to the essentials or core learning. Too much emphasis on the contents without the mastery can lead to underachievement. The scope of curriculum, including its breadth and depth, should not be over-ambitious, especially in primary education. If younger children can cover foundational learning in depth, with plenty of time to practice and the opportunity to go at their own pace, they are likely to master advanced learning more quickly and more independently in secondary school.

An overloaded curriculum can also lead to two other challenges. The first is excessive homework brought about by too many subjects and by

pressure from both teachers and families for children to master the curriculum; such a surfeit of homework can also discriminate against children of poor families, and thus contribute to exclusion, because of what may be home contexts not conducive to study and a child's need to work rather than study. It defeats the purpose of providing inclusive and equitable education. An overloaded curriculum is particularly harmful for marginalized children, especially children with disabilities who require additional resources to meet the demand of such a curriculum. Most likely these children attend school environments that are poorly resourced, disadvantaged and inadequately staffed that are not able to implement the curriculum in its entirety. Such a situation can only widen the already existing disparities in learning outcomes between and/or among students.

The second challenge related to an overloaded curriculum is overloaded assessment processes. Frequent examinations, many of which begin too early in the first years of primary school (if not sooner) – whether school-based or linked to national and even international assessments – simply add to the likelihood that children at risk of exclusion will, in fact, fail. A good quality assessment helps monitor educational quality and it does so by communicating results about what learners are able to do or not able to do. Teachers should be able not only to develop assessment materials well but also to use assessment results well. It should ultimately help enhance student learning by improving teaching practice.

### **Inflexible policies**

Education policies can be part of the curriculum and are not necessarily decided at the national level but may be set at the level of a province, district, or school. Inflexible policies which can contribute to exclusion include:

- inflexible timetables, which do not take account of students' journeys from home or
- their need to get food or do work;
- attendance policies (e.g. where students are punished for being late to school no matter what the reason);

- refusal to readmit students after they are 'pushed' out (for example, after early marriage or pregnancy).

### 4.3.2 Strategies and solutions

It can be difficult or impossible for teachers to change the main curriculum, particularly at the national level, but that doesn't mean teachers have no role in change. Some things you can do as a teacher that will apply to all students, include:

#### Advocacy for change

This involves awareness raising at all levels but starting in your school community. For example, you can note the instances of biases and discrimination you encounter and bring these to the attention of your colleagues, including your school's administration, and encourage discussion on how these could be changed to move towards inclusion. You can also advocate for more flexibility in the curriculum to link subjects together and have longer class times which combine different subjects and pairs or teams of teachers co-teaching together. Teachers should request more time to cover foundational learning whenever possible.

You can also draw attention to curriculum challenges and share these with district, provincial, and national education personnel (e.g. through individual emails, letters, and conversations as well as via teacher associations). Many countries now have signed up to anti-discriminatory conventions such as the UNCRC and UNCRPD and have developed related national policies as well as more specific inclusive education policies (for more on international conventions and policies see Module 2). If that is the case in your country, you can use these as a basis for your advocacy.

Because advocacy is key to making changes to the curriculum, we outline here some of the characteristics of effective advocacy:<sup>10</sup>

- It is based on a good understanding of ideas and practices that already exist in one's

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from: Kaplan, I. and Lewis, I. 2013. *Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education – Advocacy Guide 1 – Introduction*. UNESCO: Bangkok. Pgs. 9-10 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002210/221033e.pdf>.

own context (this includes understanding and valuing existing practices that are supportive of inclusive education) to avoid it being seen as an 'imported' model.

- It is based on a solid understanding of the barriers present in a particular context.
- There is a good understanding of any resistance that might be encountered and where such resistance may come from.
- It involves the development of short-term and long-term goals and plans which are well thought-out and organized.
- It is based on facts and evidence, not on assumptions and generalizations.
- Case studies are used to illustrate the problems and/or the desired changes.
- Examples of practical experience are available to back up theoretical arguments, and there is a connection with practical programmes with/for stakeholders.
- The group for whom change is sought plays an active role and has a strong voice in the process.
- There is a focus on positive, culturally-sensitive and diplomatic dialogue, not confrontation.
- Whoever is carrying out the advocacy has a good reputation for conveying reliable information.

#### Making changes at the classroom level

If, for example, you encounter bias and discrimination in relation to what you are meant to deliver in a classroom (e.g. in textbooks or other materials), you can often address these issues in your own teaching. If you find a story in a textbook which perpetuates a racial or gender stereotype, you can point this out to your students, discuss with them why it is wrong, and suggest another, more inclusive story.

You can also try to reduce the number of items to learn or complete; increase the amount of time for learning, task completion, or testing; and increase the amount of assistance (e.g. using a buddy system, a cross-age tutor, a teacher assistant, etc.).



## □ CASE STUDY 2

### Curriculum materials to support inclusion<sup>11</sup>

In 2018, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand, undertook a review and revision of all health education and physical education textbooks published by government and private agencies for grades 1 to 12 (primary and secondary schools). The review examined the topics, texts, definitions and examples/illustrations on issues of the diversity of gender, families (e.g. same sex parents), gender and human rights, sexual orientation, violence, sexual and reproductive health rights, sexual transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, in order to promote an accurate understanding of these issues and to eliminate stigma and discrimination.

The review and revision, supported by the Deputy Minister of Education and Secretary General of OBEC, were in accordance with relevant sociocultural changes and two important laws, the Gender Equality Act (2015) and the Prevention and Solution of the Adolescent Pregnancy Problem Act (2016). The Gender Equality Act intends to protect people from unjust discrimination and

provide access to legal processes equally whether the person is male, female or a member of a 'sexual diversity group'. Section 3 of this Act explicitly defines 'gender discrimination' while clarifying that it is not limited to men and women, but also applies to persons who have 'a different appearance from his/her own sex by birth'.

The process of reviewing and revising the textbooks was consultative, and involved the setting up of an interagency working group and a core editorial team comprising experts and members from three concerned ministries. This included the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, civil society organizations working on gender equality and LGBT rights, relevant human rights committees and academics. This group identified the topics, texts, definitions and examples that needed to be removed, changed or added, and provided recommendations/ alternative text, and where best to include the revisions. The revised textbooks incorporating the working group recommendations

were published in March 2019, and are now in circulation.

The review and revision process garnered high-level political support and involved engaging with experts and publishers in participatory workshops that fostered partnership and capacity development of stakeholders. Based on the experience with the review and revision process, OBEC produced guidelines with recommendations on topics, texts, definitions and examples, for future textbook reviews and for partner agencies that may be interested in conducting similar reviews.

With the intention of sharing widely the outcomes of this revision, the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Education Standards at OBEC issued formal communications to field offices and schools across the country, and produced a two-part YouTube video that announced the revision and provided the objectives, rationale and process, which was disseminated through social media channels.

The YouTube video can be accessed by teachers, school administrators, parents,

## □ CASE STUDY 2

### Curriculum materials to support inclusion<sup>11</sup>

and students and features  
a panel discussion with  
high-level representatives  
from the interagency core

• team. Such collaborative  
efforts, bolstered by  
enabling legislation, signify  
a strong commitment to

• promote inclusion and  
gender equality, both at the  
curricular and institutional  
levels.

.....  
11 Enabling Education Network. 2001. *Curriculum Materials to Support Inclusion – An example from Zambia..*

#### 4.4 Materials and other resources

There is a very wide range of resources we can use to make schools or classrooms more inclusive. Here we use the term 'materials and resources' to include more than just the typical physical resources (e.g. textbooks, stationery, lab equipment) we initially consider when we think about schooling. Here, 'resources' also includes human (e.g. teachers, children and young people, parents and families, farmers, artisans, business people) and other resources (e.g. natural resources and access to knowledge and information) that can be used in inclusive teaching and learning.

##### 4.4.1 Accessible materials and resources

The accessibility of materials and resources is essential to inclusive teaching and learning. Some examples of accessible materials and resources include:

- textbooks and story books in minority languages
- tactile materials – things students can touch and manipulate (e.g. wood, stones, clay, blocks, sand, plastic, etc.)
- Information technology and electronics – computers, audio books, videos, assistive technology, electronic white boards books in Braille or with large print and easy-to-read font, size and layout
- books with drawings and pictures
- visual aids (e.g. posters, diagrams, photographs, drawings, etc.) games and toys

#### Questions to think about:

- What are the accessibility needs of your students? What are the barriers they face to accessing teaching and learning materials and resources?
- What can you do to obtain accessible materials and resources to meet your students' needs?
- How can you adapt the materials and resources you have to meet your students' needs?
- How can you create your own accessible materials and resources?

Of course, part of what makes materials and resources accessible or not is how they are used. (See Case Study 3).

This is discussed further in Module 5.

#### 4.5 Local materials and resources

'Local' refers to the materials and resources available at the immediate community level or in the wider local area which can be used to support teaching and learning in schools. Some examples include:

- local flora and fauna (plants and animals) – these can be used, for example, to teach science lessons or for (local) history and art projects
- local stories – there may be local stories or legends from your community or area

## □ CASE STUDY 3

### Promoting gender equality and inclusion through textbook review

The following case study shows **how specific subject lessons can be adapted to promote an understanding of inclusion as well as teaching subject specific concepts**. Here are some class activities which have been developed by an 'ordinary' primary school teacher. He explored ways of incorporating information about inclusion into the curriculum to ensure that time is not taken away from the teaching of core subjects. The materials were developed around the question of how to support the inclusion of Bwalya in Grade 6G, Azania High School. Bwalya is a real child who has learning difficulties but whose identity has been disguised. The curriculum subjects are English reading and comprehension and mathematics.

**English Language:** Read the following story, then answer the questions in Sections A, B, C and D.

On Thursday morning Grade 6G received a new pupil in class. His name was Bwalya. A week later it was discovered that Bwalya

appeared very slow to learn things and had learning difficulties and so they ignored him and excluded him from most class activities.

Bwalya became isolated and appeared sad. It was evident that he did not enjoy the lessons as before. The teacher also paid little attention to him. He was busy meeting the demands of the curriculum as the class was soon sitting for an examination. However, the class monitor, Jane, requested a class meeting to discuss how best Bwalya could be helped to be included in the school and in learning. The discussions were fruitful, and the class came up with ideas such as playing with him, visiting him at home, being friendly, and keeping him busy in class.

#### Section A: Vocabulary

Find **five** difficult words from the passage.

#### Section B: Word Study

Find words from the passage which mean the same, or almost the same, as:

- successful, not finish, work, talk, to be part of something, very clear, separated.

#### Section C: Comprehension

Why was Bwalya excluded by the rest of the pupils in the class?

What four solutions were listed by the pupils to include Bwalya in the class? Write two things you can do to someone to show that you are friendly.

#### Section D: Including Bwalya in our learning

This section requires the pupils to develop their own solutions to the challenge of ensuring Bwalya's inclusion in class activities.

1. **Play:** How do we play with Bwalya so that all of us can benefit from the play?
2. **Visits:** Who should visit him at home? When should he be visited? What should you be doing with him? How long should the visit be?
3. **Keeping him busy:** Why do you want him to be busy? How can you keep him busy?
4. **Being friendly:** What things can show that you are friendly to someone?

which can be used in teaching/learning; for example, students can go out in the community and collect local stories and then write their own versions which can be used for history, language teaching, writing, etc.

- local knowledge, skills and experiences – in every community, there will be people with a range of knowledge, skills, and experiences (e.g. weaving, farming, storytelling) who can be invited into classrooms or accessed outside of school to enhance students' learning experiences and be linked directly to the curriculum.

Making use of the resources that exist in your community can benefit you as a teacher, your students, and other members of your school community. This can help you work towards localizing the school curriculum – that is, making the curriculum more relevant and meaningful to your students and school community.

Other inclusive education benefits of using local materials and other resources include:

- **critical thinking and creativity:** When teachers, students, and other community members are involved in the process of finding and adapting local materials and resources to use in teaching and learning, they are also developing their critical thinking and creativity. This happens because this process causes people to assess what the gaps are in the teaching and learning materials and resources they already have (if any), assess what they have in their communities that can be used to fill these gaps, and then adapt their local materials/resources to fit the curriculum. This is a formative learning process in itself.
- **sustainability:** The use of existing local materials and resources can promote greater environmental sustainability; they can (1) be more easily and reliably accessible than externally imported materials/resources which are dependent on availability and transport; (2) be

much cheaper than buying things from outside a community/area; (3) promote local economies (e.g. using desks or other classroom materials built within a community or local area can help promote and sustain local businesses); and (4) be more environmentally sustainable as access to materials/resources doesn't depend on transporting them from far away.

- **building links between schools and their communities:** The process of finding and adapting local materials and resources to use in teaching and learning inevitably involves working outside of the 'school gates'. This gives opportunities for positively and actively involving local community members in their school (e.g. in sharing their knowledge or helping adapt and develop materials and resources). It can be a way of valuing the results of the informal education – knowledge/skills/experiences – that exists within a community; making links between non-formal and formal education; building community members' confidence; raising awareness within a community about schooling; and developing/improving relationships between a school and its community.

#### 4.5.2 Making textbooks locally relevant

Most teachers and students use textbooks which are produced nationally by ministries of education. Although these may be very useful, it is likely that the examples presented in national textbooks will represent the lives and experiences of only some of the people that use them; often these kinds of examples represent urban and rather elite contexts; for example, language texts that teach words and phrases related to taking busses or airplanes, or crossing busy city streets, or ordering in restaurants.

Often what is missing from these books are examples related to the lives and experiences of people in rural communities, people from ethnic and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, and other minority or marginalized groups. In the worse of cases, where such groups

are represented, they may be portrayed as weak, illiterate and uneducated, and even primitive and pitiable.

This is where, as a teacher, you can adapt your lessons to include local examples, stories, case studies, and scenarios alongside those already provided in your textbooks. This form of adaptation is also a process that can include your colleagues, your students, and even parents and families who can participate in creating local content to supplement existing textbooks. This process of developing local materials and resources is a formative one – that is, it is in itself a learning experience and stimulates creativity and ingenuity.

The value of local materials and resources to inclusive education goes beyond teaching and learning and really affects all aspects of education. To show the potential here, the following case study highlights how local, community resources were mobilized to improve access to and the quality of education for learners in a rural community in Mali.

### Curriculum response to COVID-19

The pandemic has made a significant impact on the implementation of school curricula. Generally, national curricula are designed for normal circumstances, making it somewhat challenging when they are to be implemented during a pandemic or crisis situation.

## □ CASE STUDY 4

### An inclusive school in Mali<sup>12</sup>

Douentza is a nine hours' drive from the capital, Bamako. It is the poorest district of Mali, and 90 per cent of the population live below the established poverty line. The combined effects of encroaching desert and decreased rainfall increase vulnerability to famine and drought. Eighty-seven per cent of 7-year-olds have serious work responsibilities which occupy an average of six hours per day. Girls work the longest hours.

In Douentza, only 8 per cent of children attend school, compared to the national average of 44 per cent. There are only 17 schools in 255 villages. There are also many drawbacks to existing state provision.

School hours are inflexible, teachers are over-stretched and under-supported, teaching is by rote and in French, and the drop-out rate is very high. Yet Mali has a rich history and culture. It has produced Islamic scholars and world-renowned musicians and is home to historic cities such as Timbuktu. Mali is the leading cotton producer in sub-Saharan Africa and is proud of its democratic regime. Its many ethnic groups live together in relative harmony.

In January 1997 Save the Children UK set up a consultation process with the government, donors, NGOs (non-government organizations), and village

communities with the aim of making schooling more accessible to children (Stubbs, 2000). This case study shows that **inclusive education can be supported in one of the 'poorest' areas of the world and that, in the process, a range of environmental, climatic, economic and material challenges can be addressed.**

#### *Inadequate state provision*

Generally, educational provision by the state in Mali was inadequate and inappropriate.

This meant that the development of a community alternative was the only option in the short-term. The consultation process with the community

## □ CASE STUDY 4

### An inclusive school in Mali<sup>12</sup>

initiated by Save the Children revealed that 70 per cent of children and adults preferred a different future to that of their parents. They saw access to a school education as the only way of escaping a lifetime of rural poverty.

However, it was agreed that schooling and work should be linked. Schooling should respond to village conditions, and children should be able to go to school twice a day so that they could still fulfil domestic responsibilities.

#### *Lack of policy*

Furthermore, access to education by children with disabilities was not prioritized by the government, NGOs or communities within Mali. There was no policy or legislation which would support disability-inclusive education.

In the discussions with the community, the **inclusion of children with disabilities was made mandatory.**

#### *Mobility and communication issues*

The barriers which exclude children with disabilities from schools are by no means unique to children with disabilities – however, there are issues which are specific to the inclusion of children with disabilities, such as mobility and communication issues, and it was felt that these had to be addressed if inclusion were to be successful.

Action on Disability and Development (ADD), an international NGO which specializes in supporting disabled people's organizations, provided the necessary specialist support.

#### *Gender discrimination*

The education of girl

children is also not seen as a priority within Mali culture. A decision was made to ensure that 50 per cent of school places went to girls. A female member of the management committee was given the specific responsibility for the recruitment of girls and children with disabilities. Local theatre and musician groups were used to raise awareness and change attitudes in the local community about girls and education.

#### *Teachers' lack of local knowledge*

It was agreed that the knowledge and experience of local villagers were more relevant to village children than that of urban-educated professional teachers so local villagers were selected and then trained as teachers by professionals.

<sup>12</sup> Miles, S. 2000. 'Overcoming Resource Barriers: The challenge of implementing inclusive education in rural areas'. Enabling Education Network. [https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/bonn\\_1.docx](https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/bonn_1.docx).

Long before the pandemic, education systems in low-income countries were already going through a learning crisis. This was because the national curricula were too heavily loaded with contents that were outdated, unresponsive and subject-centred rather than child-centred (UNESCO, 2012). The pandemic has made these challenges even more pronounced. In

the absence of both clear national operational guidelines and a contingency curriculum plan concerning curriculum priorities in crisis situations, the pandemic amplified learning loss.

Adjusting the curriculum to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on the teaching and learning process is very important. In view of the multiple

## 4.6 Activity | Planning the use of local materials

### ■ Read the following example and try the activity at the end:

Naw Paw Wah is a lower secondary school science teacher in Karen State, Myanmar. Her community is Karen, one of Myanmar's indigenous groups with a long history of traditional knowledge. Naw Paw Wah was teaching her students biology. In the curriculum and textbook were some lessons about plants. Naw Paw Wah wanted to extend the lessons and connect science with other subjects so she adapted the curriculum through an activity.

Instead of just looking at pictures of plants in the textbook, she sent her students outside the classroom to find different leaves from local trees. She then gathered the students together in a circle and had them present the leaves they had gathered and give the name of the plants they came from, and, if they knew, tell something about the way the plant was used in the community (e.g. for construction or food or traditional medicine). After the lesson, she had the students ask members of the school community, such as community elders, about the plants they found and record their

answers. During the next lesson, the students were asked to do a project that involved writing about the plants they had collected. They had to write down as much information about the plants that they knew and could find in the community. They wrote about the way the plants were used traditionally, and some wrote very short stories about their plants. They used their textbooks to find out more about the biology of plants (e.g. about how photosynthesis works). The students worked together to make posters using the plants they had gathered. The community was later invited to the school to view the posters and talk together with the students about the plants they found. Through this activity Naw Paw Wah was able to:

- use local materials and resources to teach a science lesson
- engage her students through an active lesson;
- engage the local school community;
- connect science, language, and history together;
- differentiate the activity according to the needs and

abilities of her students – not every student did the project in the same way.

Now, take a lesson from your school curriculum and adapt it to use local resources and materials. To help with this process, consider...

- What are your learning objectives – what subjects, knowledge, concepts and skills do you want your students to gain?
- What activities/tasks can you develop to meet your learning objectives in a fun, engaging and active way?
- What local materials and resources can you use to make the teaching and learning interesting and relevant to for your students?
- How can you differentiate the teaching and learning to fit the needs, abilities, and strengths of different learners in your class (for more on differentiation see Module 5).
- Who else can you involve in planning and implementing your task/activity (e.g. colleagues, students, other school community members)?

challenges in curriculum implementation, instead of aiming to cover everything prescribed in the curriculum, teachers should be given the flexibility to select core and important contents according to the needs, interests and local realities. A condensed curriculum that focuses on core learning areas and meets the needs of learners and teachers in the local context provides most practical response during and after the pandemic. Many countries have reported that they developed a simplified curriculum to carry out the teaching and learning activities during the pandemic. The implementation of

a simplified curriculum provides flexibility for each school to implement the curriculum and apply student-oriented classroom management. In a centralized system of curriculum making, teachers are not empowered to take curricular decisions so central ministries set curriculum guidelines for local adaptation. Some have argued that what is important in these times is a simplified programme of learning that engages or connects children with learning more broadly rather than a formal curriculum. The issue of curriculum implementation in the pandemic is further elaborated in Module 9.

# MODULE 5

## TEACHING, LEARNING AND POSITIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT





This module:

- Offers strategies to identify and promote diversity in the learning environment
- Introduces a planning process for teachers to promote inclusive learning practices
- Explores flexibility in communication and learning styles to accommodate the diverse needs of learners
- Introduces a crisis-sensitive perspective to inclusive teaching and learning focusing mainly on the COVID-19 pandemic

## 5.1 Introduction

This module is at the heart of inclusive education for teachers, as it focuses on the core work of a teacher – which is to facilitate learning. Facilitating learning in a meaningful, equitable, and effective way depends on teachers being able to establish and maintain a teaching and learning environment of high quality. This, in turn, is dependent on teachers' capacities to teach ('pedagogy'), manage their classrooms, plan their lessons, cooperate with others, and reflect on their practice overall – so they can continuously learn and improve. Teachers' role during the COVID-19 crisis has been particularly challenging as it is always the teacher who ensures that every child is included, involved and engaged in the learning process. In the most difficult of times, teachers are expected to ensure continuity of learning while supporting the mental health and well-being of their students. Inclusion takes the centre stage in the context of teaching and learning during the pandemic because one of the biggest challenges in remote learning is reaching the most marginalized, including children with disabilities.

## 5.2 Welcoming diversity

'Respect for diversity: Respect for diversity and the dignity of all people involves recognizing difference within a common humanity. It requires the acknowledgement that diversity is present even within apparently homogeneous groups

or communities. It implies the appreciation of diversity as a rich resource for learning and teaching. The dangers involved in making those seen as different into strangers and enemies and then subjecting them to inhuman treatment have been realized in dramatic form in conflicts around the world.<sup>13</sup> In inclusive education, 'diversity' refers to the full range of differences within a school community (including children, teachers/school staff, parents and families, and other community members). This covers *all* children and young people (as mentioned in Module 1) and refers specifically to differences in background, socio-economic status, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexuality, ability and disability, as well as other differences. Increasingly being added to this already complex mix are children of refugees and migrants and those living in emergency or crisis contexts whose challenges in regard to inclusion in what might be an entirely different culture or in a context of great stress can be even more difficult to meet.

Diversity and inclusion have been at risk during the COVID-19 crisis. There can be a tendency to apply a one-size fits all approach to respond to crisis. With the overwhelming diversity that exists at the individual, family and institutional level, it is important to apply a diverse set of responses to the new normal of remote learning.

### 5.2.1 Scale of approaches to diversity

Diversity in schools and classrooms can be handled in different ways, some of which work against inclusion and others which are supportive of inclusion. The following scale is not a fixed or rigid measure of schools or teachers but gives a general sense of the ways diversity is often dealt with – from the least to the most inclusive.

#### 1. Preventing or stigmatizing diversity:

Some schools or teachers prevent diversity by excluding particular individuals or groups of children (e.g. children from minority ethnic or religious groups or with disabilities). When a school or teacher seeks to prevent diversity, it may be out of fear or

13 Booth, T. ad Dyssegaard, B. (N.D.). 'Quality is Not Enough – The Contribution of Inclusive Values to Education for All – A discussion paper. Danida. <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/QualityIsNotEnough.pdf>.

the belief that the school/teacher doesn't have the capacity to meet diverse needs (e.g. the needs of children with disabilities), or simply out of the desire to have a more homogeneous classroom in regard to age, language, economic status, ability, etc. In other situations, diversity may be stigmatized, singled out, and treated negatively. For example, if girls (or children of lower castes) are considered inferior or less able than boys (or children of higher castes), they may be given fewer opportunities than their male (higher caste) peers to participate in learning. Like prevention-based diversity, stigmatizing diversity often comes from fear or lack of knowledge.

- 2. Ignoring diversity:** Some schools or teachers, while not actively working to promote diversity, or worse, stigmatizing it, prefer to ignore it. Ignoring diversity means treating learners as if they have no differences. If diversity is not recognized, then the teacher teaches to the children who are easy to reach; thus, the needs of many students may not be met and their strengths and abilities not utilized or developed. Take, for example, a situation where there are two learners who are classmates in a school. One learner finds the teacher easy to understand because they both speak the majority language as their mother tongue – the schools' language of instruction – but a classmate, who speaks a different language at home, struggles to understand the teacher. Ignoring the different language backgrounds and needs of these two learners disadvantages the learner as an unrecognized, undervalued, minority.
- 3. Tolerating diversity:** The word 'tolerance' here suggests that diversity is recognized and accepted in a school or classroom. Tolerating is certainly better than actively discouraging, stigmatizing, or ignoring diversity. But tolerating difference and diversity is not the same as celebrating, welcoming, appreciating or even understanding. For example, a

teacher may push students to tolerate a new boy with a disability who is joining their class, but that does not mean the other students are encouraged to welcome the new boy and get to know him or appreciate him for who he is, what he brings to the class, and what his needs are.

- 4. Welcoming diversity:** To welcome (or even celebrate) diversity is about moving beyond just tolerance to active appreciation of difference in a school community. This means cultivating an attitude for yourself as a teacher, with your colleagues, with your students, and with their families in which diversity is seen not as a problem and a challenge but rather as a strength and something to be valued.

In the classroom, this means that diversity is used to enhance the teaching and learning experience. As a teacher, you can encourage your students to learn about, understand, and value one another's different backgrounds, experiences, needs, and abilities. It would be dull if all learners were the same – diversity is rich and varied and provides good teaching and learning opportunities.

Welcoming diversity is also about balance. As a teacher, it is important to balance an understanding and valuing of what characteristics are shared by the members of a school community along with any differences. This fits with the idea of the 'twin-track' discussed in Module 3.

Some differences do not need to be pointed out or addressed directly or only become important in certain situations. For example, you may not need to focus on gender differences in your classroom if both boys and girls are being treated equally. However, if there is a situation of inequality and unfairness – if, say a student is being bullied because of his/her gender – then you will probably need to deal with gender specifically. This can be done through individual talks, group discussions, and role plays with your students that promote empathy and get them thinking about gender inequality and bullying.

Such activities may offer benefits beyond the specific challenges which inspired them by promoting the welcoming of all differences.

### 5.3 Flexibility and adaptability

A teacher's capacity to be flexible and adaptable is crucially important for being a quality and inclusive educator. Flexibility and adaptability help teachers to make the best of whatever opportunities and challenges they face.

Unfortunately, for many teachers the experiences of their own schooling and their teacher education have not actively encouraged flexibility and adaptability. In fact, these experiences may have reinforced the opposite – rigidity and inadaptability. If a teacher's own experience of schooling and teacher education has been mostly lecture-based – teachers standing at the front of the classroom lecturing to the students from a textbook – they will have limited practical experience of flexibility, adaptability, and dynamic teaching approaches on which to base their own practice.

Although a lack of flexibility and adaptability in education is a challenge, all teachers can improve in these areas through practice and reflection. This is because flexibility and adaptability are not qualities you are born with but rather a set of attitudes and skills which can be developed over time. And attitudes are important here because these are not just a set of technical skills. Real flexibility and adaptability depend on teachers having a positive attitude towards change – an openness and willingness around trying new things, taking risks, and not being afraid to struggle or fail.

If you have not had much experience with flexibility and adaptability in your own education background, it can be helpful to think about other areas of your life where these attitudes and skills have been demonstrated:

- Where have you or your family and friends been flexible and adaptable (maybe within family, community, or work environments)?
- What have been both positive and negative results from these experiences?

- How do you think some of the flexibility and adaptability practiced in these other areas of life could be transferred to teaching and learning in schools and classrooms?

#### 5.3.1 Flexibility and adaptability – some examples from practice

There are many possible ways of applying flexibility and adaptability in inclusive education. The following list gives a few examples of how an inclusive teacher can use these attitudes and skills:

- adapting curricula, lesson plans, timetables and activities (e.g. an Individualized Education Programme) to fit the needs, abilities and interests of specific learners and groups of learners
- being able to make changes quickly in response to what happens
- developing teaching and learning activities to expand on and improve the curriculum
- co-teaching with another teacher or teaching assistant
- using local community materials and resources (e.g. using local customs or cultural practices, such as poetry or dance, in teaching history and language)
- if you're a dominant language speaker in a non-dominant language school, trying to learn the local language – at least enough for basic communication with parents
- developing teaching and learning materials to supplement existing resources (and make more localized resources) – this might also be done together with other teachers, learners, parents, and families
- clustering children in different ways in small groups to meet different needs of the lesson e.g. same ability, mixed ability, with a common language)
- holding lessons both inside and outside of classrooms
- meeting with learners' parents, guardians and families outside of the school

- placing students with minor hearing and sight impairments near the front of the class
- adapting a classroom to be more accessible to learners with disabilities (e.g. by widening the doorway and/or putting in a ramp).

In times of crisis, adaptability and flexibility are the most critical measures to be adopted to facilitate student learning and support their well-being. Across the world teachers, students and parents have been living through a period of extraordinary change, with schools closed, classes disrupted/cancelled and daily routines of people broken. The massive school closures adopted as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 has demonstrated that it is critical to be adaptable and flexible in everything that the school does. Often education systems are too rigid and formal, and do not easily allow teachers and others to adapt as circumstances change. Adaptability is an important survival skill that is needed even during the normal times. Crises are the times when teachers, parents, community members and students should depend on each other as they work together to address learning needs. In relation to teaching-learning, teachers need to make adaptable and flexible arrangements.

Adaptability is the ability to be creative and flexible in the face of new and unpredictable situations. Adaptability in the face of uncertainty is important because it allows us to see the possibilities in unanticipated change. Adaptability is a skill that can be learned. Switching to online teaching is one example of being adaptable. Whether we wanted or not, it was the reality, people had to accept it. Teachers should anticipate these unexpected realities and be prepared to deal with them.

## 5.4 Planning inclusive teaching and learning

There are several key issues to consider when you plan your teaching and learning. Some of these you will probably already have considered and others may be new.

### 5.4.1 Assessing your students

Different students have different backgrounds, experiences, needs, abilities, and strengths. In planning and practicing your inclusive teaching and learning, you need to be engaging in a constant assessment of your students to best tailor your teaching to meet these differences (assessment is discussed in more depth in Module 6 – Assessment).

In assessing students, we collect information:

- about what students already know and can do
- about what they do not know and cannot do
- about what interests them
- about what related experiences they have had
- about what learning styles work best for them.<sup>14</sup>

The more you spend time observing and learning about your students' backgrounds and experiences and the ways they learn, the better you will be able to plan engaging and high-quality teaching.

One often neglected source for making this kind of assessment are what may be quite detailed descriptions of a child's developmental progress in pre-primary education – if any exist. Such descriptions from daycare providers, kindergartens teachers, etc., might include progress over time in developmental domains such as motor skills, cognitive and linguistic development, and socio-emotional learning. The nature of such progress and, especially, evidence of delays or disabilities at this pre-primary level will be very useful information for the early grade teacher in planning appropriate strategies for later learning.

14 UNESCO. 2004. *Changing Teaching Practices – Using curriculum differentiation to respond to students' diversity*. UNESCO: Paris. Pg. 19. NOTE: There is some debate now about the utility of analysing students and adjusting one's teaching by the "learning style" of individual students. What is important here is to understand that children do learn in different ways which, in turn, require adaptation of one's teaching methods – e.g. providing different students with opportunities for autonomous or collaborative learning, or with additional support, especially in the early stages of learning.

### 5.4.2 Aligning your teaching, learning, and assessment

Alignment means that what you want to teach (subjects, topics, concepts) is linked to your learning objectives (what you want your students to learn) and your teaching strategies (how you want them to learn what you want them to learn) and then to the way you assess your students' learning. You can think of it as a thread running from: learning content, learning objectives, teaching-learning strategies, learner assessment.

This kind of planning will help make the way you teach fit with what you want your students to gain and achieve. Your learning objectives will likely include a range of knowledge and skills, behaviours, attitudes, and feelings/emotions (e.g. times tables in mathematics, vocabulary in languages, questioning skills, improved self-esteem and confidence, empathy, the welcoming of diversity). Alignment in your planning will involve choosing tasks and activities that fit with what you want your students to learn.

For example, if you want your students to gain confidence, you can give them activities such as presenting their own ideas which help build their confidence but are also linked to specific subjects and concepts (e.g. they can do presentations that demonstrate what they have learned in a particular subject).

In terms of assessment, let's say you have got your students to draw pictures of tigers (e.g. in biology) and label the different parts of the tigers' bodies. When you want to assess their learning, you can look at their drawings and evaluate those. You can also have the children present their drawings to the class. This will give you some insight into their confidence in presenting, their speech, their vocabulary, and their motor skills, as well as their knowledge of tiger anatomy.

### 5.4.3 Progression of learning

It may seem obvious, but learning should generally be structured so that known or simpler learning tasks come before more complex

or unknown tasks. Individual learners will be able to handle different levels of complexity at different times, and so your planning will need to be tailored somewhat to individual students as well as more generally to your whole class. For example, students will need to know how to count before they can solve mathematical equations. So, counting activities would come before activities that involve simple equations.

Planning for progression in learning should also involve an understanding of basic child development. For example, children develop their gross motor skills (e.g. the ability to control the big movements of their arms, such as in swinging their arms in circles) before fine motor skills (e.g. the ability to control the movement of their hands and fingers, such as in using a pen to write or draw). Pushing children to perform tasks before they are developmentally able to do so can lead to confusion and feelings of failure.

Many schools at pre-primary level, for example, start children writing too early before they have developed fine motor skills. But it is important not to jump ahead too far in teaching writing and mathematics. Before children are tasked with writing and counting, there is a level of 'pre-writing' and 'pre-mathematics' that they should be exposed to. Pre-writing involves things such as drawing activities (which rely more on gross motor than fine motor skills). Pre-mathematics involves things such as working on the concepts of "more and less" and 'bigger and smaller'.

### 5.4.4 Planning for support

Although the issue of support is addressed in more detail in Module 7, it is mentioned here because it is important to consider possible support needs in your teaching and learning planning. Support issues to consider in planning include:

- What is the availability of general support teachers (teaching assistants) and those with specialized skills (e.g. in supporting children with disabilities)? Are these support teachers available in your school? If not, can you advocate for having them? How trained must they be, or are untrained people from

the community (high school graduates or mothers) able to provide useful kinds of assistance?

- How can support teachers best be mobilized in supporting you and your students in your classroom? It is recommended to do your lesson planning with support teachers in advance of a lesson. In this way, you can develop clear guidelines and a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and teaching/learning objectives.
- How can you promote peer support, either same-age (more able students in a class helping those less able) or different-age, with children of higher grades supporting those in lower grades?
- Are there supporters available outside of your classroom (e.g. specialist teachers, physiotherapists, counsellors) who can be accessed to support specific students if needed? How can you access and plan for this support?

#### 5.4.5 Materials and resources

Materials and resources are discussed in much more depth in Module 4 – Curriculum, Materials and Resources. However, it is also useful to think about these in relation to planning your teaching. Two key issues arise in this regard:

- variety: Having a variety of different materials and resources available will give you more options and flexibility in your teaching and offer more opportunities to engage different learners, use different teaching/learning strategies, and create a more stimulating learning environment. Materials and resources can include texts, other visual materials (e.g. photographs, maps, diagrams, charts), tactile materials (e.g. models, building blocks, stones, twigs, leaves and other natural materials), games, and toys. In lesson planning, ensure you have the appropriate materials and resources prepared in advance and available during your lesson time.
- Accessibility: Are your materials and resources accessible to all learners? To answer this question you must have a good understanding of your students' needs and abilities. With this knowledge, you can better plan your teaching so that all learners are engaged, able to participate, and achieve. Accessible materials and resources might include audio materials and books with large print or in Braille and graded readers for different reading ability levels.

### 5.5 The teaching and learning environment

The physical spaces in which teaching and learning takes place are an important consideration in inclusive education. To make the learning environment as welcoming as possible for all students, there are several issues to consider and questions you can ask yourself:

- **physical access:** Is the space accessible for all? Are all students actually able to comfortably access the classroom or other teaching/learning space? A student with a mobility or visual impairment will not easily be able (or will be unable without support) to access a classroom on an upper floor of a building using stairs.
- **safety and health:** Is the teaching/learning environment safe from attack (in conflict areas); natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes and floods); hazards (e.g. open rubbish pits, dangerous pollutants, poor construction)? If not, what can be done to improve the safety of the learning environment? Do students and teachers have proper access to clean drinking water and sanitary and safe toilets (with adequate privacy, safe from violence and abuse)? Do students get enough nutrition to concentrate in class? Do they get sick from the food they eat? Is the environment clean (e.g. free from dust and rubbish)?
- **comfort and access to learning:** Does the teaching/learning environment have adequate lighting (e.g. not too dark and

not too bright)? Is there not too much noise so that students can concentrate and teachers/learners can be heard when speaking to the class and in group/pair work? Is the teaching/learning environment warm enough during cold weather and cool enough during hot weather? Is the teaching/learning environment aesthetically welcoming (e.g. well decorated, for example with students' artwork)? Are there comfortable places for students to sit and work (e.g. supportive desks and chairs, clean and comfortable spaces to sit on the floor)? Do some students need different seats than others or more breaks to change position? Have you asked whether any students find sitting in the class painful? (see Case Study 5).

## 5.6 Communication

Practicing and encouraging positive communication in your classroom is essential to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. There are many different ways to do this, but several key issues to consider are:

- attitude and communication style. Being friendly, smiling, showing patience, listening, being respectful, giving constructive feedback in a positive manner, speaking clearly, showing positive body language – these are all ways a teacher can demonstrate and encourage positive communication.
- clear communication to students about rules and teaching/learning objectives. The clearer that rules and objectives are explained, the better students will understand what is expected of them in the classroom as well as what they should expect from you as their teacher. Both sets of expectations (for students and for teachers) should be explained. This also helps students to understand that teaching and learning is a shared experience between teachers and students where everyone has responsibilities.

- summarizing, rephrasing, and checking for understanding. These skills and practices will help ensure that students are able to grasp and understand your teaching.

In more concrete terms, positive communication might include alternative systems such as sign language, braille texts, or audio materials.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the teaching and learning environment has altered dramatically with remote, hybrid and blended learning environments coming to the fore. For more on remote, hybrid and blended teaching and learning, see Module 9.

## 5.7 Learning styles

Some researchers suggest that we all learn in different ways and that there is a variety of different 'learning styles'. These include:

- **inter-personal** – learning in groups through cooperative work, enjoying group activities, understanding social situations, and developing relationships with others
- **intra-personal** – learning through personal concentration and self-reflection, being good at working alone, being aware of your feelings, and knowing your own strengths and weaknesses
- **language** – thinking and learning through written and spoken words, memorizing, and remembering
- **listening/aural** – learning through sounds, music, rhyme, rhythm, and repetition
- **physical** – learning through doing; e.g. using body movement in sport, games, drama, science experiments, crafts
- **kinaesthetic/tactile** – learning through touch, e.g. moving around the environment feeling things
- **arithmetic/logic** – thinking and learning through reasoning and calculation and being able to easily use numbers, recognize abstract patterns, and take precise measurements

## □ CASE STUDY 5

### Making the learning environment more welcoming<sup>15</sup>

**If students are not comfortable and do not feel secure in schools and classrooms, it will be much more difficult for them to concentrate and thus to learn.** Akram Abualia, a Palestinian teacher, describes her experiences of making a teaching and learning environment more welcoming.

'My first job as a teacher was at Alrashayda School near the Dead Sea in Palestine. It is far from Bethlehem without transport services to the school because it is in an area of Israeli settlements and military camps. Before the current peace process started between the Israeli and Palestinian authorities, education was organized by the Israeli authorities. It was forbidden to build or develop schools, yet existing schools in Palestine were overcrowded. The Palestine Ministry of Education decided to open schools in different places, such as rented houses, clubs, and public centres. My school was one of these new schools in a mosque basement, and it presented me with some interesting challenges.

This desert area has many Bedouin people (a traditionally nomadic group) who move according to the weather and grazing for their animals. However, people are increasingly staying in one place as the political situation makes travelling difficult. For those who stay here, it can be tough – people are often quite poor and school facilities inadequate. The number of pupils attending my class decreased as the winter got colder and seven out of fourteen pupils moved with their families to warmer Jericho. Those who stayed were too cold to learn properly.

My friends told me I would soon resign and return to Bethlehem; this was a difficult place and they thought I would not be able to cope. But I knew I could be a good teacher and I did not intend to give up easily.

The classroom in the mosque basement was not well built. The walls were not finished, open doors and windows let in the cold weather, the floor was uneven, and there was no heating or electricity.

Some of the children could not afford warm clothes or even shoes. Even though they were present in class, they could not participate properly – they could not concentrate on their lessons. I also found it hard to teach well in such conditions.

I was determined that the children should have an education; why should the political and environmental situation deny them their right?

We could not afford to improve the school buildings, so the situation initially seemed impossible. However, one day I decided that we would move the furniture to a corner of the classroom. The children then collected some wood, built a fire, and sat around it in the same way that they do at home. We carried out our lessons like this until the weather got better.

While the children warmed up, I let them sing songs and tell stories from their experiences. Then I could start my lessons. The children were much happier and more confident about answering questions and participating in class.



## □ CASE STUDY 5

### Making the learning environment more welcoming<sup>15</sup>

In break times, they and their friends from other classes always wanted to talk and walk with me because they had heard about our classroom. The students told their families and they started to visit me at school. Some came to thank me, but others said I was wasting my time. I invited all the parents to a meeting to explain why I

was running my class in this way. Not all came, but it was still a good meeting, and parents said they would bring me anything they could to help my work.

One day the Minister of Education and Director in the Education Directorate came to open a new school nearby, within the Palestinian authority area.

They also wanted to visit our school. The head teacher asked the teachers to prepare a good reception. I created a programme which included some of the families building a traditional tent for the visitors, facilitating their children to talk to the Minister and sing Bedouin songs, and wearing their traditional clothes. It was a great day for everybody.

15 Abualia, A. 2006. Making the learning environment more welcoming, Palestine. *Enabling Education Network*. [https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/enabling\\_education10.pdf](https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/enabling_education10.pdf).

- **visual** – looking and watching, e.g. demonstrations, films, or TV; creating art, such as drawings, paintings, or sculpture; being able to easily read maps, charts, and diagrams

#### How do you learn?

Think about how you used to learn when you were in school. Did you favour different learning styles? If so, which seemed then to be most helpful in learning? What about now?

Learners benefit from being exposed to a range of different learning styles in the classroom. This is mainly because everyone gets bored if they don't get enough variety! Do you set activities/tasks in your classroom which engage different learning styles? Can you think of some examples?

Teacher-centred approaches to teaching and learning generally engage with a limited range of learning styles (e.g. only listening/aural when a

teacher lectures to students, or only reading and writing words). A learner-centred approach will utilize a range of different styles (e.g. involving sound, movement, vision, touch). This creates a more interesting and engaging learning environment and recognizes that learners learn in different ways.

Sometimes people can misunderstand the concept of learning styles to think that everyone has only one or two styles of learning which suit them (e.g. either you are a visual learner or an aural learner). But learning is much more complex – teaching and learning activities which engage multiple, complementary learning styles are likely to promote deeper learning and improve students' learning outcomes. Thus, most learners will benefit from being exposed to a variety of ways of learning. The more learning styles you are able to provide in your classroom, the more likely you will be to meaningfully engage all of your students.

More specifically, some learners with particular delays and disabilities may find traditional learning styles very difficult and may initially only be able to benefit from particular styles of learning. For example, people with dyslexia often prefer diagrams and images to understand information. When they were first learning to read, blocks of many words would have been very difficult for a dyslexic person. Encouraging such children to use drawings or shapes to represent words and concepts will keep them engaged in learning and help them to realize that education has value for them. As they get more confident with representing information in the style that comes most easily to them, you can encourage them to do more in styles they find more challenging.

In other cases, a student with a hearing impairment may not be able to access learning that depends on sound. For that student, visual and kinaesthetic/tactile methods will be essential. And a visually impaired student will need tactile counters to use while you are describing a mathematics problem to the class because they will not be able to see the numbers on the board.

## 5.8 Differentiated instruction

Using and emphasizing specific learning styles can be a way for a teacher to differentiate teaching and learning to suit students' different needs, abilities, and strengths.

Differentiation involves a range of approaches to adapting specific learning objectives and tasks to fit the needs, abilities, and strengths of different learners. This means breaking lessons and activities/tasks down into more comprehensible units. For example, if some of your students are struggling to learn a particular concept in comparison with their peers, you can differentiate by '...using the same task and materials as are used with typical peers, using the same task but an easier step, using the same task with different materials, using a different task related to the theme of the lesson, and/or using a different objective and a different task.'<sup>16</sup>

Differentiation is useful in supporting students with a range of different abilities. It will help you tailor tasks and activities as well as learning objectives to fit particular students or groups of students. This approach will also make it much easier to assess your students' learning on an individual basis according to their specific abilities and not a generic learning objective. To the extent that it enhances the learning of students with different abilities and needs, it also tends to raise the quality of learning of the entire class.

### 5.8.1 A Ugandan teacher's guidelines about differentiation<sup>17</sup>

The following guidelines from a primary school teacher in Uganda can help you think about how to differentiate teaching and learning for your students and improve the inclusivity of your classroom:

Don't just teach for the 'average' learner: all children can learn and every child has his/her own 'special' characteristics and needs.

- Develop lesson plans with different levels of activities ('differentiated learning') presented in a logical order for every type of learner.
- Use interactive approaches. Open-ended questions help children to think critically, creatively, and laterally; gifted children can often take a discussion a step further.
- Respect your pupils and be a role model; this can stimulate a desire for lifelong learning.
- Encourage learning beyond the classroom; e.g. through sports, music/dance, or science clubs. Listen to and help all children to express their interests and talents and support them to achieve their full potential.
- Link learning to children's daily lives; build on what they already know so that they understand the relevance of education and school attendance.

16 Walther-Thomas, C., et al. 2000. *Collaboration for Inclusive Education: Developing Successful Programs*. Boston Allyn and Bacon: Toronto. Pg. 235.

17 Ichapo, J.A. 2010. *Enabling gifted children to reach their potential in Uganda*. Enabling Education 14. Enabling Education Network.

- Promote social interaction and peer-to-peer learning in the classroom so that children learn to work together and depend on each other. This helps address discrimination in the classroom and promotes sharing of experiences, ideas, problems, etc. Some children can help teachers to help other children, but it is important that all children help one another and that teachers recognize the strengths in every child.

### 5.9 Teaching during a crisis

Teaching during a crisis is a different experience altogether. It is important to note that a pandemic does not impact all students the same way. Different students are affected differently. Some students have a lot at stake in some emergency situations and may even put them at risk. Teachers need to be aware of the existing and potential vulnerabilities. At times students may feel uncomfortable engaging in conversations or other activities. Teachers must find ways for students to communicate their concerns. Students should not be overwhelmed with homework, course requirements and deadlines. Trying to compete with a crisis for students' emotional and cognitive capacity won't work well for anyone.

The emergency transition to remote learning placed an unprecedented challenge on teachers worldwide. With little time to plan, and in some cases no experience or interest in teaching remotely, teachers were asked to teach students at a distance. Teachers were in a situation where they had to think outside the box and make rapid adjustments, revisit learning outcomes, develop flexible expectations and examine their own teaching practices. The traditional classroom setting ceased to function and was replaced by distance learning, affecting daily routines for all. The pandemic forced schools to change in unprecedented ways in an instant

manner. Schools went remote, methods of instruction shifted, and teachers had to change to new classroom environments all at the same time. The pandemic also forced them to change their instructional approach. The traditional notion of what it means to teach suddenly changed. Teachers found themselves in a supporting or facilitating role rather than standing in front of students in a physical classroom to transmit contents.

In such times, it is always useful to encourage an exploratory learning approach, which engages students in drawing their own insights and discoveries throughout the learning process. Relationship building is the most crucial element in creating a positive learning environment. This type of environment reveals a level of communication that is unmatched, where students work hand in hand with their teacher to succeed; they learn to participate and guide one another through class discussions.

The pandemic changed the role of home and it became the provider of education, a function historically exercised by the school. The pandemic has shown the importance of the home, community events and local institutions as sites of learning, something both students and teachers haven't witnessed in the past. This means that we have to upgrade our distance learning in schools and assist parents on how to make homes more conducive to learning with reliable technology and connectivity.

For some teachers, there were no clear work-life boundaries anymore. While fighting with their own health and well-being concerns, they had to work as social workers taking care of children in difficult circumstances. The traditional classroom setting vanished and was inadequately replaced by distance learning, affecting the daily routines of all.

## 5.10 Activity | Some ideas for differentiating teaching and learning<sup>18</sup>

■ Take a look at the following 14 practical ideas for differentiating teaching and learning. Following these ideas is a basic table that can be used to help you consider and outline differentiated teaching and learning activities:

### 1) Create learning stations

Provide different types of content by setting up learning stations – divided sections of your classroom through which groups of students rotate. Each station should use a unique method of teaching a skill or concept related to your lesson. For example, students can rotate between stations that involve:

- creating artwork
- reading an article
- completing puzzles
- playing a game
- listening to you teach

To help students process the content after they have been through the stations, you can hold a class discussion or assign questions to answer.

### 2) Use task cards

Like learning stations, task cards allow you to give students a range of content. Answering task cards can also be a small-group activity, adding variety to classes that normally focus on solo or large-group learning.

- First, make or identify tasks and questions that you'd typically find on worksheets or in textbooks.
- Second, write or print cards that contain a single task or question.
- Finally, set up stations around your classroom and pair students together to rotate through them.

You can individualize instruction by monitoring the pairs, addressing knowledge gaps when needed.

### 3) Interview students

Asking questions about learning and studying styles can help you pinpoint the kinds of content that will meet your students' needs. While running learning stations or a large-group activity (as in point 1), pull each student aside for a few minutes. Ask about:

- their favourite types of lessons
- their favourite in-class activities
- which projects they're most proud of
- which kinds of exercises help them remember key lesson points

Track your results to identify themes and students with uncommon preferences, helping you determine which methods of instruction suit their abilities.

### 4) Target different senses within lessons

A lesson should resonate with more students if it targets a range of senses – such as: visual, tactile, auditory and kinaesthetic senses (kinaesthetic senses are related to motion and movement) – instead of only one sense.

When appropriate, appeal to a range of learning styles by:

- providing audiobooks or reading aloud
- getting students to act out a scene
- incorporating charts and illustrations within texts
- giving both spoken and written directions to tasks
- using relevant physical objects, such as money, when teaching math skills
- allotting time for students to create artistic reflections and interpretations of lessons.

Not only will these tactics help more students grasp the core concepts of lessons, but also they will make lessons more engaging.

### 5) Share your own strengths and weaknesses

To familiarize students with the idea of differentiated learning, you may find it beneficial to explain that not everyone builds skills and processes information the same way. Talking about your own strengths and weaknesses is one way of doing this. Explain – on a personal level – how you study and review lessons. Share tactics that do and don't work for you, encouraging students to try them. This should not only help them understand that people naturally learn differently, but also give them insight into improving how they process information.

### 6) Use the 'Think-Pair-Share' strategy

The think-pair-share strategy exposes students to three lesson-processing experiences within one activity. It is also easy to monitor and support students as they complete each step.

- As the strategy's name suggests, start by asking students to individually think about a given topic or answer a specific question.
- Next, pair students together (in groups of two or three) to discuss their results and findings.
- Finally, have each pair share their ideas with the rest of the class and open the floor for further discussion.

Because the strategy allows students to process your lesson content individually, in a small

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group and in a large group, it caters to your classroom's different learning and personality types.

### 7) Make time for writing a journal

A journal can be a tool for students to reflect on the lessons you've taught and activities you've run and help them process new information.

When possible at the end of class, give students a chance to make a journal entry by:

- summarizing key points they have learned
- attempting to answer or make sense of questions they still have
- explaining how they can use the lessons in real-life scenarios
- illustrating new concepts which can be especially helpful for data-focused math lessons
- thinking about anything additional they would like to learn related to the topic.

Writing a journal will not be an accessible task for all students – it will depend on age and ability – but for those students who cannot or are less comfortable writing a journal, you can try other ways of supporting them to reflect on their learning (e.g. by drawing a picture about a lesson/activity or telling a story).

### 8) Implement reflection and goal-setting exercises

As an extension of journaling, have students reflect on important lessons and set goals for further learning at pre-determined points of the week, month, semester, or year. During these points, ask

students to write (or talk) about their favourite topics as well as the most interesting concepts and information they have learned. They should also identify skills to improve and topics to explore. Based on the results, you can target lessons to help meet these goals. For example, if the bulk of students discuss a certain aspect of the science curriculum, you can design more activities around it.

### 9) Run reading circles

Organizing students into reading circles not only encourages students to shape and inform each other's understanding of what they are reading, but also helps auditory and participatory learners retain more information. This also gives you an opportunity to listen to each circle's discussion, asking questions and filling in gaps in understanding. As a bonus, some students may develop leadership skills by running the discussion. This activity makes written content – which, at times, may only be accessible to individual learners with strong reading retention – easier to process for more students.

### 10) Offer different types of free study time

Free study time will generally benefit students who prefer to learn individually but can be slightly altered to also help their classmates process your lessons. This can be done by dividing your class into clearly-sectioned solo and team activities. Consider the following free study exercises to also meet the preferences of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learners:

- provide books, audiobooks, or videos with material relevant to your lessons
- create a station for challenging group games that teach skills involved in the curriculum
- maintain a designated quiet space for students to take notes and complete work
- allow students to work in groups while taking notes and completing work away from the quiet space.

By running these sorts of activities, free study time will begin to benefit diverse learners – not only students who easily process information through quiet, individual work.

### 11) Give different sets

of reading comprehension activities. Instead of focusing on written products, consider evaluating reading comprehension through questions and activities that test different aptitudes. Although written answers may still appeal to many students, others may thrive and best challenge themselves during artistic or kinaesthetic tasks. For example, allow students to choose between some of the following activities before, during and after an important reading lesson:

- participating in more reading circles
- delivering a presentation
- writing a traditional report
- creating visual art to illustrate key events
- creating and performing a monologue as a main character or figure

Offering structured options can help students demonstrate their

## 5.10 Activity | Some ideas for differentiating teaching and learning<sup>18</sup>

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understanding of content as effectively as possible, giving you more insight into their abilities.

### 12) Assign open-ended projects

Similar to evaluating reading comprehension, give students a list of projects to find one that lets them effectively demonstrate their knowledge. Include guidelines for each type of project which clearly define expectations. Doing so will keep it challenging and help students meet specific criteria. By both engaging and challenging students, this approach encourages them to:

- work and learn at their own pace
- engage actively with content they must understand
- demonstrate their knowledge as effectively as possible

As well as benefiting students, this differentiated instruction

strategy will clearly showcase distinct work and learning styles.

### 13) Encourage students to propose ideas for their projects

As well as offering set options, encourage students to take their projects from concept to completion by presenting their own ideas. A student must show how the product will meet academic standards and be open to your revisions. If their proposal doesn't meet your standards, tell the student to refine the idea until it does. If it doesn't by a predetermined date, assign one of your set options. You may be pleasantly surprised by some of the presentations. After all, students themselves are the focus of differentiated instruction – they likely have an understanding of their learning styles and abilities.

### 14) Analyse your differentiated instruction strategy on a regular basis

This is part of your reflective practice and will help you to improve and refine your teaching.

Now, take a look at the following table. You will find an example of an activity which uses differentiation – learning stations. Can you suggest additional 'specific teaching and learning objectives' that fit with each station in column five? Think about the different types of learners you might have in your class and how they can engage with and learn from each of the learning stations. Try putting your own ideas for a different differentiation activity in the second, blank row of the table.

<sup>18</sup> Adapted from: Guido, M. 2016. '20 Differentiated Instruction Strategies and Examples'. <https://www.prodigygame.com/blog/differentiated-instruction-strategies-examples-download/>.

Subject(s)	General teaching and learning objectives	General task/activity	Differentiated tasks/activities	Specific teaching and learning objectives
Schools often have no flexibility in their yearly calendars or their daily timetables.	Children are needed for work and to care for siblings. This requires a different calendar and timetable from the school.	Learning stations	<p><b>Station 1</b> – Students look at historical drawings or photos of their country and silently read related texts (graded at different levels)</p> <p><b>Station 2</b> – Students draw pictures about the history of their country – what it looked like 100 years ago</p> <p><b>Station 3</b> – Students play a game about history</p> <p><b>Station 4</b> – Students write some words, sentences, or paragraphs about what it would be like if they were a historical figure from their country's history</p> <p><b>Station 5</b> – Students sit with the teacher or a teaching assistant and practice reading aloud about history</p>	Engaging students; promoting literacy...

### 5.11 Organizing the classroom – seating and grouping

The 'traditional' approach to organizing seating in formal schooling is typically to have students seated for an entire lesson in rigid rows with the teacher standing (and lecturing from) the front of the classroom. This tends to dictate or pre-determine the kind of teaching and learning that can take place. This teacher-centred approach:

- is not flexible and adaptable to attending to different styles of teaching and learning, organizing different activities, and supporting interactions between students (e.g. in group or pair work).
- likely only benefits some of the students some of the time, but at other times (and for some students who have difficulty engaging in learning), it will be ineffective and boring. This is especially true for those students seated towards the back of the classroom.
- limits the kinds of assessments of learning that a teacher can do.

An inclusive teacher will have a variety of methods of seating and grouping students in the classroom and will typically use at least several seating and grouping arrangements in one lesson linked to particular tasks and activities. For example, if students are set a task of working on a project together in groups, they will need to be seated in a way so that they can easily work together – rigid rows of individual desks/chairs do not suit this purpose. In this scenario, group work might take up part of a lesson, but then in another part of the lesson students might be seated in a semi-circle listening to the teacher read a story. Changing seating and grouping during a lesson can help alleviate tiredness and boredom, support particular styles of learning and particular learning outcomes, help distinguish different activities/tasks, and suit the different needs of different learners.

- A few examples of different types of seating and grouping include:
- seating students in rows – lecture style

- seating students in a circle (at desks, or in chairs, or on the floor)
- seating students in groups or pairs (either by moving chairs/desks together or on the floor)

The more flexible the space and seating (relatively lightweight chairs and desks that can be easily moved, chairs that are separate from desks, availability of open spaces in a classroom), the better able a teacher will be to facilitate a range of different seating arrangements, groupings, and activities. In some classrooms, desks are nailed to the floor in rows – this is not a very flexible learning environment!

Of course, teachers don't often have a choice in their classrooms, chairs, desks and other furniture. So even if you are faced with inflexible learning spaces, you can think creatively about how to get around the barriers. For example, can you do some activities outside or in another part of the school such as a library, gymnasium, or auditorium?

### 5.11.1 Grouping

There are many different ways to organize students into groups. Here we highlight a few:

- **homogenous grouping:** This means students are grouped according to their similarities (e.g. students who like drawing are put in one group, students who enjoy drama/role-play are grouped in another group). It is important to emphasize that homogenous grouping, as in the example of grouping by interests, can be a useful way of teaching/learning, but it should be alternated so that at times groups of learners with different interests (and other differences) are grouped together. This is particularly important when it comes to grouping students by ability – grouping students by ability (e.g. all the students in a class who read quickly in one group and slower readers in another group) is not inclusive! There are many benefits to mixed ability grouping, not the least that it can be a good way for students to support each other.
- **heterogeneous grouping:** Students are grouped according to their differences (e.g. in mixed age or ability groups).

- **pairs:** Students are paired together
- **small to medium sized groups:** Students are put in groups of three to eight.
- **large groups:** Groups are formed of more than eight students. Keep in mind that although some activities may benefit from larger groups (e.g. some games or role-plays where you need multiple people), if a group is too large there may be some students who are not participating by choice or because they are left out.

### 5.11.2 Peer-to-peer learning

Groupings and activities which encourage students to help each other in teaching/learning can be very beneficial (e.g. older students supporting younger students in reading) as this is a good way of fostering a supportive and collaborative environment; can build students' self-esteem and confidence; can help promote deeper learning (e.g. if a student has to explain or teach a concept/skill to another student, they may gain a deeper understanding themselves); and can relieve some of the pressure from a teacher (especially in large classes). However, a teacher should still have the overall responsibility of facilitating learning in the classroom.

Teachers must be very careful and vigilant not to put too much of the responsibility of teaching on their students' shoulders, no matter how able and willing a student is to help.

### 5.12 Making connections in teaching and learning

Making connections means connecting different concepts together (and understanding the links) and being able to connect abstract concepts with what is real and practical. The role of an inclusive teacher is to facilitate learners in making these kinds of connections in their learning.

One of the big challenges for teachers is to be able to make abstract concepts understandable for students. When teachers use 'real world' examples to illustrate concepts in their



teaching, it helps students to understand and make connections with their own lives and experiences. This kind of connectivity can be increased through activities which encourage students to experience concepts for themselves. For example, instead of just explaining to students the concept of cooperation, you can set activities which encourage them to practice and reflect on cooperation – to actually “feel” it (e.g. a game where one student is blindfolded and another student has to guide them, without touching them, safely around obstacles in a classroom).

Another issue to think about that can support learners in making connections is designing links between different concepts or parts of a lesson (or topics, or subjects) such as through ‘signposting’. Signposting can be done by making the link for students (e.g. by saying ‘this connects to...’), but it is also important to encourage students to make their own links (e.g. by asking ‘what did we talk about earlier that is connected to what we are talking about now?’).

### 5.13 Time

Several issues related to time are essential in inclusive teaching and learning:

- **processing time:** Moving too quickly (and without proper transitions) between concepts, activities, and learning tasks can mean that some students may not have the proper time they need to process information. Similarly, students need to be given enough time to answer questions (either individually, in pairs, or in larger groups). Demanding answers too quickly can be embarrassing, hurt students’ confidence and self-esteem, and may give a false sense of students’ knowledge and abilities. Some learners with disabilities or who otherwise struggle to learn may need extra time to answer questions, complete assignments, take tests, and fulfil other tasks/activities.
- **breaks:** Students need more frequent breaks than they often get in schooling. These do not always need to be long breaks (e.g. three

minutes of stopping a lesson, standing, or sitting and stretching can be a useful and refreshing break), but they need to frequent enough to alleviate boredom, give students a rest between tasks, and prevent them from being overwhelmed. Too much teaching without a break will bring diminishing returns in learning – that is, students will be learning and processing information less meaningfully and effectively. Some students will need breaks more frequently than the rest of the class, particularly if they find noise or large groups overwhelming. Giving them time in a safe, quiet corner behind a barrier or curtain can increase their sense of comfort and their ability to learn and reduce challenging behaviour.

- **free play:** Students (particularly of younger ages) also need proper free time to play.

Although structured playtime (where a teacher facilitates specific games and activities) is valuable, children also learn and develop in different and important ways when they are allowed to play freely. Teachers (and parents) sometimes feel that every minute of a child’s time needs to be structured and organized. But in schooling, as in outside of the school, too much of a structured learning environment actually works against children being able to learn on their own. Regulations, norms, graduation requirements, exams, timetables, class sizes, school schedules and curriculum requirements should all be understood for what they are, as means to an end and not an end in themselves. This autonomous learning is a very valuable aspect of child development as it supports children in becoming independent thinkers and actors.

### 5.14 Project-based learning

A challenge to realizing a holistic approach to inclusive education comes from the way subjects are traditionally organized and taught. This often means that individual subjects (e.g. language, history, and mathematics) are kept separate and taught independently of

one another, often by different teachers. This separation of subjects can make it difficult for teachers to cooperate in teaching and learning and works against potentially meaningful linkages between subjects. This separation of subjects is not necessarily required by school curricula, but if a curriculum does not explicitly call for linking subjects together (and offer relevant guidance and support in how to do this), it is very likely that they will be taught separately in practice.

The rigid separation of subjects is artificial and does not fit with what we experience in life outside of school where real-world situations and challenges involve a combination of different subject knowledge. Farming might involve a combination of science (in nurturing and protecting plants from pests and negative effects of climate change) and history (in learning about useful indigenous farming practices which fit the local area) and mathematics (to determine how much to plant, how much water and fertilizer to use, and ideal crop yields).

A good way of meaningfully connecting different subjects together and realizing other inclusion goals is through project-based learning. Project-based learning is a highly 'learner-centred' approach to teaching and learning which links different areas of school curriculum through a practical, engaging, and hands-on project. Projects can focus broadly or more narrowly on themes such as 'the environment' or 'the history of my community'. This project-based methodology asks learners to practically apply theoretical aspects of the curriculum in a way that is interesting and engaging. This is vital for learners who struggle with traditional listening, reading, and writing. It provides opportunities for independent learning and learner choice – where children have choices in project themes as well as specific activities that interest them. The linking of different subject areas of the curriculum through one project (e.g. mathematics, language, and history) supports participants in advancing quickly in their learning as they grasp how

different subject areas, which are usually taught separately in school, actually intersect in real life.

Building from the basic school curriculum, teachers and learners have a high degree of flexibility to choose project topics and activities. Project-based learning encourages learners' engagement with local materials and other resources (including the knowledge, skills, and experience of community members). Such learning also has significant advantages for teachers as it makes it much easier for them to differentiate teaching/learning by tailoring project activities to suit the needs and interests of different learners. This builds on the section on 'differentiation' earlier in this module.

Project-based methodology also encourages learners to support each other – a 'child-to-child' approach – through mixed ability group work and/or multigrade teaching where learners of different grades/ages learn together. And project-based learning encourages teachers to be collaborative, working together in linking different subject areas through planning and facilitating project activities.

In project-based learning, instead of taking a didactic ('teacher-centred') approach, teachers work as facilitators of learning, supporting learners in their project enquiries and ensuring that specified curriculum goals (i.e. specific knowledge and skills) are addressed through learners' projects.

### **Using Project-Based Learning (PBL) in times of crisis**

As schools switched to remote learning, it left many students felt disengaged from learning. Removed from their classmates and classrooms and missing face to face instruction with teachers, it was hard for students to find the motivation to listen to remote lectures and do textbook assignments. Project-Based Learning has been described as a remedy for COVID-19 learning loss. It is an increasingly popular pedagogical practice centred around students working collaboratively on projects while the teacher facilitates learning activities and progression.

## □ CASE STUDY 6

### Empowering Afghan children through project-based learning<sup>19</sup>

School curricula in Afghanistan as elsewhere are usually designed so that learning is split into separate subjects, often with few connections between them. This case study describes a 2014 project-based learning programme with primary school students and teachers which linked subjects and made them relevant to the reality of students' lives.

#### Overview of programme

The activities took place outside regular school hours in the Afghan provinces of Kabul, Ghazni and Badakhshan. The programme was implemented by the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) with support from children in three partner 'Friendship Schools' in Norway. The children communicate through letters and blogs.

This programme had the following objectives:

- conduct training for teachers on inclusive, child-friendly education and education for sustainable development, using project-based learning and subject

integration conduct four daily activities in school communities over a period of two weeks focusing on saving and protecting the environment introduce project-based learning and subject integration focusing on biology, chemistry, the environment, language, and technology make students aware of the value and importance of the environment (indigenous flora and fauna, disaster prevention, etc.), related to relevant themes for the targeted school

- promote youth leadership, responsibility and solidarity
- promote participatory teaching-learning approaches for teachers and head teachers.

**The project-based learning used school facilities and involved teachers and students but abandoned the typical classroom model of education in favour of workshops, free discussions, and other activities.** Although the actual projects unfolded

differently in different school communities, a common structure was used to organize the programme. This involved two stages: i) training teachers in inclusive and participatory education and project-based learning; ii) an activity camp where participating students and teachers conducted their projects.

#### Training for teachers

**Teachers and other education staff received one week's training before beginning the projects.**

**The training helped participants understand the relationship between different education subjects and how to connect these subjects with the lives of their students.** They learned

about environmental sustainability and the interconnections between the environment and human needs (including water, soil, animals, energy, air quality, and the environment).

Teachers also learned a range of inclusive approaches such as facilitating teaching and learning in a participatory way; giving students responsibility for their own and others' learning and

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teaching them to respect one another; establishing a friendly environment; developing student skills; and developing students' self-control and their capacity to work together in a team.

#### Doing the projects

The two-week project-based learning activity camps were conducted during the winter break in Ghazni and after regular school hours in Badakhshan and Kabul. Five schools were involved, with over 300 students participating in all the activities and hundreds more joining in with activities such as advocacy campaigns. **During the camps, students engaged in highly interactive activities related to the natural environment and technology.** They were supported to take an

active role in improving the environment in their school communities.

They were also encouraged to share positive messages through advocacy (about environmental protection, sustainability and related issues, women's and girls' rights), targeting senior community leaders and other community members.

In Badakhshan, students led advocacy campaigns at their schools, focusing on the importance of environmental awareness and alternative energy use. They recited poems, read articles, and presented what they had learned to parents, neighbours, and teachers. In Ghazni province, they were also able to present their suggestions on how to improve education and protect the environment to

more than 800 community members and to the district governors.

#### Results

Surveys were given to teachers and students at the end of the programme. The results showed that **the majority of participants had gained a deeper knowledge and understanding of inclusive education, project-based learning methodology, and the project topics.**

Most participants also found the project-based learning approach engaging, interesting and confidence building.

'I love this methodology. We have much more freedom and time to discuss and share our ideas. Me and my classmates very much enjoyed learning in this way.' (Somaya, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, Ghazni province).

19 Mawj, M., Sarvary, M. and NAC Education teams. 2014. Empowering Afghan children through project-based learning. Enabling Education Review 3. Enabling Education Network.

Project-based learning embodies several factors considered central to motivation in online learning. Its benefits are well established. It is known to increase student engagement, offer interdisciplinary learning opportunities and give students opportunities to practice collaboration and critical-thinking skills that are in high demand in the modern workplace.

Teachers who previously may not have had the courage to apply project-based learning found out during remote instruction that this method could be academically beneficial and prompt a deeper understanding of lessons. Projects that increase student attention and give them freedom to work at their own pace enhance student engagement and lead to increased

learning outcomes. The flexibility built into project work allows a level of personalization for each student. Many teachers who have used project-based learning say that it allows students to work on their real-life problems. A carefully planned project-based learning exercise also promotes educational equity because it benefits students regardless of geography, socio-economics, race or ethnicity or different needs.

Project-Based Learning activities can use high-tech solutions but they can also be low-tech. Some examples of low-cost activities include asking students to interview family members and neighbours or make phone calls to distant people to get additional expertise and feedback for prototyping or proposal writing. Other options include the use of art, cooking, building and construction, and the outdoors, as resources. Ask students to do an individual project where they pick a topic of interest, explore it on their own (e.g., family history, the physics of baseball or skateboarding, the science of cooking), and create a written product or use a mobile phone to create videos or podcasts.<sup>19</sup>

### 5.15 Positive classroom management

Managing students' behaviour in schools and classrooms is an important part of everyday teaching and learning and can affect the lives of students (positively or negatively) long after they leave school and enter into adulthood.

In many schools, teachers attempt to manage students' behaviour by instilling fear and using force through verbal and even physical violence. This form of behaviour management is often reinforced in wider society (e.g. by parents, religious and other community leaders, and education officials). This is the opposite of an inclusive approach to behaviour management!

Using fear and violence to manage students' behaviour in schools/classrooms causes long-lasting psychological and even physical damage and is very ineffective in encouraging genuine positive behaviours and in supporting meaningful learning. Children in a classroom may

remain quiet because they fear their teacher, but that does not mean they understand why (and when) being quiet is important (e.g. as a way of being respectful to their peers, as well as the teacher, and not disturbing learning).

The alternative to negative forms of behaviour management, including corporal punishment, is sometimes referred to as 'positive discipline'. Here we use the term 'positive classroom management' as the word 'discipline' often has very negative connotations. There are a few key principles behind positive classroom management:<sup>20</sup>

- **demonstrating mutual respect.** Teachers encourage mutual respect between themselves and students (and among different students) by demonstrating that they respect their students' needs (e.g. allowing children to go to the toilet when they need to, not only during pre-determined breaks).
- **modelling positive behaviours.** If teachers practice behaviours such as patience, respect, empathy, and punctuality, it helps support students to do the same.
- **identifying the belief behind the behaviour.** Effective classroom management recognizes the reasons students do what they do and works to change those beliefs, rather than merely attempting to change behaviour.
- **supporting students in understanding chains of cause and effect.** This means that teachers help their students understand the consequences of their behaviours and the reasons that actions are taken in response to positive or negative behaviours. This encourages both teachers and students toward thinking deeply, critically, and reflectively.
- **developing effective communication and problem-solving skills.** These are skills teachers and students can develop

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<sup>20</sup> Adapted from: Nelson, J. (N.D). 'About Positive Discipline'. <https://www.positivediscipline.com/about-positive-discipline>.

through regular practice and are essential to fostering an inclusive teaching/learning environment.

- **focusing on solutions instead of punishments.** Being able to 'unpack' the underlying causes of behaviours and focusing on fair and sustainable ways of addressing negative behaviours are much more meaningful and effective approaches to positive classroom management than giving students (arbitrary) punishments.
- **establishing fair and clear rules and boundaries.** Teachers should not assume that students know what behaviour is expected of them in the classroom. The process of establishing rules and boundaries should be one that helps students understand the reasons for rules/ boundaries – so they are not just arbitrary. Students should actively be involved in this process (for example, students can 'brainstorm' their own list of rules they think there should be in the classroom) to support their understanding and 'ownership' of the resulting rules/boundaries.
- **praising positive behaviours.** It is important that students understand when they are behaving well and are recognized for their good behaviour.
- **training students in self-management strategies at his/her developmental level.** This can include self-recording of behavioural issues and self-assessment (observing one's own behaviour and deciding if the responses meet established criteria).

However, equally important is:

- **giving encouragement as well as praise.** Providing encouragement is a way of recognizing effort and improvement, not just success, and builds towards long-term self-esteem and empowerment.
- **showing consistency.** Encouraging positive behaviours in the classroom is a process which requires patience – with slow and steady capacity building – and teachers'

consistency. If a teacher reacts to students who are disruptive in the classroom aggressively and angrily one day and with calm and patience the next day, this can seem arbitrary and be very confusing and disorienting for students.

Developing positive classroom management does not happen overnight. This is a long-term process and will take time and consistent effort to achieve. Often teachers are asked to practice positive classroom management without any real understanding of what this means or any experience of it themselves (in schooling or in teacher education). It is common for teachers who are making a transition from corporal punishment and other negative forms of classroom management to struggle with the process, especially at first. Students also need time to get used to this new system and change of approach.

Teachers who expect the transition from negative to positive classroom management to go smoothly may be very disappointed when things seem chaotic at first. This is a critical time, and teachers need support in reflecting on the transition – what goes well and what is challenging. Without this support, it is all too easy for a teacher to conclude that positive classroom management doesn't work and to revert to the more negative forms of management they are most familiar with.

To be truly effective, positive classroom management needs to be a whole-school endeavour – if only one teacher in a school is practicing this, it creates a contradictory and confusing experience for students, and the teacher will lack the support and reinforcement needed to really change attitudes, behaviours, and practices.

### 5.15.1 Positive classroom management strategies<sup>21</sup>

#### 1) Communication (sending and receiving skills)

##### Sending skills

- Exchange information on the spot with no delay
- Talk to your students directly instead of talking about them
- Talk to your students with respect and sincerity
- Express your full responsibility for what you say by using the personal pronoun "I"
- When dealing with a behavioural problem, address the student(s) in direct and straightforward sentences

##### Receiving skills

- Use eye contact and be aware and experienced in using body language
- effectively. When listening, use body language to express your thoughts and feelings (e.g. nodding or making facial expressions).
- Respond by rephrasing what you have just heard from the student to ensure him/her that you have been listening.

#### 2) Observing and monitoring

- To avoid misbehaviour in the classroom, think seriously about what causes this misbehaviour to occur.
- Examine the classroom quickly to spot possible problems and prevent them from being acted on.
- Take the initiative of enforcing active and positive communication through praising and encouraging positive behaviour.
- Deal quickly with misbehaviour that can hold the class back in order to leave a positive spirit among the students.
- Remind your students of the rule they are breaking and emphasize that by breaking the rules, they are choosing the logical consequences for their actions.

#### 3) Strategies for presentations and giving instructions

- Involve your students in evaluating their own work and your teaching.
- Give the students a study guide to help them organize their thoughts and focus their efforts while studying.
- Vary your teaching approach and presentations to meet different students' needs according to their different learning styles.
- Choose suitable teaching materials which are authentic and related to your students' daily life in order to motivate them and guarantee maximum participation.
- Be active and capable of engaging your students' interests.
- Use activities that attract learners' attention and increase motivation. Do not forget that student involvement is essential to positive classroom management.

### 5.16 Classroom management in remote learning

Managing classrooms in a remote learning environment is a challenging task. Managing student behaviour even in normal times is a huge challenge. Because of the change in the learning environment in the pandemic, the dynamics of the classroom changes and gives rise to new behavioural issues. In times of disruptions and uncertainty during the pandemic, classroom management has taken on new importance. Regardless of the mode of instruction, teachers should continue to take the responsibility of managing students' behaviours, as well as students' social-emotional health.

First, in a distance learning environment, it can be difficult to tell if students are distracted from the content, or if they are struggling with other issues such as social-emotional issues. In an online environment, digital monitoring tools and well-being software can be useful for effective classroom management. Through these tools teachers are able to find out if students are in need of any academic or social-emotional

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21 Soliman, I. (N.D.) Classroom management tips. Enabling Education Network. Pg. 5-7.

support. In low-tech or no-tech situations the best option may be to reach out to students through phones, family visits or any other direct means of communication on a regular basis, depending on the need and teacher capacity.

Second, the pandemic prompted schools to introduce remote modes of teaching where students had no devices and internet to allow learning from home. While online learning played a role in remote learning, it is not without risks. Students can potentially fall victim to predators, have their identities stolen, become victims of cyberbullying, or become cyber bullies themselves. One aspect of classroom management in the context of pandemic involves managing online risks. At times, there are chances of students visiting unhealthy websites. To ensure that students are able to make responsible use of digital resources, they should be taught early on the basics of how to act responsibly while using such resources. Teaching digital citizenship provides a good foundation for a safe and productive digital learning experience. Module 9 will discuss these issues further.

Third, in a remote learning environment, students should be able to be autonomous learners. Classroom management is not just about managing disruptive student behaviour. An autonomous learner is engaged in learning and learns at his or her own pace. One aspect of classroom management is to teach students how to adapt and engage in content independently.

### 5.17 Myths about corporal punishment<sup>22</sup>

To better understand what positive classroom management means, it is important to think about what positive classroom management is meant to replace – the system of corporal punishment which is still common in many education systems. Corporal punishment can be deeply rooted in culture (inside and outside of education) and difficult to eradicate.

22 Adapted from: UNESCO. 2015. 'Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments Specialized Booklet 1 - Positive Discipline in the Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Classroom - A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Educators.' UNESCO: Bangkok. Pp.15-18.

However, culture is not static and positive change can happen. To bring about such positive changes, teachers and other school community members need to confront the myths that have supported the use of corporal punishment for so many years. The following are some dominant myths about corporal punishment, alongside facts that can help you understand how these myths originated and to be better able to challenge them.

#### **Myth: 'It happened to me and did me no harm.'**

Fact: Though they may have felt fear, anger, and mistrust from being hit by parents or teachers, people who use this argument often do it to reduce the guilt they have for using corporal punishment on their children today. In their minds, they are defending their violent actions against their children. However, their actions reveal that corporal punishment did, in fact, do them harm: it perpetuated the cycle of violence that they now inflict upon children. Similarly, these children are more likely to perpetuate the violence for generations to come. In addition, many things that former generations managed to survive are no longer common practice now. For instance, the fact that some people may not have received vaccinations when they were children does not mean that they would prefer this for their own children.

#### **Myth: 'Nothing else works!' or 'They asked for it!'**

Fact: While positive classroom management requires developing a trusting, mutually respectful relationship between a child and her/his teacher, inflicting pain on a child is a lazy way out. It is an admission that we have failed to do what it takes to help the child to learn and internalize good behaviour. If we regularly use corporal punishment, it will take time and effort for new methods to work. If we have been nagging, yelling, threatening, or physically punishing our students for a long time, it is difficult to build an effective, trusting relationship with them overnight. This may in turn create the feeling that nothing else works, or that



the children are “asking” to be beaten; but the problem with this is the disciplinary approach itself, not the misbehaviour of the children.

Justifying that a child has asked for violence is really intended to make the perpetrator feel less guilty – blaming the victim. Besides, do you normally hit your head teacher, school staff, fellow teacher, or spouse when it appears that “nothing else works”? Hopefully not!

**Myth: ‘Corporal punishment works best. Other methods don’t.’**

Fact: Getting your students to behave through fear of punishment is not the same as discipline. Corporal punishment seems to work only if you look at it superficially and in the short-term.

Corporal punishment teaches children to do what you say, but only when you are around. In effect, it teaches them to be sneaky as well as to lie about misbehaviour, to avoid being hit or punished in some other degrading manner. By creating a sense of distrust and insecurity in the child, it destroys the teacher–child relationship. Children become angry at why someone who is supposed to teach and care for them is instead threatening, beating, or insulting them.

While a single act of corporal punishment may seem to be effective, it only temporarily frightens a child into submission. Ultimately, fear is a reactive response and doesn’t lead children to understanding deeper-level thinking or appreciating chains of cause, effect, and consequences.

**Myth: ‘Corporal punishment teaches obedience.’**

Fact: In the past, it may have been the practice to teach children never to question authority, but times have changed. Many teachers are adopting child-centred learning techniques that encourage children to explore, to think for themselves, to ask questions, and to learn the joy of finding answers as a major way of learning. Corporal punishment, however, stops a child from questioning, thinking critically, and achieving personal goals; yet these are qualities

that both adults and children need in order to excel in a dynamic, competitive, and innovative society. Enforcing blind obedience through the threat of corporal punishment greatly stifles initiative and creativity in children (and adults).

**Myth: ‘I only do it as a last resort. I had no choice.’**

Fact: This excuse rationalizes for us, and teaches our students, that the use of violence as a last resort is justified. This argument is not acceptable; for example, is a husband justified in hitting his wife as a last resort? It should be no more acceptable when it comes to our students. Besides, it is quite common for parents and teachers to result to physical punishment at the first instance – not as a last resort – and for very minor misconduct. Remember, the use of violence, amongst other problems, represents a profound failure of a teacher to manage the learners they support.

**Myth: ‘It’s the only way I can control the children in my class. I have too many!’**

Fact: This excuse is common among teachers who face large classes – perhaps up to 100 children. It usually arises because the classroom has no set rules or routines; the children do not know what is expected of them and the consequences for misbehaving; and the teacher did not take the time to build a positive relationship with the children so they would want to be good. This may be due to her/ his authoritative classroom management style – one that says, “I’m the teacher and we’ll do things my way!” In trying to maintain control, the teacher may also use corporal punishment not just to stop misbehaviour in one child but also to put fear into the hearts of the other children so, hopefully, they won’t misbehave as well (but they do). Like previous myths, enforcing blind obedience through threats of physical violence does not encourage children to learn from the teacher, only to fear him or her. As a result, children don’t want to learn, which makes our job harder, and they don’t learn well, which reflects poorly on our performance as a teacher.

## □ CASE STUDY 7

### Teachers' reflections on moving from corporal punishment to positive classroom management<sup>23</sup>

The following case study looks at the experiences and reflections of several Malaysian primary school teachers who work in small rural schools in Sarawak, East Malaysia. These teachers have been making the difficult transition from using corporal punishment to more positive forms of classroom management. There is a long history of corporal punishment in Malaysian schools, and although corporal punishment still exists, some teachers have been positively supported to change, but often only with difficulty.

A Sarawak primary school teacher's comments highlight how difficult it can be for some teachers to abandon corporal punishment.

*'Starting from last year, we do less caning. I still cane the kids sometimes. It works best with the children who don't do what we want them to do. But lately, we were asked by an inclusive education mentor to try a different way, so **we will pull out some students who are not cooperating and try other ways of discipline.** We smile more now, but it seems that we are not strict with the kids*

*if we smile at them. We must have a balance of a bit of punishment and a bit of smiling.'*

Approaches to classroom management are intrinsically linked to particular styles of teaching and reinforced by past experience. If teachers' prior experience is of using rote learning and teacher-centred approaches in which classroom control is dependent upon maintaining fear of the teacher and corporal punishment, it can be difficult to change. As another Sarawak primary school teacher said:

*'In my own learning experience, I faced strict ways. If I came back from school with a bad report, with one or two red marks, I was afraid to come back and tell my father. He was very strict, and I had to be an example for my younger brothers and sisters. Strict ways can work faster in gaining the objectives in teaching.'*

In the following text, another primary school teacher from Sarawak reflects on her experiences of working with students outside of the classroom as a way of

dealing with challenging behaviour and of making lessons more fun, engaging and meaningful – a move towards positive classroom management. She also reflects on the need to defend her approach to teaching and exercise professional courage.

*'Sometimes I've tried the other way, asking (students), 'How do you like to learn? You tell me, how do you like to learn? In 2005, I had a naughty batch of year six students, and they didn't want to learn in the classroom. So I asked them to help my husband and me clear our compound. I asked them, 'Can you help us?' At that time I was also teaching them science, so during the clearing I asked them about different plants. After doing the clearing, we had some light refreshments and we worked on how to ask for things, like how to ask for a bottle of water. It worked because I asked them how they wanted to learn. I liked it because I knew what my students wanted. I knew what they needed to help them learn. But the problem is when I don't know what they want.'*

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*The group I have now, I can sense they are like my 2005 group, but I am still looking for what point I can know how they want to learn. **I know they can learn, but you have to bring them outside of the classroom teaching in a way.***

*'In my previous school I had to teach morals – what is good behaviour. Everyone knows that teaching morals is very boring. You have to be nice, nice, nice, but you are not really nice, and I got bored and sleepy as did my students. So,*

*I said to my class, 'tomorrow bring your sports attire'.*

*And the next day the class played sports during my morals lesson.'*

*'The district education office was just across the fence from the school, and they could see me and my class outside during lesson time. So the district seducation officer came and said, 'What are you doing?'*

*And I said, 'Actually, sir, this is my morals lesson, but I got sleepy so yesterday I planned for them to bring their sports*

*attire. We are playing many different sports, but **during the sports I teach them lessons like don't cheat when you race and I teach them about cooperation.***

*He said, 'Ok, as long as you're not playing during lessons', and I said, 'I'm not just playing, they are learning.' I know too many games are not good but I can now defend myself and how I'm teaching to the district education officer, my head teacher, and the parents of my students.'*

23 Kaplan, I. and Lewis, I. 2013. Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education – Advocacy Guide 1 – Introduction. Bangkok, UNESCO, Pg. 9-10. <https://en.unesco.org/inclusivepolicylab/sites/default/files/learning/document/2017/1/221033e.pdf>.

#### **Myth: 'Corporal punishment is a part of our culture.'**

Fact: Corporal punishment is sometimes defended as a part of growing up in one's society, and the idea of promoting alternatives to physical punishment is often considered to be a "Western" imposition that doesn't consider other people's cultural values. For example, Asian societies depend upon age-related status hierarchies and the belief that the young should respect, serve, and obey older people, including teachers. Although physical punishment is widespread in Asia, there is no sacred status or necessary connection between traditional belief systems and violence against children through corporal punishment. On the contrary, two core values of Asian societies are maintaining social

harmony and learning to use mental abilities to discipline the body, especially in terms of maintaining self-control in the midst of chaos. Violence through corporal punishment actually goes against these traditional Asian values. It destroys the social harmony in the classroom in terms of student – teacher and student – student relationships, and it threatens any future relationships that the child will have. It erodes children's confidence and self-esteem, and it legitimizes the lack of self-control as an acceptable way to dominate others. Rather than corporal punishment, traditional ways can be used as alternative forms of discipline that do not include violence; for example, when respected adults model good and non-violent behaviour which is then imitated by their children.

## Teacher self-assessment on inclusive learning environment

### Recommendations

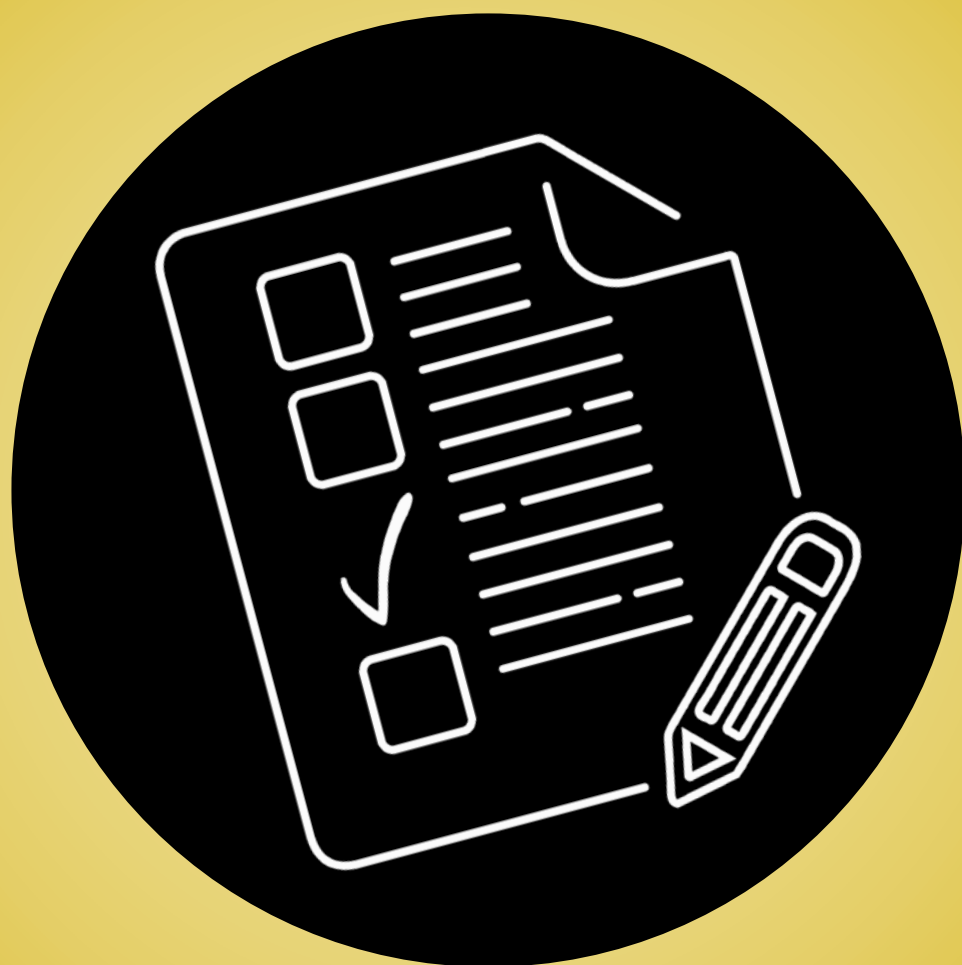
Please take a moment to reflect on the following questions.

1. Have I defined classroom routines, procedures, rules and expectations clearly?
2. Am I able to relate to all students? Have I been able to establish a welcoming climate in the classroom?
3. What are the barriers to learning for my students? Are there any particular curricular and instructional barriers to learning?
4. What have I done to eliminate their barriers?
5. Do I have reasonable expectations from my students? Do they match my students' abilities?
6. Is every student engaged in the learning process?
7. Who are the students who are not engaged in the learning process?
8. What have I done to encourage their engagement?
9. Have I been able to support students who need additional support? (children with disabilities, children who do not understand the language used in instruction)
10. Do I know who is making progress and who is struggling?
11. Have I created an atmosphere in which students can learn from each other? Have I made efforts to foster collaboration and create a community of learners by developing an accepting and supportive learning environment?
12. Do I consistently adapt instructional methods, learning materials and assessments to the abilities and interests of students, including linguistic minority learners and children with disabilities?
13. Do I allow students to seek help or ask questions any time?
14. Am I accessible to all students? Am I non-threatening to my students?
15. Do I use inclusive language? Do I consciously or unconsciously express any bias, stereotypes and stigma against any group of students?
16. Do I use a variety of instructional methods to accommodate preferences and needs of different types of students?
17. Am I making reasonable use of formative assessment? Do I provide frequent and varied feedback and positive reinforcement to student responses?
18. Have I communicated assessment results with the students and their parents and used results to improve instruction?
19. Do I use corporal punishment to discipline students?
20. Do I enjoy teaching?
21. How is my relation with parents, colleagues and administrators?
22. Am I sensitive enough to cultural, ethnic, linguistic and other demographic considerations when communicating with children and their families?
23. Do students enjoy my teaching? Do I reflect on my own teaching and consistently try to improve based on my experiences?

We need to remember that violence begets violence – if children experience violence as a normal (and preferred) way of interaction in their schools and classrooms, it is likely they will go on to see violence as the best way to handle challenges they face in their wider society.

# MODULE 6

## ASSESSMENT



This module:

- **Describes the importance of assessments in the learning process**
- **Identifies the characteristics of assessments that produces barriers for learners**
- **Explores different types of learning assessments to accommodate the diverse needs of learners**

## 6.1 Introduction

Inclusive assessment involves trying to ascertain the knowledge and skill levels of each of your students, ensuring that all can demonstrate their knowledge as accurately as possible.

This section describes how a teacher can use assessment in different ways to enable students with disabilities to participate in assessment and to make testing of all students more accurate and effective. It is important to note that many inclusive assessment practices do not require a teacher to use separate or time-consuming assessment methods for students with disabilities. If a teacher is using a variety of assessment methods which are designed from the start to make it as easy as possible for everyone to participate, much less adaptation for students with disabilities will be needed.

It is also vital to note that inclusive assessment does not mean assessing students with disabilities against lower standards than other students. Using lower marking regimes or benchmarks is a last resort, only to be used if a test cannot be changed to become accessible to a student with disabilities. The aim of inclusive content (less advanced, less detailed) than other students. The processes of assessment, however, should be the same for all students.<sup>24</sup>

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 24 Note that in some cases, children with disabilities may follow a simplified curriculum, daily assignments, and assessments. This is especially the case where examinations at the end of one school level (determining pass or fail) and/or at the beginning of a new one (determining successful transition or rejection to the next level) are "high stakes" – perhaps the only criterion used as a standard. Children following a simplified option may be awarded a school completion certificate (perhaps not nationally recognized) but may not be eligible for continuation into the next formal level of schooling.

The key to inclusive assessment is looking for barriers that students – whether disabled or not disabled – may experience in trying to take tests or assessment exercises. The first such barrier can be the teacher's attitude towards the student: if a teacher believes that a student cannot learn, they are more likely to miss the signs of a student's learning. Once teachers genuinely believe in the capacity of all children to learn and make progress, they can try out ways to help more children have their learning recognized.

Another way to think about inclusive assessment is that you are assessing student participation as well as their achievement. In this sense, assessment can be focused on the nature and quality of a student's participation – how they participate and to what extent. In addition, inclusive assessment should work towards helping learners and their parents and families understand the process and progress of their learning and to be more active in these areas.

## 6.2 Formative assessment

Formative assessment is the regular 'checking' assessment that good teachers do all the time as they deliver their lessons. This is a big part of how teachers get to know the strengths and weaknesses of each student, and is the basis on which teachers adjust their teaching strategies throughout a lesson to make sure that everyone is understanding. This is also a way of supporting students in recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses.

A key focus of formative assessment is understanding where students actually are in relation to the curriculum and learning. Teaching towards curriculum targets, based on where your students are, is fundamental to effective learning. Teaching against curriculum targets based simply on how much of the textbook needs to be covered during the term is extremely damaging. Do what you can to use the former approach rather than the latter. If you have already been given a lesson plan for this lesson, adapt it to suit your students. If that means slowing down some areas, review all

the lesson plans you have been given and work out where to cut other areas in order to spend more time on fundamental areas of learning or on areas that your students are struggling with. Ask your head teacher and other teachers for advice and feedback on doing this. More of your students will get good results with this approach – try it for a while and see.

Once you have identified learning targets for your lesson, build your lesson plan around these. How will you know when your students have got to the point where they have reached your minimum target level? What observable speech or behaviour will show you they have reached that level? If you don't see that behaviour, what can you do as part of your lesson to elicit evidence of your students' knowledge?

Write down all these ideas on the lesson plan under a heading such as, 'Evidence to expect during the lesson'. Plan the points during each lesson where you will seek this evidence. How will you seek it? Will you observe what students do during a task? Will you ask questions? Would open or closed questions help you to know how well students are understanding?

### 6.2.1 Checking your students' knowledge in the lesson

It is common for teachers to check their students' knowledge by taking a sample – e.g. asking a few students to show that they know the answer to a question. This often makes sense as a quick way to check that the lesson is progressing according to plan. However, to be inclusive a teacher has to choose the right sample. If you only ask the students whom you know will find the question easy, you're not checking where the majority of the class is in terms of understanding the lesson.

One way to get a better sample is to ask the question to the whole class. If many students put their hands up, that's evidence that a lot of them are feeling comfortable with the concepts you are demonstrating. From the group with their hands up, choose students who often do not speak or who are not always confident learners.

It will be a big boost to those students to get the answer right and be congratulated. This also allows you to confirm that most of the class is understanding well.

If you ask a question and only one or two students put their hand up, that means a) most of the class is disengaged; or b) most of the class is not understanding the lesson or target well. You have two choices here. You can ask a student with their hand raised to answer the question, and if they get it right, ask them to explain their answer to the class. But then do not move on – you already know that most of the class is struggling, so you need to go back and cover the point again, offering more chances for students to understand and practice. Do this until most of the class can put their hand up to answer your question. Don't let yourself be distracted by pressure to cover the planned lesson or curriculum target – if your students don't understand this point in the progression of knowledge, their understanding of the next step will be weak, meaning that your class's performance will get weaker and weaker as you progress through the curriculum.

Once you have reached the point where most of the class is confident on a particular topic, quietly note down which students did not put their hands up to answer or seem disengaged, quiet, or confused. Take the lesson forward. As soon as you get to an activity where students are working in groups, check what those students are doing. Are they engaged or isolated? If they are engaged, does that suggest that they struggled with the previous learning point but not this one? If they are disengaged, does that suggest that they are not participating at all in learning? Are they being socially excluded by other children, or do you think it's more of an issue with understanding your teaching? (Or both?) Take down a couple of notes on this and continue with the lesson.

Keep using this pattern to assess not only your students' knowledge but also their levels of participation in your lessons. Review your notes at the end of the week. Ask yourself what was going on with those students who were quiet or

disengaged in certain activities? Do they often show these signs or not? Do some appear to struggle with certain things and not others? What does that suggest about the teaching and learning approaches you have been using? Do these need to be changed or adapted? For everyone? For a few students or an individual student?

It's important to note that an inclusive teacher expects all his or her students to participate in each lesson. While some students will be more confident and vocal than others, a lesson is not completely inclusive unless all students are able to take part in each aspect of it. The extent and level of students' participation may well differ, but it needs to be there.

What does this mean in practice? For example, in a group discussion activity each student should be physically and socially part of a group. No student should spend most of the class looking out of the window or into space. No student should be silent or sad for the whole class.

- Establish ground rules for student participation in the group discussion. Identify the students who are engaged or disengaged and find out if a small group of students is dominating the discussion. Allow students to take turns. Do not judge them on whether or not their contribution is right. When students feel they will be judged by their teacher or fellow students they will feel inhibited to share their thoughts. Show interest and encourage students to join the discussion and listen to what others are saying.
- In the final few minutes of the lesson, review how the class has been taking part.
- Immediately after the lesson, reflect and write down notes about your students' participation (as a whole group and noting individual learners if necessary).
- When you are preparing the next day's work review your reflections on your students' participation and plan accordingly.

Note that the content of what is being formatively assessed will likely be different for

students for whom Individualized Education Programmes have been developed.

### 6.3 Authentic assessment

Authentic assessment means choosing your criteria for assessing students based on what would be the best demonstration of their learning, rather than automatically using traditional methods. Authentic assessment often involves practical ways of demonstrating knowledge, skills and understanding instead of answering written or spoken questions to explain one's knowledge. In this way it is similar to how knowledge and skills are assessed in the world of work: a teacher is often assessed on the observation of their classes and on their children's learning outcomes rather than having to write an examination to show what they know about teaching.

Authentic assessment can work much better for children with disabilities. If writing and speaking are the only tools used to assess learning, and the school or test is set up to make writing or speaking difficult for a person with disabilities, that can be a very inaccurate way of testing. The first solution in some cases is to provide such students with additional time to complete the test or giving the test in oral rather than written form, perhaps also allowing responses to be spoken rather than written. But in cases where even this might be problematic, getting such students to demonstrate their knowledge will be more accurate.

You can use authentic assessment for a student who cannot take part in a written or spoken test, however flexibly implemented, by assigning them to demonstrate their understanding of what is being tested; this can be done, for example, by asking them to complete a task related to the content being tested. If such tasks take longer than standard tests, arrange additional time for the student to do the assessment task after class or in another lesson. Don't regularly schedule assessment tasks into the time students need for breaks or for getting to other classes as this will deplete their energy and disrupt their other learning.



### 6.3.1 How can you use authentic assessment more widely in the classroom?

One way is to set the class a project where they have to produce something tangible using their knowledge. A science project is a good way of using authentic assessment. Working alone, in pairs, or in small groups, students are required to build or make an apparatus to demonstrate or test a scientific principle. For example, this could be a structure that doesn't fall down; a machine that uses water flow to move an object; a distilling device; or an aerodynamic object that flies in a certain way. These things would require students to apply learned rules and principles, perform calculations, sort data, and measure information against standards. Similarly, students could produce artworks reflecting the principles of a particular school of art or write and perform a drama translating a scene from a traditional play to their time period, language, and context.

Producing these tasks also requires students to use academically and professionally important 'background skills' such as time management, task ordering, prioritization, and presentation. For a child who might find it impossible to sit at a desk for several hours and write test papers or class exercises, such assessments are invaluable as a way for them to show their knowledge and receive credit for it. All students tend to find such assessments more enjoyable and helpful to their learning – everyone benefits as happens so often when using inclusive approaches.

You can use authentic assessment any time with your whole class. It takes a bit of practice to get used to setting authentic assessment tasks, so try a few with the class before you start assigning scores against them. The key is to decide exactly what knowledge and skills you want students to demonstrate and choose a task which will accurately allow students to show that knowledge. Discussing authentic assessment tasks with other teachers is a very good way to work out whether the tasks you set are appropriate.

One challenge is to set the level correctly. An authentic assessment task should allow all students to demonstrate some knowledge of

the topic, even where their level of knowledge is lower. Also, authentic assessment tends to need high levels of skills which adults often have but which children are still developing. So if most of your class doesn't finish the task on time, maybe your standard for task ordering and planning was too high. Decide what level you will award an 'A' for, given that you initially made the task too difficult, and work downwards from that to set your pass grade. What differing levels of understanding of the core topic did your students demonstrate in the time available? Score from high to low accordingly.

It's a very good idea to ask students what they think would be a good way to demonstrate their knowledge on a topic and use their ideas to devise authentic assessments. This would be particularly important for students with disabilities.

Authentic assessment is a very useful diagnostic tool for teachers as it forces students to apply their knowledge. If a student only has a theoretical understanding of a principle but can't put it into practice, they have probably not have understood it fully. If you try an authentic assessment task and many of the students are not able to do it, this suggests that you need to schedule in some extra teaching on the topic in order to boost students' foundational understanding.

To ensure inclusivity, set different types of demonstration tasks regularly so that, for example, a student who has difficulty building things and writing, but is excellent at verbal explanations, can show their knowledge through giving a talk or making a presentation. The next time, a student with limited verbal skills can show their strengths in constructing items. To assign grades, it might help to imagine you are the boss of these students at work. Was the result what you wanted? Did your employees carry out the task in a realistic timeframe?

Using authentic assessment will help you in understanding students' performance over an entire academic term or year. What information can you collect about students' knowledge

through a combined range of authentic and traditional assessment tasks over the whole period? Can students consistently demonstrate knowledge in more than one way, assuming their impairment did not prevent them from doing so? This will suggest that a student has a sound knowledge of that topic.

Use that collected knowledge to set your students' grade rather than using just one test score or using an average only of written test scores. If a student cannot participate in a particular test or task due to an impairment, take that test out of their score and give them an overall score based on the tasks and tests in which they could participate.

The implication of these principles is that teachers should use authentic assessment frequently. Can you think of a relatively simple authentic assessment task for every week, drawing on different student skills in rotation? Can you come up with more challenging tasks once a term or once a year where students have to work on projects in the class or as homework and present their work after several weeks?

#### 6.4 Summative assessment

Teachers use summative assessment when they need to capture a 'one-off' picture which summarizes how much a student has learned. This picture should be used by the teacher to highlight any areas of weakness which may need correcting and to do further investigation using formative assessment to identify why a student may be weak in a particular area.

Summative assessment often involves a test at the end of a term or a year but can also be more frequent. You are likely to be sharing the test results with others, whether it be other teachers in the school, the head teacher, parents of the students, the local government, or the national examinations authority. If you are setting and managing the test, you can use authentic assessment methods instead of, or as well as, traditional written or spoken methods.

The first question in any type of summative assessment, from an inclusion point of view, is,

'Can all my students participate in this test? At all? To a lesser extent than other students?' If any students can't participate equally with other students, your first task as their teacher is to help find ways to increase their level of participation in the test.

If a student can participate, but to a far lesser extent than other students, either the test will need to change or the student's score will need to be adjusted upwards to reflect the disadvantages experienced by the student from a non-inclusive test. There is no clear benchmark for how much to compensate a student's scores if they are not able to participate fully. To ensure maximum fairness and transparency in scoring summative assessments, which are often important for certifying knowledge and moving to the next level of education, it is better to find ways to make the test much more accessible for all students rather than not changing the test and adjusting scores. Such accessibility can include, for example, providing the test in larger font, giving more time to the student to complete the test, or implementing it orally rather than in written form.

The first step is to clearly identify in what ways your students are likely to have difficulty participating in the test. This does not mean whether they know the answers but can they understand the questions? Can they do the physical tasks needed to express their knowledge? It is often wrongly assumed that if a student can't participate in the process of testing, they do not have the knowledge needed to pass the test. Correcting this misapprehension is an important task for you as a teacher protecting your students' interests.

How can you identify the barriers students experience to participating in tests? It's a good idea to draw up a checklist of the things that need to be in place for students to take a test and find out whether any of these things are currently not possible for students. Do this for all the students in your class – other students may be unable to participate for reasons other than disability. You can work to help all your students participate more easily in the test.

## 6.5 Checklist for taking part in a test

■ Add any other questions you think are useful before applying this checklist to all your students

### Can your student:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Get to and from the place where the test is being held? If not, why? Is it because they cannot walk; because they cannot navigate the route; because they cannot afford transportation to the place; because they get tired very quickly; because they are malnourished and therefore do not have enough energy for the journey?</li> <li>2. Get into and out of the room where the test is and sit down at the table where they will do the test? Is this because the school itself is inaccessible (no ramp for wheelchairs) or the examination room is upstairs?</li> <li>3. Read the test paper and any test materials? Can they see any text at all or none? Do they have vision problems which make it difficult to read text? Do they have problems picking up paper or turning over pages? Can they read at a certain speed, accuracy, and fluency?</li> <li>4. Write the test paper? Can they pick up and use a pen</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Hear spoken instructions or audio input? Is this because they need to lip-read and the invigilator may not be close enough to them for lip-reading; they cannot hear unless the speaker is very well known to them; or there will be too much background noise for them to distinguish speech or recordings?</li> <li>6. Understand what they are required to do? Is this because they find it difficult to process instructions; they do not know the language that will be used for the test well; they</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>find it difficult to remember instructions; or it takes them longer than most people to process instructions?</li> <li>7. Stay at the desk for the duration of the test? Is this because they find it difficult to sit still; they need to go to the toilet frequently (do they need help with going to the toilet?); or they cannot sit upright for that long?</li> <li>8. Complete the test in the time required? Is this because they process information much more slowly than other students, for any reason? Are they unable to concentrate in unfamiliar surroundings, with unfamiliar people, with background noise, or with excessive heat or cold? Are they in too much pain to concentrate for long periods without rest breaks?</li> <li>9. Afford to pay for the test? Some tests require a fee. Do any of your students lack the financial resources to take the test or get to the test?</li> </ol> |
|---|--|---|

### Student assessment in the context of COVID-19:

Assessing students in the wake of the pandemic has been one of the most significant challenges facing the education sector. During the peak of the pandemic when countries were under lockdown and schools closed, many countries either cancelled/postponed public examinations or adopted alternative ways of testing or grading students. The pandemic generated stress and complications when state authorities planned large-scale, high-stake public examinations of summative nature that are given for purposes of certification. As an alternative measure, students

were graded based on their past grades and teachers' assessments. When prior grades or teacher's assessments are used to decide on the student's future, it raises the question of fairness and equity. When teachers are asked to grade students arbitrarily, it may disadvantage marginalized and disadvantaged groups of students because of teacher's lower expectations or biases and stereotypes against such students. The opposite argument is that teachers know best their students' abilities, so they should be given the final say. In the wake of the pandemic, there have been indications that teachers may have a larger future role in student assessments. There have also

been arguments that formal testing should not be over-emphasized at the expense of learning.

In situations in which remote and hybrid learning is the dominant mode of learning, and given that this is likely to continue even after the pandemic, the question is how best teachers can assess their students so that it is possible to ascertain whether students are comprehending the learning materials. Assessments are needed in all conditions to have accurate, easy to understand, and timely information about students' learning. Without such data, it is hard to plan instruction, design appropriate interventions and supports, and make appropriate decisions. As remote teaching is a new territory, so is remote assessment. While all types of assessments have their use, remote and hybrid modalities of learning open up opportunities for teachers to use formative assessment, which are continuous, recurring, low-stakes assignments and assessments, in place of high-stakes examinations.

The difference between formative and summative assessment is that the former is for learning (information used to improve student learning), while the latter is the assessment of learning (information used whether a student meets certain standards and is worthy of being certified). Formative assessments in the remote context can take multiple forms. In contexts where technologies are available, students can be assessed using learning platforms such as Zoom or MS Teams. In low-tech, low-resource contexts, formative assessments can take place through emails, or messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Viber and Messenger. TV or radio-based distance learning programmes that present unidirectional features offer fewer opportunities for teachers to assess student learning. But even in such contexts, students can be assessed using phone calls. In the remote learning context, teachers can also solicit parents' observations about their children's learning progress, if parents are in a position to provide information. It should be emphasized that regardless of mode of administration, key features of assessments such as validity,

objectivity, reliability and inclusivity cannot be compromised. Module 9 further discusses the nature and process of assessment in the context of remote and hybrid learning.

## 6.6 How to help your students access tests fairly

If any students score 'no' for any of the checklist questions, note down a short paragraph on the problems the student will have accessing the test and the evidence you have used to make your assessment. If you don't know the answers to these questions, find out – from the student, from their friends and family, and from the people organizing the test. If you think you know all the answers, check that you are correct. What evidence did you use to make your answer? Did you see evidence of this only once or more than once? Does the student agree with your answers? If not, why?

Once you are confident that you have accurate, evidence-based answers to these questions, you can start a plan for helping your students overcome these barriers. The answers to the checklist will help you identify what support or adjustments are needed to help each student take part in the test. If you find out that many of your students will struggle with these basic conditions for participating in a test, then it is likely there is something wrong with the entire way the test is being managed and delivered.

When you have to prepare your students for a summative assessment which other people will administer and assess, most of your task is in negotiating for adaptations for your students.

Think about one of your own children or a child in your family. If they had broken their wrist and could not hold a pen while it healed, what would you or their parents do if they had an important examination coming up? If the examination cannot be delayed or retaken, what support would the child need to take the test? Would you want them to speak their answers into a computer or recording device? Could they dictate their answers to someone who would write them down on the exam paper?

How could any accusations of cheating or unfairness be dealt with? How would you feel if your attempts to get a solution were ignored? What consequences would it have for your child if they could not get their examination certificate for this reason?

Now think about the fact that many of your students with disabilities are going to be in a similar situation for the whole of their time at school and while they are doing tests. Not making adjustments to help them participate in summative assessments is an injustice that many children with disabilities around the world face. At the same time, many countries are making adjustments to their testing methods to allow disabled children's knowledge to be assessed and recognized fairly.

**Be clear what adjustment is needed, and who would therefore be responsible for it.**

**For example:**

- If a student cannot reach an examination centre, their family, community, and perhaps the head teacher should be organizing support and funds from their networks.
- If a student needs to bring a particular device into the test, there are two areas of action. One is the family/community/school helping raise the funds and make the contacts to get the device for the student (unless there is any official source of funds for such devices). The other is the examination authority. They will need to check that the device is acceptable for use in the examination, issue proof that they have approved the device, and arrange any changes needed for enabling the device to work in a way that allows the student to participate in the examination without interfering in the examinations of other students.
- If a student needs more time to participate, the examination authority will have to work out a way of offering extra time in the test.

As you can see from these examples, all these changes will take time to arrange. Thus, as soon you have identified the specific ways in

which your students have difficulty participating in tests, talk to your head teacher about how the examiners can be alerted. This must be done at the earliest possible point, even if the examination in question is years ahead. It's better to have adjustments arranged in advance which can be cancelled if not needed than to be too late to make changes for students.

### **6.6.1 How to advocate if you don't succeed at first**

Keep talking to people you work with and asking them to find out how adjustments can be negotiated from the organization or people responsible. Contact the examination authorities yourself if you can. Ask what they normally do to help students with disabilities take part in tests. Ask whether certain adjustments can be made.

If the answer is 'no', follow up and ask why (or get your superiors to do this). Remind the examiners of the provisions of the UNCRPD (see Module 2 for more on the UNCRPD). Try to find out whether there is any national or local legislation that guarantees all students in school the right to take part in examinations. If there is, then those examinations should be appropriate for students to take part in. Make these points to the people you are contacting.

Give time for people to respond to you but hold them to account for responding. If they say they will consider it and get back to you, ask for a specific date by which they will get back. Follow up as soon as that date has arrived. If you chase once and get no response, go to their superiors or ask your superiors to do this. Keep following this pattern. Even if you cannot get change in time for your current students to take part fairly in tests, keep trying so that future students can participate.

Be as constructive as you can when requesting adaptations to testing. If you think extra time would help a student, ask for it. If a student needs a laptop, ask whether it is possible for one to be lent. If an additional person is needed to record oral answers instead of the student writing out answers, request one, potentially with an additional witness present to prevent

accusations of the enumerator adding their own knowledge to the student's answers.

If possible in your context, contact the Ministry of Education for advice if you are not getting progress from the examination authority. Are there any disability or education NGOs which you can contact for help in making your case for change? Googling "disability NGO education (your country)" would be a first step. Can you ask NGOs or other teachers you know whether they have had any success in helping students with disabilities take part in tests?

If it feels frustrating that you are having to spend a lot of time trying to convince others to change how tests are done, it may help to reflect that this is a core part of your role as a teacher. As a teacher, you want to guide your students to gain knowledge and to benefit from it. If students can't show their knowledge and get certification for it, the entire cycle of formal education is ineffective. You are a vital advocate for your students in getting them a chance to show their knowledge. Once you get progress for one student, a precedent will have been set, and it should be easier to argue for similar changes for other students.

### 6.6.2 Common arguments against making adaptations to formal tests, and how you can respond

*If we make these changes for everyone, it will cost too much.*

**Answer:** What we are asking for is actually quite simple. Once it is incorporated into the standard practice of the examination authority, the extra cost will be minimal compared to the benefit to the economy of more students with certified employable skills.

*If we make these changes for children with disabilities, it will be unfair because they will have it easier than the other children.*

**Answer:** We need to make sure that all tests are fair and do not give undue advantage to any child. The adaptations we are suggesting make

it possible for a child with disabilities to take part in a test where before they could not take part at all. The test won't be easier for them because their impairment makes taking the whole test so much more difficult. Other children do not need these changes because they can already take part in the test easily.

A common debate around inclusive examinations is time. Extra time can enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge if they write or speak slowly or if they have problems processing information. Explain that speed in reading and writing is not a valid indicator of knowledge. If it takes a child 100 per cent longer to read and write a test and they cannot speed up, making the test 30 per cent longer is actually a very small adaptation.

However, all students would no doubt like extra time to take a test. This is one of the problems with traditional testing; it sets up an unnecessarily high-pressure environment which is irrelevant to the central question of whether a student can demonstrate knowledge. However, one of the reasons for limited time can be the logistics of testing every student.

With this in mind, international experience indicates that a compromise solution is often found. Students with disabilities are often given more time in formal examinations. There are usually several students in any large examination group who will need extra time so a separate room can be found for these students to take their test. This stops the students being disadvantaged by the disruption to their concentration of most of the other students handing in their papers and leaving the exam room.

While a limited amount of extra time may still present students with a major handicap compared to non-disabled students, it can be enough to enable students with disabilities to have a reasonable chance to show their knowledge, although they may need to practice more in advance. One implication of this is that you should give your students with disabilities plenty of mock examination time and plenty of

encouragement and help to think about ways to maximize their efficiency in completing papers. (You should do this for all students; but it may be more necessary for students with disabilities).

**Addressing unspoken objections**

Sometimes people don't make these statements out loud, but it is clear that their thinking is based on arguments like this. When this happens, it helps to ask for clarification while reminding them of the messages above. For example, "Well, it's difficult to make such a

change, because funding is tight...," "Don't you think it will be more cost-effective to accurately capture all children's knowledge so that more can pass exams and go on to use their skills in the workforce? Better test results will boost the performance ratings of your agency. Would it help to look into the actual cost of making this specific change for a few hundred children a year? Could a budget request be put into your annual plan for next year?"

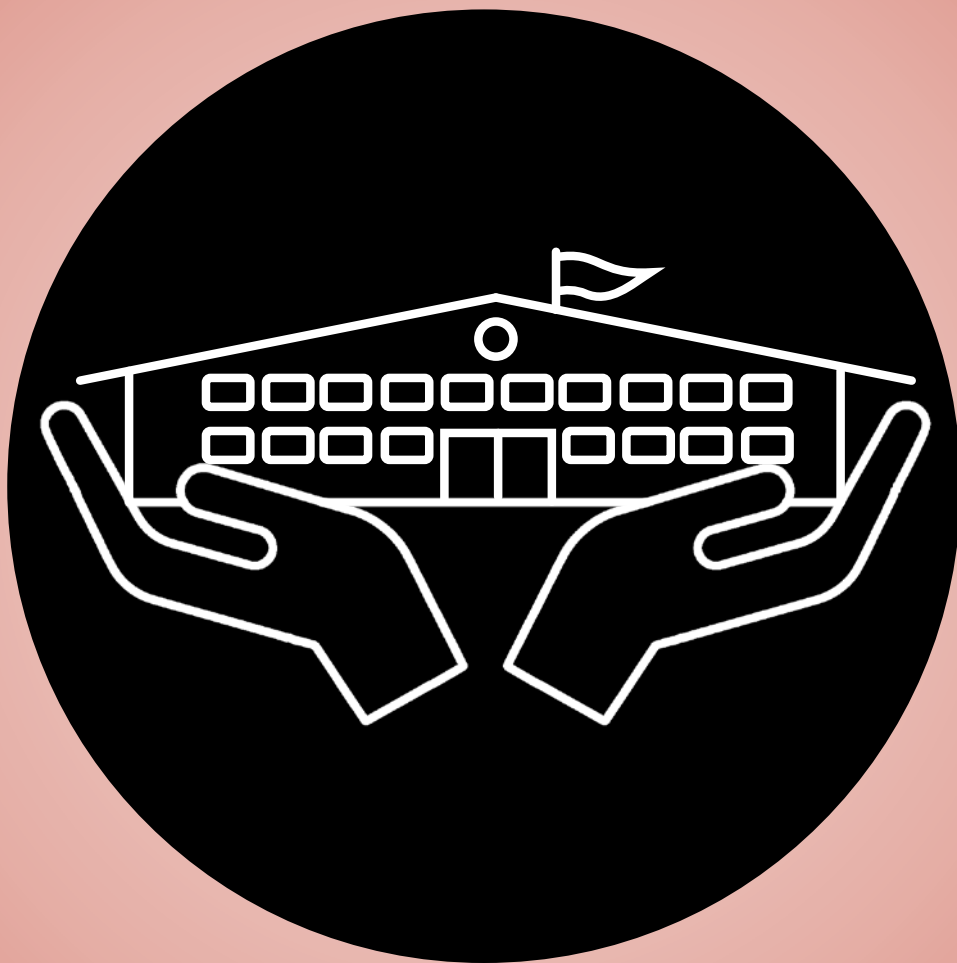
**6.7 Activity | Setting targets for assessment**

■ **When writing your lesson it is helpful to:**

- |  |   |  |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| <p>1. Write down what concepts and/or skills you want to introduce your students to and that you want them to develop and practice. (You may not need to cover all three of these areas in one lesson.) Design your lesson plan accordingly.</p> | <p>2. Ask yourself what is the minimum level that you want students to show in this area?</p> | <p>3. Are there likely to be any students who will not reach that minimum level during the class? Why not? Are you sure you haven't set the minimum too high for the majority of the class? Do you need to readjust your target?</p> | <p>4. Use your knowledge of where your students are, based on your previous observations, to answer these questions.</p> | <p>5. Don't go by where you should be in the textbook or the curriculum. You're aiming to help students gradually build new learning onto what they already know which means starting where they are and moving forward. This kind of assessment means that students are measured not against one another or against a general, pre-determined set of criteria but rather against themselves, their previous progress, and their current situation.</p> | <p>6. If you can't prepare in this way, ask your head teacher for advice. Either you will need extra training or you will need permission from the head teacher to plan lessons based on moving students along from where they are, rather than following curriculum targets irrespective of students' knowledge. It is possible that the head teacher will need permission to support you in this; in such a case, keep asking for such permission.</p> |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|

# MODULE 7

SUPPORT WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOLS





This module:

- **Identifies key institutions outside of school that support students**
- **Emphasizes the importance of parents and community as active participants in the lives of students**
- **Discusses the changing role of different actors in supporting student learning in times of crisis such as COVID-19**

## 7.1 Introduction

In an inclusive school, it will be impossible for a single teacher to be able to meet all the challenges that children may face. It is necessary for teachers to get support from others.

Support should come to the child, parent, teacher, or school that needs it. A family, teacher, or school should not move a child to a special education centre or clinic unless a purely medical issue must be assessed and treated. This is in line with children's rights to education in their own community (see Module 2). If support is provided, it works to build the capacity of people in the whole school community. What is described and suggested in the following sections of this Module cannot be implemented overnight. The development of support services is a long process.

The most important form of support is good and continuous cooperation between all the different partners involved. This will include the child, parents, the community, teachers, head teachers and other school administrators, school inspectors, teacher education (including government teacher education departments, Teacher Training Colleges and heads, lecturers and students), universities, and other government ministries which engage with education and related social services. In addition, relevant NGOs should be involved as well as international development agencies. Support provided through cooperation should include:

- advice and training to prevent problems (both to prevent impairments and prevent barriers to education)
- detection and identification of impairments and barriers faced by children
- assessment – from an education and an impairment perspective
- early response to and rehabilitation for infants and very young children and advice for their families
- treatment or rehabilitation as quickly as possible when impairments are detected later in life
- educational opportunities to all learners with a focus on potentials and possibilities rather than on challenges (while not ignoring the difficulties)
- the use of compensatory teaching/learning methods, classroom management, learning materials, and equipment.

## 7.2 Special schools and support services

Most countries have some kind of special schools. In some countries, these are run by NGOs or ministries of health or social welfare. These schools are often based on a specific impairment (visual or hearing impairments). Often, unfortunately, these schools are run separately from the mainstream education system and have little incentive to try to 'include' their students in this system; as with other schools, they want to maintain their enrolment. But in the future these special schools should develop programmes in close cooperation with government school systems. This way these schools can become partners as resource centres for inclusive education. This is discussed further in the next section on resource centres.

In places where rehabilitation for disabilities has not been available through the health service, special schools with strong expertise can be useful. They can provide rehabilitation and

education directly to children with disabilities but should also work with community organizations and health services in the identification and rehabilitation of such children in their own communities. The aim should be for the health service to progressively take up these services so that children affected by health and disability issues are identified as early as possible. These children should receive the physical and mental rehabilitation services they need to minimize impairments later in life. Schools can support this by making sure teachers spot signs of impairment and refer children to health services and by providing basic rehabilitation through resource rooms (see 7.5).

Even in a fully inclusive education system, there can still be a role for special schools in supporting learners who cannot be included full-time in mainstream schools. This may include learners with profound and multiple disabilities who cannot be safely or adequately supported in mainstream schools, or learners who are too much a danger to themselves and others to be included in mainstream schools, or learners who cannot be included in a mainstream school timetable at a certain moment, for a particular time. However, children with such severe challenges are in a very small minority. A very large majority of children, regardless of ability or disability, can be included in mainstream schools with the appropriate support.

While most students had their routines interrupted, the most affected are potentially children with disabilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many students with disabilities have been at home and without access to services. Many parents of children with disabilities have been consistently and overwhelmed. While the situation might change post-pandemic, it is time to rethink the roles of different actors – institutions and individuals – in the context of COVID-19.

### 7.3 Resource centres

Resource centres are usually places where students, teachers, parents, and families can go to access specialized education support. As

inclusive education is focused on the inclusion of learners in mainstream schools, the role of a resource centre should be in supporting this process. In this way it may serve as a base for itinerant support teachers who travel out to work directly with schools/communities. It may also serve as a space where regular teachers can visit to get in-service training and support.

Resource centres may support a community or a number of communities in a particular area (this could be at the district or provincial level). Ideally, a resource centre will have staff who are trained in supporting mainstream educators, and sometimes parents and families, in including learners with disabilities or other special needs. A resource centre may also support children from the local area directly, offering support for speech and language development, sign language, Braille training, physiotherapy, and so on.

A resource centre often has a number of specialized materials and resources which should be lent or given to schools, teachers, and families. These materials include Braille and audio books, Braille machines, magnifying glasses, and tactile learning aids. (Some resource centres have had hearing aids in the past, but it is increasingly understood that hearing aids are only useful if prescribed for an individual rather than being shared.) Resource centres should have budgets which enable them to purchase new materials and equipment frequently. The needs of different children will require a rapidly changing set of materials every year, and items will wear out. Alternatively, budgets for materials and assistive devices can be allocated to schools or children, and resource centre staff can help teachers or parents find and use the best items.

Some resource centres were once special schools. Transitioning from a special school to a resource centre can be a way of retaining special school staff and making use of their valuable training, skills, and experiences to support learners with disabilities to be included in mainstream schools as part of a broader inclusion agenda. Special school staff who transition to working in resource

centres will often need support in making their own personal transitions from segregated education to inclusion (e.g. through training and mentoring). Alternatively, where special schools still have a function to fulfil but with fewer students (as more and more are included in mainstream schools), their staff can divide their time between continuing their work in the school and acting as resources to teachers in mainstream schools.

The main function of a resource centre should be to focus on outreach activities in school communities and mainstream schools. Mainstream schools will need to make some adjustments to link up with outreach activities from resource centres. Teachers and other school staff will need to allocate time for working with visiting resource centre staff and implementing their advice. School budgets may need to change so that equipment or training recommended by resource centres can be funded. In the context of remote learning, there will be increasing need for using online tools and

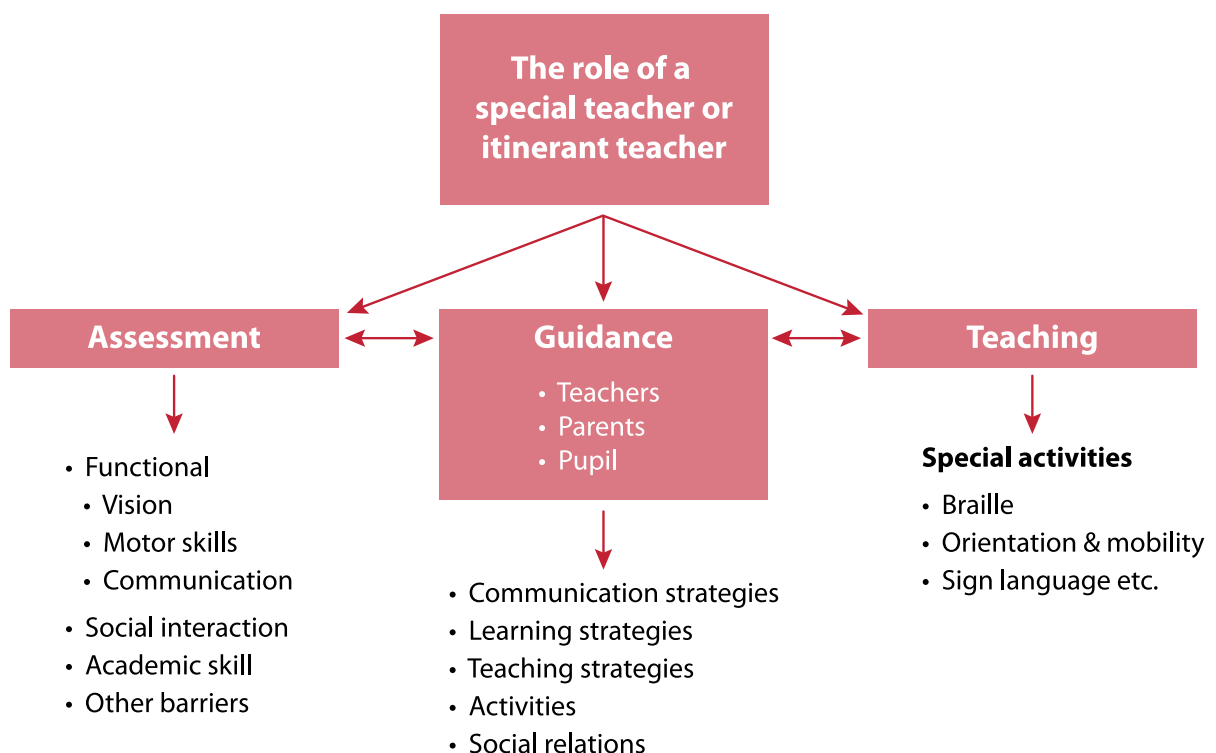
technologies that are suited to the needs of different categories of impairments.

To this end, the mainstream schools and resource centres or resource classes should be equipped with online resources and be able to make greater use of these tools to support learning, in-person or remotely. Online resources should be seen as useful complements to in-person teaching instead of a replacement for it.

### 7.4 The role of itinerant teachers

A resource teacher or resource person sharing their experiences and knowledge and travelling from place to place is often called an 'itinerant teacher'. An itinerant teacher generally moves between different schools (either in one area or more widely) offering support. In inclusive education, itinerant teachers often have special skills (e.g. in supporting learners with disabilities, in inclusive teaching methods) and may offer support to individual students, groups of students, teachers, and school administrators and other staff, as well as parents and families.

Figure 4: The role of a special teacher or itinerant teacher



Such teachers may be staff of special schools skilled in handling particular impairments but trained to focus more on processes of inclusive education (see below), or existing teachers from the regular system with a special interest in inclusion and trained in essential information linked to a range of disabilities.

As a rule, the role of an itinerant teacher is NOT to remove individual children from a classroom and teach them segregated from their class. Rather, an itinerant teacher can give **guidance** to the class or subject teacher, to parents and families, to the child or group of children, and at times to all of them. If a situation is too challenging for the teacher, the itinerant teacher may ask parents for more information. The itinerant teacher should also talk with the child – it may feel good for the child to talk with an understanding person who is not involved in the school context.

Itinerant teacher guidance often covers teaching and class management approaches and learning materials and resources. Guidance is provided based on talking with the teacher who will present the challenges based on his/her experiences, observations, and evaluation. The itinerant teacher will also develop advice based on their own observations in class or after having tried some activity with the children (see Figure 4).

Itinerant teachers can also assist in **assessment**. It can be good to have an outsider help in assessing the situation, especially when the teacher may not have the knowledge of how to detect and assess learners' potentials or barriers to learning and development. If needed, the itinerant teacher will help or do their own assessment to uncover the characteristics and needs of a child and/or the child's family. This can help teachers increase their estimation of the curriculum level at which a child can learn and identify the best strategies to help children learn at that level.

If a class teacher has training in special needs education, they should be able to assess children's functional use of vision, hearing, motor skills (including for writing), communication, and social dynamics. If not, a trained itinerant teacher

can do so and advise the teacher. Some teachers may need support from itinerant teachers to assess learners' academic knowledge and skills; i.e. what the child knows, understands, and can perform. This should identify possible gaps in understanding or skills.

#### 7.4.1 Implications of using itinerant teachers

One implication of using itinerant teachers is that the school may need additional teachers (this will influence the budget). Teachers and head teachers must decide if they want to appoint a permanent itinerant team or if the task of itinerant teachers should rotate. Another model is to have an itinerant teacher or team at the level of cluster or sub-district, moving across schools as the need arises, or coming from nearby special schools.

Throughout their work, itinerant teachers will need training and skills in:

##### 1. observation and assessment

- informal and formal observation and detection of positive things they find about children, parents/families, teachers, and the learning environment
- informal and formal assessment of the support and information needs of:
  - children with disabilities or health problems and their families and teachers
  - head teachers and school authorities including school inspectors
  - designers of the physical environment: classrooms, the schoolyard, routes to school, etc.

##### 2. facilitation and guidance

- guidance and facilitation for different persons involved (teachers, parents/families, children, head teachers, and inspectors)

##### 3. administration

- self-evaluation and self-monitoring
- writing reports
- planning their work

## □ CASE STUDY 8

### Itinerant teachers and a twin-track approach in Battambang, Cambodia<sup>25</sup>

**This case study looks at the role of itinerant teachers as part of a Handicap International project in and outside of schools in Cambodia and how this fits with the twin-track approach to inclusive education (see Module 3).**

#### Developing an itinerant teacher system

The system in Battambang started in 2010 with the recruitment of four itinerant teachers who travel between mainstream schools and communities to offer advice, resources, and support to children with disabilities, their teachers, and their parents. They support the concept of inclusive education and promote it to school directors and mainstream teachers. Their main tasks are:

- directly supporting children with disabilities in classrooms and at home
- providing consultations and support to teachers
- identifying, assessing, and referring children with disabilities
- implementing teacher and community training and awareness-raising events

- working with children of different ages with various impairments.

#### Broadening the scope of itinerant teachers

The definition of the itinerant teachers' tasks emphasized support for the individual needs of children with disabilities. However, few of these tasks addressed the barriers faced by children with disabilities within the school or promoted the inclusive education concept. Thus, it quickly became obvious that **the itinerant teacher system could not only focus on children with disabilities but should also focus on the quality of education in order to improve the learning environment of all children.** There was a real need for mainstream teachers to understand the concept of inclusive education and develop inclusive teaching practices.

#### The twin-track approach within the itinerant teacher system

In order not to overload the itinerant teachers as improvements in the education system were

reinforced, **the project delegated the work with the community and the parents to community members** (village health workers and representatives of self-help groups of people with disabilities). Here are some concrete case studies of the twin-track approach:

#### Addressing barriers within the school

Sopheap is a 16-year-old boy with Down Syndrome who was expelled from school due to behaviour issues; he would fight back when children teased and mocked him.

**Awareness-raising sessions with students using comic books, an animation movie, and posters promoted messages about tolerance and valuing differences and diversity.**

This developed solidarity among the students. Sopheap is now back in school. He has improved his life skills, and his behaviour has changed a great deal since his school friends are more friendly and positive.

To help in this process, **itinerant teachers organized monthly sessions on improving communication with**

## □ CASE STUDY 8

### Itinerant teachers and a twin-track approach in Battambang, Cambodia<sup>25</sup>

#### children, behaviour management, classroom management, and building children's self-confidence.

These sessions aim to improve the quality of education. Some teachers are keen to implement the new methods, and gradually they are influencing other teachers. Sopheap's teacher particularly appreciated a training session on classroom rules, since clear rules – defined and adopted with the participation of the students – enable the teacher to concentrate more on teaching and supporting students than on discipline.

In addition, every year several sessions on developing teaching and learning material are organized in each school. The materials created are useful for supporting various learning styles and learning through play.

The materials developed during these sessions benefit all students, and adaptations fulfil specific needs of children with disabilities. For example, Sopheap's mainstream teacher developed cards with words written in Khmer and in Braille. In this way, Ratanak can participate in the game with his classmates.

#### The impact of a twin-track approach

At the beginning of the project, the itinerant teachers were often considered special teachers in charge of teaching children with disabilities. Mainstream teachers relied on them to support the children with disabilities. Using the twin-track approach enabled school staff to better appreciate the itinerant teachers as promoters and supporters of inclusive

education which is not limited to providing special education in a mainstream setting. Mainstream teachers now consider the itinerant teachers to be trained educators who can provide advice on general teaching as well as being experts in disability-related issues.

Eventually, the twin-track approach has provided a better understanding about what inclusive education is; not solely targeting children with disabilities and focusing on their specific impairments and disabilities but also providing quality education which helps all children to learn together.

<sup>25</sup> Bouille, S. 2013. Developing an itinerant teacher system that supports a twin-track approach to inclusive education, Cambodia. *Enabling Education Review 2*. Enabling Education Network.

#### 4. continuous cooperation

- between the teaching staff and the itinerant teachers thorough regular common
- meetings
- the sharing of their knowledge and experience with teaching staff

#### 5. development of advocacy materials

##### 7.4.2 Itinerant teachers in times of crisis

Itinerant teachers can play a very important role in supporting the education of children with disabilities during the times of remote instruction. One way to continue providing specialized services to such children when schools are under lockdown is to employ itinerant teachers, who can travel around different homes, schools and communities to offer advice, resources and support. Unlike normal circumstances when they collaborate with teachers, in the crisis times when children are not in schools, itinerant teachers have a chance to work with families and communities directly. When home or school visits are not possible, itinerant teachers can continue to establish communication with the children and their parents and teachers through virtual home visits using video-conferencing or telephone calls. Itinerant teaching can take many forms. But, one obvious advantage of itinerant teaching is the opportunity it gives to focus on one student or a couple of students at a time rather than the entire class. The service is guided by the Individualized Education Programme (IEP) and support is provided over several years.

Concerns over the use of itinerant teachers have been raised in times of emergency situations. Public health experts warn that moving between multiple locations is not the safest way to prevent COVID-19. This arrangement not only puts itinerant teachers at risk, it is also risky for others. So, decisions regarding the itinerant teachers' visits should be carefully taken.

Being an itinerant teacher is a challenging job. To be effective in their role, they need to have the right attitude, good interpersonal

communication skills, adequate training in providing direct instruction to students as well as in collaborating and consulting. Time management skills, flexibility, organizing skills, stress management are also important.

#### 7.5 Resource rooms

Resource rooms are rooms in or near a school which support inclusive education in a variety of ways. As Howgego, Miles and Myers explain:

'Resource rooms are sometimes referred to as 'special units', and as 'transitory classes' in French-speaking countries. They enable the provision of specialist support within a mainstream educational setting, ideally as close to learners' homes as possible. However, they can either reinforce the principles of inclusive learning, or they can be exclusionary – as is the case with any form, or location, of educational provision.

Usually, a resource room is staffed by one specially trained teacher who manages the learning of a multigrade classroom of approximately 8–10 learners with sensory and/or intellectual disabilities. The initial purpose of locating a resource room adjacent to a mainstream school was to enable opportunities for inclusive learning and/or socializing, and to support team teaching and whole school approaches to inclusive learning for the benefit of all children. However, there is a tendency for resource rooms to become small special schools, and for there to be few links with the host school.<sup>26</sup>

If resource rooms are used well, they can be very effective in moving towards inclusive education.

#### **Here are some guidelines for using resource rooms to promote inclusion:**

1. A resource room is ideally situated in a school and at the heart of a school – not tucked away behind a school or on the edges of school grounds. The prominent placement of a resource room is about pride and sends a message that this space is a valued part of the school, not something embarrassing or

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26 Howgego, C., Miles, S. and Myers, J. 2014 Inclusive Learning – Children with Disabilities and Difficulties in Learning – Topic Guide. London, Department for International Development, Pg. 13. <https://www.heart-resources.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Inclusive-Learning-Topic-Guide.pdf>.

- shameful. This also means a resource room is more likely to be accessed and used by a wider range of students and teachers.
2. Resource rooms, if properly staffed and supported, should be available not just for students with disabilities but also for students who may need some 'time out' or a bit of extra support.
  3. Schools should not be limited to just one resource room but can utilize a variety of spaces that can be used as alternative learning environments for different purposes (e.g. tutoring, quiet spaces, games and activities, etc.). These spaces might include dedicated resource rooms, empty classrooms, libraries, assembly halls, outdoor spaces, etc.
  4. Students (even those with more severe disabilities) should not spend the entire day locked away in a resource room – otherwise this becomes a segregated school provision. Students should be supported to access resource rooms when needed but also spend other time interacting with students and teachers outside of the resource room, e.g. in mainstream classrooms, in play areas during break times, or at morning assemblies.
  5. If trained teachers or therapists are available (sometimes on a visiting basis), a resource room is a good location for developmental therapies to reduce the level of children's impairments. Teachers and therapists can provide massage and exercises to strengthen muscles, coordination, and speech.
  6. Resource rooms are often used to teach life skills to help children with developmental disabilities to cope with the school environment and to live more independently. Things like washing, dressing, understanding money, preparing food, and protecting oneself from abuse can all be taught through practical activities in resource rooms.
  7. Students using resource rooms should always be working to a plan for progressing through the main curriculum – even if some make slower progress or start at a lower level.
  8. Many students with disabilities will have missed out on years of school because of discrimination. For them, a resource room can be a valuable way to catch up on missed learning and get used to school. They will need a structured programme of learning the main curriculum so that they can catch up as much as possible with their age group.
  9. Too often, resource rooms are a one-way track: students are put there and never leave. This often means they don't get to take official examinations or go on to the next level of education. Almost every student using a resource room should be supported to join mainstream classes for all or most of their time. Make sure your school is monitoring which students are spending most of their time in the resource room and push to reintegrate these students into mainstream classes as soon as possible.
  10. Resource room teachers should work closely with mainstream teachers to encourage reintegration and support of children who have used resource rooms. School leadership will often need to encourage this collaboration so that mainstream class teachers don't see children with special needs as only the resource room teacher's responsibility.
  11. All teachers (and other school staff) should be encouraged to spend some time working within resource rooms in their school. This will help raise their awareness about the purpose and function of these spaces; normalize resource rooms as a regular aspect of school; provide additional support to resource room teachers/facilitators; and show the students who use resource rooms that teachers care about them. In a similar way (and if done sensitively and not disruptively), students who would not normally use the services of a resource room should be encouraged to visit their school's resource room and participate in activities there from time to time.



## 7.6 Resource teachers

If a school has a teacher with training in special needs education (sometimes this person is referred to as a Special Educational Needs Coordinator or SENCO) or a teacher with a specialization in a specific school subject, such a teacher can serve as a resource teacher. Resource teachers can play a vital role in supporting inclusion in a school through:

1. advising the class teacher about:
  - teaching approaches and methods
  - teaching/learning materials
  - classroom management
  - challenges with parents/guardians.
2. helping to assess children's potentials and needs
3. participating in discussions with parents if needed
4. assisting in getting advice and help from another professional regarding:
  - learning challenges
  - medical challenges
  - social challenges
  - safety issues
5. assisting the head teacher with professional justification when a school needs extra resources for a child because of special learning challenges.

### □ CASE STUDY 9

#### Resource teacher's advocacy helps Johan stay in mainstream education<sup>27</sup>

**In this case study from Indonesia, Dante Rigmalia shares the story of one student, Johan, who had challenges with his learning. Dante, Johan's primary school teacher, and his parents wanted him to stay in mainstream school when he moved to high school rather than go to a special school. This article highlights the successes and challenges in one teacher's advocacy efforts to convince the education department to allow Johan to stay in mainstream education. Dante's story shows how important it is to combine advocacy with practical action and support.**

I am a primary school teacher with the additional responsibility of being a coordinator for the implementation of inclusive education in a primary school in Bandung, Indonesia. Johan is the youngest child from a modest family. His father is a sports education teacher at a junior high school and his mother is a homemaker. Johan had trouble concentrating while studying; he could only sit for a relatively short time, always moved, and got up from his seat. He often got angry and was unable to control himself when he didn't get what he wanted.

Johan had challenges with his learning, and I realized that he needed some special assistance. I tried to find different ways to help him learn better, both inside and outside the classroom. With approval from the head teacher, his classroom teachers, and parents, I also looked for a volunteer to support this process. I found a student from the Indonesian University of Education who was then assigned to accompany Johan. Through this assistance finally Johan could learn better. The learning process ran smoothly until the time came for the primary level final examination – our national examination.

## □ CASE STUDY 9

### Resource teacher's advocacy helps Johan stay in mainstream education<sup>27</sup>

I convinced the head teacher and classroom teacher that Johan could join the national examination alongside the other students. I also explained that academically Johan had been able to follow the learning, but he just needed guidance when reading the questions and writing down the answers. I managed to convince the school supervisor, head teachers, classroom teachers and parents to give him the same opportunities as his friends for the national examination. During the examination, Johan was put in a classroom with some students and I was there too to assist him. Johan passed with adequate scores so he could attend a mainstream school as opposed to a special school.

His parents wanted to send him to a higher grade, but I knew there were not many mainstream junior high schools in the area willing to accept children with special needs.

#### Finding a school for Johan

I recommended to Johan's parents that he attend the junior high school next to my school. Johan is familiar with the neighbourhood,

and the school is not far from his house. I strongly agree with the Salamanca Statement which highlights "that every child has the right to attend the school closest to their homes" and "the child should learn together with other students in the mainstream classroom". I notice that going to school far from their homes is challenging for students, because physically they are not ready to make the long journey like adults. Children who learn in their neighbourhood school are learning in a context they know well. Having children study together in mainstream classes also has a positive impact on their development. Placing Johan in the mainstream class in his local school would help him to develop gradually, especially his social skills, and he would be better able to communicate and understand social situations.

I went to the junior high school, met the head teacher and started the conversation by introducing myself and expressing my

purpose. The head teacher told me that personally he wanted to accept Johan at his school, but the decision could not be taken by him alone. He needed approval from the school's teachers, because they would be responsible for supporting Johan in the learning process. He also needed permission from the district education department.

The head teacher suggested that I should visit the head of the district education department. He explained that he did not have the authority to accept children with special needs in his school because the school didn't have a decree from the district education department to be an 'inclusive school' – at this time only two schools in the district were officially designated as being 'inclusive schools'. The head teacher was worried that he could be sanctioned for such a decision. Such a top-down, bureaucratic culture works against implementing inclusive education in this country.

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, especially in

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### Resource teacher's advocacy helps Johan stay in mainstream education<sup>27</sup>

West Java Province, follows certain steps. First, the education department provides a decree for schools which are appointed as 'inclusive education schools'. Although this decree supports the implementation of inclusive education in some schools, it means that access to schools remains limited because many schools do not have such a decree.

#### Meeting the district education department

I went to district education department. I eventually met the head of the department, although this took a long time as I was referred to many different people first, both inside and outside the education department. But I didn't give up. The head of the district education department and I had a long discussion about Johan and his education. The head asked me, "Why are Johan's parents reluctant to send their child to a special school? Are they ashamed?" I explained that Johan's parents were not ashamed, but they (and I) felt that Johan would develop better if he studied together with his friends in a mainstream

school. He would have an opportunity to learn to interact and socialize with a wide range of children, and his special needs could be accommodated.

At the end of our discussion, the district education department head referred to the Ministry of Education regulation on the implementation of inclusive education, which states that: "A school which implements inclusive schooling must have at least one teacher with a special needs education background". He stated that almost all schools aren't ready for this.

#### The selection of a school for Johan

The junior high school we had originally chosen for Johan (we'll call it school X) does not have any teachers with a special educational needs background, I offered my support to work with the school if they accepted Johan as a student. However, the head of district education suggested Johan should go to a different school (we'll call it school Y) which was officially assigned as an 'inclusive school'.

I was disappointed, and so were the head teacher of school X and Johan's parents. However, our efforts were not totally in vain. At least I had been able to raise the issues of the lack of opportunities, and need for justice and education rights for children with special needs in attending mainstream schools. And at least Johan was not being told to go to a special school.

School Y is a good school, but it is far from where Johan lives. I had previously worked with school Y to support them in accepting a student with a visual impairment. This had been a long and difficult process, but I saw that over time the school learned much from including a child with special needs. As the proverb says, 'Experience is the most valuable teacher'.

Johan's parents and I finally, reluctantly, agreed to register him at school Y, but I knew my role could not stop there – after the advocacy stage I needed to be available to offer practical support, if Johan's case was to have a successful outcome.

The head teacher asked to see Johan's parents and

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asked for his previous learning records. I had prepared the records before the registration process began so was able to provide everything needed. I convinced the head teacher that I was ready to support and assist with Johan's education, as well as education for other children with special needs in this school, and the head teacher was happy and welcoming.

The school asked me to assist in making a learning programme and recommendations for Johan's inclusion. I told them that for the effectiveness of Johan's learning, I would also prepare a teaching assistant to collaborate with the homeroom teacher and the subject teachers so that the classroom can be a space that is conducive for everyone's learning.

#### Preparing to support Johan in a mainstream school

Preparing everything before Johan started attending school Y was a challenge. My first step was to discuss his situation with my friend, a psychologist who helps me with developmental

screenings and making learning recommendations for students at my own school. My relationship with the psychologist is a non-formal relationship (but non-formal relationships with allies can be a valuable resource in doing advocacy work).

The second step was designing the individual learning programme with Johan's previous teaching assistant. The third step was to choose a new teaching assistant and discuss Johan's assistance needs with them. The final step was to meet Johan's new homeroom teacher, some subject teachers, the curriculum advisor, and the school academic department to discuss Johan's individual learning programme. We made sure this was a friendly, informal meeting. With support from many parties, Johan finally could fully participate in the learning process, but there were many challenges during his first days in the new school. He got angry a few times, and made his classmates panic with his aggressive behaviour. And one teacher refused to teach him. The role of the

teaching assistant is very important in dealing with such situations. The teaching assistant maintained continuous communication with the teachers, parents, and other students to build awareness and foster good relationships. The teaching assistant and I discussed how to best support Johan and encourage an atmosphere that ensured the whole school community would benefit from Johan's presence at the school.

The advocacy efforts didn't stop. We approached the vocational school, before Johan moved to the third grade in junior high school. We did this so that when it was time for him to leave junior high, he would be accepted in the vocational school. This worked out well and Johan is now studying at the vocational school.

#### Lessons learned

I learned many things from Johan. He taught me how to be patient, and kept me thinking constantly about how to improve my support strategies – an understanding which enriches my experience in dealing with all other

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students. Meeting the various parties in my advocacy effort to find a school for Johan helped me to learn about the characters of different people and how to communicate effectively and efficiently.

I realized that my personal approach determines others' responses, requiring me to become more professional. I also became more familiar with education bureaucracy which will help me in any

similar advocacy challenges in future.

#### Wider advocacy

Of course, it is not effective for me simply to be advocating for inclusive education on a case-by-case basis. There needs to be wider efforts to bring about change, too. Awareness about inclusive education should be raised among all education departments, and government officials should have a clear and

common vision for quality inclusive education that supports all children. We need to lobby for teacher education that prepares every teacher for working in diverse, inclusive settings. We also need to push for the ideas, experiences and perspectives of all stakeholders to be considered in education decisions – at the individual level up to the national level.

27 Rigmalia, D. 2015. 'Local Level Advocacy – Enabling Johan to Stay in Mainstream Education in Indonesia'. In - Enabling Education Review - Special Issue 2015 - Inclusive Education Advocacy. EENET.

## 7.7 Outreach activities

Alongside being receptive, a school can also reach out to support children and their families beyond the 'school gates'. As a teacher, it is possible for you to play a role in outreach activities. It may be useful to do outreach work in cases where children are ill over a long period of time or when a child cannot come to school because of a physical disability or long-term health condition. It may be valuable to do outreach work when the parents and families of learners need support in understanding and supporting the educational needs of their children. Teachers can play an important outreach role in doing inclusive education advocacy within a community.

Outreach can be done through: (1) making home visits if transport allows – in some schools and communities, particularly where a teacher lives in the community, it will be relatively easy

for a teacher to visit homes; and (2) holding meetings or events within school communities – for example, in meeting halls, local government offices, and religious venues.

## 7.8 Support services in the community

Where distances are not too big and it is safe to travel, schools can be organized in clusters and share support services. This can include:

- Teachers from one school who have training in special needs education can share their knowledge and experiences with other schools in the cluster.
- A cluster can establish and develop a resource team (a school inclusion team that involves more than one school) in cooperation with relevant and compatible NGOs.

- Members of the resource team can receive additional training in inclusive education and support that they then share with the rest of the team and schools in need.
- Members of a cluster can share experiences with the nearest Teacher Training College (TTC).
- The nearest TTC can offer relevant additional training in inclusive education, including in special needs education.
- Schools and a possible resource team can cooperate with other local services such as health services and religious centres.

## 7.9 School inclusion teams

It is important that children, parent/guardians, teachers, and the head teacher in a school develop open and transparent relationships and cooperation. It is unfair and unrealistic that teachers are alone responsible for recognizing and addressing all children's needs. Without a strong collaborative effort, it can be impossible to properly address support needs that arise in schools and classrooms. Therefore, it is essential that teachers in a school are organized to work together in teams with others. This is important not just for support, but also for good quality teaching and learning generally. These teams can be referred to as 'school inclusion teams'.

A school inclusion team:

- brings together people who have a stake in education or in their local school and who share a common goal – to make their school more inclusive
- seeks out resources from the community that can assist or require family enforcement of school attendance
- encourages parents to assist their children with homework and seek out tutorial support if necessary
- has a diverse and representative membership
- exists to *help* teachers, other staff, children and parents – not to add another layer of bureaucracy or burden. If the team becomes a burden or works only as a bureaucratic mechanism, it is not functioning as intended.
- sets an example for what inclusion means in reality and provides practical help and advice so that others can turn theoretic knowledge of inclusion into reality
- deals with whole-school inclusion issues that may arise at different times of the school year; for example, the reasons for and solutions to incidences of bullying, absenteeism or lateness, etc., which are barriers to an inclusive school.

In schools, effective school inclusion teams address the following issues:

- planning and setting priorities
- sharing teaching strategies
- evaluating oneself and each other and introducing changes in response this
- is a key part of teachers being reflective (discussed in Module 8).
- stepping in for each other in case of absences from school
- discussing and helping each other to find solutions to:
  - academic challenges
  - challenges presented by the curriculum
  - social challenges
  - behaviour challenges
  - challenges related to practical issues and safety
  - challenges related to children having learning difficulties
  - challenges children may have because of a disability
  - challenges related to the evaluation of children
  - challenges presented by school inspectors.

School inclusion teams can be organized according to the age of the children teachers are working with. This will depend on the size and dynamics of a school. In large schools where

there are parallel classes of the same level, a team could consist of the teachers responsible for the relevant age group. In small schools, teachers of two or three levels can constitute the team. For teams of teachers to be most effective, there should not be more than five or six teachers in a team, they should be independent and self-regulating, and their meetings should be scheduled on teachers' timetables.

### 7.9.1 Membership of school inclusion teams

**Regular class teachers** (from various grades, subjects, and experience levels) need to be represented on the team. These are the 'frontline' staff who strive every day to deliver a high quality education to children. They are the ones who are ultimately expected to implement changes towards inclusion in the classroom and beyond. They experience first hand many of the problems that a specialist staff member, school head teacher, or external expert might only experience periodically (when they do a class observation or make a technical support visit). Teachers are often the ones who first spot a problem with children not attending or not participating or achieving or are the first to attempt to solve a problem. Without good quality, committed regular teachers we cannot achieve inclusive education – so without them we cannot have a useful and successful school inclusion team.

**Specialist staff** (pedagogues, psychologists, and other external experts) can be on the team to offer relevant advice and support. They can play vital roles in building teachers' confidence and capacity to deal with a wider range of issues. They may be permanent or temporary members of the team. Temporary expert members might join the team to help to solve a specific problem and then leave until their expertise is needed again.

Without effective **school leadership**, inclusive education cannot succeed. It is therefore vital that the school's head teacher and other senior staff understand the inclusion process and support the development of a school inclusion team. They need to be represented on the team so that they can stay up-to-date with

problems and solutions in their school and offer encouragement as well as management/administrative inputs, such as advising on staffing issues, policy, budgets, and relationships with education authorities and providing a whole-school overview.

**Parents and families** are often left out of school development and management, yet they are key stakeholders. The schools are caring for their children and shaping their futures – parents have a right to a say in this. It is common for parents to be viewed as 'ignorant' or as part of the problem when their children are not attending or doing well at school. Much work has been done globally to turn this around and to see parents as a vital part of the solution.

They know their children: they know what happens with the children outside school, what their lives were like before they started school, what the community they live in is like, and what makes their children happy or unhappy, scared or excited. Parents may have a range of useful experiences and skills gained through employment or by running their own business. For all these reasons, it is essential for parents' voices to be represented in a school inclusion team.

**Students**, like parents and families, are also often left out of the school's decision-making processes – considered too young, immature, or lacking in knowledge to be able to contribute to complicated adult debates about inclusive education. However, they are the primary stakeholders. They know better than anyone else what it feels like to be excluded or bullied or ignored in school, or what it's like when the teacher helps them with a problem, or they make a new friend, or their parents praise them.

They may not have qualifications yet, or years of experience, but they are experts in the reality of their own lives and their own education. And they have a basic right to be consulted and listened to in relation to things that affect them. Children therefore need to be represented on a school inclusion team.

If we see inclusive education as a process of whole-school improvement, we start to see that it's **not just teaching staff** who have a role to play. Everyone who works in the school needs to know about inclusion and take action to make the school more inclusive. A school inclusion team should consider if there are other staff who could play a useful role. A large school may have a librarian who can help improve children's access to reading materials. A school caretaker (janitor) may have a role, especially during periods where physical improvements are being planned or implemented or when poor maintenance is affecting accessibility and safety.

The size of a school inclusion team needs to be considered. The team needs enough members to offer a good coverage of skills and experiences and to ensure there are always enough people who are available to attend meetings or engage in activities, but it should not have so many members that it becomes difficult to coordinate. Each team will need to decide on how many members it wants, depending on the size of the school, the scale and type of challenges the team hopes to tackle, the capacity of key members to coordinate the team's activities, and so on. A good size might be 10–15 members with a balance of different stakeholders represented.

### What motivates someone to join a school inclusion team?

Everyone will have their own unique and personal reason for wanting to be on the team – assuming they have not just been told by their manager that they have to join. Teachers, school head teachers and pedagogues or other specialist staff may be motivated by:

- their commitment to supporting all learners to attend, participate in, and achieve in school
- a desire to learn from others and improve their own work with all children
- willingness to share their experiences and ideas in order to help colleagues who may
- still be struggling with inclusion

- interest in seeing inclusion activities and policies being planned and coordinated more effectively
- being able to add a new skill or experience to their CV – this is part of professional development.

Children/students may be motivated by:

- the desire to have their voice heard within the school on important issues affecting themselves and/or their peers
- the desire to share personal experiences relevant to inclusion/exclusion
- interest in learning new skills
- feeling of being part of something important.

Parents may be motivated by:

- their commitment to supporting their own and/or other children to get the support they need
- a desire to have their voice heard
- interest in sharing their own experiences and ideas to help other parents and their children overcome similar challenges
- interest in learning new skills and/or gaining experiences
- a desire to meet new people and make friends.

### 7.9.2 What methods can be used to inform people about the existence and work of the school inclusion team and encourage them to join?

There are many different ways to do this, and some methods will be more suited to target groups than others. Ideas include:

- posters on notice boards (around the school, in the staff room, in the classroom/resource room, etc.)
- a letter from the team coordinator or school head teacher sent to the target group
- an open meeting to present the work of the team and invite new members



- an assembly or lesson topic (for children)
- a drama or other performance about inclusion, the team's work, etc.
- a photo or drawing exhibition on the topic of inclusive education, with messages about
- the team's work and how to join
- a message/article on the school website about the team and inviting interested
- parties to get in touch/attend the next open meeting.

### 7.10 Activity | School inclusion team plan

This activity can help support you in developing a school inclusion team for your school (this can also be

adapted for your teacher training college, university, or other institution). Work with the following table to

consider who could be part of the team, what skills they need, and what their specific roles might be.

Task	What might this task involve?	Key skills needed to do this
Coordinating the team		
Developing a short-term work plan for the team and a longer-term inclusion strategy		
Keeping records of the team's discussions, activities, and results		
Monitoring and evaluating the team's work and results		
Mentoring and advising fellow team members or others in the school or community who need help with inclusion challenges		
Raising awareness of inclusion issues in the school and community		
Making and maintaining links with other relevant bodies (where they exist), such as the parent-teacher association, the student council, etc.		

Task	What might this task involve?	Key skills needed to do this
Finding suitable 'experts' from outside the team who can help with specific challenges or who can act as 'critical friends' (people who can give you an unbiased opinion about an idea or about your work)		
Carrying out research – learning more about inclusive education in the country and in other countries to inform the school's own approaches		
Finding funding for the team's activities, and for the inclusion solutions that the team wants to try		
<b>(add your own ideas)</b>		

# MODULE 8

## REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



This module:

- Guides teachers through the reflective practice
- Introduces tools to assist teachers through the reflective process
- Provides insights on how teachers can utilize the reflective practice to make meaningful changes in the classroom
- Discusses the importance of reflective practice in the context of remote teaching

## 8.1 Introduction: Being a 'reflective practitioner'

For teachers, reflective practice is a process of thinking deeply about the teaching and learning they do. This module will explore several practical ways to be a reflective teacher.

Reflective practice is essential to inclusive education. Without being able to reflect on what happens in their schools and classrooms – both the positive and negative – teachers will be unable to make meaningful changes to move towards being more inclusive educators. In addition, reflective practice is not just about teachers' own professional development, but is also about making positive changes towards inclusion in a school community.

For you as a teacher, this process of reflection involves assessing the situation in your school and classroom and your teaching and learning. It involves thinking clearly about what you and others in your school community do. It involves collecting information about what happens in your school and classroom and thinking critically about the information you gather. This is a way to consider and evaluate not only your own practice but also your beliefs.

Reflective practice involves different activities including:

- observing your students and your colleagues – and having your colleagues observe you
- taking notes – e.g. what worked in the day's lesson and what did not and why
- writing diaries – where you explore what you think about your teaching and learning
- asking questions (of yourself and others)
- planning changes/improvements to your teaching, implementing them, and evaluating what happens.

Reflective practice involves thinking deeply and means that:<sup>28</sup>

- If a lesson went well, you can describe it and think about why it was successful.
- If your students didn't understand a concept or idea you introduced, you can analyse what you did and why it may have been unclear.
- If students are having problems with their behaviour (e.g. disrupting class), you can
- evaluate what they were doing, when and why – and think of ways to try and prevent the situation next time.

## 8.2 Writing a teaching diary<sup>29</sup> and reflective journal

A **teaching diary** can be a good, structured way of reflecting in writing about your teaching and learning. Here are some general questions that you can ask and answer in your diary to get you started:

### Lesson objectives

- Did the students understand what I did in the lesson?
- Was what I did too easy or too difficult?
- What problems did the students have (if any)?
- Was there a clear outcome for the students?
- What did they learn or practise in the lesson? Was it useful for them?

<sup>28</sup> Adapted from: Tice, J. 2004. 'Reflective teaching – Exploring our own classroom practice'. British Council. <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/reflective-teaching-exploring-our-own-classroom-practice>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

### Activities, materials and resources

- What different materials, resources, and activities did I use?
- Did the materials, resources, and activities keep the students interested?
- Could I have done any parts of the lesson differently?

### Students

- Were all the students on task (i.e. doing what they were supposed to be doing)?
- If not, when was that and why did it happen?
- Which parts of the lesson did the students seem to enjoy most? And least?
- Were some students less engaged (interested) than others? If so, why?

### Classroom management

- Did activities last the right length of time?
- Was the pace of the lesson right?
- Did I use whole class work, groupwork, pair work, and individual work?
- What did I use it for? Did it work?
- Did the students understand what to do in the lesson?
- Were my instructions clear?
- Did I provide opportunities for all the students to participate?

- Was I aware of how all of the students were progressing?
- If I taught the lesson again, what would I do differently? Why?

Another written form of reflection is a **reflective journal** – this can be a simpler way of reflecting on 'critical incidents' that happen in your teaching every day.

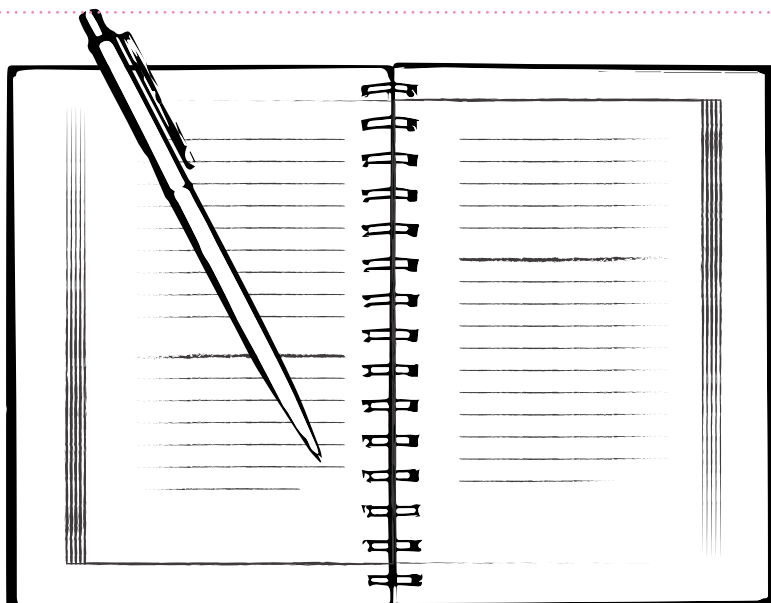
A **reflective journal** is a written record of your own teaching and learning and provides a structured way of reflecting on your experiences as an educator. Keeping this type of journal is

a good way of documenting your professional development. Reflective journals are also useful tools for developing **self-reflection** – a skill which is essential to the practice of inclusive education. A reflective journal is different from other types of journals and diaries such as those in which teachers plan and document their lessons. A reflective journal should provide a safe space for you to reflect on *any* aspect of your teaching, learning, and professional experience, not just things related to the curriculum.

Keeping a reflective journal can be as easy and straightforward as answering a few simple, open questions every day. The following image gives an example of some useful questions to ask and answer for yourself in your reflective journal:

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Figure 5: Reflective journal



### 8.3 Teachers as reflexive practitioners in the context of remote learning

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the conditions of remote teaching have given teachers an opportunity to intentionally practice reflection from action, a type of practice through which they can improve the understanding of their own teaching.

As argued by Schön<sup>30</sup> (1987), this reflection on the professional practice of teaching helps them to construct knowledge through the solutions of problems as experienced by them. To the extent that a teacher reflects on his or her teaching practice, he/she will be able to increase his/her capacity to describe, interpret, evaluate and renew his or her professional performance. Two fundamental moments of reflection are observable. First, there is conscious thinking during the action or practice of teaching, what is described as reflection in action.

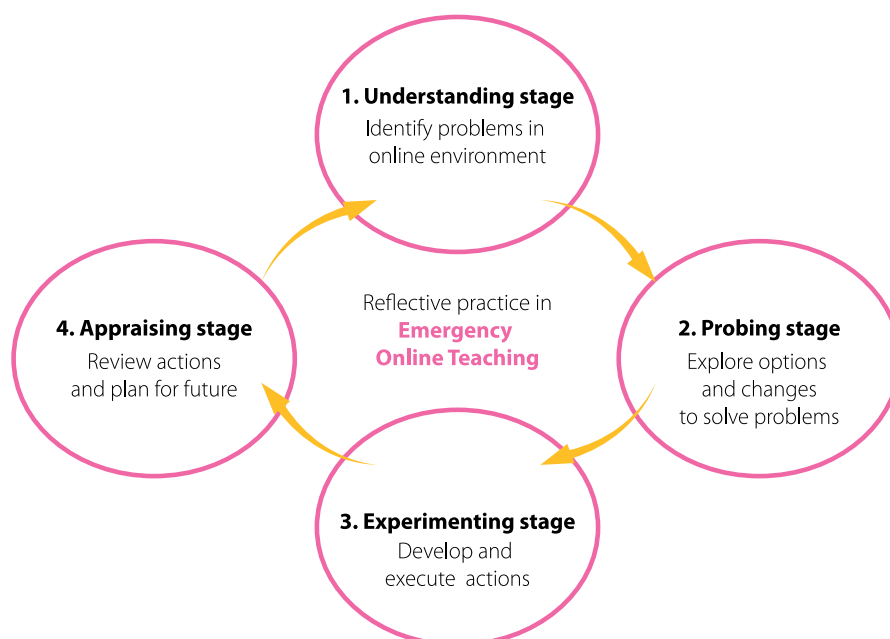
Secondly, what results from the thinking feeling after the action, a phenomenon called reflection on the action.

In the course of action, teachers identified the challenges and strategies that appeared to work well. Engaging in a process of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action can be the effective ways for teachers to develop their competencies to solve problems in remote teaching. Both of these processes are at the core of professional development and new learning when responding to uncertainties such as COVID-19.

Reflecting in itself is insufficient to bring one's skills and knowledge to the next level, but exploring and analysing what happened, why it happened – or didn't happen – and letting these findings inform future decisions and actions is what contributes to professional development.

According to Jung et al.<sup>31</sup> (2021), teachers go through four stages as they are involved in emergency remote teaching due to the pandemic.

Figure 6: Reflective practice in emergency online teaching



30 Schön, D. 1983. *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

31 Jung, I., Omori, S., Dawson, W.P. et al. 2021. Faculty as reflective practitioners in emergency online teaching: an autoethnography. *Int J Educ Technol High Educ* 18, 30. <https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-021-00261-2>.

It begins with an understanding of the situation (understanding stage) and is followed by exploration of references and changes in approach to solving problems (probing stage). It then goes through the experimentation stage whereby new courses of action are developed and executed and finally a culmination stage arrives whereby one reviews one's own actions and comes up with the ideas as a result of this review (appraising stage). The cycle of reflective practice developed by Jung et al can be applied in training and supporting teachers to reflect on and continuously improve their online teaching during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 8.4 Action research<sup>32</sup>

Action research is a structured and systematic form of reflective practice that leads to change. For teachers, action research involves the following:

- collecting information in order to bring about changes in thinking and practice
- identifying an issue within a particular context in order to address it within that context

- implementing a continuous process of observation, reflection and action by practitioners with the aim of improving practice rather than simply producing knowledge.

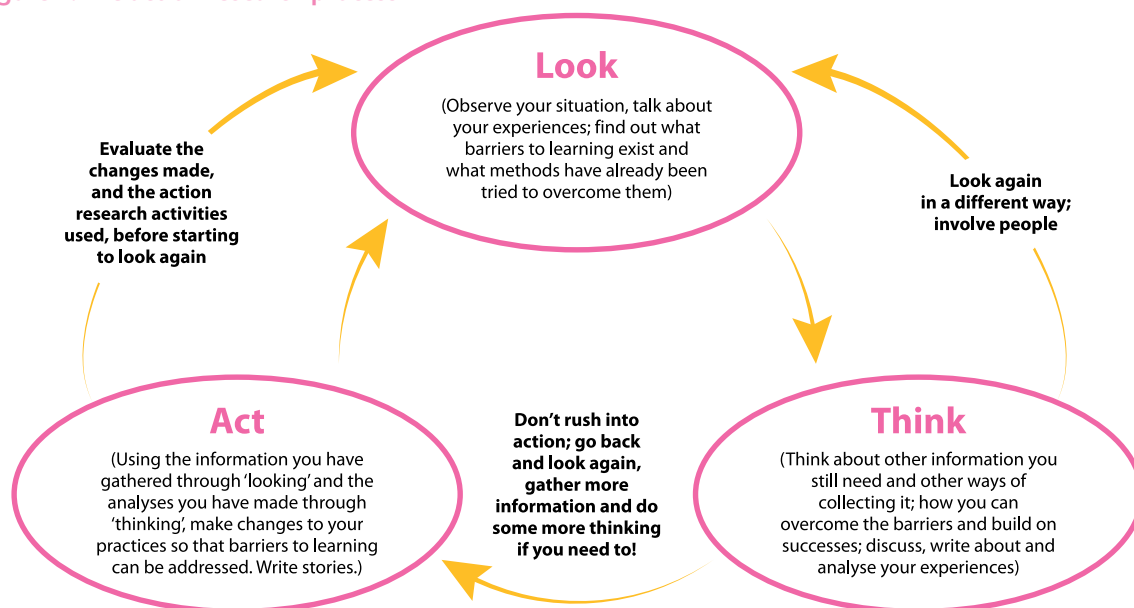
Analysing an experience transforms that experience into knowledge which provides us with the confidence to use that knowledge.

In the context of inclusive education, Action research helps teachers to research their own experiences of education and to work collaboratively to develop more inclusive practices. Action research can be extended beyond an individual teacher, classroom and school to involve a whole school community.

#### Key principles of action research

- **Use existing knowledge.** Local knowledge helps our understanding of why some children experience difficulty taking part in education.

Figure 7: The action research process



32. Adapted from Enabling Education Network. 2005. Learning from Difference: an action research guide for capturing the experience of inclusive education. Manchester: EENET. <https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Learning%20from%20Difference%20Guidelines.pdf>.

- **Build on experience.** Members of a school community have lots of experience and ideas that can be used to make education more inclusive.
- **Collect information.** There is a need to bring together the knowledge that is available within a school community.
- **Work together.** This means that progress depends on people co-operating in order to identify, and find ways of solving, problems.
- **Listen to different voices.** Working together means learning from one another and, in particular, listening to the ideas of those whose voices are often unheard.
- **Create conversations.** It is through talking and listening that we learn. These conversations can lead us to see our own situation differently and thus inspire important changes in the way we practice education.
- **Evaluate experiences.** The lessons of action research can be recorded as stories. These can be used to reflect on the learning that has occurred, and share it with others.

The action research process involves these steps:

1. **Looking – at one** aspect of your work. Collect some information such as observation notes, drawings, photographs, and taped interviews.
2. **Thinking** – about the information you have collected. Reflect on what you have heard, seen, drawn, or written by using mind maps, photographs, and video material.

3. **Acting** – on this new information by doing something differently. (Make a home visit, conduct a survey, try out a new teaching method, etc.)
4. **Looking (again)** – at the results. Observe any changes. Collect some more information. Try some new methods of collecting information.

## 8.5 Checklists

Inclusive education should be more than just an exercise in ticking off items on a checklist. Often checklists are tokenistic and can be used to suggest the appearance of inclusive practice – where a deeper, more committed approach to inclusion is missing. Following a checklist too closely can be a rigid process in itself and may work against the dynamism and flexibility a teacher really needs in an inclusive classroom.

However, despite the pitfalls, a checklist can be a useful way of outlining and monitoring the range of issues a teacher needs to consider in making a school and classroom more inclusive. It can be easy for a teacher to get overly focused on addressing one aspect of inclusive teaching and learning (e.g. engaging learners in activities) and miss out on other issues (e.g. the accessibility of the classroom). A checklist can be helpful in reminding a teacher of the ‘bigger picture.’<sup>33</sup>



## □ CASE STUDY 10

### Action research to support inclusion in East Malaysia<sup>33</sup>

**This case study and image illustrates the action research cycle.**

*Rosnah Sahilan is a primary school teacher in Tawau, Sabah, in East Malaysia.*

I have been teaching for six years now. I am interested in including children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) and autism in my classroom. This challenges my usual teaching techniques. When I'm facing a problem such as boys with autism and ADD, it comes to my mind: How can I include them with their friends in the process of teaching and learning? How can I support them with all the things I teach in the class? I tried to figure out the solutions by doing a lot of activities, and from those activities I found out which ones were suitable and which ones were not. By doing this trial and error, I have come up with solutions that are good for the children and fit with their own behaviours and characteristics. Each child is different and nobody with the same type of disability is the same. **I think every child is gifted; they have their own special things inside of them, and it is for us as teachers**

**to discover what they have. The negative things are in the school environment. As long as we can handle them and try to understand the children better, it won't be a big problem.**

We just need to do some research about it so we can better understand the children's needs in school and what we can do to support them as teachers.

In my research, I found that boys with ADD and autism want to be like other pupils in the school. It's just their expression and behaviour that make them different. The way they think and the way they do things are slightly different from the other pupils, but they want and need the same things as the other children. The teachers need to understand them better – that's the important thing. I don't want to exclude them from the school environment, I just want to include them.

With children who are new to the school environment, it takes time for them to get used to their daily routines, but as time goes by, everybody in the class can observe the new pupils for

what they are – they don't just bully them. **I remind my pupils to accept those pupils for who they are.** I try to always inform my pupils about the children with disabilities in the class. For example, if a boy has autism, I explain to the children what he looks like and why he acts the way he does. Then the other children get to understand the situation and they can accept this boy, but it does take time.

In Malaysia, some of the teachers still have negative attitudes about children with disabilities, but I think we need to change. In mainstream schools, we have not been exposed much to autism or ADD, and maybe this is one of the problems. The administrators and the staff know nothing about these types of disabilities. We don't have any training about this, and some things need to be changed in the education system in Malaysia so we can include these types of children in our system more easily. I think all teachers need to be trained to handle this type of situation. This is why I need to do research to help me.

I have used Google, but most of the time I try the activities

## □ CASE STUDY 10

### Action research to support inclusion in East Malaysia<sup>33</sup>

myself and I observe if they are working or not and then I make changes. It's like an action research. All children need to be in the mainstream because they need friends and they will have to live in the community. It is easier to teach people and develop positive attitudes when they are young. For example, with the boy with autism, when they are young, the pupils accept him, respect him and don't bully him. They will carry this type of attitude with them in the future. At

first, they didn't want to be friends with him, but when I entered the class, I looked for the boy with autism to make sure he was in a good condition and that nobody bullied him. I would ask the pupils who have done something wrong with this child and they would tell me and I would try to work with those pupils and explain about autism and I would ask them to apologize to the boy. I always do this. Although it takes some time, after a few months it gets better.

In my case, the parents of the children with autism and ADD support their children and give lots of information and are cooperative with the teachers. But some parents don't talk to the teachers about their concerns. We can see sometimes from the faces of some parents that they are not very happy with the inclusion of children with disabilities in their children's classes. But, as time goes by and they see that things are okay for their child and nothing.

<sup>33</sup> Adapted from: Sahilan, R. 2013. 'Researching my own solutions: interview with an inclusive teacher, Malaysia'. *Enabling Education Review* 2. EENET. [http://icevi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Enabling\\_Education\\_Review\\_issue\\_2\\_2013\\_English.pdf](http://icevi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Enabling_Education_Review_issue_2_2013_English.pdf)

## 8.6 Activity | An inclusive teaching checklist

The following checklist is designed to help teachers monitor and improve their inclusiveness. Use this checklist as way of considering inclusion in your own school/classroom. The checklist is not a test, and it is not a set of minimum standards – it is not meant to make you feel bad about your teaching or your school. It is something you can use to focus on what happens in your

teaching/learning environment and to make improvements.

This checklist doesn't cover all aspects of inclusion – it is focused on teaching and learning.

Put a checkmark in the second column if the answer is 'yes'.

If you do some of the things described, or if you do them some of the time, check '?. Think about what evidence you have

for your answer – this should help you in being a reflective teacher. In the final column, list ways you could improve, so that you can check '**next time!**'

At the end of the checklist are some additional comment boxes to help you reflect and become more inclusive in your teaching.

Aspects of teaching/learning	✓ or ?	Evidence	Improvements you want to make
<b>Planning and support</b>			
Does your lesson content fit your learning objectives and assessments?			
Over a semester/year, is there a progression in the complexity of learning tasks? (e.g. from tasks which require students to describe or summarize to tasks which ask students to critique or evaluate)			
Do you have plans for helping students who need extra support (e.g. tape recorded notes, shortened assignments, extended deadlines)?			
Do you regularly coordinate and collaborate with other teachers and school staff in planning and evaluating teaching/learning and related support for all students?			
<b>The teaching and learning environment</b>			
Are the physical surroundings accessible for all students (safe, clear of obstacles, comfortable, good levels of lighting, good acoustics, lack of distractions, clean drinking water and safe, sanitary toilet facilities)?			
<b>The teaching and learning environment</b>			
Are the seating arrangements flexible (e.g. can you move desks and chairs, is there a comfortable space to sit on the floor)?			
Do you modify the learning environment by decreasing distractions with the use of special work areas, retaining routine and structure by maintaining a regular schedule, and giving advanced information to the student prior to any changes?			
<b>Teaching</b>			
Do you always give an overview of lesson content (e.g. 'today we will work on...')?			
Do you make learning objectives clear?			
Do your questions find out what students know and have learnt?			

Aspects of teaching/learning	✓ or ?	Evidence	Improvements you want to make
Teaching			
Do you adapt the implementation of the general education curriculum so that it will apply most successfully for all students (e.g. reduce the number of items to learn; increase the amount of time for learning; increase the amount of assistance (e.g. using a buddy system, a cross-age tutor)?			
Do you vary your teaching methods/ activities in each lesson (e.g. lecturing, small groups, pair work, games, projects, quiet reading, storytelling, drawing, role-plays, outdoor activities, movement)?			
Do you use a range of presentation techniques (e.g. speaking, diagrams, pictures) for different learning styles?			
Do you provide opportunities for students to lead teaching/learning activities (e.g. choosing topics, coming to the front of the class to present, leading games/songs)?			
Have you taught your students strategies to help them continue with tasks when they are stuck?			
Do you give frequent breaks?			
Do you link the tasks you set for your students to previous or later learning?			
Do you make the links between parts of a lesson clear by using 'signposting' (e.g. 'the first point to make is...','this idea supports what we learned earlier..')?			
Do you give your students enough time (e.g. personal thinking time, time to talk in groups or pairs, etc.) to allow their best responses?			
Do you regularly use practical, 'real world' examples and demonstrations to explain concepts?			

Aspects of teaching/learning	✓ or ?	Evidence	Improvements you want to make
Teaching			
Do you avoid all abuse - physical and verbal (including corporal punishment) – and actively discourage your students from bullying and abusing others?			
Do you create stories with a social theme to assist the student in problem solving with difficult social, emotional, and transitional issues?			
Do you value the contributions of all your students?			
Is your classroom a place where students feel safe to make mistakes?			
Is your feedback to students specific and constructive?			
Are you able to balance your time in the classroom so that all students get good attention and support?			
Can you and do you use additional support in your classroom (e.g. support teachers)?			
Can you and do you use additional support outside of your classroom (e.g. specialist support for students with disabilities)?			
Where additional support is available (in or outside of the classroom), is it used to promote independence, build and protect self-esteem, and increase students' inclusion within their peer group?			
Do your students get pre-tutoring and/or follow up support if necessary?			
Have you set up a distraction-free area (e.g. quiet space) for students who need it?			
Are students who need it able to leave your class for periods of time with proper safety and supervision (e.g. to a separate support room in the school)?			

Aspects of teaching/learning	✓ or ?	Evidence	Improvements you want to make
<b>Teaching/learning materials and resources</b>			
Do you have a variety of materials available to all students and accessible for a range of needs (e.g. visual materials, tactile materials, books, building blocks, games, toys, texts in Braille)?			
Are you able to use and adapt local materials and resources in your teaching?			
Do you develop your own teaching/ learning materials? Do you involve others in this (e.g. other teachers, students, parents)?			
Do you provide your students with resources and support for independent learning (e.g. dictionaries, engaging storybooks and other texts, online resources, learning games, etc.)?			
<b>Assessment and feedback</b>			
Do you make it clear to students what you are looking for when you assess them? Do you have a range of assessment methods?			
Do you conduct periodic communication meetings as needed with the family and school staff (Inclusive Education Team) to examine the student's progress and any outstanding concerns?			
Do your assessment tasks measure how students learn (a process), not just outcomes?			
Are all your students involved in setting their own learning targets and monitoring their own progress?			

# MODULE 9

ENSURING LEARNING CONTINUITY THROUGH HYBRID  
LEARNING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 AND BEYOND



This module:

- Discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and learning;
- Introduces important concepts related to hybrid/blended learning;
- Highlights the education response to COVID-19 to ensure learning continuity;
- Discusses lessons learned from the implementation of remote learning measures and their possible implications for mainstreaming hybrid/blended learning;
- Introduces the concept of learning loss and suggests ways of it;
- Introduces guidelines for implementing hybrid/blended learning to build an inclusive, effective and resilient school system.

## 9.1 Introduction

This module is designed to serve as a resource for teachers and educators to guide strategic planning for hybrid learning as part of education continuity and recovery in times of crisis. Hybrid learning is a flexible mode of education delivery that can replace in-person teaching and learning, or combine the use of in-person and online methods in multiple ways. The module identifies the considerations that may be helpful in mainstreaming hybrid learning as an alternative education delivery option to traditional classroom models. Inclusion should be at the heart of hybrid learning, and the module aims to embed and sustain inclusive teaching practices to support all learners.

## 9.2 The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on education

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) labelled the outbreak of COVID-19 a global pandemic, defining it as a public health emergency of international scale. The pandemic soon caused a dramatic loss of human life and led to devastating social and economic disruptions across the world. The education sector, like other sectors, witnessed enormous disruption. The key initial response

available to countries was to declare school closures. According to UNESCO statistics (2020a<sup>34</sup>), in April 2020 more than 190 countries were forced to declare nationwide school closures, taking over 1.5 billion learners—nearly 90 per cent of the global total—out of school or any institution of learning. Over 767 million of these students were girls. In their attempts to get learning going again, several countries switched to remote learning as an emergency measure. After almost a year of the global pandemic, UNESCO (2021a<sup>35</sup>) reported that over 800 million students worldwide—more than half the school-age population—were still facing disruptions in their learning. Even before the pandemic, some 258 million children of primary and secondary school age were out of school.

The impact of the pandemic on children has been alarming, including due to interruptions in essential services such as education, health, nutrition and child protection. In particular, children and youth from low-income and disadvantaged families, children in remote and rural locations, from ethnic and linguistic minorities, refugees, children with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, and children with disabilities have often been deprived of services and support. Although considered a critical measure to control the proliferation of the virus, school closures have led to an alarming level of learning loss. The disruption in children's education has caused serious educational vulnerability, with negative impacts on short-term and long-term educational outcomes. Prolonged periods of disruption, uncertainty, isolation, and in some cases physical and emotional abuse, have taken a toll on many children's mental health and well-being. The World Bank (2020a<sup>36</sup>) estimated that COVID-19

34 UNESCO. 2020a. UNESCO COVID-19 response: how many students are at risk of not returning to school? Paris, UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373992>.

35 UNESCO. 2021a. One Year into COVID education disruption: Where do we stand? Paris, UNESCO. <https://en.unesco.org/news/one-year-covid-19-education-disruption-where-do-we-stand>.

36 The World Bank. 2020. Realizing the Future of Learning: From Learning Poverty to Learning for Everyone and Everywhere. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/250981606928190510/pdf/Realizing-the-Future-of-Learning-From-Learning-Poverty-to-Learning-for-Everyone-Everywhere.pdf>.



related closures risked pushing an additional 72 million primary school-aged children into learning poverty, a phenomenon whereby children are not able to read and understand a simple text by age 10.

Girls' education has been particularly affected by the pandemic, especially girls from low-income households and girls in rural areas. In many crisis situations, some girls are likely to be subjected to a number of threats and discrimination, including an increased burden of household responsibilities, as well as child marriage, teenage or early pregnancy, and gender-based violence. Past experience suggests that if there is any negative shock in a family, girls will suffer most. There have been reports that many girls are not benefiting much from remote instruction, due to limited time and poorer access to digital resources (UNESCO, 2020b<sup>37</sup>). Even in countries with adequate infrastructure and connectivity, girls are less likely to have access to digital devices and connectivity than boys.

Children with disabilities are also at a higher risk of exclusion in emergency situations. Normally, the impacts of disasters are dependent on pre-existing conditions and underlying risk factors, including access to resources, the availability of social networks and support, and levels of participation in community life (Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, 2020<sup>38</sup>). Children with disabilities are more likely to experience multiple vulnerabilities during a crisis and may be subjected to restraint, seclusion, harsh discipline, neglect and discrimination. They often face severe barriers in continuing their learning due to lack of equipment, assistive devices, internet connectivity and accessible materials. If careful attention is not paid, this group of children is likely to benefit the least from instruction.

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37 UNESCO. 2020b. Addressing the gender dimensions of school closures. <https://en.unesco.org/events/addressing-gender-dimensions-school-closures-covid-19>.

38 Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery. 2020. Disability-Inclusive Disaster Recovery. <https://www.gfdrr.org/en/publication/disaster-recovery-guidance-series-disability-inclusive-disaster-recovery>.

For many such children, schools are the places through which rehabilitative care can be provided, including physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, or other specialized services. The closure of schools has seriously disrupted individualized services for many children with disabilities. Continued closures increase the chances of these children not returning to school at all.

COVID-19 has also had adverse impacts on the overall well-being and schooling of ethnic and linguistic minority children. Many education systems have not treated ethnic/linguistic minorities fairly and inclusively for a long time. With the onset of the pandemic, in many parts of the world, some ethnic/linguistic minorities were subject to stigmatization, abuse and exclusion while being treated as scapegoats for the virus (OHCHR, 2020<sup>39</sup>). Emergency measures such as lockdowns and school closures have had a profound impact on many children from ethnic/linguistic minorities. Limited digital access and limited education of parents can make it difficult for many such children to benefit from homeschooling or remote instruction. In many cases, remote learning materials, both existing and newly developed, have been available in the national language but not readily available in indigenous and minority languages. Producing learning materials in multiple languages can be challenging for many governments, especially in crisis situations. However, unless appropriate strategies are implemented to reach all children in linguistically diverse contexts, prolonged closures of schools can only continue to harm linguistic minority children.

The switch to remote learning forced homes to serve as learning sites and parents to serve as providers of education or facilitators of learning, often in collaboration with teachers. While this new role challenged parents from all backgrounds, it was particularly challenging for low-income parents, millions of whom fell into extreme poverty as a result of COVID-19.

.....  
39 OHCHR. 2020. Racial discrimination in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Racism/COVID-19\\_and\\_Racial\\_Discrimination.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Racism/COVID-19_and_Racial_Discrimination.pdf).

## Reflection

**COVID-19 affected the entire world and disrupted almost everything, including education. How did it affect you, your life and the community? Who was most at risk? What precautions were taken to protect people, especially younger children? What was done to ensure that classrooms are safe spaces for learning?**

The COVID-19 pandemic deepened existing education inequalities and digital divides (UNESCO, 2020c<sup>40</sup>). A study reported that 95 per cent of high-income countries were able to continue instruction by means of online platforms, as opposed to 73 per cent of lower middle-income countries and 60 per cent of low-income countries (Carvalho and Hares, 2020).<sup>41</sup> While many low-income countries chose the option of radio and television for remote instruction, these media, too, were sometimes outside the reach of the poorest households. In many countries, erratic electricity supply, poor network quality, and lack of digital skills also affected the ability of students from low socio-economic backgrounds to benefit from online instruction (OECD, 2020<sup>42</sup>).

The pandemic profoundly affected the life and work of some 63 million primary and secondary school teachers globally (TTF, 2020<sup>43</sup>). Teachers were asked to implement new methods of teaching, in many cases without any initial orientation, guidance, resources and support.

They had to work under very difficult and challenging working conditions, and take on additional roles and responsibilities. While their own health and overall well-being were in danger, they had to take care of their students. Globally, 72 per cent of countries (146 of 204) included teachers in one of several priority groups to be vaccinated in national rollout plans, while 59 countries (29 per cent) did not prioritize teachers (UNESCO, 2021b)<sup>44</sup>). While large-scale studies on teacher mental health were not available, limited evidence indicated that teacher mental health was likely to have deteriorated substantially during the pandemic.

### 9.2.1 Challenges of remote learning for learners

Remote learning has posed multiple challenges for students and teachers have needed to be aware of these challenges to be able to support learning.

First, children need a home environment that is safe and conducive to remote learning, but not all homes are built to provide suitable learning spaces. Distractions during study hours are often an unavoidable reality. Parents' seriousness about their children's education has been critical. In some cases, children have been at risk of maltreatment at home and are subjected to physical punishment or psychological aggression. Teachers have needed to collaborate with parents and family members in order to address the issues, including through establishing daily routines and time management systems.

40 UNESCO. 2020c. Beyond Disruption: digital learning during COVID-19 pandemic. <https://en.unesco.org/news/beyond-disruption-digital-learning-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

41 S. Carvalho and S. Hares. 2020. More from our Database on School Closures: New Education Policies May be Increasing Educational Inequality. Washington D.C, Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/more-our-database-school-closures-new-education-policies-may-be-increasing-educational>.

42 OECD. 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on student equity and inclusion supporting vulnerable students during school closures and re-opening. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=434\\_434914-59wd7ekj29&title=The-impact-of-COVID-19-on-student-equity-and-inclusion&ga=2.3295538.300779361.1637939187-1628528812.1627750518](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=434_434914-59wd7ekj29&title=The-impact-of-COVID-19-on-student-equity-and-inclusion&ga=2.3295538.300779361.1637939187-1628528812.1627750518).

43 International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. Education Recovery: What does the Latest Data tell us about the State of the World's Teachers. Paris, UNESCO. <https://teachertaskforce.org/news/teachers-heart-education-recovery-what-does-latest-data-tell-us-about-state-worlds-teachers>.

44 UNESCO. 2021b. UNESCO urges all countries to prioritize teachers in national COVID-19 vaccine roll-out plans to ensure education can continue safely and schools can remain open. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/teacher-vaccination>.

Second, student motivation and self-control are key to remote learning. It is important that students are serious about their education, learn how to manage their time, and learn how to study despite distractions. When students are required to use electronic devices, there are temptations to use social media or use the devices to play games. Student motivation is assisted by continued connection of some sort with their school, teachers and classmates.

Third, students' access to devices, the internet and other online resources is often a major challenge. The shift to home-based learning has highlighted stark differences in device and internet access. Depending on the situation, teachers have a role in arranging for the appropriate form of distance learning and in addressing technical issues that arise.

### 9.2.2 Lessons learned from COVID-19 in education

The crisis has been an extraordinary time for the education sector, which faced one of its most difficult periods in history. Moving forward, a number of lessons can be drawn.

First, the pandemic highlighted that schooling practices that have long been commonly accepted do not serve all students. The world witnessed the disproportionate exclusion of

historically marginalized groups of students and the widening of pre-existing educational disparities and inequalities. To address this, inclusion and equity are key.

Second, the role of well-trained, qualified, motivated, creative and well-supported teachers has been seen to remain indispensable. Though the power of technology in facilitating instruction is enormous, the role of teachers will always be critical. Beyond classroom functions, teachers have an important role to play in the overall well-being and development of learners.

Third, remote and hybrid learning has become no longer an option or a luxury; it is a necessity. The COVID-19 pandemic created a defining moment for this form of teaching and learning. The crisis forced almost everyone to adapt to learning remotely. Students all over the world used or explored the potential use of online platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, virtual learning environments, and social media. Various group forums such as Messenger, WhatsApp and WeChat were used for teaching and learning for the first time at a global scale. Despite its challenges, technology has been seen to have significant potential to modernize the classroom and support student learning.

## Reflection

**Based on what you have read so far, list three ways in which education has been impacted by COVID-19.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Box 1

## Remote and/or Distance Learning Concepts

**Asynchronous learning:** Asynchronous learning occurs when a student is engaging in learning while not being directly connected with an instructor or other students in real-time. It may include online or offline learning activities and can encompass a wide variety of instructional interactions, including email exchanges, online discussion boards, and correspondence.

**Blended learning:** A form of instruction which combines in-person and online instruction. In blended learning, the central focus is often on the classroom setting, with online options chosen to enhance or enrich that setting and to give students more control over the time, place, pace and modality of learning

**Distance learning:** This is instruction delivered to students through a distance-based arrangement, without face-to-face contact between students and teachers in a physical classroom. In early iterations, distance learning was provided through the correspondence mode, with the support of take-home printed materials. Gradually, radio or television programmes were used. Distance learning can also involve the use of online technologies. According to UNESCO (2020e) the term may be used synonymously with online learning, e-learning, distance education, correspondence education, external studies, and massive open online courses (MOOCs).

**Emergency remote learning:** A teaching–learning arrangement that involves an emergency transition from classroom-based face-to-face instruction to remote and distance-based learning, as a response to school closures due to a crisis. Many education technology experts are hesitant to call the current form of distance learning that was organized in response to the pandemic ‘remote learning’ or ‘online learning’. It has been, rather, a short-term teaching solution to an emergent problem.

**Face-to-face/in-person learning:** The traditional form of teaching when teachers and students are engaged in teaching and learning in the same physical space, generally a bricks-and-mortar classroom.

**Flipped classroom:** A flipped classroom reverses or flips the traditional teaching sequence where teachers teach the lessons and then assign homework. Instead, students study course materials prepared or provided beforehand, typically through online means, then join the classroom to further enhance their learning.

**Hybrid learning:** Hybrid learning combines in-person and online learning, with the primary focus placed on maintaining flexible learning options. Depending on circumstances, the hybrid approach can facilitate some students attending face-to-face instruction in the classroom setting, while others join in simultaneously from a remote setting, for example through videoconferencing.

**Learning Management System (LMS):** A software application that provides the framework that holds and delivers all aspects of teaching and learning.

## Box 1

### Remote and/or Distance Learning Concepts

*Live streaming:* Online streaming in which content is simultaneously broadcast in real-time to promote student learning during face-to-face instruction and synchronous sessions.

*Online learning:* A form of distance education in which instruction is delivered fully online or over the internet. Online learning can use a range of learning options using internet-based technology as well as education technology applications that also can be used offline. Online courses can be asynchronous (where courses are not provided in real-time) or synchronous (in which teacher and students are engaged in online interactions in real-time).

*Remote learning:* Students are engaged in learning either online or offline, with no face-to-face contact with the teacher in a physical setting. It may include online learning methods such as webinars and e-learning, as well as audio or video teaching delivered via television, radio, or telephone, and the use of paper-based materials.

*Remote school:* This refers to a departure from face-to-face instruction at a physical school, to a fully distanced approach in which students learn at home or away from the physical site of the school. Instruction can take place through videoconferencing as a class, or through various individual offline and online activities.

*Self-regulated learning:* It is defined as a self-directive process whereby a learner transforms his or her mental abilities into academic goals (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2011). It includes abilities such as planning, managing and directing the learning process. A student who has well-developed self-regulated learning skills is able to choose the best strategy appropriate to the learning context, subject, or type of learning activity. According to Zimmerman and Schunk, self-regulated learning involves three steps: a) analysis of the task, setting goals and developing a plan of approach; b) deploying specific learning strategies or methods and then assessing how well these strategies are working; and c) self-reflection on the completed tasks.

*Remote school:* This refers to a departure from face-to-face instruction at a physical school, to a fully distanced approach in which students learn at home or away from the physical site of the school. Instruction can take place through videoconferencing as a class, or through various individual offline and online activities.

*Synchronous learning:* Usually refers to online learning through videoconferencing. Students have direct, live interaction with an instructor or other students in real-time. They may also engage in offline learning activities while being simultaneously connected online to their instructor or class.

*Videoconferencing:* Live audio and video connections between teachers and multiple students using videoconferencing tools.

*Virtual classroom:* Teachers and students interact with each other online in real-time.

### 9.3 Ensuring learning continuity in times of crisis

A variety of alternatives to school-based learning have emerged that aim to provide learning continuity. Many of these efforts are supported and enabled by technologies, which among others, include everything from educational

radio and television to online learning on mobile phones, laptops, tablets, and computers. While many countries have used high-tech, high-cost solutions, a key challenge has been how to ensure learning continuity for the most vulnerable groups, including many rural learners, girls, indigenous learners, linguistic minorities, migrants/refugees, and learners with disabilities.

#### Questions to consider when planning continuity or learning

1. **What policies have the national government/local education providers established for learning continuity? How can school policies be aligned with the national and local policies/plans?**  
.....
2. **What is the overall status of accessibility of digital devices or any other remote teaching tools among the students?**  
.....
3. **Are teachers adequately trained in using digital tools in teaching?**  
.....
4. **How can teachers, students, staff, and parents be trained/oriented on the use of learning management systems to ensure continuity and accessibility?**  
.....
5. **What technologies do we already have available?**  
.....
6. **What can be done in situations where there is no connectivity?**  
.....
7. **How are broadcast media being used for educational purposes?**  
.....
8. **What training materials will we need to create?**  
.....
9. **What individuals will be involved in the training and tutoring process on technologies and systems selected?**  
.....
10. **How to ensure safer use of online learning?**  
.....
11. **Are learning materials available in alternative formats to meet the needs of children with disabilities and linguistic minorities, among others?**  
.....
12. **What role does cost play in determining short- and long-term solutions?**

#### 9.3.1 Understanding learning continuity

Learning continuity has been defined as a measure to ensure that students somehow remain on learning pathways during an interruption, such as a prolonged school closure or absence due to health or any other ground, natural disasters, conflicts, or weather events. Other terms also used to refer to this

phenomenon include academic continuity, instructional continuity, and continuity of education. According to UNESCO (2020e<sup>45</sup>), situations in relation to learning continuity can take one of three forms:

.....  
45 UNESCO. 2020e. COVID-19 Response – Hybrid Learning. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373767/PDF/373767eng.pdf.multi>.

*No learning continuity:* In-person and remote learning capacities are not in place to meet the learning needs of students. Schools are at risk of not ensuring learning continuity, given their conditions and capacities. In the initial days/weeks of COVID-19, most schools in developing countries were in this phase.

*Unstable learning continuity:* Schools are on the verge of falling into a no-learning continuity trap if they experience any shock in their capacity to go remote or in-person.

*Resilient learning continuity:* Schools are fully equipped to ensure learning continuity and they can switch between in-person and hybrid learning as the need dictates. A resilient school system is not thwarted by an emergency in its mission of ensuring learning continuity.

### 9.3.2 Adverse consequences of school closures

According to UNESCO (2020<sup>46</sup>) adverse consequences of school closures, especially on vulnerable children, families and communities, include:

- **Interrupted learning:** Schooling provides essential learning and when schools close, children and youth are deprived of opportunities for growth and development. The disadvantages are disproportionate for under-privileged learners who tend to have fewer educational opportunities beyond school.
- **Poor nutrition:** Many children and youth rely on free or discounted meals provided at schools for food and healthy nutrition. When schools close, nutrition is compromised.
- **Confusion and stress for teachers and students:** When schools close, especially unexpectedly and for unknown durations, teachers are often unsure of their obligations and how to maintain

connections with students to support learning. Transitions to distance learning platforms tend to be messy and frustrating, even in the best circumstances. In many contexts, school closures lead to furloughs or separations for teachers. The impact of COVID-19 has been particularly damaging on the physical and mental health and overall psychosocial well-being of students. Sudden changes to their social lives and daily routines, the inability to access education, or in some cases unsafe home environments, caused feelings of sadness, despair, anxiety and stress. Studies show that times of crisis can have long-term effects on young students' behaviour as well as on their mental and emotional well-being.

- **Parents unprepared for distance and home schooling:** When schools close, parents are often asked to facilitate the learning of children at home and can struggle to perform this task. This is especially true for parents with limited education and resources.
- **Challenges in creating, maintaining, and improving distance learning:** Demand for distance learning skyrockets when schools close, and often overwhelms existing portals for remote education. Moving learning from classrooms to homes at scale and in a hurry presents enormous human and technical challenges.
- **Gaps in child care:** In the absence of alternative options, working parents often leave children alone when schools close and this can lead to risky behaviours, including increased influence of peer pressure and substance abuse.
- **High economic costs:** Working parents are more likely to miss work when schools close in order to take care of their children. This results in wage loss and tends to negatively impact productivity. These high economic costs can have negative effects on student learning.

46 UNESCO. 2020f. Adverse consequences of school closures. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/consequences>.

- **Unintended strain on health care systems:** Health care workers with children cannot easily attend work because of child care obligations that result from school closures. This means that many medical professionals are not at the facilities where they are most needed during a health crisis.
- **Increased pressure on schools and school systems that remain open:** Localized school closures place burdens on schools as governments and parents alike redirect children to schools that remain open. In many parts of the world when small private schools could not sustain during the pandemic, their students went to the nearby public schools, causing more overcrowding to already overcrowded schools. In the absence of adequate teachers, physical learning space and learning materials, these schools were not able to provide quality education.
- **Rise in dropout rates:** It is a challenge to ensure children and youth return and stay in school when schools reopen after closures. This is especially true of protracted closures and when economic shocks place pressure on children to work and generate income for financially distressed families.
- **Increased exposure to violence and exploitation:** When schools shut down, early marriages increase, more children are recruited into militias, sexual exploitation of girls and young women rises, teenage pregnancies become more common, and child labour grows.
- **Social isolation:** Schools are hubs of social activity and human interaction. When schools close, many children and youth miss out of on social contact that is essential to learning and development.
- **Challenges in measuring and validating learning:** Calendared assessments, notably high-stakes examinations that determine admission or advancement to new education levels and institutions, are thrown into disarray when schools close.

Strategies to postpone, skip or administer examinations at a distance raise serious concerns about fairness, especially when access to learning becomes variable. Disruptions to assessments results in stress for students and their families and can trigger disengagement.

In the early stage of school closures, what is important is to enable children and their families to cope with the crisis or pandemic through remote learning, instructional and psychosocial support, and compensatory programmes for learning losses (World Bank, 2021<sup>47</sup>).

Together, teachers and family members can help to mitigate adverse impacts by collaborating to create an environment whereby students are able to participate in learning activities. It is crucial that teachers work closely with parents, including potentially by phone and messaging, to help children cope and ensure children learn at home. Parents' involvement can play an important mitigation role in reducing learning loss, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas where there is little or no technology.

It is important to remember that it is often appropriate to provide increased support to parents and families so that they can best help their child. Even in the poorest households and households with limited literacy, encouraging parental and sibling engagement can add significantly to a child's learning, research has shown (2020<sup>48</sup>). Activities such as setting aside dedicated time for children to learn, engaging children in talking and answering questions, or creating simple counting and language activities as part of daily household routines can be encouraged, as well as 'child-to-child' approaches, and peer and collaborative learning, in which older siblings or cousins support learning for younger students.

47 The World Bank. 2021b. Adapting the Curriculum. Washington, D.C. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/9b81c823573b658de924e-ca38a735911-0090012021/original/Curriculum-29-4-2021.pdf>.

48 C. Pava, P. Mendoza, H. Schubert & A. Dowd. 2020. Celebrating 10 Years of Literacy Boost: What have we learned so far? Save the Children. [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/18202/pdf/lb\\_10\\_year\\_report\\_4sep2020\\_final.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/18202/pdf/lb_10_year_report_4sep2020_final.pdf).



## Tips that can be shared with parents

1. You do not have to become a trained teacher. Just do your best to support your child's learning. As a parent, you know your child's needs. More than anything else, your child needs care and support.
2. Establish routines, not necessarily the same way schools do, but to give some kind of structure for the day. For primary school children, afternoons should not be heavy. Plan for engaging them in fun activities.
3. Provide support, guidance, and assistance to support your child's learning. If you can't support this yourself, try to find whatever help is available in the family or community.
4. Foster a safe, conducive space for learning at home. Ensure your child has the required textbooks, learning materials or resources.
5. Encourage and recognize positive gains and achievements. Do not focus on the negatives.
6. Monitor your child's progress after they have completed their assignments.
7. Communicate with your child's school. Collaborate with your child's teacher(s) and other school staff to address any learning or behavioural challenges or concerns.
8. Support your child in maintaining positive attendance and on-time arrival.
9. Participate in face-to-face and/or virtual meetings organized by the school to support your child's academic progress.
10. Check and monitor your child's health on a regular basis.
11. If your child is attending classes online, provide the required devices. Not all families can afford to do so. Work with schools, community groups or school authorities to see if there are ways of acquiring devices.

For more information on some of the learning barriers experienced as a result of the adverse conditions during the pandemic, see Module 3, Barriers to learning in the context of COVID-19.

### 9.3.3 Remote learning modalities for learning continuity

Figure 8 summarizes various possibilities that countries can mobilize to facilitate learning at home remotely (UNICEF ROSA, 2020<sup>49</sup>). Low/no-tech offline options are comprised of printed materials, books, radio and TV, and are important to reach disadvantaged children and youth who cannot access high-tech options. The high-tech modalities include online platforms, apps, digital classrooms, and videoconferencing. Teachers play various roles in each of the different modalities.

### 9.3.4 Curriculum reorganization

Even before the pandemic, many national curriculums around the world have been characterized as over-ambitious, outdated, irrelevant and designed for ideal teachers,

students and school conditions. In the wake of COVID-19, most schools faced the need to reorganize or condense the curriculum to make the contents more manageable.

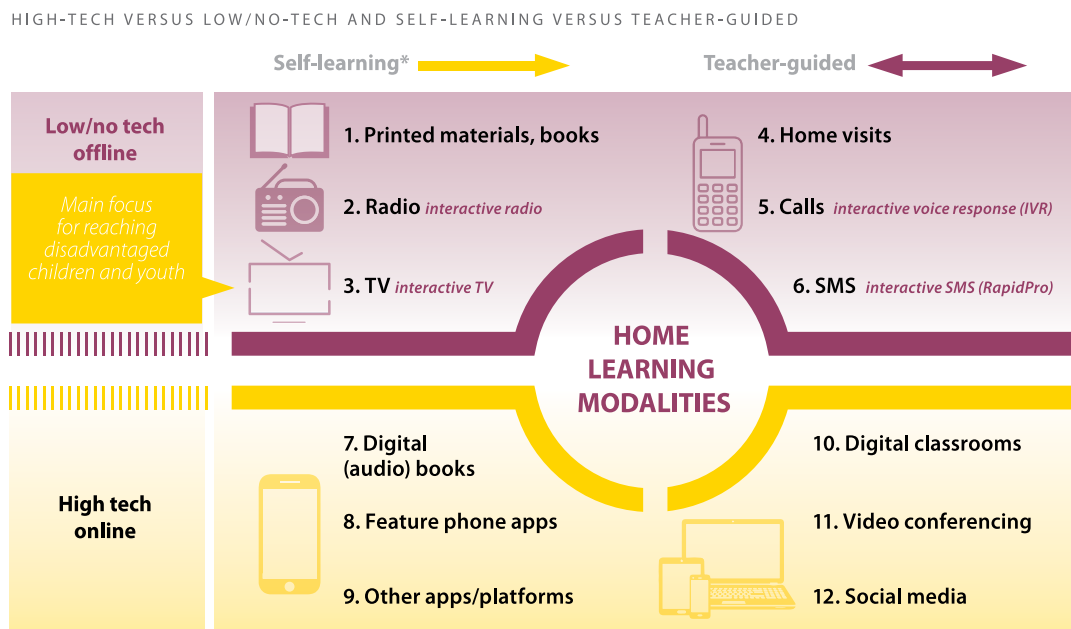
A condensed curriculum supports learners to acquire key knowledge and skills in a shortened timeframe. (AEWG, 2020<sup>50</sup>). First, it modifies the standard curriculum to focus on the most essential knowledge and skills, often in core subjects such as languages and mathematics. This is often about targeting priority areas that are most consequential for progression in the next academic year. Second, it provides an opportunity to integrate important skills such as communication, problem solving, decision-making, collaboration, critical-thinking skills and social-emotional learning.

Third, it can often merge fragmented and compartmentalized content into integrated topics of learning, enabling learners to make connections among related knowledge across disciplines.

49 UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. 2020. Guidance on Distance Learning Modalities to Reach All Children and Youth During School Closures. Kathmandu, Nepal. [https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/7996/file/Guidance%20Continuity%20of%20Learning%20during%20COVID-19%20-%20Reaching%20All%20Children\\_UNICEF%20ROSA.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/7996/file/Guidance%20Continuity%20of%20Learning%20during%20COVID-19%20-%20Reaching%20All%20Children_UNICEF%20ROSA.pdf).

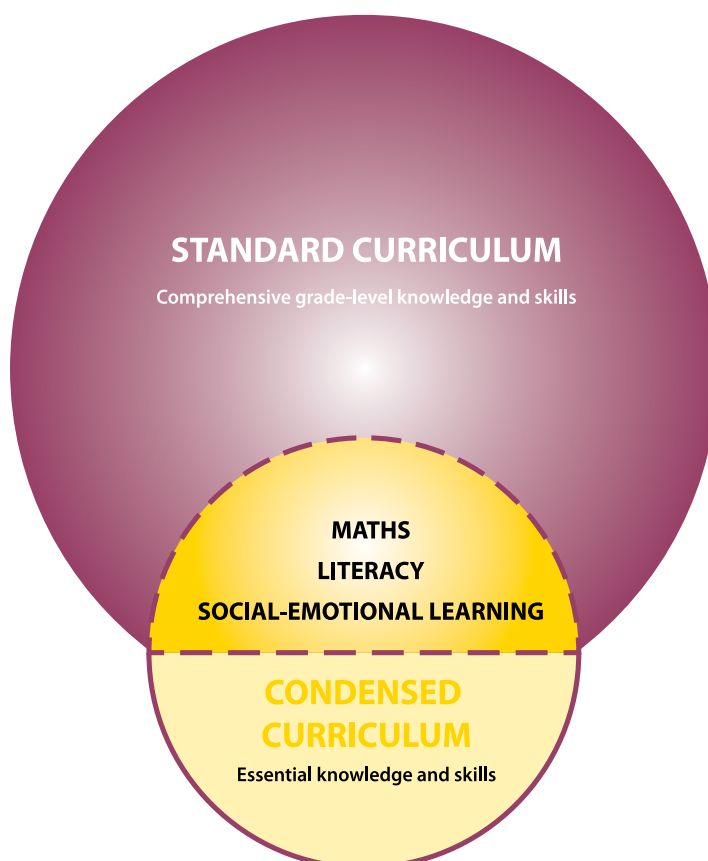
50 Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG) 2020. COVID-19 Pathways for the Return to Learning: Guidance on Condensing a Curriculum. [https://inee.org/system/files/resources/AEWG\\_Guidance%20on%20Condensing%20a%20Curriculum-Considerations%20for%20Practitioners-screen\\_3.pdf](https://inee.org/system/files/resources/AEWG_Guidance%20on%20Condensing%20a%20Curriculum-Considerations%20for%20Practitioners-screen_3.pdf).

Figure 8: Home learning modalities matrix



Source: UNICEF ROSA, 2020.

Figure 9: Relationship between standard, official curriculum and condensed curriculum



Source: Accelerated Education Working Group, 2020.

Certain principles should guide the process of curriculum condensing or reorganization. See Table 1.

Ensuring inclusivity is vital in the reorganizing process. For example, language is a major consideration. If special measures are not taken, minority language speakers risk being excluded from accessing learning materials and of experiencing severe learning loss. Modifications may also be required to increase the chances of success for children with disabilities. Such students may include students with a wide variety of mild to severe cognitive, physical, social, emotional and behavioural problems. With necessary accommodations and adaptations, all students can be enabled to fully access the curriculum and to make meaningful progress appropriate to their ability.

It is also possible to rearrange the curriculum according to the learners' mastery levels. In doing this, teachers would need to collaborate with families, curriculum developers and other stakeholders.

### 9.3.5 Remote learning opportunities for children without connectivity

#### Learning kits

Printed materials are critical for learners who are without online access and can include textbooks, supplementary books, worksheets, and assignments. Drawing from the existing experience of COVID-19, school systems can plan in advance for prolonged school closures by preparing instructional packets for use at home. Already in many countries, children are provided with instructional packets before they go on summer or winter breaks. Packets could include generic materials that are grade- and subject-specific and designed to promote learning with a degree of generality, or unit-specific materials that are based on the planned curriculum. In the United States, one intervention included mailing 10 books to students over a summer break, accompanied by email or text messages for parents, was reported to have promoted more

than one month of gains in reading skills (Mundy & Hares 2020<sup>51</sup>).

#### Radio-based approach to learning during COVID-19

Radio lessons have played a key role in giving learning continuity to many children in the COVID-19 pandemic. According to UNESCO statistics, some 826 million students (50 per cent) kept out of classrooms did not have access to a computer at home. Around 706 million students lacked internet access. Some 56 million lived in areas not covered by mobile networks (UNESCO, 2020g<sup>52</sup>). Thus, many countries turned to radio-based programmes to implement distance education that could reach the most marginalized learners. In situations where households lack radios, it is often possible to provide devices because of their low costs. Many countries in Asia and Africa have long been using radio-based programmes, which may involve one-way communication or be designed to be interactive (UNESCO, 2020h<sup>53</sup>).

In many countries, Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) has long been used as a tool to help students learn content (EDC, 2009<sup>54</sup>). IRI features audio lessons, including learning exercises and games, that support and guide a teacher and students in a classroom. Activities such as group work are also supported and children are encouraged to interact with each other and with their 'audio' teacher.

Use of educational TV or TV-based instruction During the pandemic, many countries used television to enable access to distance education and to ensure learning continuity. It was reported

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51 K. Mundy & S. Hares. 2020. Equity-Focused Approaches to Learning Loss during COVID-19. Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/equity-focused-approaches-learning-loss-during-covid-19>.

52 UNESCO. 2020g. April 21. Startling digital divides in distance learning emerge. <https://en.unesco.org/news/startling-digital-divides-distance-learning-emerge>.

53 UNESCO. 2020h. Learning through radio and television in the time of COVID-19. <https://en.unesco.org/news/learning-through-radio-and-television-time-covid-19>.

54 Education Development Center, INC. 2009. Tuned in to Student Success: Assessing the Impact of Interactive Radio Instruction for the Hardest to Reach. <http://idd.edc.org/sites/idd.edc.org/files/EDC%20Tuned%20in%20to%20Student%20Success%20Report.pdf>.

Table 1: Condensing Curriculum: Basic Design Principles

DESIGN PRINCIPLE	STANDARD CURRICULUM	CONDENSED CURRICULUM
<b>Inclusive</b>	Practices, pedagogy and materials are gender-sensitive and inclusive of all learners including girls, learners from marginalised communities and learners with disabilities.	
<b>Outcome-based</b>	Learning outcomes describes everything learners are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the school year.	Limited number of priority outcomes with a focus on literacy, mathematics, thinking skills and problem-solving. Priority outcomes address knowledge skills that learners can use across multiple subject areas.
<b>Coherent</b>	Lesson objectives and learning experiences are logically sequenced to build knowledge and skills at the current grade level.	Lesson objectives address both grade-level and key prerequisite skills. Lesson experiences are logically sequenced to support the acquisition of priority outcomes and include lessons that directly teach prerequisite knowledge and skills.
<b>Comprehensible</b>	Learning activities, cognitive tasks, language, materials and pacing are developmentally appropriate.	Pacing gives sufficient time for learners to master foundational literacy, mathematics and critical-thinking skills. Decisions are based on reducing instructional time for other subject areas and/or integrating them into literacy or mathematics where appropriate.
<b>Relevant</b>	Model lessons include examples of instructional practices and learning materials that engage and motivate learners.	Model lessons include examples of instructional practices in learning materials that engage and motivate learners in physically-distanced and distance learning settings.
<b>Supportive</b>	Learning experiences should address the learners' physical, social and emotional well-being.	Socio-emotional learning is an integral part of the curriculum. Learner's well-being is addressed through structures and strategies that help them cope specifically with the trauma and disruption caused by the pandemic.

Source: Accelerated Education Working Group, 2020.

## □ CASE STUDY 11

### Multilingual students in Cambodia continue learning despite school closures

An initiative in Cambodia sought to ensure that all children, including the most marginalized, could continue to learn when schools were closed amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Multilingual education delivered by radio was among the distance-based learning modalities introduced by Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), together with UNICEF, to benefit ethnic minority children in the North Eastern provinces

of Kratie, Ratanakiri and Mondulhiri.

The support included lessons for pre- and primary school multilingual students in the Krung and Tampuan languages in Ratanakiri province, and in the Central Mnong language in Mondulhiri province.

An estimated 1,527 students from 79 primary schools who did not own a radio were due to receive one in April 2021, bringing lessons into their home.

In addition, 34 community preschool MLE teachers and 70 primary school MLE teachers were due to receive radios to be used for teaching purposes in the classroom or during distance teaching and learning activities.

The initiative was being delivered through Cambodia's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, with funding assistance from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Source: Global Partnership for Education. 2021. April. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/news/radio-based-program-helps-multilingual-students-continue-learning-despite-school-closures>.

### How can teachers enhance the learning value of radio or TV-based lessons?

- Follow up on the learning experience of students after radio or TV lessons. Encourage students to share and discuss their experience. Engage family members in following up with the students.
- Organize/facilitate peer discussion on the learning and ask students to share their insights with the teachers and others, if any means of communication is available.
- Set specific goals or activities for students to achieve or accomplish.
- Stay connected with your students after the radio or TV lessons to provide any help they might need.
- Collaborate with broadcasters, education officials, producers and developers to provide feedback and tips on what kind of materials might be useful to students.

that TV has the potential to reach 62 per cent of the total students globally, and that 77 per cent of the total countries deployed TV in their national response to a COVID educational strategy (UNICEF, 2020a<sup>55</sup>).

Educational television includes live and pre-recorded broadcasts, and has the advantage that it can be offered to a large group of users. TV lessons are best when they take care to target children of different conditions, ages and abilities. Programmes should be developed in local languages, keeping in view the needs of minority language speakers. The use of subtitles, and of sign language, helps for different types of viewers. Inclusiveness can additionally be achieved through lesson presenters being women as well as men, from different ethnic/cultural groups, and being persons with disabilities. Programmes can be designed to combine with print materials such as workbooks, and written homework assignments. Text messages and social media can be used to inform parents, teachers, students and others with reminders about programmes, or to share relevant instructions, or to solicit feedback. Attempts should be made to make TV lessons more interactive, such as by having the learner answer questions during lessons.

Before implementing TV-based instruction, teachers should undertake a survey using telephone, physical contact or SMS to find out who has access to TV. Students should know the broadcast schedules for lessons and it is helpful if students are prepared by teachers for each lesson. Parents may be encouraged to join in engaging with broadcasts. Teachers should also be prepared for follow up action after broadcasts.

The value of educational broadcasts aired through TV or radio often goes beyond the teaching of curriculum contents. Lessons can include materials that are useful to all – children, youth, and adults – and include topics of wide

interest and relevance such as health and psychosocial well-being.

### Teaching through mobile phones

In recent years, simple mobile phones have been widely available to most households, even in low-income countries. Phones have been used in a number of countries to bridge the gap between school and home for disadvantaged children and youth without access to internet, TV or radio. Although they are not the ultimate solution, phones can maintain lines of communication, share learning, and help build a community. Mobile phones can also be effectively used alongside other media such as radio and television. Many basic phones give access to radios, so in situations where radio sets are not available mobile phones can be used to join radio-based instruction. Phones can facilitate teacher–student interactions through phone calls and messaging (SMS). Mobile phones have been used to give assignments and submit assignments, while feedback can be provided through phone calls or SMS. Phones can also be used to monitor student learning, check on student well-being and give general guidance. Case Study 12 shows some of the ways in which mobile phones support education provision in Sub-Saharan Africa (Burns, 2020<sup>56</sup>).

### Teacher home visits

During the COVID-19 emergency, home visit programmes played a vital role in addressing the learning needs of students, especially of girls, children with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups of children. Home visits allowed teachers to build trusted relationships with families and to reach into communities experiencing disparities and vulnerabilities. In many countries, teachers organized safely distanced outdoor reading sessions, art lessons, or any other lessons on sidewalks, driveways, parking lots or in a park or any available open space. A case study from Nepal illustrates how

55 UNICEF. 2020a. May 7. Can broadcast media foster equitable learning during the COVID-19 epidemic? <https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/can-broadcast-media-foster-equitable-learning-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic/>.

56 Burns, M. 2020. School, Interrupted: 4 Options for Distance Education to Continue Teaching During COVID-19. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/school-interrupted-4-options-distance-education-continue-teaching-during-covid-19>.

## □ CASE STUDY 12

### Using mobile phones for education in Sub-Saharan Africa

The high rates of mobile phone ownership everywhere have opened up educational opportunities for students in many countries. For example, teachers can use social media, including messaging apps, to send information and content and organize discussions. In Niger, SMS has been used for literacy

and numeracy instruction. In South Africa, serialized m-novels and mobile-based storybooks are being provided. Commercial phone-based tutoring and SMS support are offered in many locations. Text messages can also “nudge” people into proactive behaviours such as reading to their children.

Educational apps are also used to help students learn basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well a wide variety of other content. Many apps allow students to create content. Edutainment programming is also available on smartphones.

Source: Mary Burns. 2020.

## □ CASE STUDY 13

### Teaching door-to-door in Nepal

During the school lockdown in Nepal, remote learning was a challenge – especially for students living in hilly areas of the country with poor access to an internet connection or even a radio. Around 25 per cent of students in Nepal do not have any kind of access to digital and online resources. In collaboration with local governments, the National Campaign for Education

employed a method of door-to-door teaching. Under this approach, teachers in hilly regions aimed to reach 4–5 houses in a day, often visiting in the evenings after field work had ended.

The door-to-door approach presented a unique opportunity for teachers to interact with parents, and this proved to have

a very positive impact on parents' attitude towards their children's' continued education.

In some cases, teachers were also able to establish outside learning centres in villages, where they could gather the children and teach them while maintaining physical distancing.

Source: C. Neltoft. 2021.

teachers managed to conduct door-to-door teaching during a school lockdown (Neltoft, 2021<sup>57</sup>).

### Community learning hubs

Community learning hubs are local initiatives to support student's learning and well-being. Hubs gather teachers and small number of students, usually 6–12 or more, under the appropriate health guidelines, to provide a safe learning space. During the pandemic, hubs became a lifeline for many students. Hubs were particularly useful for children with disabilities, children from low-income groups, or children of linguistic/ethnic minorities and girls. Hubs also provided teachers with an opportunity to access remote instruction via technologies.

A similar concept is the small learning group. In some countries, committed teachers organized students in small numbers (6–10) from the local area to form learning groups. Parents often provided spaces to host the activities which provided normalcy and routine in the daily lives of students. In some communities, local volunteers or community mobilizers were enlisted.

### Peer-assisted learning

Peer tutoring is also an option to address students' different learning needs. It is based on principles of cooperative learning and pairs students together, giving them the role of instructor or learner, which can be swapped depending on the situation. Student peers can meet face-to-face or online. Sessions may be formal or informal. While all children can benefit from such arrangements, it can be particularly useful for students who have academic problems. It is possible to learn both cognitive and non-cognitive skills from these reciprocal learning strategies.

### Community outreach: preventing dropouts

Millions of students either dropped out of schools or have been on the verge of dropping

57 Neltoft, C. 2021. Door-to-Door Teaching in Nepal During School Lockdown. Education Out Loud. <https://educationoutloud.org/door-door-teaching-nepal-during-school-lockdown>.

out of school due to COVID-19. There have been estimates that around 24 million children, mostly girls and vulnerable children, would not return to class as schools resumed normal teaching and learning (UNESCO 2020i<sup>58</sup>). Teachers have a responsibility to do their best to prevent the incidence of students dropping out. It is often possible to identify those who are at risk well before they stop engaging in school. Teachers should be aware of and look for signs of disengagement, and act to maximize engagement and supports. Some groups are more susceptible to falling behind in learning and are at a heightened risk of dropping out. These include girls, refugees, migrants, internally displaced peoples, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, students with disabilities, and students in rural areas.

A number of actions can be taken. First, it is important to collect data on student performance. Poor attendance, erratic behaviour, and falling grades are predictive of possible dropping out and should result in providing personalized support.

Second, develop trusted relationship with students. The presence of a caring, trusted adult contributes to child engagement and resilience. Keep lines of communication open with the students and their families. Convey the message that they matter to you and that you are available for support, including one-on-one support.

Third, try to be aware of any economic or any other difficult family situation that may manifest in a child's poor engagement with school. Offer information to students and families on how to cope with challenges. If you can, connect families with local service providers, NGOs or community group that could provide support.

Fourth, emphasize the importance of education to students and their families. In the event that students are not willing to continue their education through a formal route, there might be alternative learning opportunities.

58 UNESCO. 2020i. UNESCO COVID-19 education response: how many students are at risk of not returning to school? Paris, UNESCO.



## Reflection

If you are a teacher educator or a teacher, how did your students continue their learning during the school closures? (If you are not in these roles, just indicate what was done to ensure learning continuity in your community).

Learning kits \_\_\_\_\_

Radio \_\_\_\_\_

Television \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phones/smartphones/tablets \_\_\_\_\_

Online (websites/learning platforms) \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, students who drop out of high school often suffer from low self-esteem. Teachers should be alert to this and work to build student confidence.

### 9.3.6. Teacher's role in remote learning

Teachers' roles changed significantly during the pandemic. As frontline workers, teachers have had to be engaged in multiple roles in the most difficult circumstances, calling for significant teacher leadership, creativity and innovation.

According to UNESCO (2020j<sup>59</sup>), teachers as providers of home-based remote learning were performing a number of roles: a) distance learning settings builder; b) emotional caregiver and learning partner; c) micro-curriculum planner; d) Instructional designer; and e) tutor.

In particular, teacher's caregiving role has come to the fore. The crisis has shown how important it is to attend to the academic and personal needs of all students. Additionally, teachers' personal and professional lives have become more intertwined and it was imperative that teachers, teacher

educators, policy-makers, and others advocated to improve teachers' working conditions and their rights. Teacher professional development has also begun to be reconceptualized.

### 9.3.7. Factors that enhance student access to remote learning

A number of factors contribute to make the provision of remote learning effective. These include:

**A national, overarching education sector response strategy:** Remote learning in times of crisis should be guided by an education sector response strategy that explains the objectives, priorities, modalities, activities, implementation responsibilities, coordination, financing, and monitoring and evaluation of programmes and activities. The strategy should be an essential part of the larger national emergency plan. It should be focused on mitigating the immediate impact of a crisis on teaching and learning as well as on a long-term strategy for recovery. Teacher educators and teachers and other stakeholders should know in advance how their work is linked to the overall national framework.

59 UNESCO. 2020j. Ensuring effective distance learning during COVID-19 disruption: guidance for teachers. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375116>.

## Reflection

**It is important to identify students who are at risk of not returning to school or at risk of dropping out while at school. What actions did your school take, or has planned, to prevent students from dropping out of school?**

**Identify students at risk of not returning:**

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**Identify students at risk of dropping out:**

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### ***Centrally coordinated, one-stop portal:***

Emergency education affairs should be centrally coordinated and provide access to information and resources through a one-stop portal. Provincial or regional websites should be linked to the national website to avoid overlapping or contradictory messages. The portal should contain information concerning different learning modalities being implemented and how these can be accessed. Central authorities should give clear guidance on which content materials to use.

***School leadership:*** When faced with a crisis situation, school leaders should be guided by a strong institutional vision founded on clear values that enable them to mount an effective response. School leaders must engage in effective communication, be flexible and adaptive, and pay attention to the emotional well-being and health of teachers and students. The head teacher should make sure that there is a learning continuity plan and that it is being followed. It is important that the leader maintains and strengthens connectivity with students, teachers, families, education officers and local officials.

### ***Teacher capacity development and support system:***

Effective professional development will help teachers plan, coordinate, organize and implement activities for learning continuity. Many teachers had to get on with remote teaching without any preparation during the pandemic. Some managed to get quick-fix training, but this is not enough. Working in a new education climate requires new types of training.

***Teacher availability for support:*** Whatever the modality of learning, the teacher's role is critical. Teachers should continue to communicate with their students, parents and local community members through agreed and routine methods. Students should be assured that support is available from their teachers in times of crisis.

### ***Parental/community engagement, support and supervision:***

Parents and local communities should recognize the importance of learning continuity and be well-informed of the various learning programmes that are planned and available, including how to access them. Without parental and community support, programmes cannot be successfully implemented.

***Inclusion and equity-focused activities:***

The COVID-19 crisis hit the most vulnerable students the hardest. Without an intense and deliberate focus on equity and inclusion, they will be last to recover. The growing inequity and digital divides underscore the need for accessibility considerations when designing solutions. In particular, the physical and socio-emotional needs of particularly vulnerable groups of students should be prioritized.

***Collaboration and multistakeholder***

***partnerships:*** Governments and education institutions can forge partnerships and collaborations with the private/business sector for the provision of free or low-cost online courses to learners. Continued multistakeholder collaboration is crucial to developing sound strategies for the reopening of schools, reversing learning losses, and creating a long-term vision and programme for hybrid learning.

## 9.4 Towards learning recovery during and beyond COVID-19

As education policy-makers and educators discussed resuming school activities and the process of recovery, much uncertainty remained. Educational recovery involves a complex set of coordinated educational, operational and public health strategies. This section discusses possible measures that might be considered.

### 9.4.1 Meeting children's health, psychosocial well-being and other needs

Psychological recovery is an important aspect of educational recovery. Students who are disturbed emotionally and mentally and who have had traumatic experiences will struggle to learn. Teachers should be supported with training in social and emotional learning (SEL) in order that they can best support their students.

- Teachers, teacher educators and heads of schools can assist students in many ways, including:
- Identify students or families in distress and in need of support.

## Reflection

**If you are a teacher educator or teacher, how did you maintain your communication with your students and their families?**

**Direct phone calls** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

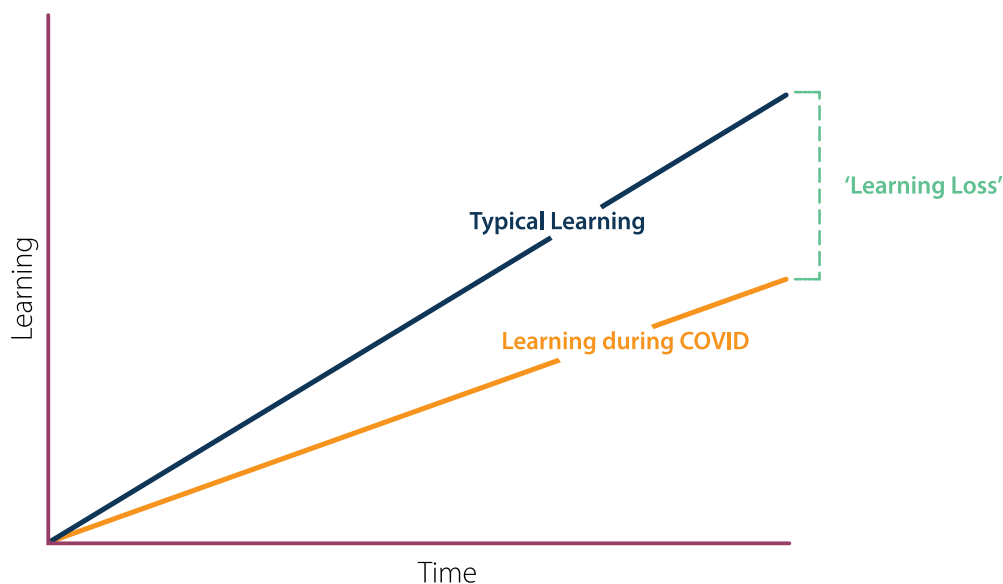
**Messaging** \_\_\_\_\_

**In-person meetings at school** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home visits** \_\_\_\_\_

**No communication** \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 10: How to think about 'learning loss' associated with COVID-19.



- Coordinate with the health, nutrition, child protection and other sectors who are mandated to provide services. Establish links between families or children in need and suitable agencies. If school-based or community-based mental health professionals such as counsellors, social workers, and psychologists are available, they should be mobilized to provide more intensive support.
- Work closely with the families. Families need to be provided with information on health and well-being, verbally or through other means.
- Support student peer networks. Social connection is a strong protective factor for helping people thrive.

#### 9.4.2 Mitigating learning loss

Learning loss typically refers to the knowledge lost when students experience extended time away from school. It can also describe declining student achievement. Prior to the pandemic, learning loss was typically understood in terms of content forgotten or lost by students due to breaks in instruction during vacations. Since the pandemic, learning loss has become the focus of

education policy across the world. Learning losses are likely to manifest differently across grades and subjects and among different students. Some educators believe that learning loss recovery needs will be intensive, and concentrated in the early grades and among at-risk students (Pier, et.al. 2021<sup>60</sup>). Losses will be larger in core subjects such as math, science and languages. Figure 10 shows this hypothesized effect.

Before the pandemic, there were already several initiatives to estimate learning losses as a result of crises, and a realization that losses can continue to compound even after children return to school. Four years after children missed three months of school following the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, an assessment found that the children were the learning equivalent of 1.5 years behind where they would have been with no earthquake (Kaffenberger, 2020<sup>61</sup>).

60 Pier, L., et. Al. 2021. January 25. COVID-19 and the educational equity crisis: Evidence on learning loss from the CORE Data Collaborative [Commentary]. Policy Analysis for California Education. <https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/covid-19-and-educational-equity-crisis>.

61 Kaffenberger, M. 2020. How much learning may be lost in the long-run from COVID-19 and how can mitigation strategies help? Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2020/06/15/how-much-learning-may-be-lost-in-the-long-run-from-covid-19-and-how-can-mitigation-strategies-help/>.

## Reflection

**If you are a teacher educator, or teacher, what is your experience regarding student learning loss? In what areas of knowledge are students prone to experience learning loss at the primary level? What areas of skills are students prone to forget? Which students may be more likely to have a larger learning loss?**

According to a calculation of the World Bank (2020b<sup>62</sup>), the learning poverty indicator—a measure of the percentage of ten-year-olds who cannot read and understand even a simple text—would increase to 63 per cent during the pandemic from 53 per cent prior to the crisis.

### 9.4.3 Strategies to mitigate learning loss

Assess the magnitude of learning losses. Measuring learning loss is a critical first step towards mitigating it. Once children's learning levels are established, it is possible to design appropriate remediate education and acceleration strategies. Formative assessments can provide a means of ascertaining students' individual needs and personalizing their instruction effectively.

#### Remedial instruction

Remediation has been a common instructional technique used to help students to catch up on missed lessons and skills and to get back on track in terms of expected grade-level competencies. However, there may be shortcomings with the approach. Research has indicated that some remedial approaches, including down-tracking, and grade retention, actually undermine achievement (Learning Policy Institute, 2020). According to the US National Center for Learning Disabilities (2020), remediation can result in lowered expectations for students with disabilities and relegate them to lower 'tracks' than their nondisabled peers. The approach may

make some students feel as though they are not able to do grade-level work.

#### Accelerated education

Accelerated education supports children to make up for lost learning, using instructional strategies that are proven to help students to acquire grade-level content. The approach is based on high expectations and recognizes the potential of each student. It often provides students with grade-level materials, tasks or assignments, together with appropriate supports to make the work accessible. Many alternative education programmes designed for over-age children and out-of-school children use accelerated learning approaches to provide learners with equivalent, certified competencies.

#### Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework to improve teaching and learning in an inclusive manner. Recognizing that there is no typical student, and that student needs and capacities are different, teachers are required to find ways to create different learning opportunities and to remove any barriers to learning. Flexibility is key as teachers deploy alternative pathways to help students reach their objectives. Approaches could include small group discussions, and small teacher-to-student ratios, to help build ownership of learning for students, and reinforce social ties that improve learning outcomes. For more on UDL, see Module 4.

#### Project-based learning

Project-based learning is a highly learner-centred approach to teaching and learning

62 The World Bank. 2021a. Pandemic threatens to drive unprecedented number of children into learning poverty. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/10/29/world-bank-pandemic-threatens-to-drive-unprecedented-number-of-children-into-learning-poverty>.

which often links different areas of the school curriculum through practical, engaging, and hands-on projects. It is known to increase student engagement. For more on project-based learning, see Module 5.

### Targeted support in academic subjects vulnerable to learning loss

Not all subjects are equally vulnerable to learning loss. Experience suggests that most students face more difficulty in core subjects such as math, science and languages. Teachers can find out where gaps are in student knowledge through regular formative assessments. Once gaps are identified, schools can think about ways to provide additional support in these areas. Students who speak minority languages and students with disabilities may need additional support.

### Expanded learning time

The school day and year, as typically designed, will not be sufficient to overcome learning gaps.

Strategies that expand learning time and are designed to enrich learning time can create powerful learning opportunities, leading to learning acceleration. This can include time before and after the usual school day, and vacations and other scheduled breaks. Activities can include after and out-of-school programmes, summer programmes, the pull-out model during school hours, learning camps, and tutoring programmes. Expanded learning time must complement regular learning in order to support essential curricular standards.

## 9.5. Transitioning from emergency remote teaching to hybrid learning

In the wake of the continued threat of COVID-19 or other crises, education systems have been forced to search for resilient systems of education delivery. Resilient school systems are those that have the capacity to switch easily from in-person instruction to remote instruction, including hybrid learning. This section introduces key features of

## □ CASE STUDY 14

### Teaching at the Right Level

Programmes to address learning loss do not have to be newly invented. In many countries there are already a number of proven programmes that can be used, modified or scaled up. One such initiative is the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach (UNICEF, 2020b).

TaRL is an evidence-based intervention proven to quickly equip children in grades 3–5 with basic skills.

The approach includes three steps: one-on-one oral assessment of children's reading and arithmetic skills; grouping children by ability level rather than by age or grade; and dedicating a period of the day or year on foundational reading and mathematics using a combination of evidence-based activities.

TaRL approaches are currently being

implemented in at least 12 African countries.

A UNICEF-supported pilot in Borno State, Nigeria, for example, achieved impressive results in a small group of formal and Quranic schools, which contributed to the government's buy-in to scale up interventions in neighbouring states.

Source: UNICEF. Teaching at the Right Level. 2020. <https://www.teachingattherightlevel.org/>.

## Reflection

**If there was any learning loss among your students, how would you determine the loss?  
What will you do to detect the learning loss?**

**What actions will you take to help students catch up with their learning?**

- Remedial programmes
- Acceleration
- Curriculum reorganization
- Tutoring support
- Extracurricular activities
- Any other

these approaches and discusses how they can be used by teacher educators and teachers to deliver inclusive quality learning for all.

### 9.5.1 Imperatives for a hybrid mode of learning

#### **Need for a system that is resilient to shocks**

COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of creating education systems that are resilient to shocks. Hybrid learning models can facilitate learning continuity by enabling teaching and learning to occur in-person and/or remotely, primarily online, on an as-needed basis. The twin-track approach (see Module 1) is an important way to support access to and the quality of education for all learners, while ensuring that additional, more specialized support is available for those who need it.

#### **Critical role of technology**

The pandemic has clearly illustrated the importance of technology in education. Technology can support and enhance education and also serve to democratize and equalize education opportunities. Conversely, the use of technology can also deepen education gaps and disparities. In addition, the pandemic has also illustrated that technology cannot replace teachers in their vital roles to guide, mentor, facilitate and support students.

#### **Time to reexamine traditional in-person instruction**

The pandemic has demonstrated that learning can take place beyond the boundaries of physical schools. Schooling can have flexible forms, flexible times and flexible providers. The use of remote learning options with increased involvement of families and communities shows that complementary learning spaces can play an important role in learning. Some education analysts contend that COVID-19 has created a momentum for examining the historic monopoly of formal, in-person instruction.

#### **Complementarity between in-person and online learning**

In-person education can be strengthened by establishing complementarity with online learning. The experience gathered thus far from online learning gives clear opportunities to design new ways of teaching and learning, and of assessing students. In-person and online learning can clearly go hand-in-hand.

#### **Laying the foundation for hybrid learning**

The pandemic has built the initial groundwork for hybrid learning. Many teachers have developed the confidence to conduct online teaching, utilize online learning resources, and design and facilitate TV or radio-based instruction. Schools and homes have increasingly

come together to facilitate children's education. Many countries have been taking action towards developing ICT infrastructure and connectivity. In future, education systems that are unable to offer seamless hybrid methodologies may find themselves being left behind.

### 9.5.2 Understanding hybrid learning

Hybrid learning is defined as a learning approach that combines remote and in-classroom learning, helping to ensure learning continuity and improve learning outcomes for students (UNESCO, 2020e<sup>63</sup>). It may encompass the opportunities and flexibility that will be necessary for the future of education.

#### Key principles of hybrid learning:

- Offers the learner greater flexibility, an element of self-direction and freedom of choice, and empowers the learner to exercise greater ownership of his/her learning progress.
- Helps personalize learning to the needs of the student, who can work/learn at his/her own pace.
- Provides a collaborative setting where students can share information and work between and/or among themselves, creating a more enriched learning experience.
- Allows schools to maximize instructional time during school closures.
- Transforms pedagogy toward student-centred, active learning methods and a deeper level of engagement.
- Allows the use of diverse learning tools and resources – print/non-print, audio/video, digital/non-digital, that help to differentiate instruction and that can support learning at different levels and for students with specific sets of needs.

63 ibid.

### 9.5.3 Different models of hybrid learning

It is often said that there are as many ways of blending face-to-face classroom time and online/remote lessons as there are students. At one end of the scale, hybrid learning can be applied to reduce physical attendance in favour of, for example, videoconferencing, so as to create smaller groups that allow for appropriate social distancing. On the other end of the scale, it is also hybrid learning when in-person classes are the prevalent mode of teaching, with technology performing a supporting role. This flexibility is what makes hybrid learning a viable model for crisis situations.

According to UNESCO (2020e<sup>64</sup>), there have been six different types of hybrid learning options in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

### 9.5.4 Key considerations in making choices around a hybrid learning strategy during COVID-19

#### Decide on the overall scope, focus and target group

First, it needs to be decided whether the hybrid model is to be adopted simply as an interim measure or as a more long-term strategy to optimize the different advantages of in-person and remote methods. Second, review the scope of curriculum response that can be covered using the hybrid option. Third, decide whether the hybrid strategy is to allow the class pace to move along together with the pace of the teacher, or whether there can be a fully self-paced strategy for individual students. Choices may need to be made around the needs of small subsets of students who may be more in need of in-person instruction.

#### Decide on segments of students and their needs for remote or in-person learning

Not all students will be able to participate in and benefit from remote learning. According to

64 UNESCO. 2020e. COVID-19 Response – Hybrid Learning. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373767/PDF/373767eng.pdf.multi>.



UNESCO (2020e<sup>65</sup>), the following categories of students either cannot participate or fully benefit from remote/hybrid instruction, so the hybrid strategy should pay attention to their needs:

- Students who are living with people at high risk;
- Students whose parents are not comfortable sending their children for in-person learning because of the possible health risks;
- Students who are in the last grade of an education system and who will be taking high-stake examinations;
- Children of parents who require child care;
- Students without access to remote learning;
- Vulnerable groups of students whose learning and well-being will be impacted by being away (children with disabilities, linguistic minorities, children at risk of dropping out).

### Decide on the grade level (primary or secondary) for remote or in-person learning

Evaluations have shown that primary school students find it particularly challenging to benefit from remote learning. Younger children need a level of guidance, social interaction and visible learning opportunities that are difficult to create in a remote/hybrid learning environment. It has also been pointed out that remote/hybrid instruction for primary school children can have profound social consequences, including forcing women to leave their jobs or reduce working hours (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2020<sup>66</sup>).

### Choose the learning option based on the digital maturity level

Local circumstances, including in relation to digital infrastructure, resources, or expertise, often dictate whether or not a school system is ready for online learning. Countries that lack the resources and expertise for online learning may choose the traditional form of broadcast media, phone-

65 Ibid.

66 Hanushek E and L. Woessmann, 2020. "The Economic Impacts of Learning Losses", Education Working Papers, No. 225. Paris, OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/education/The-economic-impacts-of-coronavirus-covid-19-learning-losses.pdf>.

messaging apps, and paper-based learning materials. A report prepared by McKinsey and Company (2020<sup>67</sup>) classifies school systems' digital maturity level into four categories (Figure 11).

### Decide on the subjects that will be prioritized for remote/online learning

Factors to be considered include: the strengths and difficulties of students, the importance of the subject for students' schooling journeys, the availability of a trained/qualified teacher, the extent to which the subject requires in-person equipment, and the degree to which the subject is suitable for adaptive software for remote learning. Additional issues include examination requirements and the availability of quality online materials.

Schools should also decide which activities for each subject can be carried out remotely or in-person. In-person learning is most suitable for activities that require students to create social connection with the teacher or peers, and for activities requiring physical equipment, formal evaluation, intensive collaboration, group work and class discussion. Many other activities such as communicating new assignments and information, teaching new concepts, and activities requiring independent practice can be handled remotely.

Figure 12 presents possible hybrid models that might be suitable for each subject and age group. Remote learning options for young children (aged 4–8) are often not suitable. For children aged 8–12, core subjects such as maths and languages can be taught in-person, as remote options are often not suitable. Non-core subjects can be delivered through remote options. In the case of older children (12–17) and youth (17–18), mathematics, languages and sciences can be delivered through flipped methods. Social studies and additional languages can be taught using the asynchronous hybrid model.

67 McKinsey & Company. 2020. Back to School: Lessons for Effective Remote and Hybrid Learning. <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/Mckinsey/Industries/Public%20and%20Social%20Sector/Our%20Insights/Back%20to%20school%20A%20framework%20for%20remote%20and%20hybrid%20learning%20amid%20COVID%2019/Back-to-school-A-framework-for-remote-and-hybrid-learning-amid-COVID-19-vf.pdf>.

Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>IN-PERSON MODEL</b>	Facilitates in-person teaching and learning.	Has a higher risk of spreading the virus. Physical distancing and safety protocols need to be implemented. Limited numbers of students can be taught at one time.
<b>HOMEWORK MODEL</b>	Formal instruction takes place in-person at school, while further practice of newly acquired concepts is conducted at home. This offers a reasonable blending of in-person and remote options.	Teachers do not have control over the remote learning aspect.
<b>FLIPPED CLASSROOM</b>	The flipped classroom begins with instruction at home, followed by practice at school. The model enables teachers to check on students' understanding of material and provide in-person feedback.	Parents have a role to play when students are learning at home. If parents are not able to provide support, it may be difficult for students to grasp material.
<b>SYNCHRONOUS LIVE (with videoconference)</b>	This model allows for one group of students learning in-person and another group learning remotely via videoconferencing, at the same time.	Those who are attending the class remotely may find it difficult to follow and teachers will not be able to observe how remote students are learning the material. Teachers may not be able to respond to students' questions or engage them to participate.
<b>ASYNCHRONOUS HYBRID</b>	This model is a combination of learning activities completed at school and at home. Instruction, practice and feedback take place at school in a traditional classroom and students continue further learning at home. This is again followed by classroom review and feedback.	Its effectiveness potentially depends on the availability of good quality learning resources and teacher's ability to support students during the instruction and review phases.
<b>REMOTE MODEL</b>	The entire learning experience is undertaken remotely. The remote option offers more safety during the times of a pandemic or any crisis.	This option might not be effective for younger children and for certain content subjects.

### Other hybrid models and concepts

<b>Concurrent</b>	<b>Teaching live sessions to in-person students and remote students over video simultaneously.</b>
<b>Split modality</b>	<b>Teaching live sessions only with in-person students and assigning independent learning activities to remote students.</b>
<b>Split schedule</b>	<b>Teaching in-person for part of the day and live over video to remote students for part of the day.</b>
<b>Split staffing</b>	<b>Having different teachers specialize in either in-person or remote teaching.</b>

Figure 11: School systems based on their digital maturity level

No tech maturity	Low maturity	Medium maturity	High maturity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning material limited to printed shets and textbooks.</li> <li>Teacher-student interaction limited to physical notes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning material can be shared through mass coverage through TV and radion programmes.</li> <li>Teacher-student interaction can be faciliated through basic phones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning material can be shared in multiple and tailored ways (eg, teachers share videos and offline work assignments).</li> <li>Teacher-student interaction can be faciliated through mulitple options (eg, email, videoconference) and with multiple students at a time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning material can consist of virtual learning systems with advanced and adaptive learning- software solutions.</li> <li>Teacher-student interaction can be faciliated through virtual classrooms including chat, blogs, email, videoconference and back-end teacher. views of student progresss.</li> </ul>

Source: McKinsey & Company. 2020.

Figure 12: Hybrid learning models for different age groups

Age group	4-8	8-12	12-17	17-18
Subject	<b>1 In person</b>		<b>3 Flipped classroom</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remote learning methods for young students are not very effective.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can learn autonomously at their own pace.</li> <li>Students require tailored coaching and complete exercises at home.</li> <li>Learning can be complemented with additional remote learning solutions to practice at home.</li> </ul>	
	<b>1 In person</b>		<b>5 Asynchronous hybrid</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core subjects for which remote learning is not very effective.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students require in-person interaction with peers and teachers.</li> <li>Learning can be strengthened with complementary learning activities that can be reviewed at home.</li> </ul>	
	<b>6 Remote</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-core subjects with difficulties to carry out safely in-person</li> <li>Remote alternatives are available</li> </ul>			
	Math			
Reading and writing				
Sciences				
Social studies				
2 <sup>nd</sup> language				
Art				
Sport				

Source: McKinsey & Company. 2020.

### **Define the optimal remote learning experience for students**

and languages can be taught in-person, as remote options are often not suitable. Non-core subjects can be delivered through remote options. In the case of older children (12–17) and youth (17–18), mathematics, languages and sciences can be delivered through flipped methods. Social studies and additional languages can be taught using the asynchronous hybrid model.

### **Defining optimal remote learning experiences**

In order to maximize learning outcomes, school systems need to decide on the mix of activities students will experience, and the amount of time spent on them. The optimal number of learning hours per day should be decided, along with how many of these should be spent online. Younger children should not be exposed to than a few hours a day of screen time. Decisions on synchronous learning, where students are taught together in real-time, and self-paced, asynchronous learning, will vary according to students' age and maturity. There will also be decisions regarding choices around teaching in groups or in one-on-one instruction.

### **Undertake a careful monitoring of the remote experience.**

Many currently available hybrid learning models have not been adequately tested and their effectiveness in primary and secondary schools is not known. Parents, teachers and students can provide important feedback about their experiences. Data on the processes (design, implementation modalities) and outcomes (student access, quality and equity) and impacts of the remote experience should be collected and analysed. It will be necessary to develop a system of continuous adjustment and improvement, based on growing evidence.

### **Assess the educational outcomes of remote learning.**

Teachers have important roles in monitoring the remote learning experience following different

indicators, including access, quality and equity. Regarding access, three things are important: students' access to digital tools (especially advanced tools), their capabilities to use them, and their levels of participation. Monitoring quality involves determining how well students are making progress towards their learning objectives. Test scores, students' learning habits, actual learning products prepared by students and teacher observations can be used as marks of quality. Regarding equity, it needs to be checked whether remote learning is causing any inequalities between groups of students in terms of socio-economic status, gender, disability, linguistic group, and other factors.

### **9.5.6 Embracing diversity in hybrid classrooms**

As remote learning becomes a 'new normal', issues of diversity and inclusion should be given heightened priority, in order to enable full participation in learning for all students. Creating an inclusive hybrid classroom poses real challenges. Remote learning does not provide the degree of intimacy and connection that exists in in-person learning environments. The bottom line is that teachers should aim to help students to feel connected, respected and valued, while also helping them to achieve their education objectives.

### **Ensure access to remote learning devices**

As remote learning becomes increasingly dependent on sophisticated digital resources, it can add additional problems for vulnerable, disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Their needs must be seriously considered and addressed, either by ensuring they can gain access to the necessary devices, connectivity, and other supports, or by other means.

### **Be available and responsive in whatever form – virtual or in-person – is possible**

It is important to create personal connections with students to create an inclusive and welcoming online learning environment that can accommodate the needs of all students. In online teaching, it is common to provide scheduled virtual drop-in hours to provide support. When

low-tech devices are used, students should be able to reach their teacher by phone or any other locally available means of communication. Teachers should proactively reach out to students, and families. Some online teachers send weekly surveys to students asking them if they are learning well or have any learning difficulties.

### **Inclusion as the basic norm**

Teachers' actions, behaviours, and language should be guided by a strong commitment to inclusion. The remote learning space should be welcoming. Teachers should set ground rules for inclusive language and respectful dialogue. It is important to set clear expectations. Early on, students should be clearly communicated with on protocols, manners, requirements and deadlines.

### **Be considerate**

Students may be experiencing different challenges that can impact their ability to learn. Support them by offering flexibility to meet deadlines, or by adjusting workloads.

### **Diversify learning contents**

Whenever new online learning materials are used, examine whether they are sufficiently inclusive. Online materials should be free of implicit and explicit bias and stereotypes. All materials should be made accessible to all kinds of readers, including children with disabilities and linguistic minorities. Online classes should be designed in a manner that promotes inclusion.

### **Build an inclusive approach to the use of technology**

The effectiveness of online and/or remote teaching depends on inclusive digital practice. It is important to build the digital knowledge and skills of students in order to facilitate more inclusive pedagogy and practice, increased personalized learning, and enhanced engagement.

### **Focus on engagement**

High rates of student attendance do not necessarily mean the same level of participation and engagement. A survey undertaken by

EdWeek (2020<sup>68</sup>) reported that 74 per cent of teachers in the United States said their students' level of engagement during the pandemic was much lower or somewhat lower than it had been prior to the pandemic. Strategies that are known to be successful in promoting engagement include building connections through discussion forums or networks; creating a clear structure for participation in different activities; engaging students with questions; keeping students focused on key things; managing student attention, and providing feedback.

### **9.5.7 Formative assessment in hybrid learning**

Assessment is an integral part of learning, be it remote or in-person. It has become more important than ever for teachers, schools, parents, and school systems to have accurate, easy to understand, and timely information about student learning. Without such data, it is hard to plan instruction, design appropriate interventions, reallocate resources, and make policy decisions.

Implementing assessment is a new territory in the context of remote learning. Historically, modalities of student assessment demand the physical presence of students, either for administration or for observing learners' learning progress. Traditional modalities often cannot be used in hybrid learning environments and it is necessary to develop alternative approaches.

While all forms of assessment of student progress are important, formative assessment is especially suitable for remote/hybrid learning contexts, and many countries relied on this method for high-stakes examinations during the pandemic.

There are at least three factors that might shape the ways in which assessments are planned and implemented in hybrid contexts; instructional-, environmental- and student-related (C. Evans, N. Dadey & B. Gong, 2020<sup>69</sup>) These are explained in Figure 13.

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68 EdWeek Research Center. 2020, April 27. *Survey tracker: Monitoring how k-12 educators are responding to coronavirus*. Education Week.

69 C. Evans, N. Dadey & B. Gong. 2020. A Deep Dive into Formative Assessment in a Remote or Hybrid Learning Environment. <https://www.nciea.org/blog/educational-assessment/part-1-deep-dive-formative-assessment-remote-or-hybrid-learning>.

Figure 13: Continuum of instructional and assessment shifts in a remote learning environment

Dimension	Minor instructional/ Assessment shifts	Continuum	Major instructional/ Assessment shifts
<b>Instructional Characteristics</b>			
Type of remote learning	Synchronous		Asynchronous
Curriculum	Minor (if any) changes to curriculum scope and sequence		Reduced or prioritized curriculum scope and sequence
District policies	Teachers can require students to use webcam, submit AV files, etc.		Teachers cannot require students to use webcam, submit AV files, etc.
Content area and learning targets	Procedural knowledge		Hands-on, interactive, lab-based teaching, etc.
<b>Student Characteristics</b>			
Age/grade level of student	Older students		Younger students
Student readiness for online learning	Student is technologically skilled, self-directed and prepared/motivated to learn online		Student is not technologically skilled, self-directed, and/or prepared/motivated to learn online
<b>Environmental Characteristics</b>			
Student access to technology and internet	Student has device and internet access		Student does not have device or internet access
Work space and at home. Support and environment	Access to a quiet space, free from distractions, with supportive and informed adult assistance		Shared, disruptive and distracting workspace, with little or no support or assistance

A brief introduction to different assessment modalities is provided in the following subsections.

*Self-assessment:* Self-assessment is an evaluation by the student of his or her own work, and a process that involves students taking control of their own learning. To support this, teachers can provide printed or digital-based assessments, quizzes, tests and problem-solving exercises.

*Written assignments:* Written assignments are commonly used to assess student

understanding of materials and their ability to present answers in written forms in a coherent manner. These assessments can be undertaken remotely or in in-person contexts. The most common types of written assignments include essays, reports, and research papers. Students should be pre-informed of an assignment’s requirements, including the process, format and deadlines. Students should also be provided with written and verbal feedback.

*Conferencing:* One-on-one conferences between a teacher and a student or students can be an important basis for assessment. Conferences can be face-to-face or online and can be conducted as one-on-one meetings or small-group meetings involving 4–5 students. Conferences allow teachers to build relationships with their students, check on their understanding, assess progress, make immediate corrections of errors, and provide feedback.

*Phone interviews:* A phone interview can be a tool to conduct assessments orally. Teachers can also speak with family members or parents and gather their feedback on student progress. Teachers in many parts of the world have assessed students through mobile phones, including through SMS text, call centres and interactive phone-based assessments for both formative and summative assessments. Phone-based assessments can only assess a limited set of competencies.

Direct phone calls between teachers, students and parents have been used widely during school closures. In some countries, homework hotlines were used even before the COVID-19 pandemic to support student learning and to provide feedback to students and parents. In some parts of the United States, dedicated local phone numbers have been established to connect students and parents with trained teachers who provide support in core subjects. Toll-free phone calls have been established to provide counselling and emotional support, as well as to support students with disabilities. Homework hotlines also provide support to students with print disabilities.

### **Assessment using asynchronous digital media**

Asynchronous assessments provide students with more time to research and process information, allowing for deeper understanding. Examples of asynchronous approaches are the following:

*Projects:* When a complex topic is to be assessed, students can be asked to develop a project individually or in groups. Project work can

require students to review the literature, collect data, conduct an experiment, analyse results, and develop a written report or using digital media.

*Group work:* Group work in hybrid and remote environments can provide rich learning experiences that will help to prepare students to collaborate in similar environments in their life. However, there may be extra complexities involved in assigning group work in the case of remote and hybrid modes of instruction, including if some students do not have access to digital resources.

*Peer assessment:* If students are connected and can communicate reliably among themselves, it is possible to use peer assessment, by which students identify strengths and weaknesses in each other's work, potentially promoting teamwork and collaboration.

*E-portfolios:* An e-portfolio is a collection of samples of a student's work, artifacts, project works and demonstrations that highlight the student's learning achievement, progression and evidence of their ability to do something.

### **Assessment using synchronous digital media**

Synchronous assessments are useful as a way to provide instant feedback and just-in-time support. These assessments generally give a snapshot of how well students know facts or materials, and provide important evidence for adjusting instruction. They can take place via online platforms as well as directly by phone. In some countries, TV instruction is combined with synchronous phone-based connection between teachers and students. Examples of assessment using synchronous digital media are provided below:

*Oral assessments:* In situations where connectivity is assured and teachers and students have access to audio and video equipment, oral assessments can be administered in real-time.

*Presentations:* Individual or group presentations can be organized in real-time in situations where digital classrooms can be created with reliable synchronous communication.

## Box 2

**Child Well-being and Screen Time**

A review of available evidence dating from before the COVID-19 pandemic suggested that there could be cognitive and social benefits from a moderate use of digital technology, especially in watching age-appropriate, high quality programming. For infants, engaging in screen time together with a parent or caregiver can boost attention and orientation towards learning. (Gottschalk, 2019[35]).

Short-term intensive use of digital devices for education purposes was not expected to lead to long term challenges, as long as:

- good practice is followed, including balancing online time with offline and social activity,
- parents and students maintain vigilance around potential increased exposure to risks such as cyber-bullying.
- device settings are installed that limit exposure to inappropriate content and protect personal data.

Source: Burns, T. and F. Gottschalk (2019).

*Debates:* If fast and reliable digital communication channels are available, debates can be organized in real-time. Teachers have a chance to assess students' emotional maturity, manage conflicts and ability to debate.

### **Assessment in situations where there is no connectivity**

Options include phone messaging platforms that have capacity to allow teachers to design, deliver, and track multiple-choice and short-answer assessments. Feedback to students can be provided through the platform or even by traditional mail.

#### **9.5.8 Ensuring a safe online environment for students**

More use of the internet means children may be increasingly subject to different types of online threats such as cyberbullying, sharing of inappropriate content, online predation, sexting, and phishing emails. Children should learn how to ensure their online safety at a young age. They should know how to keep their information private, not to respond to strangers, and to report anything unusual to an adult. Ensuring cyber safety is the shared responsibility of students, families and school staff.

Teachers should remain up-to-date with internet trends and developments as they explain the importance of how to use the internet safely. Schools can also create support systems to ensure support to those who face cyberbullying. Approaches parents they can take can include making children's study space in a common area so that senior family members can monitor the use of the computer. Parents should set a good example with exemplary online habits of their own.

The amount of time children should be allowed to use a screen every day remains an unresolved issue. Some research has indicated that the amount of screen time and the kind of content students watch should be subject to supervision, or risk low academic outcomes and poor mental and physical health. Other recent research suggests that evidence for the risks from screen exposure is inconclusive and should not be overstated. Box 2 provides some tips on screen time and child well-being (Burns, T. and F. Gottschalk, 2019<sup>70</sup>).

70 Burns, M. 2020. Radio, TV, Mobile Phones and Online Learning - Options for Distance Learning During COVID-19. Edmund Rice Foundation. <https://www.erebb.org/initiatives/radio-tv-mobile-phones-and-online-learning-options-for-distance-learning-during-covid-19/>



# ANNEX

MORE INFORMATION ON KEY INTERNATIONAL  
INSTRUMENTS RELATED TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

## 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 1948

The drafting and signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represented a historic coming together of 48 countries in agreement of basic principles about the rights for all humans to a safe, healthy life, with freedom, and dignity.

The Declaration identifies education as a human right and calls for the right to a free, basic education for all. The declaration came in the aftermath of the devastation of the Second World War and, in part, was a response to the widespread abuse of human rights perpetrated by the Nazis (particularly genocide) and others during the war. This came not long after the foundation of the UN in 1945 and served as a defining declaration of the UN's basic principles. Developing a 'Universal' declaration of human rights was a way of recognizing that human rights must be a global responsibility and exist above any national, religious and cultural beliefs, norms and laws.

### ARTICLE 26

**(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.**

Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

## 2 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education: 1960

The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education is a multilateral treaty which UNESCO adopted in 1960 and came into force in 1962. The Convention forms the basis of what later became UNESCO's 'Education for All' programme. The Convention sets out what the UN refers to as 'the principles of equality of opportunity and of treatment in education'. The convention addresses many different forms of discrimination in education including discrimination based on gender and religion. It also addresses the rights of minority groups to use, teach and learn in their own languages.

### ARTICLE 1

1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term 'discrimination' includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying *{stopping or making invalid}* or impairing equality of treatment in education and in particular:
- Of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level;
  - Of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard;
  - Subject to the provisions of Article 2 of this Convention, of establishing or maintaining separate educational systems or institutions for persons or groups of persons; or
  - Of inflicting on any person or group of persons conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of man.
2. For the purposes of this Convention, the term 'education' refers to all types and levels of education, and includes access to education, the standard and quality of education, and the conditions under which it is given.

### ARTICLE 3

In order to eliminate and prevent discrimination within the meaning of this Convention, the States Parties thereto undertake:

- (a) To abrogate *{do away with}* any statutory *{legal}* provisions and any administrative instructions and to discontinue any administrative practices which involve discrimination in education;
- (b) To ensure, by legislation where necessary, that there is no discrimination in the admission of pupils to educational institutions;
- (c) Not to allow any differences of treatment by the public authorities between nationals, except on the basis of merit or need, in the matter of school fees and the grant of scholarships or other forms of assistance to pupils and necessary permits and facilities for the pursuit of studies in foreign countries;
- (d) Not to allow, in any form of assistance granted by the public authorities to educational institutions, any restrictions or preference based solely on the ground that pupils belong to a particular group;
- (e) To give foreign nationals resident within their territory the same access to education as that given to their own nationals.

### ARTICLE 4

The States Parties to this Convention undertake furthermore to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which, by methods appropriate to the circumstances and to national usage, will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment in the matter of education and in particular:

- (a) To make primary education free and compulsory; make secondary education in its different forms generally available and accessible to all; make higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity; and assure compliance by all with the obligation to attend school prescribed by law;

- (b) To ensure that the standards of education are equivalent in all public educational institutions of the same level, and that the conditions relating to the quality of the education provided are also equivalent;

- (c) To encourage and intensify by appropriate methods the education of persons who have not received any primary education or who have not completed the entire primary education course and the continuation of their education on the basis of individual capacity;

- (d) To provide training for the teaching profession without discrimination.

### ARTICLE 5

1. The States Parties to this Convention agree that:

- (a) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; it shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace;
- (b) It is essential to respect the liberty of parents and, where applicable, of legal guardians, firstly to choose for their children institutions other than those maintained by the public authorities but conforming to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the competent authorities and, secondly, to ensure in a manner consistent with the procedures followed in the State for the application of its legislation, the religious and moral education of the children in conformity with their own convictions; and no person or group of persons should be compelled to receive religious instruction inconsistent with his or their convictions;
- (c) It is essential to recognize:
  - the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities.

- Schools of minorities must be maintained.
- Depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language should be provided, unless:
  - (i) This right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating in its activities, or which prejudices national sovereignty;
  - (ii) That the standard of education is not lower than the general standard laid down or approved by the competent authorities; and
  - (iii) That attendance at such schools is optional.

**Nomads are an example of a type of minority group. Because nomadic groups are not permanently settled in one place, their children often have difficulties attending an ordinary, fixed school. Flexibility of the system will be essential here to support education for nomadic children. This flexibility should include adjustment of the curriculum so that the curriculum will be meaningful for these children. This may involve a form of education which follows the children as they move or catches them for particular times when they are in one place.**

### 3 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: 1979

**The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), is as UN Women explains, 'often described as an international bill of rights for women'. CEDAW defines and addresses discrimination against women in many of its forms, including discrimination in education and health.**

#### ARTICLE 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

#### ARTICLE 9

States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

## ARTICLE 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- a. The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
- b. Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
- c. The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;
- d. The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;
- e. The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;
- f. The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
- g. The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;
- h. Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

## ARTICLE 12

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.
2. Notwithstanding *{aside from}* the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

## ARTICLE 16

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

The same right to enter into marriage;

The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount *{dominant}*;

The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, ward ship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

The betrothal {engagement} and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

#### 4 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: 1989

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), was adopted in 1989 and came into force in 1990. It defines children as human beings with their own rights, some of which (such as the right to play) were not previously specified in human rights conventions. The UNCRC is, as UNICEF notes, ‘the most rapidly and widely ratified international human rights treaty in history’. All UN member states, with the exception of the United States of America, have ratified the UNCRC. The UNCRC is very important as it addresses children’s rights to education, health, privacy and protection against all forms of abuse. These rights are linked and form a basis for inclusive education for all children.**

**It is every child’s right:  
To receive a quality education and develop his/her full potential.**

**Potential:**

**Having basic possibilities and capabilities if facilitated with opportunities.**

**Quality education:**

**Education that is child centred (rather than curriculum centred), is addressing physical, social, emotional and intellectual interests, potentials and needs, considers diversity as enriching, promotes activity, reflection and problem solving and focuses on sharing rather than competing.**

#### ARTICLE 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years (...).

#### ARTICLE 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child’s parents, legal guardians, or family members.
1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice. (...)

#### ARTICLE 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.
2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

#### ARTICLE 23

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions, which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.

#### ARTICLE 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
  - (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need; (...)
  - (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
  - (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

**ARTICLE 29**

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
  - (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

- (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- (e) The development of respect for the natural environment. (...)

**ARTICLE 32**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (...)

**ARTICLE 37**

- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. ..Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age.

.....

## 5 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention: 1989

**The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO convention 169), is an International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention which sets out specific rights for indigenous peoples. Among other rights, the Convention addresses indigenous peoples' right to education that recognises and is relevant to their traditional knowledge, cultures, languages and histories. This 1989 Convention is progressive compared to previous law, because it recognises indigenous peoples' rights to maintain and develop their own cultures and languages.**

### ARTICLE 27

1. Education programmes and services for the peoples concerned shall be developed and implemented in co-operation with them to address their special needs, and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their further social, economic and cultural aspirations.
2. The competent authority shall ensure the training of members of these peoples and their involvement in the formulation and implementation of education programmes, with a view to the progressive transfer of responsibility for the conduct of these programmes to these peoples as appropriate.
3. In addition, governments shall recognise the right of these peoples to establish their own educational institutions and facilities, provided that such institutions meet minimum standards established by the competent authority in consultation with these peoples. Appropriate resources shall be provided for this purpose.

### ARTICLE 28

1. Children belonging to the peoples concerned shall, wherever practicable, be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language or in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong. When this is not practicable, the competent authorities shall undertake consultations with these peoples with a view to the adoption of measures to achieve this objective.
2. Adequate measures shall be taken to ensure that these peoples have the opportunity to attain fluency in the national language or in one of the official languages of the country.
3. Measures shall be taken to preserve and promote the development and practice of the indigenous languages of the peoples concerned.

### ARTICLE 7

(...)

2. The improvement of the conditions of life and work and levels of health and education of the peoples concerned, with their participation and co-operation, shall be a matter of priority in plans for the overall economic development of areas they inhabit. Special projects for development of the areas in question shall also be so designed as to promote such improvement. (...)

### ARTICLE 25

1. Governments shall ensure that adequate health services are made available to the peoples concerned, or shall provide them with resources to allow them to design and deliver such services under their own responsibility and control, so that they may enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
2. Health services shall, to the extent possible, be community-based. These services shall be planned and administered in cooperation with the peoples concerned and take into



account their economic, geographic, social and cultural conditions as well as their traditional preventive care, healing practices and medicines.

3. The health care system shall give preference to the training and employment of local community health workers, and focus on primary health care while maintaining strong links with other levels of health care services.
4. The provision of such health services shall be coordinated with other social, economic and cultural measures in the country.

#### **ARTICLE 26**

Measures shall be taken to ensure that members of the peoples concerned have the opportunity to acquire education at all levels on at least an equal footing with the rest of the national community.

#### **ARTICLE 29**

The imparting of general knowledge and skills that will help children belonging to the peoples concerned to participate fully and on an equal footing in their own community and in the national community shall be an aim of education for these peoples.

#### **ARTICLE 30**

1. Governments shall adopt measures appropriate to the traditions and cultures of the peoples concerned, to make known to them their rights and duties, especially in regard to labour, economic opportunities, education and health matters, social welfare and their rights deriving from this Convention.
2. If necessary, this shall be done by means of written translations and through the use of mass communications in the languages of these peoples.

#### **ARTICLE 31**

Educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and

particularly among those that are in most direct contact with the peoples concerned, with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history textbooks and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples.

## **6 World Declaration on Education for All: 1990**

**The World Declaration on Education for All, builds on previous declarations and conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It calls for primary education to be made accessible for all children. The Declaration, as UNESCO notes, '...reaffirmed the notion of education as a fundamental human right and urged countries to intensify efforts to address the basic learning needs of all'.**

**The Declaration is an important part of the foundation of the global movement towards inclusive education and constitutes an agreement made between 150 sovereign states and 150 governmental and non-governmental organisations. Although the Declaration called for the realisation of accessible primary education for all by the year 2000, this goal was not achieved, and subsequent frameworks, statements and goals have been developed (such as the Dakar Framework, Salamanca Statement, Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals). These extend the deadline and more specifically address the scope and goals of inclusive education.**

### **Meeting Basic Learning Needs**

Every person - child, youth and adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.

### Shaping the Vision

To serve the basic learning needs of all requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an “expanded vision” that surpasses present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices.

### Universalising Access and Promoting Equity

Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults.

### Focusing On Learning

Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development - for an individual or for society - depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities, i.e. whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values.

### Broadening the Means and Scope of Basic Education

Learning begins at birth.

- The main delivery system for the basic education of children outside the family is primary schooling.
- The basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse and should be met through a variety of delivery systems.
- All available instruments and channels of information, communications, and social action can be used to help convey essential knowledge and inform and educate people on social issues.

### Enhancing the Environment for Learning

Learning does not take place in isolation. Societies, therefore, must ensure that all learners receive the nutrition, health care, and general physical and emotional support they need in order to participate actively in and benefit from their education.

### Strengthening Partnerships

National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial or organizational requirement for this task. New and revitalized *{something which existed before but is started again in a new way}* partnerships at all levels will be necessary:

### Developing a Supportive Policy Context

Supportive policies in the social, cultural, and economic sectors are required in order to realize the full provision and utilisation of basic education for individual and societal improvement.

### Mobilising Resources

If the basic learning needs of all are to be met through a much broader scope of action than in the past, it will be essential to mobilise existing and new financial and human resources, public, private and voluntary.

### Strengthening International Solidarity

Meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility. It requires international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities.

## 7 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs: 1994

**The Salamanca Statement built on the World Declaration on Education for All, to more specifically define, address and call for inclusive education. 92 sovereign states and 25 international organisations joined together to hold the World Conference on Special Needs Education during which the Salamanca Statement was developed.**

**The Salamanca Statement is an important advancement and defining document in the movement towards inclusive education - it addresses education policy and practice calling for all children (regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language, ability/disability, social class, health situation, etc.) to have access to education in regular schools within their communities.**

**The Salamanca Statement specifically addresses the right to education in regular schools for children with disabilities, which is an essential aspect of inclusive education. The Salamanca Statement includes a 'Framework for Action' which states that 'inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights'.**

### Statement

2. We believe and proclaim that:

- every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs,
- education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,

- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,
- regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of:
  - combating discriminatory attitudes,
  - creating welcoming communities,
  - building an inclusive society and achieving education for all;

Moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

3. We call upon all governments and urge them to:

- give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties,
- adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise, develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries having experience with inclusive schools, establish decentralized and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special educational needs,
- encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organisation of persons with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes concerning provision for special educational needs,
- invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies, as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education,
- ensure that, in the context of a systemic change, teacher education programmes, both pre-service and in-service, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools.

## Framework for Action

3. The guiding principle that informs this Framework is that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

This should include:

- disabled and gifted children,
- street and working children,
- children from remote or nomadic populations,
- children from linguistic,
- ethnic or cultural minorities, and
- children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

These conditions create a range of different challenges to school systems. In the context of this Framework, the term 'special educational needs' refers to all those children and youth whose needs arise from disabilities or learning difficulties.

Many children experience learning difficulties and thus have special educational needs at some time during their schooling.

Schools have to find ways of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. There is an emerging consensus that children and youth with special educational needs should be included in the educational arrangements made for the majority of children.

This has led to the concept of the inclusive school. The challenge confronting the inclusive school is that of developing a child-centred pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities. (...)

4. (...) It assumes that human differences are normal and that learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature

of the learning process. A child-centred pedagogy is beneficial to all students and, as a consequence, to society as a whole. (...)

It can substantially reduce the drop-out and repetition (...), while ensuring higher average levels of achievement. (...) Child-centred schools are, moreover, the training ground for a people-oriented society that respects both the differences and the dignity of all human beings.

6. (...) Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights. (...)

7. The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, (...)

10. (...) Experience, moreover, suggests that inclusive schools, serving all of the children in a community, are most successful in eliciting (stimulation and bringing about) community support and in finding imaginative and innovative ways of using the limited resources that are available.

18. Educational policies at all levels, from the national to the local, should stipulate that a child with a disability should attend the neighbourhood school that is, the school that would be attended if the child did not have a disability. (...)

## 8 Beijing Declaration of the 4th Conference on Women: 1995

**The Beijing Declaration of the 4th Conference on Women established a 'Platform for Action' which set out a series of specific goals and strategies to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. The Platform for Action was, in part, developed in recognition of the fact that as of 1995, women still did not have equality of access in many important aspects of life, including education.**

**The Platform for Action calls for the removal of '...all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making'.**

**The Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action was adopted by 189 sovereign states. The Beijing Declaration and its Platform to Action focuses on 12 'critical areas of concern' for women, including 'education and training' and has been subject to review every five years since its development in 1995.**

27. Promote people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through the provision of basic education, life-long education, literacy and training, and primary health care for girls and women;
30. Ensure equal access to and equal treatment of women and men in education and health care and enhance women's sexual and reproductive health as well as education;
32. Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people;

34. Develop the fullest potential of girls and women of all ages, ensure their full and equal participation in building a better world for all and enhance their role in the development process.

## 9 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and Recommendations: 1999

**The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and Recommendations (also known as Convention 182) mandates the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour including slavery, child trafficking and prostitution.**

**The Convention and Recommendations are very relevant to education, because child labour is a major cause of children's exclusion from education. Even when not directly excluding children from education, child labour negatively impacts on the quality of education working children do have access to. As of 2014, the Convention has been ratified by 179 out of 185 ILO member states (sovereign nations) and has been one of the most popular and rapidly ratified of all of the ILO's conventions.**

### Convention

#### ARTICLE 3

For the purposes of this Convention, the term the worst forms of child labour comprises:

- d. all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage *{a kind of slavery}* and serfdom *{a kind of slavery}* and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- e. the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

- f. the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit {unlawful} activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- g. work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

#### ARTICLE 6

2. Each Member shall design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour.
3. Such programmes of action shall be designed and implemented in consultation with relevant government institutions and employers' and workers' organisations, taking into consideration the views of other concerned groups as appropriate.

#### ARTICLE 7

1. Each Member shall take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the provisions giving effect to this Convention including the provision and application of penal {punishment} sanctions or, as appropriate, other sanctions.
2. Each Member shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time-bound measures to:
  - a. prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour;
  - b. provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration;
  - c. ensure access to free basic education, and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour;
  - d. identify and reach out to children at special risk; and
  - e. take account of the special situation of girls.
3. Each Member shall designate the competent authority responsible for the implementation of the provisions giving effect to this Convention.

## Recommendations

2. The programmes of action referred to in Article 6 of the Convention should be designed and implemented as a matter of urgency, in consultation with relevant government institutions and employers' and workers' organisations, taking into consideration the views of the children directly affected by the worst forms of child labour, their families and, as appropriate, other concerned groups committed to the aims of the Convention and this Recommendation. Such programmes should aim at, inter alia *{among others}*:
  - a. identifying and denouncing the worst forms of child labour;
  - b. preventing the engagement of children in or removing them from the worst forms of child labour, protecting them from reprisals and providing for their rehabilitation and social integration through measures which address their educational, physical and psychological needs;
  - c. giving special attention to:
    - i. younger children;
    - ii. the girl child;
    - iii. the problem of hidden work situations, in which girls are at special risk;
    - iv. other groups of children with special vulnerabilities or needs;
  - d. identifying, reaching out to and working with communities where children are at special risk;
  - e. informing, sensitising and mobilising public opinion and concerned groups, including children and their families.
3. In determining the types of work referred to under Article 3(d) of the Convention, and in identifying where they exist, consideration should be given, inter alia *{among others}*, to:
  - a. work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;

- b. work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
  - c. work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
  - d. work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
  - e. work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.
12. Members should provide that the following worst forms of child labour are criminal offences:
- a. all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
  - b. the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; and
  - c. the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties, or for activities which involve the unlawful carrying or use of firearms or other weapons.

## 10 The Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All: 2000

**The Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All, builds on the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All. Ten years after the Declaration, it recognised that the goal of primary education for all had not yet been achieved (with an estimated 13 million children still without access to primary education in the year 2000). The Dakar Framework reaffirmed the commitments of sovereign states and other organisations to achieving primary education for all, and clearly defined six more specific and measurable goals for education to be achieved by the year 2015.**

- Goal 1** Expand early childhood care and education
- Goal 2** Provide free and compulsory primary education for all
- Goal 3** Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults
- Goal 4** Increase adult literacy by 50 percent
- Goal 5** Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015
- Goal 6** Improve the quality of education

**To evaluate progress towards these goals, UNESCO developed an Education for All Development Index (EDI) to measure a sovereign nations progress (0 – 100%) in four of the six goals against four indicators.**

### ARTICLE 3

We re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (1990), supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term:

- an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be.

- It is an education geared to tapping *{using and encouraging}* each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.

#### ARTICLE 6

Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalisation. Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency.

#### ARTICLE 7

We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:

- expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
- achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, (...);
- eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, (...);
- improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

#### ARTICLE 8

To achieve these goals, we the governments, organisations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:

- mobilise strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;
- promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;
- ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;
- develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;
- meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities *{disasters}* and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict;
- implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognise the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
- implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV and AIDS pandemic;
- create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments (...);
- enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers;
- harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals;
- systematically monitor progress (...);
- build on existing mechanisms (...).



## 11 Millennium Development Goals: 2000

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were developed during the Millennium Summit of the UN in the year 2000 and comprised a set of eight goals, all UN member states were expected to achieve by the year 2015. The goals were:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- To achieve universal primary education
- To promote gender equality and empower women
- To reduce child mortality
- To improve maternal health
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- To ensure environmental sustainability
- To develop a global partnership for development.

The MDGs in their focus on education, health, gender equality and poverty reduction were important to the movement towards inclusive education. Although there has been international progress towards achieving universal primary education (and other goals) since 2000, the world is still a long way still from achieving universal access to primary education.

## 12 UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities: 2006

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was the first human rights convention of the 21st century and addresses the human rights of persons with disabilities. The UNCRPD is recognised as establishing the first, legally binding, international set of minimum standards for the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

The Convention addresses a range of human rights. People with disabilities are given the same rights as non-disabled people to participate in education, political, social, cultural and economic affairs. If people with disabilities need support to overcome a barrier to participation (e.g. in voting, learning, working), this support must be provided.

Article 24 specifies the right of people with disabilities to inclusive education at all levels (lifelong education). Sovereign states are responsible for ensuring that all necessary support and accommodations are provided (for example, making schools physically accessible to children with disabilities, and providing accessible materials, such as textbooks in Braille). Along with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNCRPD is one of the most important conventions for inclusive education.

### ARTICLE 5: Equality and non-discrimination

- States Parties recognise that all persons are equal before and under the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law.
- States Parties shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds. (...)

- In order to promote equality and eliminate discrimination, States Parties shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided.

#### **ARTICLE 7: Children with disabilities**

- States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children
- In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. (...)

#### **ARTICLE 9: Accessibility**

3. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life (...). These measures (...) shall apply to, inter alia *{among others}*:
  - a. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
  - b. Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.
4. States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to:
  - h. Develop, promulgate *{spread}* and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public;
  - i. Ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;
  - j. Provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities;
  - k. Provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signs in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms;

- l. Provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public; (...)
- m. Promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;
- n. Promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost.

#### **ARTICLE 19: Living independently and being included in the community**

States Parties to this Convention recognise the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community, including by ensuring that:

- b. Persons with disabilities have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement;
- c. Persons with disabilities have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community;
- d. Community services and facilities for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

#### **ARTICLE 24: Education**

3. States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view

to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life-long learning directed to:

- The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
  - The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
  - Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
4. In realising this right, States Parties shall ensure that:
- a. Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, (...)
  - b. Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live; (...)
  - c. Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximise academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.
3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:
- c. Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
  - d. Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community; (...)

#### **ARTICLE 25 – Health**

(...) States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure access for persons with disabilities to health services that are gender-sensitive, including health-related rehabilitation. (...)

- Provide persons with disabilities with the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care and programmes as provided to other persons, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and population-based public health programmes;
- Provide those health services needed by persons with disabilities specifically because of their disabilities, including early identification and intervention as appropriate, and services designed to minimise and prevent further disabilities, including among children and older persons;
- Provide these health services as close as possible to people's own communities, including in rural areas; (...)
- Prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in the provision of health insurance, and life insurance (...)

## 13 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: 2007

**The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples reaffirms Indigenous People's rights, including their rights to education, health, employment, language, culture, identity and traditional lands/ territories (which are often a key aspect of indigenous peoples' culture, religion and identity).**

**Although the Declaration is not legally binding, it calls for the end to discrimination for indigenous peoples. It encourages sovereign nations and other parties and organisations to work alongside indigenous peoples in promoting and supporting their access to human rights and development on their own terms.**

**The right to preserve, develop and transfer indigenous knowledge and knowledge practices between generations of indigenous peoples is an important part of their right to education and is addressed in the Declaration. Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.**

### ARTICLE 4

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

### ARTICLE 6

Every indigenous individual has the right to a nationality.

### ARTICLE 11

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature

### ARTICLE 12

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

### ARTICLE 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

### ARTICLE 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

#### **ARTICLE 15**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.
2. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

#### **ARTICLE 18**

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

#### **ARTICLE 21**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia {among others}, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.
2. States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

#### **ARTICLE 22**

1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.
2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

#### **ARTICLE 24**

Indigenous peoples have the right to their traditional medicines and to maintain their health practices, including the conservation of their vital medicinal plants, animals and minerals. Indigenous individuals also have the right to access, without any discrimination, to all social and health services.

#### **ARTICLE 31**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

#### **ARTICLE 39**

Indigenous peoples have the right to have access to financial and technical assistance from States and through international cooperation, for the enjoyment of the rights contained in this Declaration.

## 14 Sustainable Development Goals: 2015

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were developed as an update on the original Millennium Development Goals. In recognition that the MDGs had not been achieved by 2014, a 'Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda' was developed to assess global progress towards the original MDGs. The Goals were put into a framework of social and environmental sustainability, to spur progress towards the Goals after 2015. These 17 SDGs were adopted in September 2015 and came into force in January 2016.

The SDGs are the first framework that donor governments have committed to follow which specifically calls for inclusive education and lifelong education.

### Sustainable Development Goals

**Goal 1** End poverty in all its forms everywhere

**Goal 2** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

**Goal 3** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

**Goal 4** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

**Goal 5** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

**Goal 6** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

**Goal 7** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

**Goal 8** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

**Goal 9** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

**Goal 10** Reduce inequality within and among countries

**Goal 11** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

**Goal 12** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

**Goal 13** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

**Goal 14** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

**Goal 15** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

**Goal 16** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

**Goal 17** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Other useful instruments to refer to include:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966)
- General comment No. 13 (1999) on Article 13: The right to education of the ICESCR, adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- General comment No. 4 (2016) on Article 24: Right to inclusive education of the CRPD, adopted by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- General comment No. 7 (2005) on Implementing child rights in early childhood of the CRC, adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- General recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education of the CEDAW, adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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## Welcoming Diversity in the Learning Environment

Teachers' Handbook for Inclusive Education

This teachers' handbook is intended to serve as a practical resource to help teachers and teacher educators to gain understanding of the multiple issues of inclusion in their day-to-day work and acquire competencies that facilitate inclusive pedagogy. The handbook is comprised of nine modules – each of which presents the conceptual discussion of key topics related to inclusion and diversity and features some promising case studies, instruments and approaches. It also provides a framework for ensuring learning continuity in the wake of crises and emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and deals with a range of topics aimed at building the capacities of teachers and teacher educators for recovery and resilience in education systems in the COVID-19 context.

## Stay in touch

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