

ILFE Toolkit

Adapted Afghan Version:
Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating
Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments



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Cultural Organization

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Preface

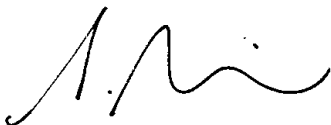
The education of all children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances remains a major challenge in Afghanistan. Approximately 50% of children remain out of school and many children who are enrolled in school, drop out, or do not attend school every day.

The World Education Forum (2000) held in Dakar, set as its second goal: "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." Due to the persistent conflicts in Afghanistan, the government committed itself to reach this goal by 2020 instead of 2015.

Without making all the schools more inclusive and child-friendly this goal will be elusive. Increasing school enrolment, attendance and completion rates for all the children and provision of books and learning materials in different languages both in ink (regular print) and Braille are significant parts of this effort. Further, eliminating bias within schools, the national education system, and curricula, and eradicating the social and cultural discrimination that limits the schooling of girls and boys, are the challenging but must tasks for all those who are involved in education. We should equally address the learning needs of children with different abilities, disabilities and health conditions, as well as children under different socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Indeed, education must be equally provided for children living in communities far away from the nearest school, children who have to work to support their families, as well as children who migrate from one place to the other in search of pasture for their domestic animals or for their own security due to the conflicts that still continue in parts of Afghanistan.

Inequality and inequity in education remain matters of great concern in Afghanistan. To change this, it is critical that teachers, headmasters, principals, supervisors and education planners are sensitised about the importance of inclusive and child-friendly education, and to provide them with practical tools.

This Toolkit addresses these issues and offers comprehensive, practical, and cost effective cases and suggestions on how schools and classrooms can become more inclusive and learning-friendly. It has been developed by building on experiences gained by the organisations and individuals working for inclusive education as well as for Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) over decades in Asia and beyond. I wish this Toolkit, adapted carefully to suit the needs and context of Afghanistan by key government and non-government stakeholders over the past 12 months, to be an inspiration for all those who are working in schools and classrooms with diverse student populations.



Shigeru Aoyagi
Director, UNESCO Kabul
UNESCO Representative to Afghanistan
September 2010

Foreword

The education of all children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances remains a major challenge, but also a major priority for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In spite of the tremendous efforts that have been made over the past years, both by the Ministry of Education as well as its national and international partners, almost 50% of Afghan children remain out of school. In addition to the millions of children who never enrol in school hundreds of thousands of children may be enrolled in school, but they rarely attend.

The reasons for the high drop-out rates, poor attendance and completion rates as well as transition rates to lower secondary schools are many. However, without making all schools more inclusive and child-friendly the goal of ensuring access to quality Education for All (EFA) will remain elusive. Realising this goal means increasing school enrolment, attendance and completion rates; provision of books and learning materials in different Afghan languages in both ink (regular print) and in Braille; eliminating bias within schools, the national education system, and curricula; and eliminating the social and cultural discrimination that limits the demand for schooling for girls and boys with different abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and health conditions. Education must also be provided for children living in communities far away from the nearest school; children who have to work to support their families, as well as children who migrate from one place to another in search of pasture for their animals or for their own security due to the armed conflict that still plagues parts of Afghanistan.

This Toolkit has been developed by a group of education specialists to address these, and many of the other barriers, that keep children away from school, and prevents them from succeeding within the formal education system. It has been comprehensively revised and adapted by teachers, student teachers, teacher trainers, Ministry of Education officials, as well as education activists working within national and international organisations to address these issues specifically from an Afghan perspective, and within an Afghan context.

The publication of this Toolkit by the Ministry of Education and UNESCO in collaboration with all the member organisations of the Coordination Working Group on Inclusive Education (IECWG) is a timely initiative as the Ministry of Education sees inclusive and child-friendly education as one of the main means of fulfilling its national and international commitments to provide equal access to quality primary education for all by 2020.



Farooq Wardak
Minister of Education

Acknowledgements

The work of preparing this Toolkit was genuinely participatory and involved many education specialists, teachers, agency experts, and others from inside and outside of the Asian Region. Their names are listed below, and we would like to thank all of them for their contributions. Every single input and comment were thoroughly considered and contributed to the enrichment of the Toolkit.

Listed below are the many contributors who provided their valuable time and experienced insights into completing this Toolkit. If we have inadvertently forgotten someone, please accept our heartfelt apologies and sincerest appreciation for your valuable assistance.

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Overview of the Adapted Afghan Version of the ILFE Toolkit

Inclusive education is based on the right all children have to quality education according to the:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- UN Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- World Declaration on Education for All (1990)
- Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)
- The Dakar Framework - Education For All (2000)
- Millennium Development Goals - MDG (2000)
- Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004)
- Afghan Millennium Development Goals - AMDG (2005)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
- Afghan National Development Strategy - ANDS (2008)
- Education Law (2008)
- Road Map - Needs and Rights Assessment for Inclusive Education (2009)
- National Education Strategic Plan - NESP II (2010).

Inclusive and child-friendly education should be seen as:

- An approach to whole school improvement that will ensure that national strategies towards Education for All are really for all;
- A means of ensuring that all children receive quality care and education in their home communities as part of early childhood development, pre-school, primary and secondary education programmes, particularly those who are currently excluded from mainstream education or vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion; and

A contribution to the development of a society that respects and values the individual differences of all citizens.¹

An inclusive, learning-friendly environment (ILFE) welcomes and educates all children regardless of their gender, background and abilities.

These are the key characteristics of inclusive and learning-friendly schools and communities:²

- Inclusive schools welcome all children in the community regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, HIV and health status, as well as their social, economic, ethnic, religious or language background.
- Inclusive communities and schools embrace diversity not merely tolerate it.
- Children learn at their own pace and according to their own abilities to achieve optimal academic, social, emotional and physical development.
- Children with disabilities and other special or individual learning needs as well as their parents and teachers have free access to school and community based as well as external support systems, all to ensure that their individual needs are responded to effectively.
- Children and parents are actively involved in the teaching-learning process, the knowledge and skills children carry with them from home is therefore valued, and recognised.
- Curricula, assessments and examinations are flexible and child-centred, encouraging children to learn and to develop self-esteem and confidence.

¹ International Symposium on Inclusion and the Removal of Barriers to Learning, Development and Participation (2005). "Recommendations" Bukittinggi, Indonesia on URL: http://www.idp-europe.org/symposium/Symposium_Recommendations.pdf

² Watterdal, T. (2008). "Embracing Change." p 2.

Although Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) will look different from country to country, district to district, and from school to school they are all based on the same six principles (or dimensions):

1. Rights-Based, Inclusive and Child Seeking
2. Effective - Focusing on the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of all children
3. Healthy, Safe and Protective
4. Gender Responsive
5. Community Based and Family Focused
6. Child-Friendly Systems and Policies - Child-Friendly Assessment and Evaluation Systems, Curricula and Support Systems

It is important to reiterate that; NO school can be child-friendly unless it is Inclusive, and NO school can be inclusive unless it is child-friendly!

WHO CAN USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This Toolkit was written especially for teachers in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools, school administrators, student teachers, teacher educators and trainers, education activists, education planners in government and non-government organisations, as well as all those who want to improve access to schools and learning for children who usually do not go to school. This Toolkit will be especially valuable for teachers who are working in schools that are beginning to change towards becoming more inclusive and child-friendly.

We must embrace the fact that "All Children Are Different," and the principle that all children have an equal right to education, regardless of their gender, background or ability. Many of our schools and educational systems are moving towards "inclusive education." Girls and boys with diverse backgrounds and abilities are encouraged to attend neighbourhood schools. On the one hand, attending school with their peers increases their opportunities to learn because they are able to interact with other children. Improving their learning also promotes their participation in family and community life. On the other hand, the children with whom they interact also benefit. They learn to respect and value each other's abilities and backgrounds, as well as patience, tolerance, and understanding. They learn to work together, to take responsibility, and to appreciate each other's strengths and accept each other's weaknesses. They come to realise that every person is unique and "special" and thereby learn to embrace diversity and to cherish it.

How Can You Use This Toolkit?

For us, as teachers, embracing diversity among our students is not always easy. Some of us may have large classes, and we may already feel overstretched and overworked. Including children with diverse backgrounds and abilities into our classes often means more work, but it does not have to! All we need to do is to manage the diversity among our children by recognising their strengths as well as their weaknesses. We need to plan lessons accordingly, by using different teaching strategies and adapting our curriculum to fit the abilities, needs and background of each individual child. And, most importantly, we need to know how to mobilise our teacher colleagues, parents, and community members to help us provide a good quality education for all the children in our school and neighbourhoods.

This Toolkit is designed to help you do all of these things! It provides you with useful tools to make your schools and classrooms more welcoming, lively and effective places of learning for ALL. Our

schools and classrooms should therefore not only become child-friendly, but also teacher-friendly, parent-friendly, and community-friendly. This Toolkit contains a set of ideas that will inspire you to reflect (think about) on your own situation. You can try out many of the ideas provided to you throughout the seven Booklets of this Toolkit without major investments in equipment or materials. Instead they are designed to help you make a difference with few resources by inspiring your creative minds. They also invite you to discuss these ideas with others, and, together with all the learners in your community, create a unique, dynamic, and inclusive learning-friendly environment.

However, this Toolkit is not an absolute recipe or manual to be followed step-by-step. It will not have an answer for all the challenges you may face. Please remember that creating an inclusive, learning-friendly environment is a process that will take time. It cannot be achieved over night. Since you and your students will always be learning new things, the process towards inclusion will never be finished. It will provide continuous challenges as well as satisfaction to students, teachers, administrators, special educators, parents, and other members of the community.

Each Booklet contains tools and activities that you can do by yourself (self-study) to start creating an inclusive, learning-friendly environment (ILFE). Some of these activities ask you to reflect on what you and your school are doing now in terms of creating an ILFE. Others actively guide you in improving your skills as a teacher in a diverse classroom. You might want to try these individual activities first, so you can become familiar with what an ILFE is, how it can be created in your classroom and school, and how it will benefit you and your students.

Because creating an ILFE requires teamwork, there also are tools and activities that you can do with your colleagues and supervisors, with your students, as well as with their families and other members of the community. These activities will help you sustain important changes in your classroom and school, so they continue to be inclusive and learning-friendly.

These Booklets can be used in two ways. For those schools that are already involved in becoming inclusive and learning-friendly, you might want to choose a Booklet or Booklets that will help you in some special way, such as working with families or communities or managing inclusive schools. For those schools that are just starting on the path to becoming inclusive and learning-friendly, you might want to work through each Booklet, starting with Booklet 1 and moving through Booklet 6. The Toolkit is designed to help you each step of the way because each Booklet builds on the one before it.

Although the term "school" is used throughout this Toolkit, this term means any formal or non-formal learning environment where pre-school, primary, or secondary education takes place. In this Toolkit, therefore, the term "school" is used broadly to cover all types of educational settings. These environments can be formal schools, community classes in private houses or Mosques, or even informal classes held under shady trees. Consequently, you can use this Toolkit if you are a professional teacher or a volunteer who helps children with diverse backgrounds and abilities to learn in informal settings (such as classes for street and working children).

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

Through this Toolkit, you will learn what an "inclusive, learning-friendly environment" is, and how your school and classroom can create such an environment (Booklet 1).

You will also learn how important families and communities are to the process of creating and maintaining an inclusive, learning-friendly environment, as well as how to involve parents and community members in the school, and how to involve children in the community (Booklet 2).

You will learn what barriers to education, development and participation are, how to identify those children who are not in school, and how to reduce and remove barriers to their inclusion in schools (Booklet 3).

You will learn how to create an inclusive classroom and why inclusive and learning-friendly environments are so important to children's achievement and how to deal with the wide range of different children attending your class. You will learn how to make learning meaningful for all, and how to plan and manage an inclusive classroom, how to maximise available resources, introduce and manage group work and cooperative learning, as well as how to assess children's learning (Booklet 4).

You will learn how to manage inclusive schools and make sure that your school is welcome to all children, and how to develop schools that help children to optimise their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development (Booklet 5).

Finally, you will learn ways to make your school accessible, healthy and protective for all children, especially those who are vulnerable to exclusion from and within the education system (Booklet 6).

LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Teachers and practitioners from around the world helped to develop this Toolkit. This includes those directly involved in four Regional workshops sharing their tools and ideas for getting all children in school and learning, those sharing their knowledge and tools through other venues such as printed publications and the Internet. It includes those who served as "critical readers" in reviewing early drafts of this Toolkit. And most importantly, it includes those schools and teachers from many different countries who reviewed this Toolkit and provided valuable advice and additional tools for its improvement. You will therefore be learning from a vast number of stakeholders, in schools in countries throughout Asia and beyond. One of the most important questions you can ask yourself when using the tools is: "How can I adapt this specific tool for use in my classroom or in my school?"

We have included a number of cases from different parts of Afghanistan that highlight different aspects of the ideas we are presenting in this Toolkit. These cases will also help you to better understand how these ideas can be implemented in practice.

A NOTE ON TERMS

One challenge in developing this Toolkit was determining what terms should be used. Oftentimes, different terms are used to describe the same thing. Moreover, sometimes a term may imply an idea or feeling that is not intended. For example, we have avoided using any terms that imply discrimination. We have also tried to keep the terms simple and the presentation itself as friendly and informal as possible.

In keeping with the theme of this Toolkit, we have tried to use terms that are as inclusive as possible. Some of the most important terms that appear in this Toolkit include the following (listed alphabetically) while others are explained in text boxes throughout the Toolkit as the terms first appear:

- **Barriers to learning, development and participation**
The barriers children face will vary from one child to another. It is important to realise that all children face some forms of barriers. If these barriers are not addressed properly, children will not be able to reach their full academic, social, emotional, and physical potential. Barriers may therefore be experienced temporarily or permanently depending on how effectively these

are addressed, reduced and/or removed. It is therefore important that educational approaches are adjusted to the individual potentials and needs of all learners. These barriers can be environmental or attitudinal (created by us as teachers and by the school system) or individual (barriers related impairments, health conditions and circumstances affecting the child).³

- **Children with diverse backgrounds and abilities**

This is perhaps the most inclusive term in this Toolkit. It refers to those children who usually are excluded from (fall outside of and not being able to participate in) the mainstream educational system due to gender, disabilities, as well as having a different social, cultural, language, ethnic, or religious background than the majority population in their communities.

- **Classroom**

This refers to the actual place where children come together to learn with the help of a teacher. This can for example be in formal classrooms in schools, or in community based classes in private homes in villages far away from the nearest school. It can also be in informal classes for child workers held under trees in parks or in alleyways, classes at youth centres for children who are living on the street or even home-based learning sessions for those children who cannot attend any other learning environment, either temporarily or permanently.

- **Community**

This refers to the wider social group to which the child and family belong. It can be a group of families, a cluster of houses in the mountains, a village, or a neighbourhood in a big city.

- **Disability or Children with disabilities**

"Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments (hearing or vision) which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."⁴ Children with disabilities are therefore often excluded from schools altogether or they are sent away to special schools. They are children who were born with an impairment, or they lost their hearing, vision or ability to walk or move around because of illness, accidents, or other causes. It is important that we understand that children with disabilities are capable of learning, and that they have the same right to attend their neighbourhood school as all other children.

- **Family**

This refers to the main social unit within which a child is raised.

- **Gender vs. Sex**

Gender refers to the social roles that many believe belong to boys and girls, or to men and women within a particular social or cultural group, for example; "men as breadwinners;" "women as child caregivers;" "boys as vocal, tough and sporty;" and "girls as quiet, obedient and studious." Gender roles are created by a society and are learned from one generation to the next as part of a society's culture. Because it is a socially learned perception (for instance, learned in the family or in school), anything associated with gender can be changed to achieve equality and equity for both boys and girls. In other words, we can change the gender roles of "men and women as both breadwinners and child caregivers." Gender roles often affect the expectations we place on girls and boys in school. As a result of cultural and social gender roles, we struggle to provide access for girls to education here in Afghanistan and boys (not just in Afghanistan but in countries all over the world) seem to struggle to succeed within education. While the term "sex" refers to the biological differences between boys and girls (or men and women).

³ UNESCO (2009). "Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings - Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments Specialized Booklet 3" Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO. pp: 8-12

⁴ Article 1 of the United Nation Convention (2006) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- **Impairment**

Impairment is a partial or complete loss of a body function, a body part, an organ, or a sensory (hearing or vision) system. The loss can be the temporary or permanent. Impairments may affect mental functions (memory, consciousness, and cognitive abilities), sensory functions, and/or physical and bodily functions (internal organs, as well as the head, the body and limbs) which means that children with an impairment may experience difficulties seeing, hearing or moving, and that they may learn at a different pace (faster or more slowly) and in different ways than most other children.

- **Inclusive education or Inclusive learning**

This refers to the schools and education programmes both in formal or non-formal learning environments that are welcoming of ALL children regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, as well as social, cultural, language, ethnic, and religious background.

An inclusive and child-friendly education system ensures that all children have equal access to quality education regardless of their gender, age, abilities, disabilities/impairments, health conditions, circumstances, as well as socio-economic, religious, ethnic, and language backgrounds.

Afghan Ministry of Education Definition of Inclusive Education

- **Learning environment**

This means any formal or non-formal setting where children gain knowledge and the skills to use that knowledge in their daily lives. Learning environments may take the form of schools, colleges, community based classes, and Mosques, or even private homes, or sport clubs.

- **Learning-friendly**

This means placing the child firmly at the centre of the learning process, but also recognising that his or her total learning environment includes others such as teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders, who will guide children in their learning process. In a learning-friendly environment children will benefit not only from learning by themselves, or from their teachers, but also from the learning of others who may have different need and learn in different ways. For instance, a learning-friendly environment gives children a chance to participate actively in their own learning. It also is an environment in which teachers are helped and empowered to learn and teach more effectively, where they are free use and adapt new teaching methods, and where parents and community members are actively encouraged to participate in helping their children to learn effectively and their schools to function.

- **Student or Learner or Pupil**

These terms refer to anyone who is participating in formal or non-formal learning at a primary or secondary level. They are used interchangeably in this Toolkit.

- **Students with "special learning needs" or "special educational needs"**

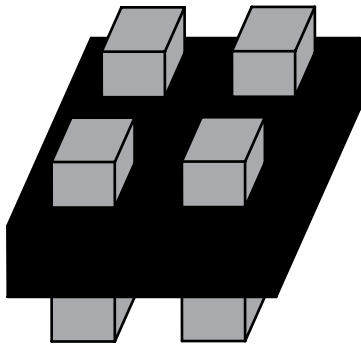
This means children who may require greater or a different kind of attention to help them with their learning. In many countries, these children are taught in special schools or classrooms. However, we believe that these children should grow up, play, and learn together with their peers in the regular neighbourhood schools and not placed in segregated special schools. These students are often labelled (or sometimes being referred to in derogatory terms) in such a way that they are set apart from "regular" students, they will therefore suffer from poor self esteem and are discriminated against by their peers and their communities. When these terms appear in the Toolkit, it merely acknowledges the existence of this labelling practice. However, this does NOT mean that we condone these practices. It is important that we realise that ALL children are unique and different and should have equal rights to quality education in their neighbourhood school.

- **Teacher**

This refers to any individual who systematically guides and facilitates a child's learning within a formal or non-formal learning environment.

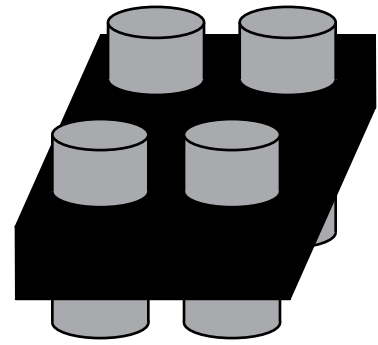
Inclusion vs. integration and segregation

Special Education



Special Education

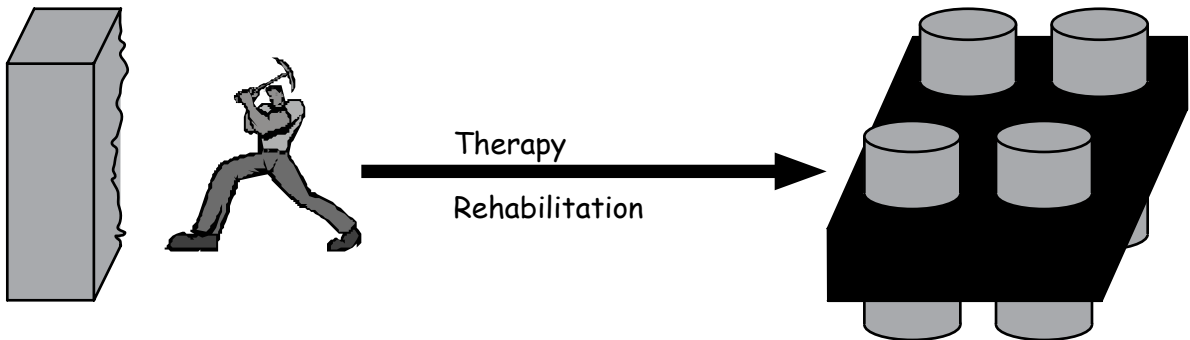
- Child with special needs
- Square peg for square holes
- Special teacher
- Special school



Regular Education

- Regular children
- Round pegs for round holes
- Regular teacher for regular school

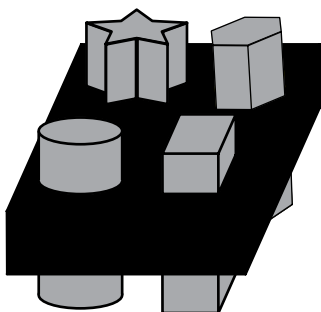
Integrated Education



- Change the child to fit the system
- Make the square peg round

- Education system stays the same
- Child has to adopt or fail

Inclusive Education



- All children are different
- All children can learn
- Different abilities, ethnic groups, size, age, background and gender
- Change the system to fit the needs of the child

(Original drawings by Sue Stubbs adapted by Karen Chesterton and Alexander Thomas Hauschild)

Dari Braille Alphabet

ا	ب	پ	ت	ث	ج	چ
ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	ژ
س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع
غ	ف	ق	ک	گ	ل	م
ن	و	م	لا	ء	ی	ئ

Pashtu Braille Alphabet

ا	ب	پ	ت	ټ	ث	ج
چ	ح	خ	ش	ځ	د	ډ
ذ	ر	ړ	ز	ز	ژ	س
ښ	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع
غ	ف	ق	ک	گ	ل	م
ن	ڼ	و	ه	ء	ي	پي
ی	ئ					

English Braille Alphabet

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤	⠥	⠦	⠧	⠨	⠩
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤	⠥	⠦	⠧	⠨	⠩
U	V	X	Y	Z					
⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤					
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⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠

Braille Numbers

1	2	3	4	5
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠
6	7	8	9	10
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠

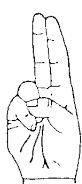
One-Handed Dari Finger Spelling Alphabet



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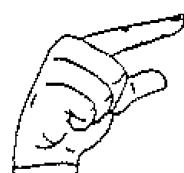
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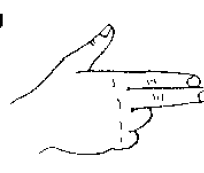
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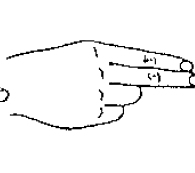
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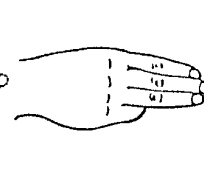
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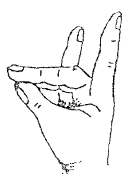
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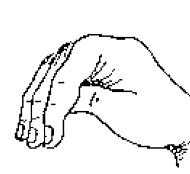
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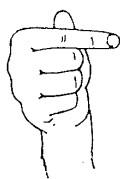
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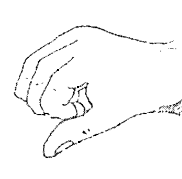
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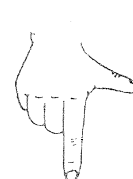
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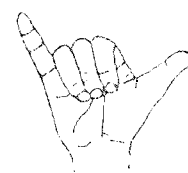
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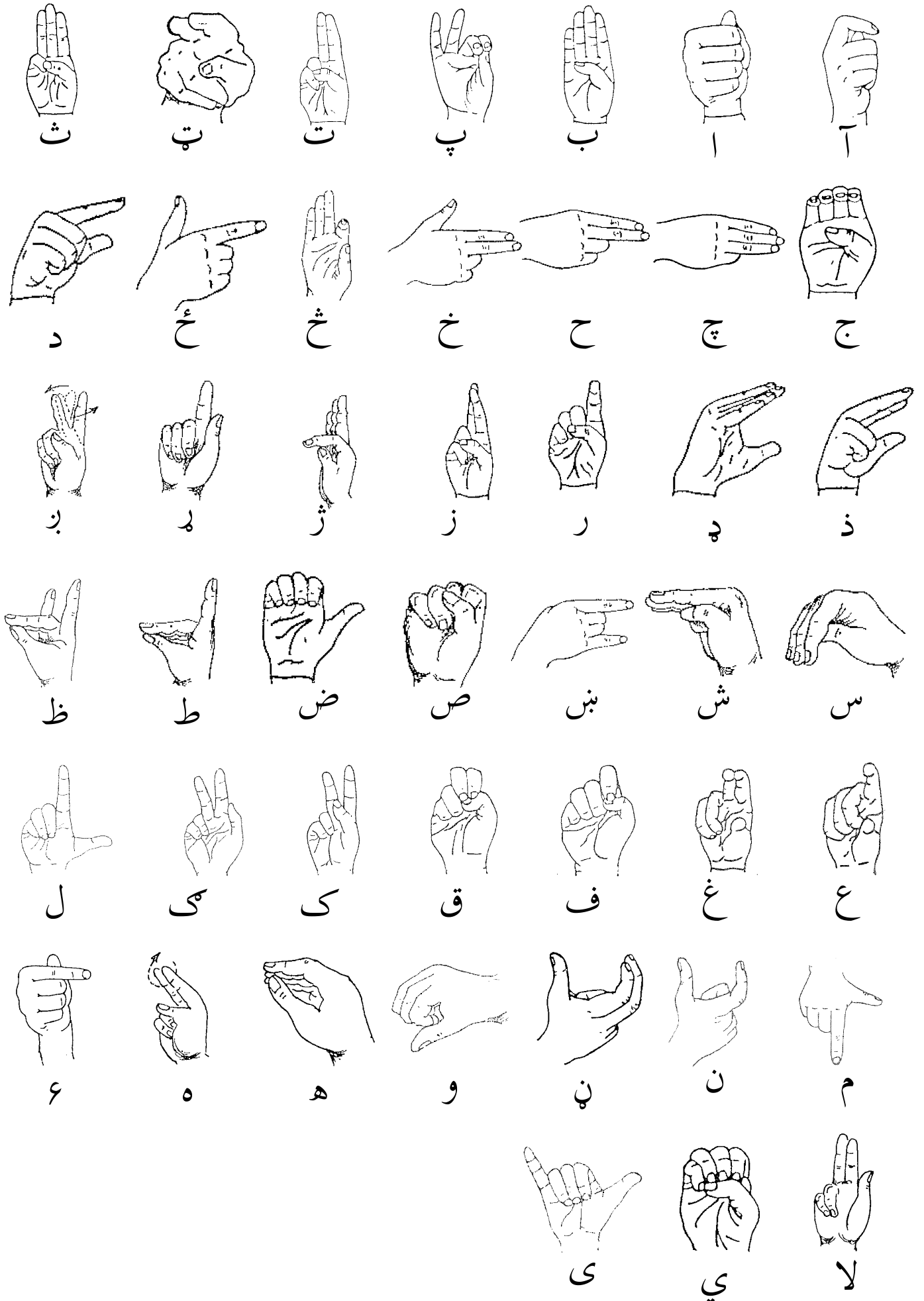


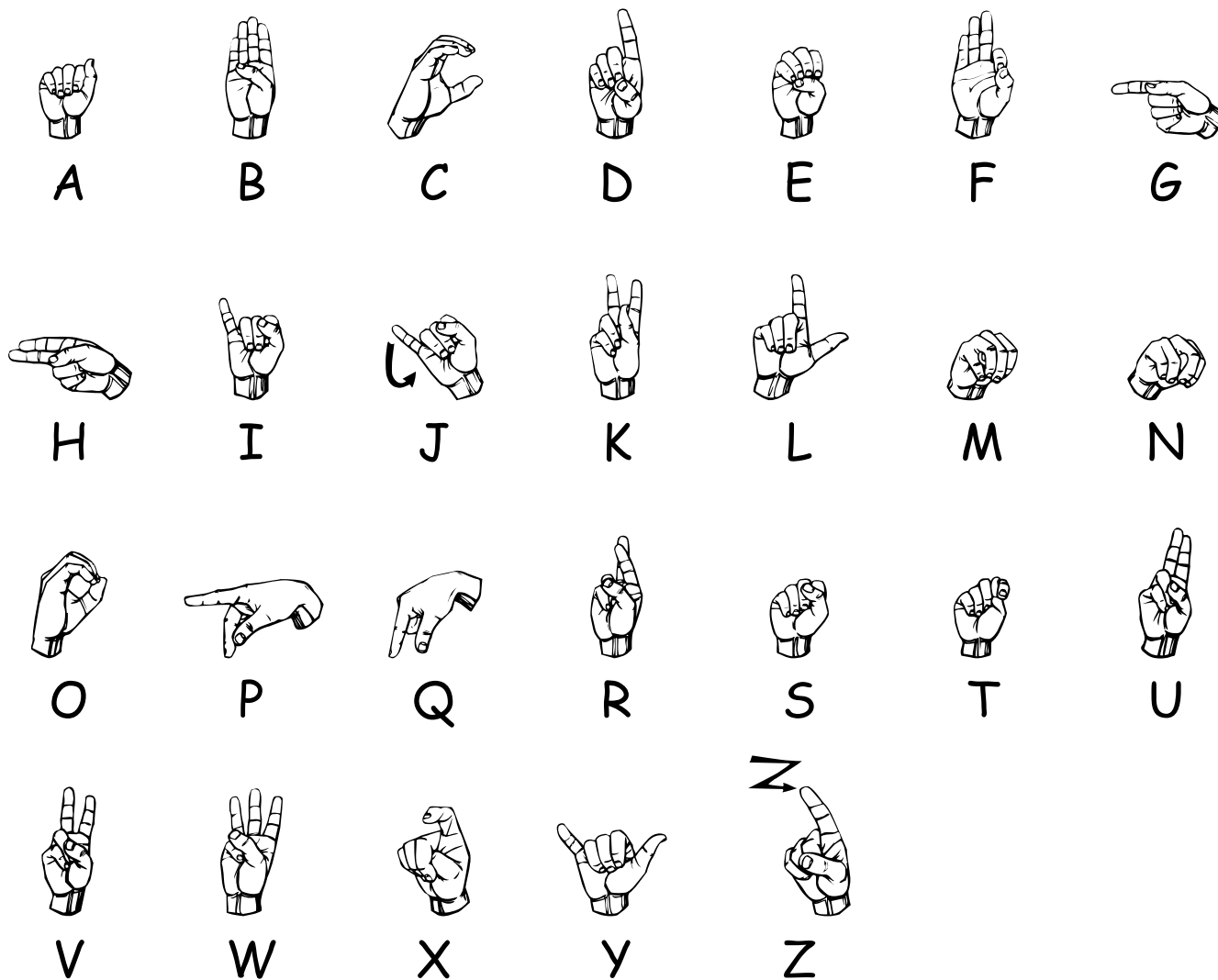
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One-Handed Pashtu Finger Spelling Alphabet



One-Handed American Finger Spelling Alphabet

Two-Handed British Finger Spelling Alphabet



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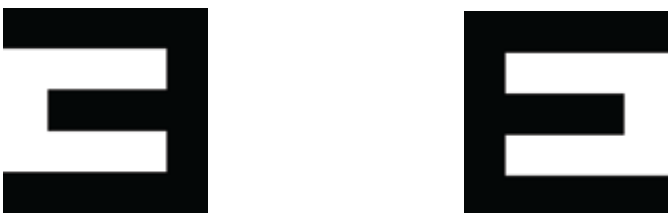
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E Chart**6/60**

If this symbol (letter E) at 6/60 cannot be seen from half a distance (3 meters) in the eye with the best correction (as vision is different from one eye to the other), the person is considered to be blind.

6/18

The first number (6) is the distance used for testing (6 meters). The second number (18) is the size of the symbol.

If these symbols (letter E) can be seen from a distance of 6 meters with proper correction (glasses), the person being tested has "normal vision". If s/he cannot see the symbol s/ he has low vision.



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Afghan Association of the Blind (AAB) / Afghanistan Demain / Afghan National Association of the Blind (ANAB) / Afghan National Association of the Deaf (ANAD) / Afghan Parent Association of Children with Intellectual Impairments / Afghanistan Child Protection Organisation (ACPO) / Associazione Pro Bambini di Kabul (PBK) / Blind Roshandelaan Association of Afghanistan (BRAA) / BRAC / Enabling Education Network (EENET) Asia / Family Welfare Foundation (FWF) / Handicap International (HI) / Herat Association of the Blind (HAB) / International Assistance Mission (IAM) / International Committee of the Red Cross / Crescent Society (ICRC) / International Rescue Committee (IRC) / Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) / Kabul Education University / MACCA / Ministry of Education (MOE) / National Association of the Blind (NAB) / Nejat Centre / Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) / Rahyab Organization / Save the Children / SCAO / SERVE Afghanistan / Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) / UNESCO / UNICEF / War Child Holland (WCH)

Book 1:

Becoming an Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environment (ILFE)



TOOL GUIDE

Booklet 1 describes what an inclusive, learning-friendly environment (ILFE) is and what the benefits are for teachers, children, parents, and communities. It will also help you to identify in which ways your school may already be inclusive and learning-friendly, as well as those areas that may need more improvement. It will provide you with ideas about how to plan for these improvements, as well as how to monitor and evaluate your progress.

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Tool 1.1

What is an ILFE and Why is It Important?

Inclusion is about practical changes we can make so that all children, including those with diverse backgrounds and abilities, can succeed with their education and enjoy learning. These changes will not merely benefit the children we often single out as children with special educational needs, but all children and their parents, all teachers and school administrators, and everyone from the community who works with the school.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “INCLUSIVE” AND “LEARNING-FRIENDLY”?

What is “Inclusive”?

Over the years, the term “inclusive” has often come to mean “including children with disabilities” in “regular” classrooms for children without disabilities. In this Toolkit, “inclusive” means much more.

“Inclusive” does include children with disabilities such as children who have difficulties in seeing or hearing, who cannot walk, or who are slower to learn. HOWEVER, “inclusive” also means including ALL children who are left out or excluded from school.

An inclusive and child-friendly education system ensures that all children have equal access to quality education regardless of their gender, age, abilities, disabilities/impairments, health conditions, circumstances, as well as socio-economic, religious, ethnic, and language backgrounds.

Afghan Ministry of Education Definition of Inclusive Education

This is the list of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education according to key Afghan stakeholders (education planners, headmasters, teachers and education activists) when they were asked to identify which groups of children were most vulnerable in Afghanistan (listed alphabetically):

1. Children affected by conflict and war
2. Children affected by drugs
3. Children from ethnic, language, social and religious minorities
4. Children from poor economic backgrounds
5. Children in conflict with the law / Children in incarceration (prison)
6. Children living far away from school - in villages where there are no schools
7. Children suffering from neglect, abandonment and abuse
8. Children who are over-aged
9. Children with disabilities and disabling health conditions
10. Girls
11. Nomadic (Kuchi) Children
12. Street and Working Children

“Inclusive” means that as teachers, we have the responsibility to seek out all available support (from school authorities, the community, families, children, educational institutions, health services, community leaders, and so on) to finding children who are out of school and facilitating ALL children to learn.

Moreover, in some communities, all children may be **enrolled in school**, but some children still may be excluded from **participating and learning in the classroom**. For instance, they may be children;

- who get lessons and have to read textbook in a language that is not their first language (mother tongue);
- who are never asked to contribute;
- who never offer to contribute;
- who can't see the blackboard or a textbook or can't hear the teacher;
- who can't hear well;
- who have difficulties with speech (speech impairment or "stuttering"), or;
- children who are not learning well and no attempts are being made to help them.

These children may be sitting at the back of the classroom and may soon leave altogether (drop out). As teachers, we are responsible for creating a learning environment where ALL children can learn, ALL children want to learn, and ALL children feel welcome and included in our classrooms and schools.

What is "Learning-Friendly"?

Many schools are working to become "child-friendly," where children have the right to learn to their fullest potential within a safe and welcoming environment. The aim is to improve each child's participation and learning in school, rather than concentrating on the subject matter and examinations. Being "child-friendly" is very important, but it is not enough.

Children come to school to learn, but as teachers, we are always learning, too. We learn new things about the world to teach our students. We learn to teach more effectively—and enjoyably—so that all students learn how to read or do mathematics, and we learn new things from our students as well. This Toolkit is one step in this direction.

A "learning-friendly" environment is "child-friendly" and "teacher-friendly." It stresses the importance of students and teachers working together as a learning community. It places children at the centre of learning and encourages their active participation in learning. It also fulfils our needs and interests as teachers. It enables us and encourages us to give all children the best education possible.

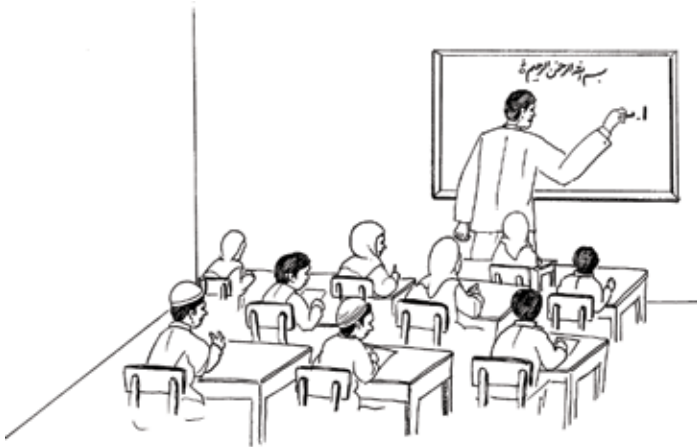
Child-friendly schools (CFS) will look different from country to country, district to district, and from school to school, but they are all based on the same six principles or dimensions:

1. Rights-based, inclusive and child seeking
2. Effective - Focusing on the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of all children
3. Healthy, safe and protective
4. Gender responsive
5. Community based and family focused
6. Child-friendly systems and policies - Child-friendly assessment and evaluation systems, curricula and support systems

It is important to understand that no school can be child-friendly unless it is inclusive, no school can be inclusive unless it is child-friendly, and that no school can offer quality education unless it is inclusive and child-friendly.

Action Activity: Understanding Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Classrooms

Which classroom below do you think is inclusive and learning-friendly?

**Classroom A.**

Sixty children are crowding together on benches behind desks with their exercise books open and pens in their hands. The teacher is writing mathematic questions on the blackboard from the Grade 3 textbook. She makes sure that she writes it exactly as it is written in the textbook. The children, who are sitting on the right side of the room, copy what the teacher has written on the blackboard into their exercise books. While the children, who are sitting on the left side of the room have to wait for the teacher to move out of their sight so that they can see what she has written before they can copy it into their exercise books. As she writes, the teacher asks: "Are you copying the questions I am writing?" Everyone answers: "Yes, teacher."

**Classroom B.**

The children are sitting on the floor in small circles. The Grade 3 teacher is teaching shapes to the children. In one group, the children are talking about geometrical circles. The teacher has shown them some common, round, objects, like balls, bangles and even pees that she had asked the children to bring from home. The children handle the objects and then work together to make a list of other objects that are circular in shape. In another group, some of the children are holding rolled up wooden twigs and sticks. The children place their sticks on the floor in the centre to begin forming a square. One child with hearing difficulties adds her stick to form a triangle and smiles at the teacher. The teacher smiles back and says "very good," making sure that the child can see her lips as she speaks. The older sister of one of the children in the class who has volunteered to be a classroom helper for a week, pats her on the arm, and then turns to assist a student who is a bit confused about where to place her stick in order to form a new shape.

Now, answer the following questions :

- Which one of these two classrooms do you believe is inclusive and learning-friendly?
- In what ways is it inclusive and learning-friendly? Please fill in the table below.

Characteristics of Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Classrooms (Table 1.A)

	Traditional classroom	Inclusive, learning-friendly classroom
Relationships between the teacher, classroom helper and the children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
Who is in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
Seating arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
Learning materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____

You will find how we filled in our table at the end of the Booklet.

Compare your table with one of your colleagues. The characteristics are very different in the two classrooms, and they tell us what kind of learning environment it is in these two examples.

The table above presents some of the characteristics of a learning-friendly classroom. You may think of many others. Particularly important is the "Relationships" section. In an inclusive classroom, we as

teachers need to form close relationships with our children and support them as much as we can, so that each child can learn as much as possible.

Reflection Activity: What's My Situation?

Think about the elements of an inclusive, learning-friendly classroom mentioned in the table above, and ask yourself the following questions?

- What type of classroom do I work in?
- What changes can I introduce to make my classroom to make it more inclusive and learning-friendly?
- How can I make the topics I teach more interesting for my children so they will want to learn about them?
- How can I arrange my classroom so that ALL of the children are learning together?
- Who can help me to create an ILFE (for example, the Principal, other teachers, my students, parents, and community leaders)?
- Who can help me in the class, what other teaching-learning resources are available in the community (adults and children)

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF AN ILFE?

ALL children have the right to learn, as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which is ratified by virtually all governments in the world, as well as the Afghan Constitution (2004) and the Afghan Education Law (2008). Moreover, all children can learn, without regard to their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. This includes children with disabilities; street and working children; children of remote or nomadic populations; children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities; children affected by HIV; and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.¹ Furthermore, while all children can learn, they may not all learn the same things at the same time, at the same pace, and with the same results, but this is completely normal and acceptable and should not lead to children having to repeat classes or be expelled from school!

With so many individual differences, children need to learn in a variety of ways, not just by copying information from the blackboard onto a slate or into a notebook. Copying from the blackboard is probably one of the least effective ways for children to learn. We will learn more about this in Booklet 4 of this Toolkit on creating inclusive, learning-friendly classrooms.

Teaching children with diverse backgrounds and abilities is often a challenge, so we need to understand **how** to teach these children. We will not learn everything we need to know in teacher training. Therefore, we also need to learn by observing and talking to experienced teachers, by going to workshops, by reading books, and by exploring other resources such as this Toolkit. We then need to practice what we have learned in our classrooms. An ILFE is therefore important, not only for the development of ALL of our children, but also for our own professional development as teachers.

In an ILFE, everyone shares a common vision of how children should work and play together. They believe that **education needs to be inclusive, gender-responsive and fair - girls should have the same rights and opportunities as boys, and non-discriminatory, sensitive to all cultures, religions, as well as relevant to the daily lives of children and their families.** Teachers,

¹ UNESCO (1994) The Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, p. 6.

administrators, and students should respect and embrace their different languages, cultural backgrounds, circumstances, and abilities.

An ILFE teaches children life skills and healthy lifestyles so that they can make informed decisions and protect themselves from illness and harm. Moreover, in an ILFE there is no verbal abuse (no name-calling, abusive language, teasing or ridicule), no physical punishment (no pinching, slapping, caning or other forms of corporal punishment), in other words, there is no child abuse.

An ILFE encourages teachers and school administrators, children, families, and communities to help children to learn inside and outside the classroom. In the classroom, children - and not just teachers - are responsible for their learning and actively participate in it. In an ILFE learning is linked to what children want to be in life (their aspirations), and it is meaningful for their daily lives. It is understood that learning helps children to develop new aspirations as their knowledge grows, and they can work towards a living future life that is better than the one they are living, and better than the lives their parents have lived.

An ILFE also considers the needs, interests, and desires of us as teachers. It gives us opportunities to learn how to teach better; it provides the best resources possible for teaching; and it celebrates our successes through appropriate rewards and recognition.

Action Activity: What is an ILFE?

Discuss with your colleagues what you think are the important elements of an inclusive, learning-friendly environment, an ILFE classroom, school, or another place where children learn.

- Draw a tree with roots on a large writing surface (such as a blackboard or poster paper).
- Ask your colleagues to write down one or two characteristics that they feel are most important in an ILFE on the different branches of the tree - See illustration below (1.B).
- Compare your tree with the one at the end of the Booklet (Illustration 1.B.i) and see if any characteristics are missing?
- Then ask yourselves, which characteristics do our school or classrooms have, and which do we need to work more towards? How can we improve our school or classroom to become an ILFE? List the "missing" characteristics on the different roots of the tree - See example at the end of the Booklet (Illustration 1.B.ii).

Remember: Changing from a traditional school or classroom to one that is inclusive and learning-friendly is a process, not an event. It does not happen overnight. It takes time and teamwork.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN ILFE?

Benefits for Children

Through an ILFE children will among others learn how to;

- become more self-confident;
- develop greater self-esteem;
- take pride in themselves and their achievements;
- learn independently both inside and outside of school;
- ask good questions;
- be good observers;
- be more creative;
- improve their communication and interpersonal skills;

- improve the way they learn;
- understand and apply what they learn in school to their everyday lives (such as in their play and in their homes);
- interact actively, productively and joyfully with their classmates and teachers;
- value their native language (mother tongue);
- gain or regain self-respect as they learn to respect others;
- appreciate different cultures and traditions;
- embrace diversity of abilities and backgrounds;
- enjoy being with others who are different from themselves, including how to be sensitive to and adapt to these differences, and;
- how to learn together and value their relationships, regardless of the backgrounds and abilities of their friends and classmates.

Benefits for Teachers

Teachers also receive important benefits from teaching in an ILFE. They will;

- have more opportunities to learn new ways to teach different kinds of students;
- learn how to explore new ideas by communicating more often with teacher colleagues from within and outside their school through school clusters or teacher networks;
- receive valuable input and assistance from parents and community members;
- gain new knowledge, such as the different ways children learn and can be taught;
- learn how to find solutions and overcome challenges, instead of just seeing problems and obstacles;
- develop more positive attitudes and approaches towards children (and their families) as well as challenging situations;
- get more positive feedback from their students by applying these new ideas;
- experience a higher sense of accomplishment when ALL their students are succeeding in school to the best of their abilities;
- have more volunteers working and helping in their classrooms (which will reduce their workload) because parents, older siblings and other members of the community will be more likely to help when they understand that what the children learn in the classroom is important for the of children themselves, their families and the development of the community, and;
- they will discover (or rediscover) that teaching is a joy and a privilege, not a chore.

However, remember that "ALL children succeeding" does not necessarily mean that all children successfully pass a written examination. It means accepting diversity in the different ways children learn as well as how they show their success in learning; for instance, when they can successfully explain and apply a concept to the teacher or to the class, instead of answering questions about it on an examination.

Benefits for Parents

Through an ILFE, parents will;

- learn more about how their children are being educated;
- learn how they can become personally involved in and feel a greater sense of importance in helping their children to learn;
- learn how to share their experiences when teachers ask them for their opinions about children;
- feel valued and consider themselves as partners in providing quality learning opportunities for children;
- learn how to assist their children better at home by using some of the techniques that the teachers use in school;

- learn how to interact with others in the community;
- learn how to understand and help solve each other's problems, and;
- most importantly, they will know that their children are receiving a quality education.

Benefits for Communities

An ILFE can offer many benefits to the community, too. The community;

- develops a sense of pride as more children go to school and learn;
- discover that children are being prepared to become responsible future community leaders, which will help the community to develop and prosper;
- sees that potential social problems, such as petty crimes or adolescent problems, may be reduced; and,
- becomes more involved in the school, creating better relations between the school and the community.

Action Activity: Challenges to Becoming an ILFE?

With all these benefits, why don't all schools have inclusive, learning-friendly environments? Below is a short list of some of the obstacles (barriers) to becoming an IFLE that may affect some schools. For each obstacle, identify some ways to overcome it within your school.

1. Change takes energy, openness, and willingness. If teachers have too many domestic responsibilities or many non-teaching administrative duties at school, such as attending frequent meetings, they may feel that they don't have the time or the energy to implement change.

Ways to Overcome this Obstacle:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. Teachers do not understand what an ILFE is, or think that they do not have the resources, that are needed to become an ILFE.

Ways to Overcome this Obstacle:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

3. Parents and even teachers may not understand the benefits of an ILFE and are concerned that including all kinds of children in the school will affect their children negatively.

Ways to Overcome this Obstacle:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4. Parents and even teachers may not understand the benefits of an ILFE and are concerned that including all kinds of children in the school will affect their children negatively.

Ways to Overcome this Obstacle:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Learning From Experience: Including Children with Disabilities (Case from one of the pilot schools for inclusive education in Kabul)

I want to tell you a little bit about a child in my class. He is 12 years old and he is Deaf. When he came to my class he didn't really have any proper language to communicate with, just a few family signs, which is not enough to communicate with others outside his family. Last year he joined to our programme. In the beginning his family was not quite sure if it was right to send a Deaf child in to school. They were afraid that the other children would tease him. They didn't know how he could possibly understand the teacher since he couldn't hear so they refused to bring him to school. But our team talked a lot with his family, especially with his father. He had the idea that his son would become a tailor and he didn't think there was any need for any formal education. He was saying: "What is the purpose of sending him to school? What can he possibly learn? He needs to learn some vocational skills, that is enough. I am not educated and I have survived, and he will do the same."

After much convincing, he finally agreed to send his Deaf son to school, but he did not want to participate in any training for parents as he said he was much too old, and if his wife would go it would be a shame for his family. However, his older son volunteered to come to the training instead of his parents. He is in grade 7 in the same school. He started to support his brother by coming to the training for parents. He soon wanted to learn more about different ways of communicating with his brother and he wants to learn Sign language. Now he freely communicates with his brother and is helping him with his sessions. He doesn't know all the official signs but he has found a way how to communicate with his younger Deaf brother anyway.

In the beginning the young Deaf boy was very afraid of the other children and of the new environment. He felt ashamed when he used signs or asked some for support. He didn't know anything about rules and regulation in the school and would sometimes behave a bit "naughty." However, he quickly learned. He now feels self confident, and he is interested in learning new and different things. He is doing all the tasks that are given to him by his teacher. He is participating in all the different events in school, and he now knows how to read and write.

He is coming to school every day, even when he is sick, because he believes that going to school is the best way for him to change his life. He says that: "Now I have friends, and I am responsible for some work at home and in the class because I am the oldest students in my class. Now I have a role to play in my family, and they respect me, and I have learned to respect them. Although they don't know signs but they change their attitude toward me. I am happy to be Deaf, I hope all the other parents think positively about their Deaf children and try to support them. I hope one day I can finish school and get a good job."

His family is now very happy and they encourage him in everything he does.

"Now they respect me ..."

From an article by Karima Ysoofi
EENET Asia Newsletter, Issue No. 6
<http://www.idp-europe.org/eenet/>

Tool 1.2

Where are We Now?

IS OUR SCHOOL ALREADY AN ILFE?

Many schools may be on their way to becoming inclusive and learning-friendly, and they are seeing the benefits of doing so for their teachers, children, parents, and communities. In creating an ILFE, the first step is to determine to what extent your school is already inclusive and learning-friendly. Thereafter, you will know what further steps your school still needs to take to become fully inclusive and learning-friendly. The checklist below will help you to assess your school. Fill it out as honestly as possible. Place a checkmark beside each of the items that your school is already doing. Don't worry if many of the items are not checked. Through this Toolkit, we can work on these together. After completing this assessment, you will have information to begin with planning and implementing an ILFE in your school. You will learn how to do this in the next Tool in this Booklet.

WHY DO WE NEED TO CHANGE?

We need to change our education system and practices because;

- millions of children are still out-of-school (in Afghanistan more than 6 million children remain out of school);
- millions of children are in school but not learning to the best of their abilities;
- millions of children are being bullied, teased, being discriminated against, and are unhappy in school (excluded within education);
- millions of children are unable to complete their primary education;
- millions of children may complete primary education but are unable to make the transition into secondary education;
- today's schools do not respond properly to needs of children, families and communities;
- today's schools do not fully facilitate the cognitive, emotional, social and physical development of children, and;
- because today's schools do not prepare children properly to succeed in life;

Action Activity: ILFE Self-Assessment

What is your school already doing to create an inclusive, learning-friendly environment?

School Policies and Administrative Support

Your school:

- _____ has a mission and/or vision statement and policies about inclusive, learning-friendly education, including a policy against discrimination;
- _____ has a master list of all children in the community, whether they are enrolled or not, and has individual records of why children have not enrolled or have dropped out;
- _____ conducts regular campaigns to encourage parents to enrol their children, emphasising that ALL children should be enrolled and are welcome;
- _____ has access to copies of conventions, laws and policies that address issues related to inclusive education for children with diverse backgrounds and abilities;
- _____ knows which professional organisations, advocacy groups, and community based organisations offer support and resources for inclusive education;
- _____ shows in specific ways that school administrators and teachers understand the nature and importance of inclusive education;

- _____ has prepared a list of barriers that prevent the school from fully developing an ILFE and a list of ways to overcome these barriers;
- _____ is aware of and is changing school policies and practices - such as costs and daily schedules - that prevent some girls and boys from receiving a quality education;
- _____ provides flexibility to teachers to pursue innovative teaching methods for helping all children to learn;
- _____ has close links with the community, is responsive to the needs of the community, and provides opportunities for exchanging ideas with the community to bring about positive changes in inclusive practices;
- _____ responds to needs of the staff and is not exploitative;
- _____ has effective support, supervision, and monitoring mechanisms in which everyone participates in learning about and documenting changes in inclusive practices, as well as in making future decisions.

School Environment

Your school:

- _____ has facilities that meet the needs of all students, such as separate toilets for girls and boys (if you have co-education in your school), and ramps (not stairs) for students with physical disabilities;
- _____ has a welcoming, healthy, and clean environment;
- _____ has a steady supply of clean, safe drinking water;
- _____ promotes healthy and nutritious food among students and their families;
- _____ has (or has a plan to hire) a school staff with diverse backgrounds (women and men with different backgrounds in race, ethnicity, physical ability, religion, language, socioeconomic status, etc.);
- _____ has staff, such as resource teachers, counsellors and bilingual teachers, who can identify and help with the students' individual learning needs;
- _____ focuses on teamwork among teachers and students;
- _____ has links with health authorities who provide periodic health examinations for children.

Teachers' Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

Teachers:

- _____ can explain the meaning of "inclusive" and "learning-friendly" education and can give examples of ILFEs;
- _____ believe that all children - girls, poor or wealthy children, language and ethnic minority children, as well as those with disabilities - can learn, and should go to school together;
- _____ are involved in finding school-age children who are out-of-school and try to enrol them into school;
- _____ know about diseases that cause physical, emotional, and learning disabilities; and can help students with poor health to get proper care;
- _____ receive annual medical examinations, along with other school staff;
- _____ have high, but realistic expectations for ALL children and encourage them to complete school;
- _____ are aware of resources that are available to assist children with special educational needs;
- _____ can identify culture and gender bias in teaching materials, the school environment, and in their own teaching, and can correct this bias;
- _____ help students learn to identify gender and culture bias in learning materials and correct it in a culturally sensitive manner;
- _____ adapt curricula, lessons, and school activities to the needs of children with diverse backgrounds and abilities;

- _____ use content, language, and strategies in their teaching that help all students to learn;
- _____ can assess children's learning in ways that are appropriate to the children's abilities and needs;
- _____ are open to learning, adapting, experimenting, and changing;
- _____ are able to work as a team with other teachers, children, parents and community members, as well as education authorities;
- _____ are allowed to implement new and innovative ideas;
- _____ are permitted to use other (additional and complimentary) learning resource than the standard textbooks in the classroom

Teacher Development

Teachers;

- _____ have access to programmes inside the school or in school clusters where they can learn new things (training)
- _____ attend workshops or classes on developing an ILFE classroom and school, receiving advanced professional training on a regular basis;
- _____ give presentations to other teachers, parents, and community members on developing an ILFE classroom;
- _____ receive regular support for improving their understanding of subject matter content (such as mathematics, science, and language);
- _____ receive regular support for developing teaching and learning materials related to ILFE;
- _____ receive regular support from school administrators through scheduled observation, monitoring and supervisory plans;
- _____ have a work area or lounge where they can prepare lesson materials and share ideas;
- _____ can visit "model" ILFE schools.

Students

- _____ ALL school-age children in the community attend school regularly.
- _____ ALL students have textbooks and learning materials that match their learning needs (including books in Braille for children with visual impairment).
- _____ ALL students receive regular assessment and information about their performance to help them monitor their progress.
- _____ Children with diverse backgrounds and abilities have equal opportunities to learn and to express themselves in the classroom and at school.
- _____ ALL children have equal opportunities to participate in all school activities.
- _____ ALL children enjoy the school activities (including your teaching).
- _____ ALL activities are adjusted to the needs and situations of different communities and therefore relevant for the lives of ALL children.
- _____ ALL children come to school
- _____ ALL children are followed up if their attendance is irregular and corrective actions are taken.
- _____ ALL students help to develop guidelines and rules in the classroom and in the school regarding inclusion, non-discrimination, violence, and abuse.

Academic Content and Assessment

- _____ The curriculum allows for different teaching methods, such as discussion and role-play, to respond to different learning styles and paces, particularly for children with special educational needs.
- _____ The content of the curriculum relates to the everyday experiences and lives of ALL children in the school whatever their backgrounds or abilities may be.
- _____ The curriculum integrates literacy, numeracy and life skills into all subject matters.
- _____ Teachers use locally available resources to help children learn and to relate new knowledge to what they already know and have learned before string school (appreciate, value and build on existing knowledge).
- _____ Curriculum materials include positive images, pictures, examples and information about many different kinds of people, including girls and women, ethnic minorities, people of different social and economic backgrounds, as well as persons with disabilities.
- _____ Children who experience learning difficulties have opportunities to benefit from modified lessons, receive additional tutoring, and be given additional time when sitting for exams (i.e. additional time is given to children with dyslexia, children who read and write Braille as well as for children who use Sign language for communication).
- _____ Curricula and learning materials are in the languages children use in and out of school (mother tongue based education).
- _____ Curricula promote positive values such as respect, tolerance, and knowledge about the different cultural, ethnic, language and religious backgrounds represented in the local community (preventing discrimination and stigmatisation of minority groups).
- _____ Teachers have different assessment tools to measure the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of their students (including student self-assessment), rather than only depending upon examination scores.

Special Subject Areas / Extra-curricular Activities

- _____ Children with physical impairment have opportunities for physical play adjusted to their individual abilities and needs.
- _____ Children with visual impairment have opportunities to learn orientation and mobility (O&M), activities of daily living (ADL) and for physical play adjusted to their individual abilities and needs.
- _____ Girls have the same access to and opportunities for physical play (such as equal time on the football field), and other extracurricular activities as boys.
- _____ All children have opportunities to read, write, and learn in their own language (mother-tongue based education) when they first enter school and, if possible, continuing thereafter.
- _____ The school shows respect for children of with different religious background; children have opportunities to learn about their own religious traditions, as well as the religious traditions of other children, as appropriate, during the school day.

Community

- _____ Parents and community groups know about ILFE and are able to help the school become an ILFE.
- _____ The community helps the school reach out to ALL children who have been excluded from school.
- _____ Parents and community groups offer ideas and resources about the implementation of ILFE.
- _____ Parents receive information from the school about their children's attendance and achievement.

This self-assessment checklist will help you and your colleagues to begin planning and creating an ILFE in your school. The next Tool in this Booklet will guide you in how to do this, so don't forget this checklist! Remember also that implementing an ILFE is a continuous process. You, your colleagues, parents, and community members will want to review this checklist at different times of the year to monitor whether you are moving at an acceptable pace toward becoming an ILFE.

HOW CAN OUR SCHOOL BECOME AN ILFE?

How would you answer a teacher from another school who asks, "What do we need to do to become a school that has an Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environment?" Reading and discussing the text below will provide you with ideas for answering this teacher.

Becoming an ILFE in an Afghan School

Abdul Ghafor Nadeem School is located in the centre of the business district of Kabul. The principal of the school has developed a number of excellent programmes to improve the quality of education in the school.

In 1386 (2008) the Ministry of Education introduced the principal to the idea of inclusive education. 10 teachers were selected to participate in workshop, and the school was later selected to be one of the first pilot schools for inclusive education in Afghanistan. This programme has helped him to implement his plans, and improve the access to quality of education for all his students.

He started by promoting a sense of trust between teachers and students. To strengthen the capacity of his teachers he organised seminars twice every month. He personally monitored and supervised these seminars. These seminars had a positive impact on the teaching methods used by the teachers, as well as on the way they communicated and interacted with their students. Another aim of these seminars was to give the teachers a forum where they could share experiences with each other and improve their knowledge. As a consequence the principal and teachers were trying to optimise the use of existing resources, as well as finding ways to get access to additional resources from government and non-government partners.

In 1387 (2009) the school started to enrol children with disabilities and other special educational needs. There was a construction site near the school and many of the workers brought along their children to help them at work. The Principal noticed that these children did not go to school, so he asked their fathers, if their children could work one shift and attend school during another shift. Many of the fathers accepted his suggestion and enrolled their children in school.

Abdul Ghafor Nadeem School has established all the seven committees that schools in Afghanistan have to have, but in this school these committees are active and help with school affairs (in many other schools these committees exist on paper only). These committees work closely together with students, parents, community leaders and influential personalities, and play a significant role in the management of the school.

Here are some of the results of the work these committees have done:

- Two new hand pumps were donated by the community and installed in school
- A small health centre was established within the school
- People living around the school used to dump their garbage behind the school, with support of the principal and the school committees they initiated an environment project, where students and parents cleaned up the area and made it into a football and sports field for the children

- Waste water from the neighbourhood Mosque is now being used to water the trees and plants on the school grounds to improve the environment and reduce the dust that previously bothered the children when they played outside
- Vegetables are now cultivated on the school grounds as part of science projects
- Posters have been placed on the toilet doors to improve hygiene
- Senior members of the community (among others a commissioner in the election commission, a medical doctor in a hospital, a senior officer at the attorney general's office, as well as a carpenter) are now advising the school in the management committee - they have also provided much needed donations for new furniture for the classrooms in the school
- Talent competitions are being organised (among others in; poetry, calligraphy, music, and theatre)
- Courses on Al-Quran for teachers and student have been organised after school hours by volunteers
- Seminars on first-aid have been organised for over 20 students by volunteers from outside the school

The hard work of the teachers, principal, parents and children in the school has resulted in:

- Increased confidence among students
- Improved learning and understanding
- Increased acceptance of children with diverse abilities and backgrounds
- Better communication and interpersonal skills
- More teamwork
- Improved results in academics

HOW TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN CHANGE

The points below are important in bringing about lasting change in schools. Think about and discuss with your teacher-colleagues how these points can be promoted and implemented in your school.

1. Leadership for change is essential; without it, nothing will change. Someone with a certain authority in your school - the principal, headmaster, or the teacher who is most interested and committed to change - needs to be the "change agent." She or he will be the one who is responsible for leading the way and encouraging others to follow to develop an ILFE in the school.

2. Workshops and other learning opportunities for teachers that are participatory and activity-based are needed to introduce and sustain change. For example, begin with Staff Development Days that allow teachers to experience child-centred teaching. Give them opportunities to discuss openly their questions and concerns about an ILFE. Encourage teachers to observe each other and give constructive feedback.

As children with different needs are enrolled in the school, hold additional workshops that help teachers;

- a) to understand how these children learn;
- b) to learn new ways of teaching, and;
- c) to identify changes that should be made within the classroom and school that will help these children to learn better.

Be sure to follow up on the workshops in terms of how well they have helped teachers, what areas need additional support to promote changes in teaching and learning, and what future workshops should be held. It is important that teachers feel that their need for knowledge is being met during the process of change, and that they feel that their voices are heard. This change will never work if it is done in a top-down approach, it must be felt and owned by each individual teacher.

- 3. Improving teaching and learning in the classroom** is the main focus of change in becoming an ILFE. Remember that the school itself is also a classroom. But while the school represents the overall environment, you and your classroom are the closest to the children. You see the children every day, you work with them most closely, and your teaching methods have the greatest impact on their learning.
- 4. Information** collected in the school and community, as well as information about ILFE need to be used to manage and make positive decisions in moving forward. We'll look at some of the ways to collect and analyse this information later in this Toolkit.
- 5. Resources** need to be mobilised and used effectively. Families and communities can be especially important here, as we will learn in Booklet 2 on working with families and communities to create an ILFE.
- 6. Planning is crucial.** A flexible, long-term plan (3-5 years) can serve as a guide for step-by-step change. It should allow teachers, the school staff, and the community time to change from old to new beliefs and practices. Teachers and parents should participate in setting objectives. The more all key stakeholders are involved from the beginning, the better.
- 7. A collaborative, team approach** to the process of change is needed. "Everyone participates; everyone is a learner; everyone is a winner." It is important that everyone feel that this is "their" process, and that, as a team, they together are responsible for the planning and implementation. This attitude will foster creativity, confidence and commitment, and it will promote the sharing of duties and responsibilities.
- 8. The mission, vision, and culture** of the school needs to be developed around the key characteristics of an ILFE as discussed in the first Tool in this Booklet. Everyone - teachers, administrators, children, parents, and community leaders - should be involved in developing the school's mission and vision.
- 9. Continuous contact and communication** with parents and community leaders is necessary to gain their confidence, to make sure that ALL children are in school and learning to the best of their abilities, as well as to increase the sense of ownership in the community, and the sharing of resources between the community and the school.

Action Activity: Dealing with Resistance

Not everyone will initially want to change, and some people may actually resist changing their long-standing beliefs and practices. Discuss with your colleagues some of the major reasons why schools - maybe even your own school - may resist becoming an ILFE. List these below. What are some of the ways this resistance can be overcome?

1. Point of Resistance: _____

Ways to Overcome It: _____

2. Point of Resistance: _____

Ways to Overcome It: _____

3. Point of Resistance: _____

Ways to Overcome It: _____

4. Point of Resistance: _____

Ways to Overcome It: _____

5. Point of Resistance: _____

Ways to Overcome It: _____

Tool 1.3

Steps to Becoming an ILFE

HOW TO PLAN ON BECOMING AN ILFE

After assessing where your school is on the journey to becoming an ILFE, and recognising how the process of change takes place, you need to decide what steps to take to create a more inclusive and learning-friendly environment, in your classroom or in your entire school. Below are suggestions for steps to plan and implement an ILFE.² These steps do not have to be sequential. You can work towards developing these steps according to what you see as appropriate in terms of your time, situation and priorities.

Step 1: Set Up an ILFE Team

Identify the people who will play a role in planning and implementing an ILFE and set up a Coordinating Group.

1. The ILFE Team may include a few teachers, the head teacher, and two or three parents, or it may be larger.
2. The ILFE Coordinating Group may include teachers, administrators, and other school staff members; educators and health care providers; people from groups vulnerable to exclusion from and within education (i.e. persons with disabilities, and people with minority backgrounds); children (elected among the students); parents; members of the community; and local organisations.

Step 2: Identify Needs

What do people already know and what do they need to learn?

1. Explore the knowledge of ILFE among the member of the Coordinating Group. What do the ILFE Team members already know about the characteristics and benefits of an ILFE? What do they need to learn and how will they learn it (i.e. inviting guest speakers, visiting resource persons, resource centres, or other schools that have developed an ILFE)?
2. Explore the knowledge of students, staff, parents, caregivers, and members of the local community. Once the coordinating group is knowledgeable about an ILFE, decide what questions to ask others. This may involve simple individual interviews or group conversations, or you may design a short questionnaire.

Learn about the school and the community's children.

1. Review (or complete) the ILFE self-assessment checklist included at the beginning of the previous Tool on "Where are We Now." Make a list of what your school is doing already and what still needs to be done to become an ILFE.
2. Find out which children in the community are not coming to school, and why. Tools for doing this are presented in Booklet 3 on "Getting All Children in School and Learning."
3. The ILFE Team should identify the educational needs of the students, and the needs of those who are excluded in your community (children who are still out of school) so that they can make good classroom and school plans for including these children. The team may need to complete an evaluation of the individual learning needs of all the students if this has not been completed already. Parents and siblings can give the team helpful information about their children.

² The steps in this section were adapted from The All Children Belong Project, www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/decision_making/planning_steps.html, and from Booth T, Ainscow M, et al. (2000) *Index for Inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools* (Bristol, CSIE).

4. Identify existing resources in your school and community. List all support and services required for children with various backgrounds and abilities. These may include government services, NGOs, health clinics, and private agencies.
5. Describe the current education programme and the school environment. This description should clarify what facilities, furniture, and materials currently are available and in use. Are these accessible by ALL children? If not, how can they be made more accessible?
6. Identify and describe teaching and learning processes in classrooms. Visit classrooms and describe exactly what you see teachers and students doing. Are the classrooms inclusive and learning-friendly? Why, or why not?

Analyse this information. Describe the changes that need to be made to make classrooms more inclusive and learning-friendly. Consider class size, instructional strategies, teaching styles, teacher-student relationships, classroom helpers (volunteers), and materials used.

Collect further information. The information you have gathered may raise new or additional questions. Gather additional information so that you can make your decisions based on all the relevant information, not on opinions or ideas only.

Step 3: Create a Vision

Describe your desired classroom environment, or even your ideal "Dream Classroom." When you and your children walk inside the classroom, what should it look like? What kind of furniture should it have? What should the teacher be doing? What should the students be doing? What should be on the walls? Consider girls and boys; those who do not speak the dominant language (those who have a different mother tongue than most of the student); those who have a disability (visual, hearing, physical or developmental impairments); children of different cultural, social, language, ethnic and religious backgrounds - ALL children. If all school-age children in the community are in school, what will their different learning needs be, and how should these be met? Write down as specifically as you can your "vision" of a "dream classroom," which will serve as your long term goal in creating an ILFE.

Next, to reach your "dream," think about what kind of support you would need from the community, from local government, and from education officials? How can you get this support? Who can help you to realise your "vision."

Step 4: Produce an ILFE School Development Plan

Develop a schedule of activities for creating and implementing your ILFE. You will need to describe in detail the changes that will be needed and when they will be implemented. You should also list materials and services, people responsible for providing these services, and any other resources that are needed. If these are not available in your community, you need to make a plan for how you can implement ILFE without much support and services (this will be the case in many Afghan schools). Your schedule should include realistic dates for implementing changes. It should have solid targets, but it should also be flexible to meet changing needs and conditions.

Provide for additional resources as needed. Prepare in advance to add needed resources (such as developing a peer tutoring system, or establishing a special parent-teacher committee for low cost resource development).

Consider minds and hearts. Developing education so that it encourages the learning and participation of ALL children takes place in two ways: through detailed analysis and planning, and through changes in people's hearts and minds. You can use the ILFE self-assessment checklist and these guidelines to

do the detailed analysis. What will you do to try to bring about change in people's hearts and minds? How about starting by increasing the participation of parents, older siblings and community members in your classroom? In this way, they can learn for themselves about the benefits of an ILFE, and they can help you more in your teaching and the children with their learning. Booklet 2 on "Working with Families and Communities to Create an ILFE" will give you more ideas on what to try.

Step 5: Implement Your Plan

Provide technical assistance as needed. Is technical assistance needed, such as workshops on special topics that are given by experienced persons? If so, what type of assistance is needed and who will provide it? How it will be implemented, and how often will it be provided?

Train school staff (teaching and non-teaching) and students as needed. Training topics can cover children's rights and their implications for education, gender related issues, awareness about the rights of minorities, issues related to working children, disability awareness, clarification of personnel responsibilities, team-teaching, subject integration, and so forth.

Promote active parental involvement. The planning team should develop a system for parent/teacher communication. Who will be responsible for regularly communicating with parents? Parental input should be encouraged and seriously considered throughout the planning and implementation process.

Plan how you will deal with resistance. If possible change should be implemented at the pace with which all key stakeholders are comfortable. Use the information from the activity at the end of Tool 1.1 (Activity on Challenges to Becoming an ILFE) to identify what possible resistance may arise and the ways to overcome it.

Step 6: Evaluate Your Plan and Celebrate Your Success

Monitor the progress and modify your plan when needed. The ILFE team is a continuous resource to be used throughout the school year. Prepare a schedule of follow-up meetings. Decide how monitoring will be done, and who will do it. Observe how the existing programme is going; decide if existing supports are adequate or need to be improved or eliminated.

Celebrate Your Successes! Achieving significant changes in an education programme deserves to be celebrated! Since you have hopefully involved the community every step of the way, invite the community to celebrate the changes in your school by holding a fair, a festival, or an "Open School Day" for parents, community members, and government officials. Representative work from ALL children should be displayed along with new teaching materials (developed from waste or low cost material); teachers demonstrate their new skills of assessment and teaching; and children of all abilities demonstrate what they have learned.

HOW TO MONITOR OUR PROGRESS

What differences are we making? Are our classrooms and schools becoming more inclusive and learning-friendly? To find out whether you are successfully developing an Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environment, you will want to ask three key questions:

1. Are we "inclusive and learning-friendly" in the ways we planned to be?
2. How can we improve on what we have done?
3. What difference have we made, especially in improving how ALL children learn and thrive in school?

You can evaluate the process and the outcomes of an ILFE both informally and formally. You and others inside the school can conduct informal evaluations, and then use the information you collect to shape or make changes in the programme. In addition to an informal evaluation, it is wise to have trusted outsiders come in on a regular basis to conduct a formal evaluation. This evaluation may be part of a school accreditation visit, or just as a way to view the school through "fresh eyes." During Open School Days, parents could fill out questionnaires to evaluate the performance, and the children's learning, as well as to recommend any improvements. You will get many good ideas this way. Remember that children are also good monitors and evaluators, and we need to ask them what they think too!

The ILFE self-assessment checklist that was given earlier in this Booklet can be used as a monitoring tool so that you can follow your school's progress towards becoming an ILFE over the course of one year, two years, several years, or even a decade or more.

In addition to the checklist, here are five ways to gather information in order to find out whether the school is moving towards becoming an ILFE.

1. Keep diaries and records. You and your fellow teachers can keep a short diary each month of what you have achieved in developing an ILFE. This will include keeping records of activities, and of meetings in the school and the community. Class monitors or other pupils can also keep a simple diary of what has taken place and can discuss it with their teachers each month. Community leaders or parents can visit regularly and keep records.

2. Talk to other people. Much of this is done informally as your ILFE programme develops, but sometimes you need to plan special occasions when you look for answers. You can do this by using a list of questions and recording answers. Talk to students, parents, and other teachers either individually or in groups. It is important for you to ask questions in a way that bring out their opinions, rather than the answers that they think you want to hear.

3. Assess knowledge and skills through essays. What do you and other teachers know about the diverse student population in the school? You may want to ask other teachers to write an essay about what they know, and to list the questions about what they think they still need to know. This is also a good activity for students to do.

4. Observation. Whom and what do we observe? Headmasters need to observe teachers' instruction in classrooms as part of overall professional development. Keep records of how often the headmaster visits the classroom and what the discussion is about. Peer observation is also useful particularly as part of team teaching. Teachers from one class can observe students from other classes. Keep records of these observations and comments, and discuss them periodically in groups consisting of the headmaster and teacher-colleagues.

Look at the buildings and the surroundings. Has your ILFE activities made an impact on the appearance of the school? Is it "barrier free"? How are the sanitation facilities? Are they well protected from outsiders? Do girls and boys with and without disabilities have equal access to the playgrounds and sport fields?

Observe changes in the way students act and behave. Do they help each other in ways they did not use to before ILFE was introduced?

5. Documents. Examine various school documents, such as letters to parents, progress reports, and lesson plans. Do the written documents from your school reflect the inclusive learning environment you are trying to become? Do lesson plans and the curriculum syllabi reflect the ILFE of your school?

Tool 1.4

What Have We Learned?

You have come to the end of this Booklet, but you still have one more activity to do. Let's start by finding out what you have learned about ILFE from this Booklet? Can you complete the following tasks?

1. What is an ILFE? Explain what it means and describe what it looks like in a classroom (such as considering seating arrangements, learning materials, and relationships).
2. List five characteristics of an ILFE.
3. List two benefits of an ILFE for each of these groups: children, teachers, parents, and other members of the community.
4. Why might some of these groups resist the change to becoming an ILFE?
5. List the important steps for introducing and maintaining change in schools. Describe the ways in which you have observed these steps in the process of change going on at your school.
6. What are the five major Programme Planning Steps for developing an ILFE? At what point in the change process is your school? What have you already done to become ILFE? Since it is a continuous process, what do you still need and want to do?

Developing an ILFE is the only way to go if we are serious about achieving the goal of Education for All (EFA)! It requires commitment, hard work, and the openness to learn many new things; and it brings with it the satisfaction of seeing all children learn - children who have been in school learn things from children newly enrolled in school who have been excluded, and the children who were excluded come to know the joy of learning.

This Booklet has asked you to think about the ways your school operate, to what extent it is inclusive and learning-friendly, and has helped you to explore different ways your school can become more inclusive and learning-friendly.

Learning-Friendly Classrooms (Table 1.A)

	Traditional classroom	Inclusive, learning-friendly classroom
Relationships between the teacher, classroom helper and the children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distant • The teacher addresses students with her back towards them • She doesn't consider the needs of all her students as she blocks the view for many of them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly and warm • The teacher sits next to the children • She smiles at the child with a hearing impairment • The helper praises this child and assists other children
Who is in the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher • Students with relatively similar backgrounds and abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher • Classroom helper (volunteers, parents or older sibling - brothers or sister) • Students with a wide range of backgrounds and abilities
Seating arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigid seating arrangements in every classroom (all the children seated on benches at desks in rows) • Children in the back are looking into the back of the heads of the children in front - limits child-to-child interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible seating arrangements • Children sitting together on the floor in circles facing each other - facilitates child-to-child interaction
Learning materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook (Mathematics) • Exercise book • Blackboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of materials for all subjects such as math materials made from low cost or waste material • Common household objects are used as learning materials
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional teaching resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining common household goods and objects that are well known to the children with mathematical theory • Involving the community by using classroom helpers
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard written examinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic assessment; Observations; Samples of children's work over time such as portfolios (see Booklet 4)

Book 2:

Working with Families and
Communities to Create an ILFE



Book 2: Working with Families and Communities to Create an ILFE

TOOL GUIDE

Booklet 2 describes how you can help parents as well as community members and organisations to participate in developing and maintaining an ILFE. It gives ideas about how to involve the community in the school, but also how to involve students more in community life. It will help you identify in what ways this is already going on, and it will offer ideas for involving families and communities in promoting and developing an ILFE.

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Tool 2.1

Teacher-Parent-Community Relationships in an ILFE

WHO IS THE "COMMUNITY"?

The community includes all those who live and work near the school. Everyone in the community can make significant contributions towards developing an ILFE in schools.

In an ILFE, we are responsible for creating a learning environment where ALL children - girls and boys - can learn and develop to the best of their abilities. Parents and community members have an important responsibility to support the development of ILFE in our schools and classrooms. For instance, they need to work with us to ensure that all out-of-school children are found, enrolled and that we find ways to help them stay in school.

Involving the community is of crucial importance for developing an ILFE, however in reality there is often little contact between schools and communities. This is due to many reasons. Many parents find it difficult to attend school activities during the day because they are busy with work and household duties. In Afghanistan many parents have little or no formal education, many of them will feel intimidated when talking with teachers and headmasters, and will therefore often shy away from active participation in school activities. Many Afghan families are large. This is another factor why many parents find it difficult to spend time participating in school activities as they are busy raising and caring for the other children. If we, as teachers, are assigned to schools outside our own home communities, we may not even live in the same community we teach in, or we may live at the school and leave on weekends to see our own families in distant communities. For these and other reasons, communication is often one-way, from school-to-parent or school-to-community, and very rarely from parents-to-schools or communities-to-schools. Yet these obstacles must be overcome when a school begins involving families and the community in creating an ILFE.

WHY SHOULD WE INVOLVE COMMUNITIES?

The active participation of families, community leaders, and other community members are of vital importance in getting all children into school and helping them to learn, develop, and participate actively. If families and communities value the education we give their children (and value us, as teachers), then children will also value their opportunity to learn. It will encourage them to respect us and ALL their classmates - especially those with diverse backgrounds and abilities - and encourage them to apply their learning in their daily lives.

Communities offer information, practical knowledge and skills that we can use to improve our teaching and promote the learning of our children. For instance, we can incorporate traditional stories or songs into our language lessons, use different techniques for growing and nurturing local plants or raising animals in our science lessons, or use traditional building and carpet-weaving techniques in math classes.

Moreover, if we want to mobilise all the resources needed to improve the education for ALL our children, the quality of our schools, as well as to achieve sustainable change, then **schools and communities must work together!**

WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS?

As teachers, what are our roles and responsibilities in working with parents and community members so that they can support an ILFE?

All teachers have the responsibility to;

1. communicate regularly with parents (or guardians) about their children's progress in learning and achievement;
2. work with community leaders to find out which children are not in school and why, and to find ways to bring them into school;
3. explain the value and purpose of an ILFE to the parents of the children in their classes;
4. prepare their students to interact with the community as part of the curriculum, such as through field trips or special activities and events, and to;
5. invite parents and members of the community to be involved in classroom and school activities.

Some teachers also will take on the responsibility to;

6. work with other teachers and the headmaster to communicate about ILFE to parent and community organisations (School Management Committees, Village Education Committees, Parent Teacher Associations), and to;
7. encourage and work with parents to be advocates for ILFE with other parents and community members.

Action Activity: How Can We Work With Our Communities

Begin by listing every school activity that you are aware of that involves families and community members - such as field visits, parent-teacher meetings, religious celebrations - and that brings teachers, children, their families, and communities together.¹

Next to each activity, write down:

- whether you assisted in this activity or not; and if so, in what capacity;
- the positive results from this activity, and;
- the negative (or not-so-positive) occurrences that happened and how these could be avoided in the future (for instance, few parents attended, or only the mothers attended while the fathers stayed away).

Ask yourself:

- Which activities are the most important in making your school and classroom inclusive and learning-friendly?
- Which activities are good events for promoting a better understanding of ILFE among families and communities?
- How have these activities motivated parents and other community members in volunteering to help with classroom activities?
- How can you incorporate successful ideas from the activities of others into yours?
- How can these activities be expanded - for example, holding an Open School Day at the beginning and end of each year, rather than only once a year? The Open School Day at the start of the year can focus on what the children will learn and how families can help, while the one at the end of the year can exhibit the children's work and celebrate everyone's achievements in working together and creating an ILFE.

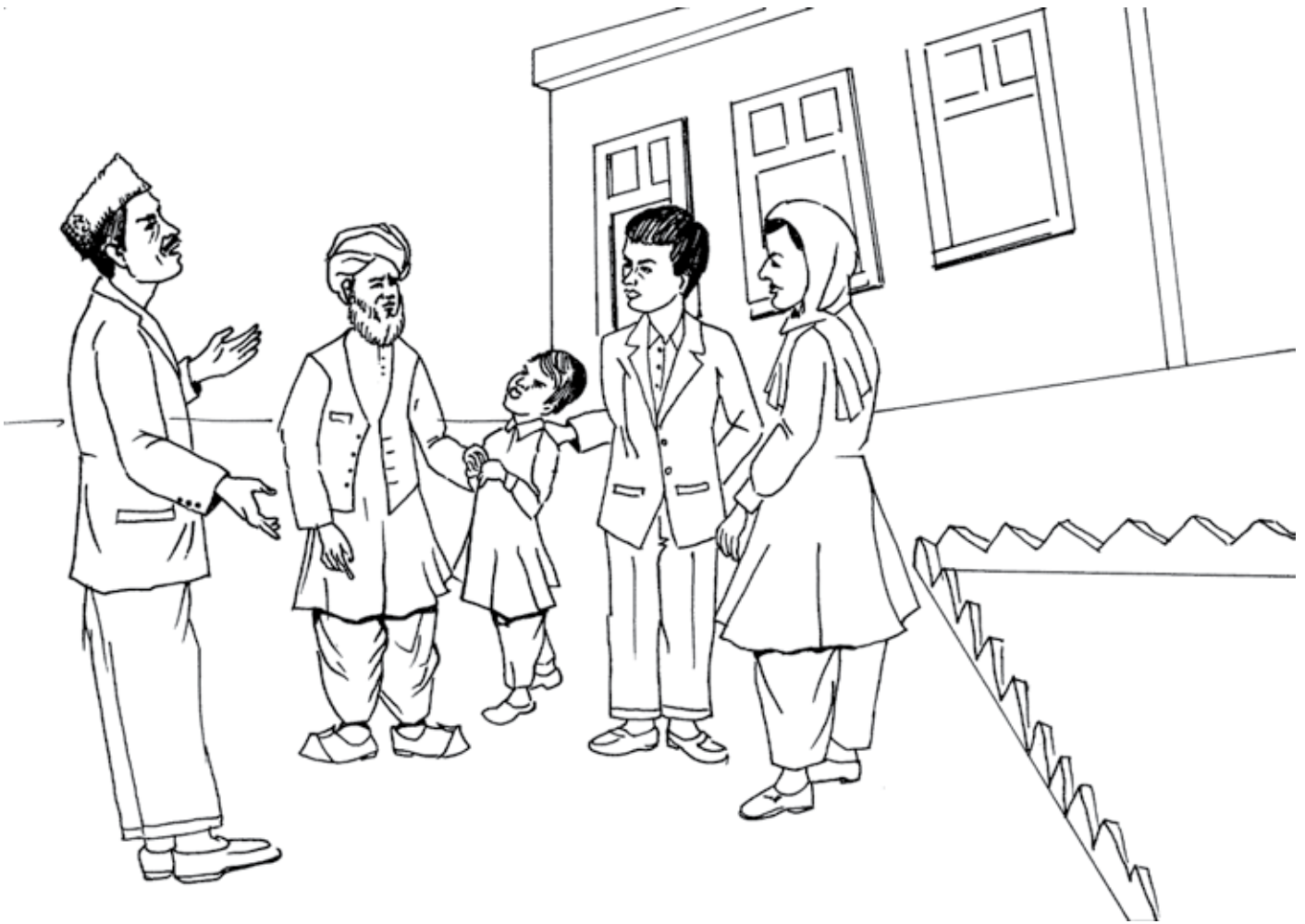
¹ This activity was adapted from The Multigrade Teacher's Handbook (1994) Bureau of Elementary Education, Department of Education, Culture and Sports in cooperation with UNICEF Philippines, and UNICEF at <http://www.unicef.org/teachers/environment/families.htm>

Tool 2.2

Information and Advocacy for ILFE in Families and Communities

For educational interventions to have real impact, community must fully support them and be actively involved. For communities to be actively involved, they need to be contacted, informed, and motivated.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



One of our most important responsibilities as teachers is to communicate and work closely together with families and other members of the community. Children learn better when their parents and other family members are interested in, and involved with, the school and with their education. When we involve families in learning, we increase the potential for learning in our classrooms, and we create support for our teaching in many ways. Consequently, making contact with our children's families and important community members is vitally important in creating inclusive, learning-friendly environments.²

² This section and activity were adapted from *The Multigrade Teacher's Handbook* (1994) Bureau of Elementary Education, Department of Education, Culture and Sports in cooperation with UNICEF Philippines, and UNICEF at <http://www.unicef.org/teachers/environment/families.htm>

There are many effective ways to begin communicating with families and communities. Below is a list of some of them:

- Hold meetings with family and community groups where you introduce yourself, describe your goals for teaching and for children's learning, the value of diversity in an inclusive, learning-friendly classroom, and discuss the ways in which families and community members can participate in your classroom activities. For you to succeed it is important that ALL the parents feel that you respect them and value their opinions and contributions, regardless of their background, abilities or circumstances.
- Schedule informal meetings with parents once or twice a year to discuss their children's learning. Show them examples of their children's work. Stress each child's talents and positive achievements, and talk about how each child can learn even better.
- Send your students' work home to show parents how well their children are doing. Ask them for their opinions about their children's work, and what they think their children should learn next.
- Encourage children to talk about what they learn at home and use this information in your lessons. Also talk with the parents about what their children are learning in class relates to their life at home, and what they learn at home, related to the curriculum they follow at school. Remember that many children in your classes may be first-generation-learners, it is therefore important to value and show respect, both for the formal and informal knowledge they bring with them from home.
- Conduct community field visits or ask children to interview parents or grandparents about their own childhood years in the community, and then have the children write stories or essays about "Community Life in the Past." This will encourage to more communication within families and between generations.
- Encourage family members to participate in classroom activities and invite community elders and others to share their knowledge with your class.

KEEPING REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Informing Parents about Their Children's Progress

As teachers in an ILFE, we need to communicate regularly with parents about their children. We may visit parents in their homes, send notes home with children about their progress, or invite parents to school to meet with us. Consequently, it is essential to create a welcoming atmosphere for all parents and community members at school.

Meeting with parents (or guardians) early in the year is important so that teachers and parents can develop a relationship and a partnership for children's learning. However, many parents are used to home visits or invitations to school only when their children are underperforming or have misbehaved, you therefore need to state clearly at the beginning of your visit or in your invitation to parents that this conversation will be different. Tell them that you want to learn about the child from them so that you can teach the child more effectively. Tell them also that you want to inform them about their child's skills, so that they can help the child at home and reinforce what the child is learning at school. Encourage the parents (both mothers and fathers) to volunteer in school to help their own child and the other children to learn. Explain to them that they, as parents and families become more involved in school and classroom activities it will affect their children's performance in school.

It is important to inform parents regularly about children's progress in learning. This means using assessment methods that help teachers, students, and parents know which skills a child has developed in literacy, numeracy, life skills, and other subjects. Parents need to know what their child has learned well and what the child still needs to learn.

One of the ways to do this creatively is through colour-coded charts, which are particularly effective with parents who are not literate. For example, in Chart 1 below, a colour corresponds to math skills. It is important that the different colour levels are defined, not only based on the skills needed to pass class tests and exams, but that they are also adjusted to the individual abilities of each child - as different children have different learning abilities and capacities. The individual targets for each child should be set at the beginning of the school year.

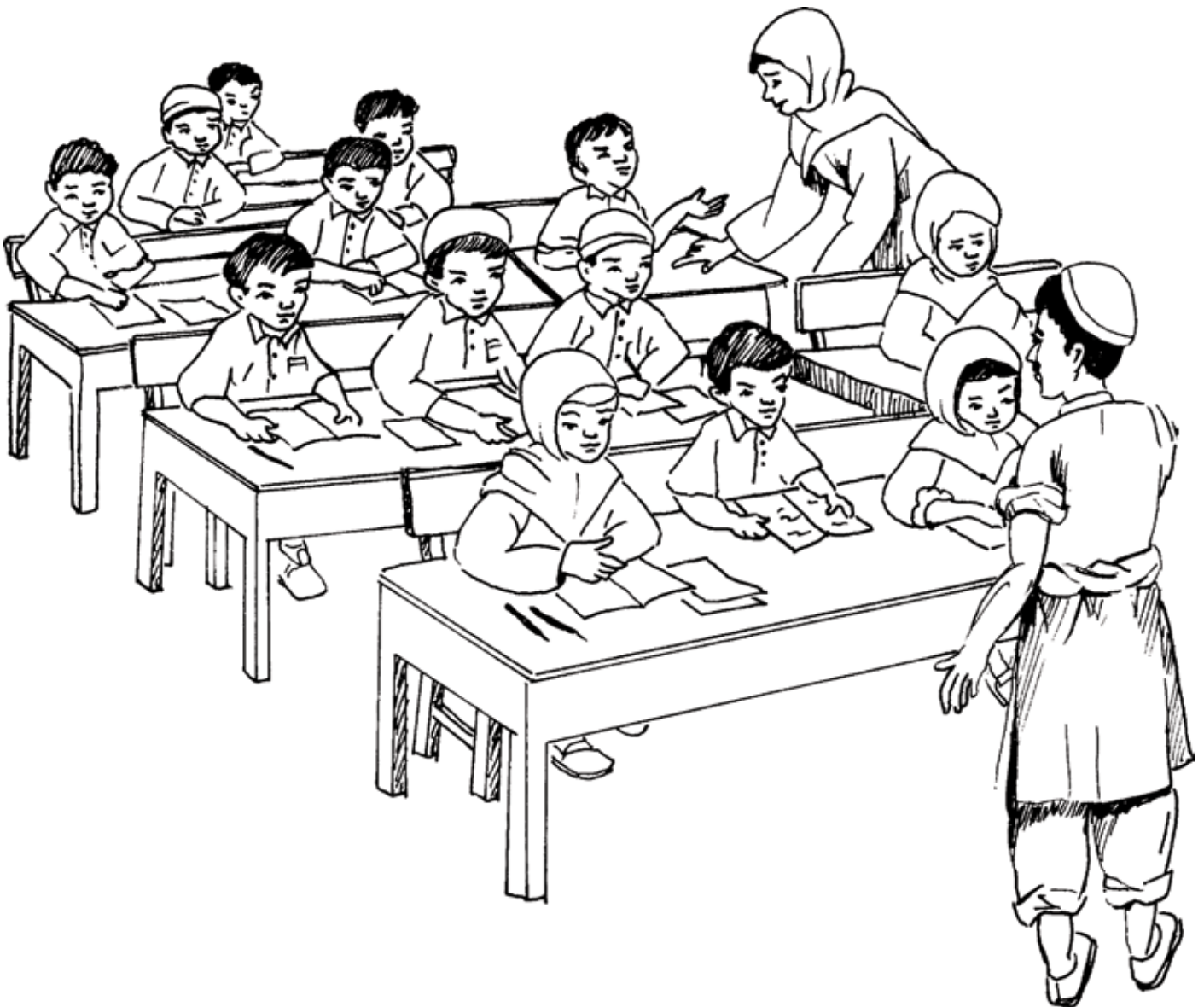


Chart 1**Sample of a Colour-Coded Chart of Content and Tasks for Math for One School Year.³**

This is the Individual Chart for Leyloma who is in Third Grade who did well in Math in Second Grade:

Level	If 8 out of 10 questions are answered correctly he proceeds to the next level
Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values of currency (up to 100) • Writing numbers • Subtraction - single digits; addition - single and double digit numbers
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental arithmetic (addition, subtraction) • Division - single digit numbers • Reading math problems
Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiplication • Subtraction and addition of double digit numbers • Measurement (height, weight, distance and volume)
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying numbers up to 700 • Subtraction and addition by regrouping • Subtracting a triple and a double digit number • Identifying triple digit numbers
Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiplication - double and single digit numbers • Division - double and single digit numbers • Reading word problems
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiplication - triple and single digit numbers • Measurement (distance and liquids)

³ Adapted from duPlessis J. (2003) Rainbow Charts and C-O-C-O-N-U-T-S: Teacher Development for Continuous Assessment in Malawi Classrooms. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

Chart 2**Sample of a Colour-Coded Chart of Content and Tasks for Math for One School Year**

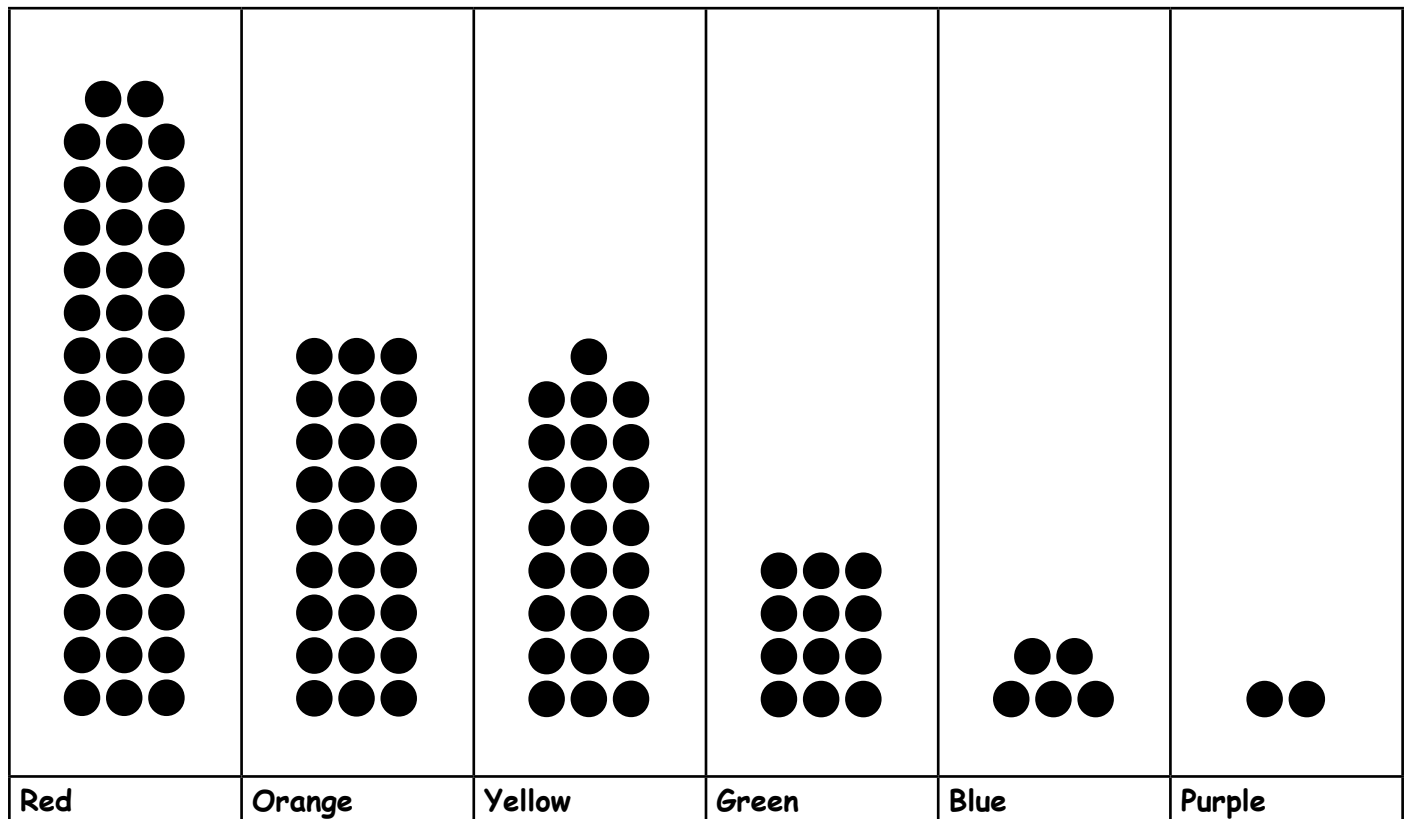
This is the Individual Chart for Noori who is also in Third Grade but Struggled with Math in Second Grade

Level	If 8 out of 10 questions are answered correctly he proceeds to the next level
Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing numbers from 1 to 10 • Addition - single digit numbers • Subtraction - single digit numbers
Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values of currency (up to 50) • Writing numbers from 11 to 50 • Addition - single with double digit numbers • Subtraction - single digit from double digit numbers
Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values of currency (up to 500) • Writing three digit numbers • Mental arithmetic (addition, subtraction) • Measurement - height and weight
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition - double digit numbers • Subtraction - double digit numbers • Division - single digit numbers • Reading simple math problems • Measurement - distance
Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying numbers up to 1000 • Subtraction and addition by regrouping • Subtracting a triple and a double digit number • Multiplication - single digit numbers
Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiplication - double and single digit numbers • Division - double and single digit numbers • Measurement - volume and liquids

Using Charts 1 and 2, colour-coded "Rainbow Charts" are then made to show children's progress and ensure that teachers, students, and parents together monitor the children's learning. In the Rainbow Chart (chart 3), each child has a "happy face" marker with her or his name on it. As they progressively improve their math skills as indicated in the chart, their marker is moved to the colour that matches her or his individual performance level. If you, as a teacher, observe that some children have stayed in a level too long, you can try to find ways to help the children learn what is required to move to the next level, or re-evaluate you expectations.

Chart 3.

Rainbow Chart of Student Progress for the Entire Class



Whether teachers use a Rainbow Chart, a skill list, or a progress report card to send home, informing parents about their children's progress is enormously important in creating and sustaining school-home communication.

It is important to ensure that these charts do not create unhealthy competition between children (which can result in teasing and bullying of those who underperform), and that children are not being punished by their parents if they struggle to perform according to our expectations.

Informing Parents and the Community about ILFE

In talking with parents (or guardians) about their child's learning, it is important to explain how your classroom and school are becoming inclusive and learning-friendly. You will need to explain carefully what you mean by "inclusive," as we learned about in the first Booklet in this Toolkit, and use some of the case studies as examples of how inclusive learning can benefit **ALL** children. In addition to talking with parents, some teachers can work with the headmaster and the schools' ILFE team or coordinating committee to explain the development of an ILFE to larger groups including community members. Some of the ways you can explain ILFE include the following:

1. **Printed Information.** Prepare school brochures or newsletters to give out. Invite journalists from the local newspaper to visit the school and encourage the local press to write about ILFE. Show the journalists the benefits of an ILFE school, and explain the school's plan to provide a quality education for all children.
2. **Radio and TV Public Service Announcements.** Schools can use radio and television to show and tell parents about the need for schooling their children.

3. **Community or Group Meetings.** Plan to hold short workshops or training sessions. These sessions are helpful in introducing the school to people who are new, especially for families whose children are not attending school. The sessions can explain the school's mission to educate all children as well as explain about ILFE. Also during this first meeting and later meetings, as well as getting their ideas about how the quality of education at your school can be improved even more.
4. **Involve Social and Health Services / Organisations.** Since institutions and organisations working with health and social services may become involved in your school as it becomes more inclusive, stay in touch with them as one of your important strategies. They can provide important resources and help protect the rights of your children.
5. **Create Networks with Other ILFE Schools.** In some countries, three or more schools (cluster) work together to support each other in becoming more inclusive and learning-friendly. Teachers share ideas about new teaching methods they are using or ways they are involving community members in their classrooms. They host school or cluster workshops to get updates on new teaching techniques, and on special topics related to ILFE. They jointly organise community events to get all children in school, or conduct field trips so that children can learn from communities other than their own.

MOTIVATING SUPPORT FOR AN ILFE

Parents as Advocates for Change. In some communities, parents themselves will be the advocates for an ILFE at the school level, together with teachers and headmasters. In a school in Shahr-e-Naw in Kabul, for example, parents whose children had been rejected by the school in the past because they had learning difficulties or disabilities, experienced the benefits of ILFE when the same schools suddenly welcomed their children to their school. They now share their positive experiences with ILFE with other parents during teacher-parent's meetings. Their stories are published in newsletters and publications to encourage other schools to move towards inclusion as well.

Parents as Barriers to Change. In other communities, parents may resist change. Some parents, often mirroring the values of society, may initially not want children who are different from their own to be play and learn together with their children. These communities should therefore be targeted with the advocacy activities discussed below.

Advocacy Strategies

Advocacy involves education, information, publicity, gaining support, and getting support from others to promote your message. How can parents and community members become advocates for an ILFE?

1. **Encourage Parents to Tell Others about Your ILFE School.** Parent advocates may want to use some of the same information you used when telling them about ILFE, such as brochures, newsletters, or children's work. They can be especially effective in talking with parents who resist change, in explaining the value of diversity in the school and classroom through their own experiences, and in convincing them that quality education comes first in an ILFE school.
2. **Involve Parents in the Classroom to Help Children who are Vulnerable to Exclusion.** As parents understand that they are welcome in your classroom, they may volunteer to come more often and assist you. If they do not, plan tasks for parents or community members and invite them to help you. For example, parents or community members can serve as volunteers in language instruction or for assisting children with disabilities. They can read to children and listen to children read. They also can help supervise group activities and free the teacher to work with individual children or small groups who may need more attention. We'll explore other ways of involving parents and community members in the next Tool.

3. **Involve Parents in Child-Seeking Activities for Children who are Out-of-School.** For example, work with the leaders of the local Mosque to announce the enrolment dates and times in the school before the beginning of the school year to attract all families from the community to send their children to school. Local merchants and businesses may want to contribute small gifts for the children when they enrol in school. Many other ideas for involving parents and communities in child-seeking activities can be found in Booklet No. 3 on getting all children in school and learning!
4. **Link School Management Communities with ILFEs.** Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or School Management Committees (SMCs) are ways of involving parents in a long-term relationship with schools. They help to provide onsite supervision, as well as improved quality and accountability.

Village Education Committees

The Community Support Program in Balochistan in Pakistan supported the establishment of women's village education committees. There are now over 1,000 of these groups, each with five members, modelled after the men's education committees. The women have proven to be better than the men at sustaining attendance and other daily activities in the all-girl schools.

For more information on this programme, see <http://www.worldbank.org> and search for "Balochistan."

5. **Outreach through Home Visits.** Connecting with families whose children are excluded from school is not always easy. One way to provide information about ILFE is for the school to ask someone from one of the many groups that is vulnerable to exclusion, such as a person with a disability, or a person from an ethnic or religious minority, to be an outreach person for the school. A group meeting with that outreach person or individual home visits can be effective in explaining the school's approach to ILFE.

Tool 2.3

The Community and the Curriculum

THE COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Practical contributions by parents and communities are important for ILFE development. For example, community organisations, parent-teacher associations, and school management committees often get involved in helping to improve school facilities. This is important, especially for schools that have physical barriers preventing children with physical disabilities from entering the school buildings. If there are steps, community members can help to put in ramps in place of steps. In many countries, community organisations are also active in improving school water supplies and sanitation (toilet facilities).

How to encourage parents to participate and volunteer in school activities by:

- Creating forums where they can share problems and ideas (for example setting up Parent-Committees or PTAs)
- Organising adult literacy classes - teaching parents how to read and write
- Teaching basic life skills
- Teaching livelihood skills
- Teaching about nutrition
- Teaching about hygiene
- Teaching about family planning

In the last Tool it was mentioned that one way to involve parents directly (mothers and fathers) is to invite them to visit the classroom. There are many ways in which parents, grandparents, and guardians can be involved in a student's education that will contribute to the ILFE nature of the classroom. Here are some ideas - Parents and other family members - both those who are literate and those who are no - can;

- volunteer to assist teachers with classroom activities, such as reading or preparing learning materials, helping with extra-curricular activities like sports or field trips, or organising special activities like the celebration of religious and cultural festivals;
- be classroom guest speakers who share information about their work and their lives,
- talk about the history of the community, share folk stories, or demonstrate how to make traditional crafts, and how to develop and sustain businesses;
- become involved in and attend PTA meetings and other school events;
- donate needed materials to the school or help to find financial contributions to meet school and classroom needs;
- reach out to other parents whose children are not in school, or are thinking of dropping out, to encourage them to complete their education;
- participate in efforts to keep their children's schools safe and clean;
- help the school to hold an Open School Day;
- help to assess children's learning achievements;
- hold a career day every year - invite men and women with different background to discuss their careers and how girls and boys can prepare for their future careers, and;
- successful graduates and dedicated parents can serve as role models, especially those with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

Female Role Models

Female teachers and other women from the community can be involved in role model programmes. Parents or other relatives of the students, as well as religious, artistic, athletic, or political figures from the community are often willing to become involved with a school or classroom that tries to give girls positive role models.

If local women are available to do this, invite them to come in several times during the academic year. Ask them to address how gender roles have affected their choices, successes, and failures. In addition to speeches, demonstrations of their work and consultations with individual students, they can help direct and comment on role-plays with students. **It is important that these activities are held both in girls' and boys' schools as well as the few schools that are open for both girls and boys.**

Have a female teacher and a group of girl students who have made it successfully to secondary school visit rural schools where girls usually drop out during or after primary school. All the girls should meet together to talk about what girls need to do to stay and do well in school. Have the visiting female teacher and older girls meet together with the girls and their parents to discuss specific ways to help girls stay in school and complete their education.

Adapted from the *Gender-Fair Teacher* (2003) UNICEF/Eritrea

THE CLASSROOM AND THE COMMUNITY

Besides inviting parents and community members to the ILFE school a relevant curriculum requires that children learn as much as they can about various topics concerning their lives, their culture, their background and their communities. For instance, children can;

- find articles or get information from their home or community that relate to a lesson at school;
- interview parents or grandparents about their childhood;
- find plants or other materials that relate to a lesson;
- bring materials (such as used cardboard) that teachers can use to make teaching and learning materials;
- participate in redesigning the classroom or in assessing and improving upon the school grounds so they are more "child-friendly" (especially for children with disabilities), safe (reduce conflict), and gender sensitive;
- improve upon the school grounds can also lead to more outdoor classroom spaces;⁴
- participate in community service activities - for example helping the elderly, the poor, widows and orphans;
- help tutor working children who are not able to join school every day;
- map deforestation, pollution and other environmental destruction in their home communities;
- plant trees and participate in reforestation activities as part of science class, and children can;
- map their communities and assist in finding children who are not in school, but should be.

Student Participation in Meetings. Students can also extend their real-world experience by attending and participating in school-parent meetings, community meetings, or other civic events. You can role play the meeting in advance with students in the classroom and practice when they will participate and how. Students can organise activities and projects from their classroom lessons and show them in a student fair, or a small group of students can present a dramatic play, song, or poem. In this kind of activity, students get to explain to their parents (or guardians) what they are learning. This improves communication between the school and parents, and it reinforces for the child what he or she has learned.

⁴ UNICEF. *Children as Community Researchers*. <http://www.unicef.org/teachers>

Tool 2.4

What Have We Learned?

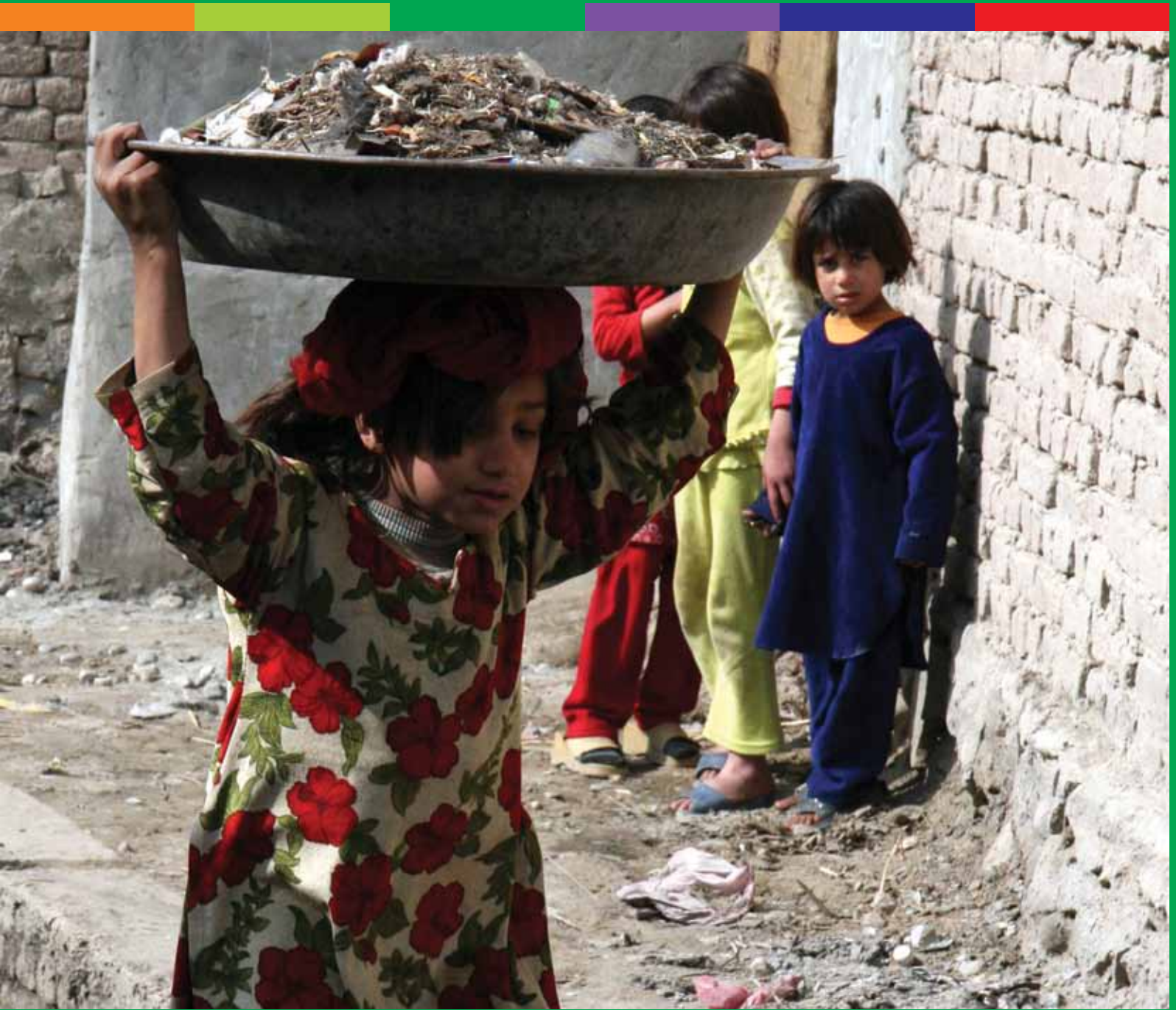
This Booklet has given you several tools that you can use to involve families and communities in ILFE. Can you complete the following activities?

1. List the responsibilities of ILFE teachers in relating to the community.
2. In what ways do you tell parents about their child's learning skills?
3. List two ways in which mothers and fathers can help to include traditionally excluded children (a) in school and (b) out of school.
4. Name several ways in which the community can come into the classroom.
5. List several ways in which students can get more involved in their community or in using materials from home or community.

Involving the community is critical for the success of an ILFE. There are many ways in which you can prepare students to engage with the community, and with their local environment. There are also many ways in which teachers can work with the parents (or guardians) of students to inform them about ILFE and encourage them to become advocates for the school in the community. This Booklet has listed many ideas for this. **Now ask yourself, "What can I do to start working more closely with my children's families and communities?" Come up with three personal targets and compare and discuss them with your colleagues, your students, and their families. After two or three weeks, compare how you are progressing and what further actions you can take.**

Book 3:

Getting All Children In School and Learning



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

TOOL GUIDE

Booklet 3 will help you and your colleagues to understand some of the main barriers that keep children from coming to school, or makes them drop out of school, and how you can reduce or even remove these barriers completely. The Tools includes way of addressing the needs of (groups of) children who are often excluded from and within education. These Tools have been used widely and effectively by teachers throughout the world. After working through these Tools, you will be able to talk with other teachers, family and community members, and students about what conditions may be pushing children away from learning. You also will be able to identify where the children who are out of school live, why they are not coming to school, and what you can do to get them into school, and learning.

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Tool 3.1

Who are Vulnerable to Exclusion From and Within Education?

One important step in creating an ILFE and involving families and communities in this process is to find those children in the community who are not going to school.

Did you ever stop to think that maybe one of your students has a brother, sister, or friend who cannot, or will not, come to school. If we are dedicated enough to want to get these children into our inclusive schools and classrooms, keep them there, and assist them in learning the knowledge and skills they need for life, then we need to understand why they do not come to school!

DISCOVERING BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Read the following case study:

"Fareed" is 9 years old. Early every morning, though burning summers and freezing winters, Fareed collects scrap paper which he sells for a few Afghanis. The rest of the day till late afternoon he sells water to the families living on the mountain, because they have no water in their houses. Fareed needs money for his family. Therefore the whole day he carries water from well in the valley up to the families living in small houses on the steep mountain side. Therefore, he has no time to go to school. The distance from the water well to his "customers" is more than one kilometre steep climb on narrow and slippery paths up the mountain side. He asks "So, when would I have time to go to school?"

Case study from the NEJAT Centre

Action Activity: Identifying Barriers to Inclusion

If you are working with your colleagues, organise yourselves into two or four groups. If you are working alone, try this activity by yourself.

- First, think quietly yourself about some of the reasons why Fareed may not be going to school. If it helps, write brief notes. This should take about 5 minutes.
- Children's learning environment includes their schools, families, and communities. It also includes the children "themselves," that is, whether they personally wants to go to school, or not. Next, assign each group a learning environment. One group is the SCHOOL. Another group is the FAMILY. Another group is the COMMUNITY. And the fourth group is the CHILD (Fareed). If you are working in two groups, each group can take two learning environments. If you are working alone, try to do all four of them.
- Give each group a large sheet of poster paper, and then ask them to write at the top of the sheet which learning environment they are working on. There should be one sheet per learning environment.
- Discuss in your groups what barriers may exist within your learning environment that may be causing a child like Fareed not to come to school. List these barriers on the poster paper for your learning environment, and then read the following section.

Some Reasons Why Children May NOT be In School

These are the 12 main groups of children who are vulnerable to exclusion from and within education in Afghanistan (listed alphabetically):¹

- Children affected by Conflict, War and Emergencies, Internally Displaced Children, Refugees and Returnees
- Children affected by Drugs
- Children from Ethnic, Language, Social and Religious Minorities
- Children from Poor Economic Backgrounds
- Children in Conflict with the Law / Children in Incarceration
- Children living far away from School - in Villages where there are no Schools
- Children suffering from Neglect, Abandonment and/or Abuse - including Orphans
- Children with Disabilities
- Children who are over-aged
- Girls
- Nomadic (Kuchi) Children
- Street and Working Children

Below are some of the major reasons that affect whether children attend school or not (listed randomly):

Lack of security

Large parts of Afghanistan are still affected by conflict and war and schools are often targeted by militants. In 2007 and the first six months of 2008 a total of 254 teachers and pupils were murdered by terrorists, while 329 were injured. 220 schools were destroyed or burned down. Threats from insurgents have resulted in the closing of more than 700 schools depriving more than 300,000 students from access to schooling. In cooperation with local communities and security institutions, the Ministry of Education launched anti-terrorism and anti-insurgency programmes in 1386 (2007) and as a result 49 terrorist attacks on schools have been prevented.²

In addition to the destruction and closure of schools that directly prevents children from attending school, parents often keep their children, especially their daughters away from school in fear for their safety. Landmines and unexploded ordnances still litter large parts of Afghanistan. Every single day Afghan children are being killed or disabled on their way to school, or while they are playing or working in the fields.



Children are being recruited and abducted by terrorists and criminal groups, and then trained to fight and use arms and/or to become suicide bombers. Unfortunately there are no credible statistics on the number of child-soldiers in Afghanistan.

¹ This is the list of children most vulnerable to exclusion from and within education according to key Afghan stakeholders (education planners, headmasters, teachers and education activists) when they were asked to identify which groups of children were most vulnerable in Afghanistan (2008)

² Ministry of Education (2008). "The Development of Education - National Report of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan."

Children in many parts of Afghanistan have lost and are still losing parents and siblings to conflict, war and terrorist attacks. The scars that have been left on the minds and in the hearts of the children of Afghanistan will undoubtedly affect their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.³ Inclusive education is one of the few programmes that address these issues effectively.

Gender discrimination⁴

Millions of girls have enrolled in primary and secondary schools when girl's education was reintroduced after the Taliban government was ousted, as girls were not permitted to go to school by the Taliban government that ruled most of Afghanistan in the years prior to 2001. Today more than 2 million girls are enrolled in primary and secondary schools throughout Afghanistan. However, the Ministry of Education estimates that at almost 50% of school aged girls remain out of school.⁵

The geographical distribution of female teachers and education services for girls is a formidable challenge, as:⁶

- 51% of all female primary school teachers and 70% of female secondary school teachers are working in five of the biggest cities;
- 90% of the districts in Afghanistan (328 out of 364) do not have upper secondary schools (high schools) for girls;
- 13% of the districts (48 out of 364) have no female teacher at all, while;
- 16% of the districts (58 out of 364) have one or two female teachers;

Without female teachers many girls are not allowed to go to school (men are in most cases not allowed to teach girls), especially in lower and upper secondary schools. Thousands of schools (for girls and boys) have been built or rehabilitated as school infrastructure was severely damaged by war and neglect.

In spite of impressive efforts by the government, with support of the international community, girls remain the single largest of the most vulnerable groups of children to exclusion from and within education in Afghanistan. In parts of the country girls are still in danger of physical attacks if they dare to go to school. There are numerous cases of female students and their teachers being maimed and killed for claiming their constitutional and moral right to education.

In Afghanistan, as in most other countries, girls with disabilities, girls who are working, girls who are living on the street, girls with minority backgrounds, girls who have suffered neglect, abandonment and abuse are often double or triple disadvantaged.⁷

³ Ministry of Education / UNESCO (2009). "Needs and Rights Assessment on Inclusive Education."

⁴ Ministry of Education / UNESCO (2009). "Needs and Rights Assessment on Inclusive Education."

⁵ Ministry of Education (2008). "The Development of Education - National Report of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan." p.37.

⁶ Based on information received by email from the Ministry of Education [26.04.2009] based on the 1386 (2007) School Survey and on data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS)

⁷ Ministry of Education (2008). "The Development of Education - National Report of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan." p.37.

Early marriage and pregnancy

The traditional practise, in parts of Afghanistan, of child and teenage marriages is a factor that prevents many girls from completing their primary and secondary education. 40% of women in Afghanistan are married before the age of 18, and one third of these women have children before reaching adulthood.⁸

Poor economic background (Working and Street Children)

Poverty often affects whether or not a child can attend school. Because of their financial burden, poor parents are often pressed to provide even the basic necessities of life. Hence, children like Fareed must help to earn the family's income at the expense of their education and future life. We see these children every day, especially if we live in cities, but we hardly ever notice them unless they are begging for money, selling us things or washing the windows of our cars. "The street" is their source of livelihood and sometimes even their home. The excitement and the hope of earning money may encourage a child to leave home and move to a big city rather than staying in school. There are about 100 million street children worldwide. A child in the street may be a working child, usually a school dropout, or simply a homeless girl or boy. Street children are at high risk of being exploited because they are no longer properly protected by their families, communities, and schools. Not all street children are without families, however. Some, like Fareed, may work on the street to earn money and then return to their families at night. Many street children have little or no contact with their families, and they are without adult supervision. Moreover, they may have been abused physically or sexually at home, thus causing them to run away and end up on the street where they are bound to face similar violence and abuse.



Relevance and the practical value of education

Many children are prevented from going to school because their parents and families do not feel that education is meaningful for their daily lives; thus, they do not understand why their children should attend school. Parents also may feel that their children will receive a poor quality education, and the skills their children will learn in certain jobs are more valuable than those they will learn in the classroom.

Malnutrition

Children do not learn well if they are hungry or malnourished. They are often absent from class and may be classified as "slow learners." If they do not receive the attention they need, they may feel that they are not valued as members of the class, and they may drop out of school. The effects of malnutrition may also have life-long consequences on children as it may impair (hinder) their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.



⁸ UNICEF (2008). "UNICEF and partners come together to help reduce maternal mortality in Afghanistan." http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/afghanistan_39281.html (17. September 2008)

Disabilities and Special Educational Needs

Most children with disabilities or special educational needs are not in school, especially when our schools and education systems have no policies or programmes for including children with physical, emotional, or learning impairments. Parents and community members are often unaware that all these children can learn, and that they have the right to education and should attend school. Even a school's facilities (such as stairways) may block many of these children from entering school. They also are the ones who often drop out because class sizes are too large, and we cannot devote enough time to their "special needs". In addition, the curriculum content, our teaching methods, and even the "language" of instruction (spoken, visual) may not be appropriate for children with disabilities or other special needs - as some will need Braille for reading and writing or Sign language for communication.



Disabling health conditions

Children who are frequently ill (for example if they suffer from Malaria, Asthma, or Allergies) are also often absent from school, and will therefore have difficulties keeping up with the other children. If they do not receive the health care, or the educational support and attention they need they may end up dropping out of school. The effect of many health conditions can therefore be life-long as they may lead to physical, social, emotional and intellectual impairments (for example; untreated eye-infections may lead to blindness, and ear-infections may lead to deafness). In addition to the physical consequences of many health conditions they may also lead to stigma and discrimination as they may be thought to be "contagious," even if this is medically proven not to be so.

Children affected by HIV are especially vulnerable to stigmatisation and discrimination, whether the children are infected themselves or they are "merely" affected because one of their family members are HIV positive, or have died of AIDS. These children will often be excluded from school and shunned by the community, even if there is no risk for HIV to spread through playing, leaving and being together with other children. In Booklet 6 you can read more about how to create a health, safe and protective environment for children.

Illness affects children in many ways. Many children - especially girls are taken out of school to care for sick siblings, parents and grandparents, or to earn money for the family.

Neglect, violence and abuse

Fear of violence when coming to school, at school, or going home from school may frighten children away. While boys often experience beating, bullying and sexual abuse, girls are at risk of assaults or other forms of harassment that might endanger their future prospects of getting married. For victims, it takes a heavy toll on their self-esteem. The violence and abuse often continues at home. Most Afghan children are being punished physically (often quite harshly) if they do not behave or perform according



to quite stringent expectations. They are being pinched, slapped, and beaten. Sometimes the physical (corporal) punishment is so severe that it results in permanent damage to their hearing (slapping over the ear), their vision (slapping in face), their intellectual development (severe shaking and beatings to the head), and their physical development (hands, arms, and legs are broken). Physical punishment is accepted by Afghan parents, as they do not know of any "effective" alternatives, and do not realise how severe the consequences physical punishment can have on the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of their children. Maybe Fareed was a victim of violence and abuse and therefore no longer wants to go to school.

Drugs⁹

Drug abuse is quite common in many parts of Afghanistan. Many parents, mostly fathers but also mothers are using drugs. Many are using drugs to be able to endure long and gruelling workdays, difficult living conditions, as well as to distract from hunger and cold. Infants and small children are sometimes given drugs to sleep, stay quiet, quench their hunger, and to distract them from the cold.

There is no reliable data on the number of children who are addicted to and/or affected by drugs. However it is estimated that more than 1.4% of the population age 15 to 64 are addicted to opiates or approximately 260,000 people. Another 3.6% or 670,000 people are addicted to Cannabis.¹⁰ There are no statistics available on drug addiction among children age 0 to 14. Based on this data there are at least 1 million people in Afghanistan who are addicted to drugs, mainly Cannabis and Opiates.

If one million people are addicted to drugs many more will be affected. Most children of parents who are addicted to drugs will be severely affected. If the main breadwinner and/or caregiver of the family are addicted to drugs, it will affect the economic, social and emotional condition in the family and as a result especially the children will suffer. Maybe one of Fareed's parents is a drug addicts!

Drug consumption and abuse will severely affect the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of children. Even if children who are consuming drugs are enrolled in school they will be less likely to attend school regularly, less likely to succeed in school, and therefore less likely to complete their education and make a successful transition to working life.

Minority backgrounds

Children who come from families that are different from the community at large in terms of language, ethnicity, religion, or other cultural features are especially at risk of being denied access to school. Sometimes, they are given access to substandard educational facilities, poorer quality instruction, and fewer teaching materials. They also have fewer opportunities for higher education than others. In some communities, moreover, there is



⁹ Ministry of Education / UNESCO (2009). "Needs and Rights Assessment on Inclusive Education."

¹⁰ UN Office of Drugs and Crime (2007). "World Drug Report."

a local tradition of beginning one's working life in childhood, without the benefit of quality schooling. This tradition is passed on from one generation to the next, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and illiteracy. Fareed may be a member of one of these communities.

Negative attitudes

Negative attitudes towards children with diverse backgrounds and abilities are one of the biggest barriers to including these children in school. Negative attitudes can be found at all levels: parents, community members, schools and teachers, government officials, and among marginalized children themselves. Fears, taboos, shame, ignorance, and misinformation, amongst others, all encourage negative attitudes towards such children and their situations. These children - and even their families - may develop low self-esteem, hiding away and avoiding social interaction, and becoming invisible members of their communities. This can lead directly to their exclusion from school, even though they have the same rights and needs as other children. Fareed may also be a victim of negative attitudes.



School Environment

The mission of our schools is to effectively educate ALL children by giving them the skills they will need for life and life-long learning. Historically, our schools have not been equipped adequately to educate girls and boys with diverse backgrounds and abilities. While family and community circumstances may contribute to excluding children from school, making improvements in these conditions alone may not make our schools inclusive. Factors may exist within our schools that may actually discourage some children from coming to school, as well as contributing to poor attendance and early dropout. You and your colleagues have an important role to play. You can change your school into a place where every child can come to learn.

Below are some of the barriers to learning, development and participation created by schools, school policies, and school environment:

- **Costs (direct and hidden)** - For many poor families, school fees, examination fees, contributions to school, even the cost of books, pencils, school uniforms, or transportation can keep children like Fareed away from school.
- **Location** - In rural areas especially, if the school is located far away from the community, children like Fareed may be kept at home where they are safe. Particularly for girls, the distance from their homes to the school may discourage parents from sending their daughters to school out of fear for their safety. Children with disabilities also may not attend school if there is no suitable transportation for getting them to school.
- **Schedules** - Fareed may want to study but cannot learn during regular school hours. School timetables and calendars conflict with Fareed's work schedule so that Fareed cannot "learn as well as earn." Moreover, girls may drop out when going to school conflicts with their family responsibilities, such as domestic chores and caring for younger children or elderly family members.

- **Facilities** - If our schools do not have adequate facilities, this may be one reason why some children do not come to school. For instance, lack of boundary wall and proper latrines for girls may discourage them from coming to school. Inadequate facilities, also affect children with disabilities.
- **Preparedness** - One of the most common reasons why children with diverse backgrounds and abilities (especially children with disabilities) are excluded from school is that the schools and teachers are not educated or trained to teach them. Consequently, even if these children come to school, they may receive less attention and a poorer quality education than the other children in their class.
- **Class Sizes, resources and workload** - Large class sizes are common in Afghanistan and can be a barrier to the inclusion of children with diverse backgrounds and abilities. In wealthier countries, class sizes of 30 are considered too large, while in countries with limited resources class sizes of 60-100 are common. However, the size of the class is not necessarily a significant factor for successful inclusion, if attitudes are positive and welcoming. However, there are many examples of children with diverse backgrounds and abilities being successfully included in large classes. School with limited facilities often have to cater for thousands of children. Many schools therefore have two or three shifts per day. Afghan children therefore have very limited time in school where they have to learn all they need to pass the requirements of comprehensive curriculum. As a consequence, teachers are stretched and have little or no time to meet the needs of children who may require attention. As discussed above, attitudinal barriers to inclusion are often greater than barriers posed by inadequate material resources.

SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING

What other barriers did you list on your poster sheets in the previous activity or discuss amongst each other?

Make a "Master List" of all the barriers that have been thought of or learned about from reading and discussing the information given above.

Action Activity: Barriers and Opportunities

- Everyone should imagine that they are Fareed or another child that is usually excluded from school. Decide for yourself what is your name, your age, your sex; where do you live, and with whom; what is the life situation in which you find yourself (such as with Fareed).
- Think about what **opportunities** you may have in enrolling in school (for instance, a school close to your home), and what **barriers** there might be. You can refer to the list above, your master list and your sheets from the first Tool in this Booklet on identifying barriers to inclusion.
- On a large sheet of poster paper, or any other writing surface, write down the different **barriers** you would face and **opportunities** you would have, everyone should plot their thoughts on the paper - and whether these barriers or opportunities related to "you" as a child, to "your" family, "your" community, or "your" school. Do this is together in a group, not individually.
- After everyone has finished, look at the chart you have made. Are there more barriers than opportunities? Are there more barriers than you ever expected? These barriers represent the challenges that must be overcome so that children like Fareed can come to school and that can be overcome with help from you.

- What are the most common opportunities? Are these "real" opportunities? Do they exist **now** for children with diverse backgrounds and abilities in your community, or are they opportunities we think **should be** there for ALL children? If they are opportunities we think children should have, then they represent the vision of what you want to achieve in removing barriers and expanding opportunities for inclusion.
- The barriers that are commonly repeated by the members in your group, would be a good starting point for action!
- Are there many barriers that are related to children themselves, to their families, to communities and to schools, such as negative attitudes? These may need coordinated efforts to overcome!

Tool 3.2

Finding Children who are Not in School, and Why?

The previous Tool helped us to explore reasons why some children may not be in school. The question that needs to be answered now is, "Which of these barriers - or maybe others - exist in my school or community?" To answer this question, we first need to know which children in our community are not attending school and then investigate some of the reasons why this is happening. After we have this information, we can begin planning and implementing activities to get these children in school.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY MAPPING

One effective tool that is widely used to identify children who are not in school is school-community mapping, which is also called school mapping or community based mapping. Like traditional maps, these maps show major community landmarks. More importantly, they also show each household in the community, the number of children and their ages in each household, and whether or not school-aged children in those households are attending school. You can create these maps by following the steps below.

1. Enlist the help of community committees, community and religious leaders, dedicated volunteers, your students as well as other teachers in your school. This step will actually help to build stronger links between your school and the community it serves. It also can help your school to obtain community resources for action programmes (especially important for schools with minimal resources), as well as to promote community ownership of the maps and the inclusive learning programmes that come out of the mapping and planning process.
2. Hold an orientation session for those who have volunteered to help with collecting information and creating the maps. Talk to them about why ALL children should be in school, the benefits of having a diverse range of students with different abilities and backgrounds in the school, and how the maps can be important tools for finding those children who are not in school and encouraging them to come to school and enjoy learning.
3. At the orientation session, or during a follow-up session, prepare a rough map of the community - this can also be done by your students in science or art classes. Some communities may already have maps, while others may not. Include major landmarks (roads, water sources, important places like the village health centre, places of worship, etc.) and all of the houses in that community.
4. Conduct a household survey (mapping) to determine how many members each household contains, their ages, and their levels of education. Information about the educational levels of children will help you to target those who are not in school, while information about adults may indicate which parents may benefit from activities like literacy programmes. The household survey can be done in several different ways, such as through home visits (which also can be used to encourage parents to send their children to school), interviews with knowledgeable persons (including children), or using existing records, if these exist. This information is then compared with school enrolment records to see which children are not in school.
5. Once the information is collected, prepare a final map of the community showing its households, their members, ages, and educational levels. Then share the map with community leaders to identify which children are not in school and discuss some of the reasons why these families may not be sending their children to school. With this information, we can begin constructing action plans.

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN MAPPING

The school-community mapping process can be implemented as a "child-to-child" approach, one that can even be incorporated into your lesson plans. Children of all ages can make maps, and it can be an important activity in their learning.¹¹

To teach children effectively about leadership (as children are future community leaders), responsibility, democracy and solidarity it is important that they are actively involved in school-community mapping projects. They take the lead in identifying children who are not coming to school and in influencing parents and community members to allow them to attend school. For example, in Tajikistan's Child Club project, girls and boys in grades 4-9 worked together to draw a map of the communities and houses surrounding the school. They identified the children that lived in each house, and then noted on the map whether or not these children were attending school, and some basic reasons why (lost interest in school, never enrolled because they had a disability, had to work, etc.).

One useful way to begin is by having children create their own personal map of their community, which will help them to decide what should be shown on the school-community map. The ability of children to draw accurate maps varies greatly according to the child's age. But if their very different styles and abilities are accepted, children of all ages will enjoy producing useful features for the collective school-community map.

If a community does not have a map already, a simple one can be prepared from scratch. Ideally, the school-community maps should be large enough for the children to locate their own homes and those of their friends. Creating the map goes like this.

1. Begin by gathering your children together and making a list of all of the important places in the community (such as the school, Mosque, homes, health centre, shops, etc.), any important physical features (like roads, rivers, mountains, etc.), and any other important locations where community members often meet (such as fields or even wells where they often go to collect water).
2. Cut out several pieces of cardboard and then draw pictures of these important places, physical features, and locations on them. You also might want to use a variety of items, such as cardboard squares to represent houses, pebbles to represent mountains, fabric to represent rivers and sticks to represent bridges. But be sure to help the children to remember what each symbol represents.
3. Ask the children to decide on the most important feature in their community, such as the school. Have them make a special symbol for it out of cardboard. It should be different from all of the other pieces so that it stands out. It will serve as the map's "reference point" (the place that everyone remembers and can relate to in locating other important places and features in the community).
4. Place a large piece of cloth, heavy paper, or other suitable writing material on the ground; gather the children around it; and ask them to decide where to put the "reference point" (such as the school) so that all of their homes can be put around it. For example, if the school is located close to their homes or in the centre of the community, place it in the centre of the map. If it is located far away from their homes and other places they often visit in the community, place it off to the side of the map.

¹¹ This section and the process of creating the map were adapted from "Children as Community Researchers," UNICEF Web site: Teachers Talking about Learning: www.unicef.org/teachers/researchers/basemap.htm. Readers are strongly encouraged to access this Web site, see examples of children's maps, and learn more!

5. Ask the children what other important places are located on the edge of their community. Place the symbols for these places on the map to establish its boundaries.
6. As a group, decide upon the community's major physical features (such as streets, fields, mountains, and rivers), and add these to the map. Make sure that all of the children agree on where their physical features should be located. You might want them to be free to carefully walk on or around the map to check this out. If they have already created "personal maps," have the children look at them again to make sure all of the features are on the large map.
7. When everyone agrees about where the important places, physical features, and other locations are located on the map, the children can draw them in with ink, paint, or felt pens to make them a permanent part of the map, instead of using cardboard or other non-permanent symbols.
8. The map belongs to the class so it needs to be dynamic, with new important features being added as the children think of them. To begin filling in the map and identifying children who are not in school, the children should begin by deciding on specific themes and then pinning small paper symbols on their map to represent these. Some of the most obvious themes to begin with are:
 - the homes of ALL children in the community, the ages of the children, and whether or not they are in school;
 - homes of people who are important to their daily lives;
 - places children play or work;
 - places children avoid, such as places of danger (violence);
 - places children like and dislike;
 - places where children go alone, with their parents, with other relatives, with friends, with other adults; and
 - transportation routes (especially those they use to come to and return from school) and the means by which they do so (such as by foot, bicycle, motorcycle, automobile, etc.).
9. Walk with your children around the community to help them fill in the map with greater accuracy. During the walk, or even at a special meeting, invite adults from the community to talk with the children and make suggestions for additions to the map. This will start getting community members involved in identifying children who are not in school and create the support you need for action programmes.

After the maps are made, your students can identify which children in the community are not going to school and locate the families of these children. Your students - working with teachers, parents, and community leaders - can then help motivate parents to send their children to school.

The school-community maps need to be continually updated and used to identify children who may not be coming to school. Consequently, creating the maps can become a permanent part of the curriculum. Moreover, the community should easily see the map.

The main map should be in the community school, or on the outside of the school boundary wall, so that community members can comment on it. The map also can begin the community development process for getting all children in school.

DISCOVERING WHY CHILDREN MAY NOT BE COMING TO SCHOOL

You have now identified which children are not coming to school in your community, and perhaps you have found out some of the reasons why. The major question that needs to be answered now is: "What major factors characterise children who are being excluded from school, compared to those who are able to attend school?"

As we learned earlier, some factors may be visible, such as physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities; more hidden, such as lack of care, malnutrition or abuse; or even accepted and largely unrealised factors, such as gender roles or the responsibilities of children in their families.

Action Activity: Creating Child Profiles and a questioner

The **Child Profile** is a tool to promote inclusive education and equity in the classroom. It is being used in many countries in Africa, Central America, as well as Central, South, and Southeast Asia. A child profile:

- helps community members and teachers to identify which children are not coming to school and why, as well as those who are at risk of dropping out;
- shows the diversity of children in the community in terms of their individual characteristics and those of their families, and;
- helps to plan programmes to overcome factors that exclude children from school.

They identify those children that should be (or soon will be) in school, and then they get them in school. This system, therefore, can identify out-of-school children as well as those who are in-school but who are learning poorly. To create a child profile, follow the steps below:

1. Based on your school-community map, make a list of all of the children who are not coming to school.
2. Discuss with your colleagues, your students, and those who helped to create the school-community map about what factors (barriers) may be causing children not to come to school. You can refer to the lists you made in the first Tool in this Booklet. These factors may not necessarily be the actual causes, but they are the ones that need to be investigated first for each child.
3. Next, using these factors create a list of questions that when answered may give you some insights into why a child is not coming to school. Below is an example of a list of questions that could be used. The questions were developed to uncover how the barriers discussed earlier affect the enrolment of children and their completion of primary (and secondary) education. **You can develop your own list of questions based on the barriers you feel are common in your community. Be sure to include children as well as community leaders in this process. They can help you to identify ALL of the children who are not in school.**

It is important that the questionnaire is not too complicated, and that you try to prevent asking sensitive or embarrassing questions. If you do, you will not always get the correct answers!

If possible try to interview both parents in a family (for quality assurance).

Ensure that cultural sensitivities are taken into account. In parts of Afghanistan it is seen as offensive for man to ask questions about female members of a household. In those areas, these questions should therefore better be asked by female teachers or students.

Here is an example of how a simple questionnaire can look like (if the children in the same household and with the same father have different mothers please fill in separate forms):

Sample of a simple Child Profile Questionnaire

1	Name of father:		Date/Year of birth:	
	Name of male guardian in case the father is deceased:			
	Highest level of education (if any):			
2	Name of the mother:		Date/Year of birth:	
	Name of female guardian in case the mother is deceased:			
	Highest level of education (if any):			
3	Address			
4	Ethnic affiliation:			
5	Language spoken at home (mother tongue):			
6	Religious affiliation:			
7	Number of children (age 0 to 18):			
1)	Name:		Sex:	Date/Year of birth:
	In School: Yes ___ No ___ (check)		Name of school:	
	If she/he is school age and not in school why?			
	Did she/her ever go to school? Yes ___ No ___ (check)			
	If she/he completed school, how many grades did she/he complete?			
	If she/he dropped out why?			
	Does she/he work outside the home? Yes ___ No ___ (check)			
	2)	Name:		Sex:
In School: Yes ___ No ___ (check)		Name of school:		
If she/he is school age and not in school why?				
Did she/her ever go to school? Yes ___ No ___ (check)				
If she/he completed school, how many grades did she/he complete?				
If she/he dropped out why?				
Does she/he work outside the home? Yes ___ No ___ (check)				
3) same as above ... should leave room for 8 children per questionnaire as large families are quite common in Afghanistan			
8	List of all the other family members who live in the same household:			
1)	Name:	Date/Year of birth:	Education level:	Relation to the children:
2)	Name:	Date/Year of birth:	Education level:	Relation to the children:
3) same as above ... should leave room for 6 persons per questionnaire as extended families quite often live together in Afghanistan			
9	Distance from house to school:		Means of transportation:	
	How much time does it take for the children to come to school:			
10	Other comments and important information about the family:			

After the questionnaires for the entire school-community are completed;

- look at them closely to see what factors affect children's ability to attend and/or complete school;
- compare the lists of factors between children, and see which factors (that keep children out of school) are most common in your community, and;
- use the list of these factors as a starting point to develop action plans to address the causes of children not completing school or not coming to school at all.

The next Tool in this Booklet presents ways to create these plans.

Tool 3.3

Actions for Getting All Children in School

Now that we have identified which children are not coming to school and some of the reasons why, we can now start planning how to get them enrolled in school. This section begins by describing the action planning process (also called micro-planning), followed by some ideas of actions that you might try, or adapt, for your school and community.

ACTION PLANNING

In the previous Tool, we used school-community mapping to locate children who are not in school. We created a map and collected information about each child who is not in school, created family and child profiles, and identified some of the barriers that are keeping them out of school. Now, we need to take action to reduce or if possible remove these barriers. To do this, you can follow the steps below to and create an effective action plan.¹² The following tool has been adapted for you to start working to remove barriers to inclusion and get all children in school:

1. Form a team of persons who will help you to evaluate the information collected through the school-community mapping process, as well as to plan suitable actions. These may be the same persons who are members of the ILFE Team and ILFE Coordination Group described in Booklet 1 (Tool 1.3), the ones who were specifically involved in the mapping exercise, or both.
2. Divide this team into groups according to their roles or interests, for instance, school teachers, community group members, women's group members, community leaders, school children, persons from the private sector, etc.
3. Next, each group should discuss and come up with a list of actions that they can take - as a group - to get all children in school and learning. Each group should consider the challenges in implementing each action. What is the likelihood of success? What are the obstacles to implementing each action? How can these obstacles be avoided? In order to avoid designing action plans that fail, it is important to consider all the potential obstacles.
4. Once each group has decided on some possible actions for getting these children in school, bring all of the teams back together to share their ideas. Working together, identifying which actions can be realistically undertaken by considering the following issues and any others that you think are appropriate.
 - a. Which actions can have the greatest impact on the most children?
 - b. Which actions should be given the highest priority in your particular situation?
 - c. Which potential actions show the greatest likelihood of success and should be started first? The best strategy is to start simple, to achieve success, and then to go on to a more difficult action. In short, build on success!
 - d. Which actions can you take using existing resources?
 - e. Which actions will require outside help? To get those outside resources, oftentimes it is necessary to show potential donors that you are working successfully with the resources you already have. Therefore, start with what you can do now! While waiting for others to help with later actions.

¹² Adapted from: Toolkit for Assessing and Promoting Equity in the Classroom, produced by Wendy Rimer et al. Edited by Marta S. Maldonado and Angela Aldave. Creative Associates International Inc., USAID/EGAT/WID, Washington DC. 2003.

5. Next, everyone should work together to develop plans for the actions that were decided on above. These action plans should contain the following elements.
 - a. The objectives that you want to accomplish; for instance, to increase access to school by children with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
 - b. The strategies or methods that are needed to implement activities; for instance, meetings with parents of children with diverse backgrounds and abilities to find out the children's needs; followed by meetings with school administrators and teachers to assess school facilities and what activities should be undertaken to make them more accessible and learning-friendly.
 - c. The specific activities and their timing (schedules).
 - d. Deciding on who you want to reach (for example, parents of children with diverse backgrounds and abilities, and the children themselves)
 - e. Who should be responsible for which activities and actions (who should do what)?
 - f. What resources you will need and how can you get them?
 - g. What can you do while waiting for additional resources?
 - h. What criteria will be used to evaluate the success of your action plan (for instance, all children in school)?
6. If several teams will be working on different actions, make sure that they have regular opportunities to share their experiences, and coordinate their actions better.
7. Provide opportunities for all teams to step back and observe (self-evaluate) what they are doing; to reflect on what is being done, or what has been done; and to assess their level of success (what's working, what's not). Use this information to decide whether to continue an activity as planned or to change it, and then apply that decision (implementing it!).

IDEAS FOR ACTION

This section is an "idea generator." It briefly looks at some of the major barriers to inclusive learning that we discussed earlier, and then presents ideas of how they can be reduced or even removed, based on the experiences of schools and communities who are working to promote inclusive learning. These are ideas that you should consider, and expand upon, based on your own situation. They also can be used as a starting point for action planning.

Lack of security

What actions can we take to improve the security for students, teachers and schools?

- ✓ Work with community leaders and parents to establish "school watch" activities, where responsible teachers, parents, or other community members watch over the school. This may include escorting children to safe areas when needed.
- ✓ Create stronger links between schools and communities, as communities are more likely to protect the school if they feel it is "their" school.

Gender discrimination

What can we do to encourage equal access to schooling for girls and boys?

- ✓ Monitor attendance and collect information on girls and boys who are not in school (for example, through child profiles).
- ✓ Mobilise community and religious leaders to encourage both girls and boys to attend and complete their education.

- ✓ Establish community education committees who are responsible for promoting education among parents and children in the community.
- ✓ Provide information materials for household distribution showing the value of education for girls and boys.
- ✓ Relate what is being taught in the classroom to the daily lives of the children and their families to encourage parents to send their daughters and sons to school.
- ✓ Talk with parents to see if household tasks can be rearranged so that girls and boys can attend school regularly.
- ✓ See if a flexible school timetables are possible for girls or boys who have many other responsibilities.
- ✓ Identify and support local solutions, such as organising alternative schooling of good quality like home-based and community-based schooling for girls or boys who cannot attend formal schools.
- ✓ Encourage the establishment of incentive programmes for girls and boys, such as small scholarships, subsidies, school feeding programmes, and donations of school supplies and uniforms.

Early marriage and pregnancy

What can we do to help these young girls and her family?

- ✓ Encourage young families to wait having children until both the mother and father have completed their primary and secondary education.
- ✓ Establish school health policies that guarantee the right of pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers to continue their education after giving birth. Steps in the policy making process are discussed in Booklet 6.

Poor economic background (Working and Street Children)

What can we do to help these children?

- ✓ Talk with local charitable organisations to see if learning programmes already exist for children who need to work or live on the streets, or if these programmes can be established; for instance, after-school or weekend programmes whereby school children "teach" their out-of-school peers.
- ✓ These children should be given priority for livelihood skills training in such areas as; sewing, woodworking, agricultural production, typing, computer training, and the like. This training increases family income while the children are in school, and it provides the children with skills that they can use throughout their lives.

Relevance and the practical value of education

What are some of the things that can be done to help these children (discussed in more detail in the Booklet 4)?

- ✓ Incorporate "community walks" into lesson plans, where children visit the community to learn how certain lessons are important for their daily activities.
- ✓ Encourage parents and other community members to be "assistant teachers" in the classroom who share their local wisdom, explain its importance to life, and discuss its relevance to what is being learned in class.

Malnutrition

What are some of the actions we can take to help these children (additional actions are discussed in the Booklet 6)?

- ✓ Work with local charitable organisations to establish school feeding for learning programmes that provide regular, nutritious lunches or snacks. These programmes should benefit ALL malnourished children, however, girls are more vulnerable, and should therefore be prioritised.

Disabilities and Special Educational Needs

What can you do to increase the access to school and learning potential of these children?¹³

- ✓ Children with disabilities sometimes find it difficult to get to school. Try to organise transportation to school and make school accessible by ramps, and other resources that respond to specific needs.
- ✓ When a child with a disability first comes to your school, talk with the family member who is with the child. Find out what the child's disabilities are and what he or she can do despite the disability. Ask about any problems and difficulties that the child may have.
- ✓ When the child starts school, visit the parents from time to time to discuss with them what they are doing to facilitate the child's learning. Ask about plans for the child's future. Find out how you can best work with the family.
- ✓ Ask if the child needs to take any medicines while in school.
- ✓ If you do not have enough time to give the child all the attention he or she needs, ask the school or community to find a helper for you. The helper could give the children the extra help needed during school hours.
- ✓ Make sure that the children can see and hear you when you teach. Write clearly so that they can read what you are saying.
- ✓ If the child has a hearing or visual impairment let him or her sit in the front of the classroom so they can see and hear better.
- ✓ Find out if the child and the parents have problems about schooling. Ask if the family thinks that other school children are helpful to the child and whether the child gets on well at school.

Disabling health conditions

What can we do to help (discussed in more detail in the Booklet 6)?

- ✓ Work with local health service providers to establish regular health, dental, and nutrition screening and treatment programmes.
- ✓ If you notice that one of your students are ill and do not get treatment, please talk with the student and her or his parents, and try to find ways that you and your school can help.
- ✓ Work with local organisations to conduct information meetings about Epilepsy to reduce the stigma and to help your teachers to act correctly in case any of their students have seizures.
- ✓ Work with local organisations to conduct sensitisation workshops in your school and community to raise awareness and increase knowledge about HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and other disabling health conditions.
- ✓ Discuss the needs and concerns of parents whose children are not HIV affected (they have rights too!), and how these can be accommodated when HIV affected children come to school.
- ✓ Establish peer counselling clubs.

Neglect, violence and abuse

What can we do to help and protect these children?

- ✓ Work with children and community members to map where violence occurs on school grounds, or on the way to and from school (discussed in more detail in the Booklet 6 on creating a healthy and protective ILFE).
- ✓ Work with community leaders and parents to establish "child watch" activities, where responsible teachers, parents, or other community members watch over areas of potential or high violence within and outside of school. This may include escorting children to safe areas when needed.
- ✓ Inform parents about the consequences of physical punishment on the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of children.

¹³ Adapted from UNICEF. <http://www.unicef.org/teachers/protection/access.htm>

- ✓ Present alternatives to physical punishment (positive discipline) to parents during teacher-parent meetings.
- ✓ If the abuse continues discuss the matter with religious and community leaders.

Drugs

What can we do to protect our students from drugs?

- ✓ Start with drug-prevention education in primary school - as many children start with drugs at an early age or never make the transition into secondary school it is important to start drug-prevention education during primary school.
- ✓ Inform parents about the dangers of drugs during parent-teacher meetings.
- ✓ Incorporate drug-prevention education into different subject matters, like social studies, language, science, etc.

Minority backgrounds

For children who may speak another language or have another cultural, ethnic or religious background than the majority of the children in school, we need to put special emphasis on the following:

- ✓ Work with parents and community members to modify class lessons and materials to represent the diverse cultures and languages of the community. This will help ensure that the community will find the materials authentic and useful, and it will encourage them to send their children to school. Ways for doing this are presented in Booklet 4 of this Toolkit.
- ✓ Use local stories, oral histories, legends, songs, and poems in developing class lessons.
- ✓ For children who do not speak the language of instruction in your classroom, work with bilingual teachers or others who speak the child's language (even family and community members) to develop an appropriate language-training curriculum for the classroom.

Negative attitudes

What can we do to reduce stigma and discrimination towards groups of children vulnerable to exclusion from and within education?

- ✓ Create awareness among parents and other community members about the benefits of an ILFE for ALL children.
- ✓ Create awareness about disabilities among parents and community members.
- ✓ Distribute information about disabling health conditions to reduce the fear among parents and community members and stigma towards those affected.
- ✓ Distribute information about how HIV is transmitted to prevent children infected or affected by HIV to be excluded from school and communities.

School Environment

These are some of the barriers directly related to school environments and policies, and that you can find solutions to as long as you have support from your headmaster:

• Costs (direct and hidden)

What are some of the things that can be done to help these children?

- ✓ Discuss with school administrators, parents, and community members about what direct and indirect costs may be keeping children away from school.
- ✓ Identify ways to reduce (or waive) these costs; for example, through incentive programmes - like small scholarships, subsidies, food, school supplies, and uniforms - possibly coordinated through local charitable organisations.

- **Location**

What are some of the actions that can be started to help these children?

- ✓ Find out which children are located the furthest away from school through school-community mapping programmes.
- ✓ Work with parents and community members to identify ways to get these children to school and then home again safely.
- ✓ Assist communities far away from your school in setting up community based classes for the youngest children.
- ✓ See if flexible school attendance (timetable) is possible for children who live far away from your school.

- **Schedules**

What are some of the things that can be done to help children who want to study and go to school, but who also need to work to support their families?

- ✓ See if a flexible school timetable is possible for children who need to work.

- **Facilities**

What are some of the actions that can be done to improve access to schools and classrooms, sanitation facilities and school grounds for ALL children?

- ✓ Work with families and community leaders to construct safe water supplies and proper sanitation (latrine) facilities for ALL children, especially for girls (see also Booklets 4, 5 and 6).
- ✓ Create flexible and attractive learning spaces for ALL children in our schools, using local and low cost materials.
- ✓ Insulate school building to enable schools to provide education for children also during the winter months.
- ✓ Provide alternative and sustainable energy sources for schools and classrooms to ensure stable energy supplies, for example; solar energy, wind power, and local production of briquettes¹⁴ made by organic waste materials to replace wood and coal.
- ✓ Design new school building based on universal design principles, to ensure that ALL children have equal access to all school facilities, including; classrooms, sanitation facilities, and school grounds.

- **Preparedness**

What can be done to help these teachers and children?

- ✓ Find out what types of backgrounds and abilities do they possess.
- ✓ Find out what their individual learning needs are.
- ✓ Contact government education agencies, local non-governmental organisations, teacher training institutions, local charities, foundations, or even international agencies working on improving children's education in your country. Ask them if they know of any teachers, or other experts, who are already teaching children with diverse backgrounds and abilities like your children.
- ✓ Contact these teachers and ask if you and maybe some of your colleagues can visit their school to learn how to teach children with individual learning needs. If you cannot visit these schools because it is too expensive, ask if they can send you any resources that you can use in your classroom, such as sample lesson plans, descriptions of teaching methods, or samples of instructional materials that you can easily reproduce.

¹⁴ These are being produced with great success by community based organisations among others in Nepal and Tajikistan with support from the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature (Naturvernforbundet).

- ✓ If the resources are available, ask them also to visit your school to get their advice, as well as to talk with school administrators and other teachers about the value of teaching children with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- ✓ When working with children, focus on what the child *CAN* do, rather than on what he or she can *NOT* do. This applies for all children, not simply those with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- ✓ Above all. Don't lose courage. Build networks and a good relationship with those who know how to teach children with diverse backgrounds and abilities, and keep in contact with them.

Tool 3.4

What Have We Learned?

Barriers to inclusive learning may be visible, such as a physical disability; more hidden, such as violence, abuse and neglect, or malnutrition. Other barriers are seen as part of life, without parents and community members realising their damaging effects on learning, development and participation, such as traditional attitudes, gender roles, or the customary roles and responsibilities of children in their families, that often prevent children from succeeding in education.

Children can be excluded from school for many inter-related reasons, not just one, and we may never have thought that these reasons existed. For instance, cultural traditions may dictate that children living in rural communities are expected to begin their working lives in childhood and not attend school. This may be particularly the case if families are poor, they cannot afford the cost of schooling, and they do not value education for the children's future.

Barriers to inclusion may exist at several levels and must be addressed at several levels. For example, when our schools do not provide a rewarding, quality education to meet the felt needs of a child and his or her family, the child may drop out, especially if he or she is from a minority culture and teachers and other community members do not want to be bothered with having to deal with him or her.

In all of these cases, special efforts are needed to identify these children, and several actions may need to be taken simultaneously to help get these children in school.

The first step in making our schools more inclusive is to find out which children are not coming to school. School-community mapping is a valuable tool for finding these children, and it can be done either as a school-community activity (community-to-child) or a classroom activity (child-to-child).

To understand why children are not coming to school, we need to learn what individual (child), family, community, and school factors most commonly stop children from coming to school. These factors are the starting points for change and building inclusive schools.

The Tools in this Booklet also have taken you to the point of drawing up a plan of action for reducing barriers to inclusive learning in your school and community. To start this process, consider the following questions and agree on practical actions that you and your colleagues can take in your context.

- What have you learned from the Tools thus far?
- What are the key lessons for your context?
- What might be the main obstacles to inclusive learning and getting all children in school in your context?
- What are the main challenges facing you and your team?
- What steps are you going to take?
- What will be your indicators of performance or success?
- What specific activities could you plan for the next (school) year?
- When and how will you evaluate the progress that has been made?

These plans and actions also may help you to make your classrooms more inclusive, a topic that is discussed in Booklets 4 and 5.

Book 4:

Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Classroom



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

TOOL GUIDE

This Booklet will help you to understand how the concept of learning has changed over time as our classes have become more welcoming, child-centred, and learning-friendly. It will give you tools and ideas about how to deal with children with diverse backgrounds and abilities that attend your class, as well as how to make learning meaningful for all.

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Tool 4.1

What is Learning?

In the report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century it was stated that education throughout life is based upon four pillars: **Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be.**

The concept of learning, and teaching, has changed dramatically over the past decades. Inclusive education, child-friendly schools and life-long learning are concepts that have been introduced and enabled millions of children who used to be out-of-school to come to school, feel welcome and receive help by educators to develop their intellectual, social, emotional and physical abilities. In this Tool you will learn about how you can reform the teaching-learning processes within your schools and classrooms.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

In the introduction to this Toolkit, we said that "inclusive" meant including not only children with disabilities in the classroom but ALL children with diverse backgrounds and abilities. Getting these children into our classrooms is part of the challenge. The remaining part of the challenge is meeting all their individual learning needs, especially giving individualised attention to those children who are usually excluded from the classroom or from participating and/or learning in the classroom (excluded from and within education).

Our classrooms are diverse in terms of the types of children we teach and how they learn. New research tells us that **children learn in different ways** either because of hereditary factors, experience, environment, or their personal traits and characteristics. Consequently, we need to use a **variety of teaching methods and activities** to meet the different learning needs of the children in our classes.

At first, this can seem like a frightening idea. Many of you may be working in large classrooms and may wonder, "How can I use different teaching methods to suit individual children when I have over 50 different children in my classroom?" Actually, this is one of the reasons why some of us may resort to "rote learning." We simply repeat information over and over, and then have the children repeat it back to us, over and over again, hoping that they will remember it. While this may seem like an easy method to manage many children, it is boring, both for us and for our students.

In order to change, we need to learn new ways of teaching. We will begin to enjoy the different ways our students can learn. Some teachers are already using a variety of methods, which they find to be more rewarding for them as well.

Reflection Activity: How Were YOU Taught?

Think about how you were taught in school and if you liked being taught that way! Write down how you felt about these methods. Reflect on your own schooling ...

Which of these teaching methods helped you to learn the best? Are you using these in your classroom? How are your children responding to these methods? Are they actively and happily learning, or are they just sitting quietly listening to you? How are they performing on their examinations, quizzes, or other assessments?

HOW CHILDREN LEARN

No child is "uneducable." Given the right conditions, ALL children regardless of their abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances can learn effectively, especially when they are "learning by doing."

Many of us, we learn best by "doing," actively participating and hereby gaining experience. This is what we really mean when we talk about "active learning," "children's participation in learning," or "participatory learning." It's getting children to learn new information through different activities and teaching methods. These activities are often linked to children's practical experiences in everyday life. This linkage helps them to understand and remember what they are learning, and to use what they have learned in school later in life.

When we know the different ways children learn it will help us to develop learning activities that are more meaningful for ALL children, and for us.

Learning by Sight, Sound, and Movement

What are your children doing when they first come into your class in the morning? Hopefully they are looking at you (sight), listening to you (sound), and watching what you, and others are doing (movement). In other words, they are learning!

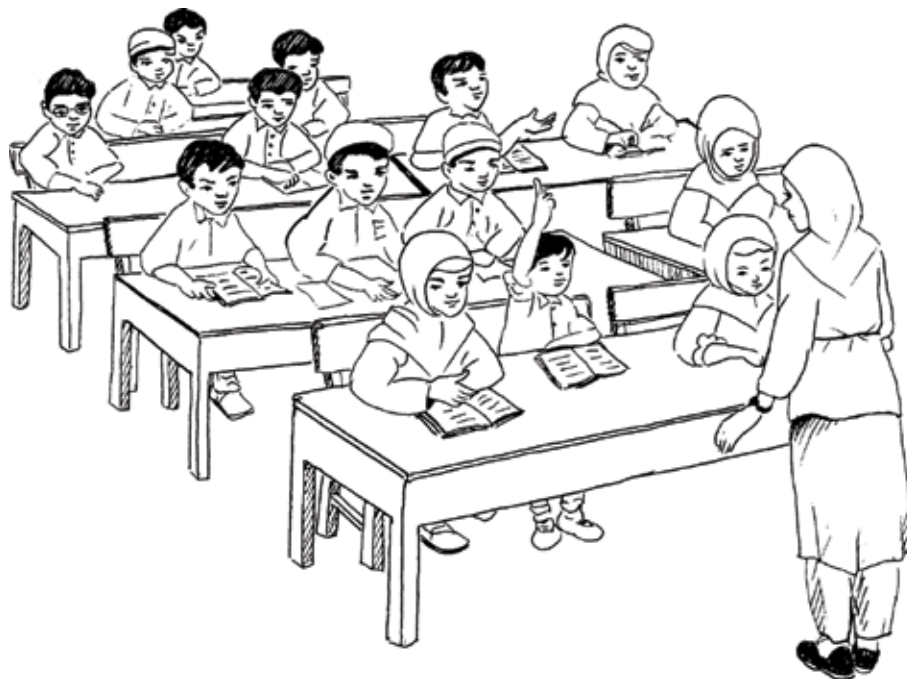
These three - sight, sound, and movement - are important in helping children to learn. For some children with disabilities, their hearing, sight, or movement may be more limited, and they may learn at a slower pace, or in a different way than most of their non-disabled peers.

As the old saying goes, "I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand." This is very important! If we only teach children by having them listen to us, then only about one-third of our students are learning anything. The same is the case when we ask them only to copy something from the blackboard in their notebooks, it is not effective!

Razia understands that different children learn in different ways, so she varies her teaching: She doesn't just use the chalk and board method. She teaches her students by playing games, recitations, and acting. It is much more fun, and the children concentrate much better and have fun while learning.

This means that when we are planning our lessons, we need to use visual materials (posters, drawings, etc.), tasks that involve discussion (hearing and listening), and to provide opportunities for movement of some form (for example, drama or sports, that is possibly linked to the different cultures represented in your classroom).

Remember that some children may have sight or hearing difficulties and will therefore not receive the same sensory input as the other children. Ask yourself, "What activities will be relevant to them, and how can I as a teacher adapt an activity to make it more relevant so that ALL my students can learn?"



Multiple Ways of Learning

We know that some children learn best through reading and taking notes, others through studying visual materials, and still others through body movement (playing games, sports) or musical activities. Some like to work on problems individually, while others like to interact with others to find solutions.

If we can observe or discover the many ways by which children in our inclusive classrooms learn, we can help ALL children to learn better, and we will gain greater satisfaction from teaching.

Active and participatory learning can use the many ways that help children to learn. Seven pathways by which children learn include the following.

- **Verbal or linguistic**, where some children think and learn through written and spoken words, memory, and recall.
- **Logical or mathematical**, where some children think and learn through reasoning and calculation. They can easily use numbers, recognize abstract patterns, and take precise measurements.
- **Visual or spatial**, where some children like art, such as drawing, painting, or sculpture. They can easily read maps, charts, and diagrams.
- **Body or kinaesthetic**, where some children learn through body movement, games, and drama.
- **Touch**, children who are not able to see or hear well can learn better through touch (tactile learning).
- **Musical or rhythmic**, where some children learn best through sounds, rhyme, rhythm, and repetition.
- **Interpersonal**, where some children learn easily in groups through cooperative work. They enjoy group activities, they easily understand social situations, and they can develop relationships with others easily.
- **Intra-personal**, where some children learn best through personal concentration and self-reflection. They can work alone, are aware of their own feelings, and know their own strengths and weaknesses.

When children learn, they may use several pathways to help them to understand and remember. Therefore, it is important for us to use different teaching strategies that cover a combination of these learning pathways.

We need to develop lesson plans and manage classrooms in ways that ensure active and effective learning for all children. We'll learn more about lesson planning in the next Booklet on managing inclusive, learning-friendly classrooms.

Reflection Activity: Improving Your Lessons rework ...

- Pick one lesson that you enjoy teaching but maybe your students are not performing up to your expectations, or a lesson that you would like to teach in a more enjoyable way.
- What are the major points (information) that you want the children to learn?
- What methods are you using to communicate this information?
- Why do you think they are not learning?
- What different activities can you use in your teaching so that children can use more than one of their senses (sight, sound, touch, movement) in learning?
- How can you incorporate these activities into your lesson plan?
- How can your children contribute to designing the lesson, especially those children who usually do not participate so much in class, or those children with diverse backgrounds and abilities?
- Try out the lesson! If you feel comfortable in doing so, ask your students if they enjoyed the lesson. What activities did they enjoy the most? Can you use these activities to teach other lessons?

Self Esteem as a Barrier to Learning, Development and Participation

Can you remember a child in one of your classes who was unusually shy, didn't like to participate, never raised his/her hand in class, and also was not learning well? One of the reasons for children behaving this way is that they have low self-esteem. They lack confidence in their abilities, or they think that they are not as valuable as the other children in the class. Studies have shown a close relationship between how children see themselves and their learning performance. They found that when children are given negative feedback (criticism) it lowers their self-esteem, and they soon learn that it is better not to try at all. Rather than failing, the children just avoid making an effort.

Action Activity: The Value of Self-Esteem

Take a piece of paper and draw a face, and pretend this is one of your students. Every time you observe someone say something to a child that makes her or him feel bad about him- or herself, tear a piece of the paper away.

It only takes three or four of these comments to tear away a child's sense of self-esteem.

NOTE: You can do this activity with your students to help them understand how their actions and words can affect the feelings of others.

Before they will fully participate in learning, children need to believe that they can learn. Children are developing their self-esteem and their identity as they grow, and adults have an important role to play in making sure that this happens.

Children feel hurt when their sex, ethnic backgrounds, or abilities are not valued, or they are used to make them feel inferior. We cannot give children positive self-esteem, but we can provide the right environment and conditions for it to develop. We should therefore make sure that ALL children;

- feel that they and their contributions are valued;
- feel safe (physically, socially and emotionally) in their learning environment, and;
- feel that they are unique and that their ideas are valuable.

In other words, children should be valued for who they are. This helps children to enjoy learning. Teachers can reinforce this by creating a more welcoming classroom; where children's self-esteem is promoted through praise; where cooperative and group learning is encouraged; and where children feel successful and have fun learning new things.

Building on Existing Knowledge

Children learn by linking new knowledge with knowledge they already have from before. Talking and asking questions together (social interaction) can improve learning, which is why learning in pairs and small groups is so important.

We should actively find ways to support learning that use information that the children already know (their prior knowledge).

A child might be slow to adjust to learning in school, and he/she doesn't know what to say when you ask a question. In this case, you will need to establish a good relationship with the child so that you can understand how the child learns best. For example, what tasks can this child do? What letters in the child's name does she or he know and can copy legibly? Which numbers does the child know and can associate with simple objects in the room? What are the special things the child likes and can talk about to the teacher, or to another child? Can the child sing, do sport, or play games?

In addition, how can relate what children learn in school to the child's home environment and life in the community? All children who come to school with some knowledge from home. Whether in school or out of school, children respond to new situations in many different ways. Some of these ways will be useful in school, while others will not. It is our responsibility to find out what the child knows and what skills he/she has learned already. We can then build upon their knowledge and skills in teaching them new things. In many cases, the experiences of girls will be quite different from those of boys.

In school, our children are faced with many tasks that may be very different from the tasks and problems they must solve at home or when they play. Some children may never have held a pencil before coming to school for the first time; or have never seen and held a book; while others may not speak the language that you and their classmates speak. Consequently, it is very important to build links between all the things your students already know, and can do well, and the new things they learn about in your classroom. How can this be done?

Action Activity: Building Links for Learners

In the first years of primary school children are supposed to learn basic literacy (to read and write) and numeracy skills (addition and subtraction). Here are some simple, but effective activities you can introduce to the children when they come to school for the first time. This will help them to begin the process of more "formal" learning, building on what they already know from home. Can you think of others?

- Ask the children to name the different objects around in the classroom in their own language. Label the objects (for example; desk, chair, bench, shelve, window, door, blackboard, wall, and floor) with the names the children are giving them - if children speak different languages you can

label the objects with different names reflecting the language diversity represented in your class. The children will learn to recognise that letters and words have practical meaning.

- Write down the words of the national anthem that the children sing every morning before starting school, another song, or a poem that the children know. Singing and reciting poems is an important part of learning because it; helps children to breath properly; builds vocabulary; rhythm, and rhyme; and develops unity within the class. Ask the children if they can guess which words are which.
- Make sure you praise each child for at least one thing that they can do well.
- Be clear and specific when you give directions.
- Organise the older or more mature children to help younger children to understand the directions that you give.
- If you have any children in your class who cannot speak the language of instruction, speak to them in their own language, if you do not speak their language try to find other children in the class who are bilingual. If no one in the class is bilingual, you have to find another teacher in the school who is, if that cannot be found, you need to seek help from the community.
- If you have children from different language backgrounds in the class, try to teach all the children in your class a small poem or a song from all the different languages spoken by your students. This will teach your students about the value of language diversity?
- These simple tasks that children can successfully achieve, especially at the beginning of the school year, will help even the shyest child off to a good start. Your students will become confident, and understand that school is a good place to be, a place where they can feel safe, feel welcome, and learn. In other words, an INCLUSIVE, LEARNING-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT!

Tips for Teaching and Learning

- Lessons need to be structured around daily or weekly "themes" rather than unconnected pieces of information. A "theme" can for example be "water," and daily topics related to water can be:
 - 1) learning about how to keep water clean and prevent pollution - science;
 - 2) writing stories (essays) about rivers and lakes - language;
 - 3) measure water by using different containers (centilitre, decilitre, litre) and learning about factions ($1/10$, $1/4$, $1/2$, 1) - math;
 - 4) finding quotes about water in Al-Quran - religious studies and reading;
 - 5) make drawing, collages or paintings related to water - art, and;
 - 6) organise a competition where the students have to run 100 metres with water glasses (measuring how much they water they had in the glass when they started, how much was left in the glass when they reached the goal, to see how much they had spilled, the one who had run the fastest ($1/2$ the score) but with the least water spillage (the other $1/2$ of the score) had won) - sports, life skills (logical thinking), and math.
- We need to realise that some children will need more time to learn and progress than others. When we use theme (project) based learning as in example above we can give different children different tasks (some more easy or difficult than others), based on their individual abilities and stage of development.
- We need to plan activities that encourage children to work in teams (in pairs, or small groups).
- The teams (pairs and groups) should be put together in such a way that they reflect the diversity of abilities and backgrounds in our classrooms (not all the "smart" students in one group, and the "not-so-smart" in another! This will foster child-to-child teaching and learning, which will benefit ALL the children, both those who learn fast and those who need more time to learn and understand.
- Students must be able to find the curriculum useful and relevant to their life (situations and circumstances).

- Students must be encouraged to ask questions and consider information, and be able to construct their own understanding of the subject matter.
- We need to ask good questions to allow students to explain their ideas. Rather than asking questions that require a "Yes" or a "No" answer only, we need to ask open-ended questions to allow children to express their views, ideas, and opinions.

REMEMBER: Before starting a new "theme", and "topic," you need to ask all of your children what they already know about it. Asking this question will help children to relate to the themes and topics, if it is a familiar one, and help them to understand and learn more quickly. Some children may be "experts" on certain topics, such as fishing or growing vegetables, and these children should be given opportunities to present their knowledge for the benefit of others in the class.

Tool 4.2

Dealing with Diversity in the Classroom

EMBRACE AND VALUE DIVERSITY

All classrooms are diverse because all children are unique and different. Added diversity in classroom brings added benefits to ALL students. Children with different abilities and backgrounds have different experiences, skills, and knowledge, which benefit ALL. It is our duty, as teacher, to create the right environment and opportunities for ALL children to learn and develop to the best of their abilities.

In Booklet 2 under Tool 2.2, we learned what it means to be excluded, and why inclusion is important for everyone. Similar activities, like the following, can be undertaken to help children and parents understand the value of diversity.

Action Activity: Gift Giving - Getting to Know Each Other

Teachers in a cluster group can use this activity when they meet for the first time. They can also use it when they meet their students at the start of a school year or even at the first Parent-Teacher Association meeting.

For this activity, participants work in pairs. They should ask each other open-ended questions to find out what special qualities each person has that would benefit the group. The final statement should be written on a small "gift card" and state something like:

"My friend's name is and he brings the gift of patience."

"My friend's name is and she brings the gift of a sense of humour."

Each pair of participants then takes turns in presenting each other's skills to the entire group. They should talk about how these skills can benefit everyone.

This activity can highlight the need for teachers to value all children in their class, and that many personal qualities are not obvious to the casual observer. Our responsibility is to scratch the surface and discover the unique quality that each child possesses. We can then develop learning environments that allow these qualities to be developed, valued, and used.

INTRODUCING DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING, LEARNING, AND KNOWING IN THE CLASSROOM

In the previous Tool, we learned that **children learn in many different ways and at many different levels**; that is, there is diversity in learning. Consequently, we as teachers need to devise different ways of learning using different teaching methods, so that all children can understand the information we are teaching and can learn in a meaningful way, especially those with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

The range of teaching-and-learning activities in the classroom runs from memorisation and repetition all the way to solving problems and thinking creatively.

Memorisation, Analysis, Synthesis, and Problem Solving

In our classrooms, we can look for ways to address this entire range. For example, we can:

- **use blocks, bottle caps, models, and other objects to teach mathematics**, which taps into the fine motor skills and visual understanding of children;
- **invite children to talk about (or write about) ideas and processes in mathematics**, which links their verbal thinking to understanding mathematics concepts;
- **ask children to draw pictures for the stories that we read to them, which connects their visual thinking to the words and events** in the story, and;
- **guide children in making maps of the area around school**, which links their experience of movement in space to visual and mathematical concepts. When children survey their community, identify problems within it, and use their skills cooperatively to suggest solutions to these problems, they are learning how to apply what they learn in school. Apart from being good education, this process helps the community to understand the work of the school, and they may be more motivated to support the work of teachers (see Booklets 3 and 6).

For your classroom to be fully inclusive, you need to make sure that the curriculum is accessible to and relevant for ALL children in terms of what you teach (content), how you teach it (method), how the children learn best (process), and how it relates to the environment in which the children are living and learning.

We also need to consider children who experience learning difficulties. Are we planning for children who may have difficulties following the standard curriculum, such as children with physical, sensory (Hearing and vision), or intellectual impairments, or children from income-poor families, working children, or children who do not speak the language of instruction? Will the curriculum still be accessible to these children as well? How can we make learning accessible to ALL?

Action Activity: 7 Steps of Observing Diversity

1. Write down the children in your class who have clear strengths in certain subjects (such as mathematics, writing, discussion skills, etc.)
2. Describe how these strengths are demonstrated in class.
3. Write down the children who have other talents that may be indirectly related to classroom learning. Is a child good in arts? Is another child good in sports? Or, have good social skills? For instance, children with Down's syndrome often have good social skills.
4. Now draw a circle on the page to represent the rest of the children in the classroom that you haven't linked to special skills or talents. In the next week, observe these children more closely.
5. If you notice that one of them likes a certain activity, write it down.
6. How does this activity or how the child performs it reflect his/her ways of learning?
7. How can these ways be incorporated into your lessons?

In observing and dealing with diversity, we need to identify what provisions we can make, that is, the positive ways of helping children to learn, especially children who experience learning difficulties. We should not focus on what we have to "give up," such as our time, but on the learning benefits for our students. For instance, we can ask one child who is good in reading, but not so good in sports, to teach a friend? At the same time, we can ask his friend who is good in sports but struggle with his reading, to help his friend with playing football. In other words, we need to establish a relationship where both children are able to contribute to each other's learning, development and participation.

CHALLENGES TO DIVERSITY

All societies are diverse. Having children with many different backgrounds and abilities in a single inclusive classroom is merely a reflection of society. However, it does have its challenges. We need to consider what each child needs to learn and how he/she learns best. We need to discover how to get ALL children to want to learn together.

Three challenges that can prevent children from learning together are: bullying, prejudice, and discrimination. Learning how to deal with these challenges in an inclusive classroom is one of the most important jobs a teacher must do. You will learn about how to deal bullying, teasing, and discrimination in Booklet 6.

BIAS IN THE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Prejudice and discrimination can be reflected unintentionally in our curriculum and learning materials. This is the case especially for girls, children with different abilities, disabilities and backgrounds, as well as children affected by disabling health conditions (including allergies, asthma, and epilepsy, but also hepatitis and HIV). For instance, children working on the streets may be depicted in school books or story books as uneducated, or as pickpockets and thieves. If our curriculum materials are inclusive of children with different backgrounds and abilities, they will be more sensitive to these diversities and circumstances. They also will be more relevant to children's life and better at facilitating learning, development and participation.

The same situation applies to materials that are inclusive of girls. As we learned in Booklet 3, the social roles assigned to women and men ("gender roles") may be different within a society. Traditional beliefs about the status and roles of men versus women can restrict girls' access to schooling. As a result girls are often kept at home and away from school to do domestic work. Such roles, beliefs, and actions that discriminate against girls may be reflected in the teaching materials we are using. If an active girl who likes to do sports and play outside reads about other girls in schoolbooks and they are portrayed as being quiet and passive and spending most of their days indoors, she may start to think that she too should be passive, just like the girls she read about in her books. This often leads to poor performance especially in mathematics and science. For example, girls may be discouraged or afraid to use mathematics materials or engage in science investigations because these may be regarded as "boys' activities."

Equity in curriculum design is therefore important for ensuring inclusiveness in the classroom. The teaching materials we use are inclusive when they:

- include ALL children, including those with diverse backgrounds and abilities;
- are relevant to the children's learning needs and abilities, as well as their way of life;
- are appropriate to the culture;
- value social diversity (for example, socio-economic diversity; poor families can be very good families for children; they may come up with creative solutions for problems, and they could be depicted as inventive);
- are useful for their future life;
- include males and females in a variety of roles, and;
- use appropriate language that includes all of these aspects of equity.

How can you assess whether or not the materials you are using reflect gender and ethnic equity?

1. **Check the illustrations.** Look for stereotypes, that is, images or ideas about people that are widely held and accepted though they may not necessarily be true (such as men as "breadwinners" and women as "child care providers"). In the illustrations, are people of one cultural group, or are men, the dominant characters? Who is doing what? Are children with disabilities passive watchers, or are they actively involved, such as playing ball with others? Do they look enthusiastic?
2. **Check the story line.** How are problems presented, conceived, and resolved in the story? Does the story line encourage passive acceptance of "minority" characters (such as tribal peoples or persons with disabilities)? Are the successes of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their "good looks"? Could the same story be told if the actions or roles given to men and women in the story were reversed?
3. **Look at lifestyles.** If the illustrations and text attempt to depict another culture, do they simplify or offer genuine insights into other lifestyles?
4. **Look at relationships.** Who has the power? Who makes decisions? Are women depicted only in supportive and subordinate roles?
5. **Note the heroes.** Are the heroes usually from a specific cultural group? Are persons with disabilities ever heroes? Are women ever the heroes? Are poor persons ever heroes?
6. **Consider effects on child's self image.** Are there any suggestions that might limit the aspirations of any particular group of children? This might affect children's perceptions of themselves. What happens to a girl's self-image when she reads that boys perform all of the brave and important deeds, while girls don't?¹

One way to begin looking at these issues is to use the following checklist to assess your learning materials in terms of equity and inclusiveness.



¹ Council on Interracial Books for Children. (1980) *Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks*. New York.

Checklist for Assessing Equity in Learning Materials

Criteria	Content		Illustrations	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are the roles of men and boys as well as women and girls balanced (such as being depicted as doctors, nurses, teachers, field workers, and shop keepers)?				
Are the types of activities for boys and girls equal (such as sporting activities, playing, reading, talking, working, and studying)?				
Do both boys and girls have similar behaviours (such as active, helping, caring, happy, strong, and productive)?				
Do girls sometimes take the role of leader?				
Are girls shown as confident and able to make decisions?				
Do girls act as "intelligent" as the boys?				
Are girls included in outside activities as much as boys?				
Are girls and boys solving problems in the texts?				
Are girls and boys working together in a way appropriate to the culture?				
Are the topics interesting to girls?				
Are the topics interesting to minority children?				
Is there a gender balance in stories about animals?				
Are women described in history?				
Are women included in literature and art?				
Are ethnic minority people included in history, literature, and art?				
Does the language include girls (or are terms, such as "he" or "his", usually used)?				
Is the language appropriate for use in the local community (such as objects or actions that can readily be recognised)?				
Does the language encourage ethnic minority boys and girls to be interested in the text?				
Are the words not discriminating against ethnic minority people?				

Books should reflect the diversity of gender roles, racial and cultural backgrounds, individual needs and abilities, as well as a range of occupations, income levels, ages, and family structures (for instance, some single parent families).

If you have little choice when it comes to the books that are available in your school, then you must "correct" the books you have, and add details that are missing from the text. Perhaps you, your colleagues, and your children can draw additional illustrations to add to books to make them more balanced in terms of the roles of women, minority groups, and others with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

GENDER AND TEACHING

Teachers and schools may unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes. We may:

- call on boys to answer questions more often than we call on girls;
- assign housekeeping tasks to girls, and tool-using tasks to boys;
- reward boys for right answers, and withhold praise from girls;
- criticise girls for wrong answers;
- give more responsibilities to boys than girls (such as being the head of the class or head of a group), or;
- make use of textbooks and other learning materials that reinforce negative gender stereotypes.

Moreover, many teachers may be completely unaware that they treat girls and boys differently. As teachers, we have a clear responsibility to create equal opportunities for all children, boys and girls, to learn, develop and participate to the best of their abilities.

Remember that it is not necessary to oppose ideas that are important to a local culture or community. However, it is necessary to understand how such ideas influence our teaching practices and the opportunities for learning that all children should have.

Action Activity: Gender Equity

Either working alone or as a classroom activity; Make a short survey to get a better understanding of your own school and community. In the table below, write down those jobs that are normally done by boys and girls in the home or local community (such as fetching water, cooking, looking after other children, or tending animals) and those jobs that teachers expect children to do in school (such as sweeping the floor or moving desks).

- Are the jobs we are giving boys and girls in school the same as those at home or in the community?
- Do these jobs reflect traditional beliefs about the roles of men and women?
- Do these jobs stop girls from doing activities that they are fully capable of undertaking?
- Do these jobs prevent boys from learning how to become caring, companionate, responsible and empathetic?

	Boys	Girls	Comments
Home			
School			
Community			

Based on your survey, what can you and your students do to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn how to do certain jobs and to take responsibility?

What can you and your students do to encourage school staff and community members to allow all children to participate equally and to contribute to their own, their schools', and their community's development?

DIVERSITY AND DISABILITY

Strategies for Students with Disabilities²

When we are creating inclusive classrooms and are trying to include children with different abilities and disabilities, we need strategies to help these children learn to their fullest potentials. Some of these strategies include the following.

- **Sequence.** Break down tasks and give step-by-step instructions.
- **Repetition and feedback.** Use daily "testing" of skills, repeated practice, and daily feedback.
- **Start small and build.** Break down a targeted skill into smaller parts, and then help children to develop this skill step-by-step.
- **Reduce difficulty.** Sequence tasks from easy to difficult, and provide hints and help only when necessary.
- **Questioning.** Ask process-related questions like; "how to?", or content related questions like; "what is?"
- **Graphics and illustrations.** Emphasize pictures or other pictorial representations.
- **Group instruction.** Provide instruction or guidance for small groups of students instead of the whole class.
- **Group learning.** Grouped to facilitate interaction between children with different abilities and disabilities, as well as from different backgrounds (each group should be "heterogeneous" in other words reflect the diversity of abilities and backgrounds found in the classroom, school and community).
- **Supplement teacher and peer involvement.** Use homework, parents, siblings, or others to assist in instruction.

In addition, you can encourage other children (boys and girls) to take responsibility for classmates with disabilities by pairing each child who has a disability with a child without a disability. Ask the partner to help with important activities; for example, assisting the child with a disability to get where he/she wants to go, such as the library, latrine, and so on, as well as assisting them on field trips or during team games. Explain to the partners that they might sometimes need to protect a child with a disability from physical or verbal harm, and tell them how best to do this.

To help children without a disability accept and appreciate children with disabilities, tell stories about all the things people with disabilities can do, not only on what they cannot do!

² Excerpted from: Swanson HL. (1999). Instructional components that predict treatment outcomes for students with learning disabilities: Support for a combined strategy and direct instruction model. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 14 (3), 129-140.

Children Who Have Difficulty Seeing

Identifying Children Who Cannot See Well

Some children cannot see as well as others. If this is discovered early, we can do a lot to overcome the challenges these children may face.

Some of the signs of a child who may not be seeing well are when the child:³

- bumps into things easily;
- has difficulty in seeing objects that are close, or far away;
- has difficulty reading words in his/her book (holding it very close to the face when reading), or on the blackboard;
- has difficulty writing in straight lines;
- has difficulty threading needles;
- may complain of headaches or itchy eyes;
- fails to catch balls when playing;
- wears clothes inside out;
- arranges items incorrectly, or;
- brings the wrong objects when asked to bring something.

Checking Children's Eyesight by Developing a Simple Eye Chart

Step 1

Make a poster with six shapes with either three horizontal or three vertical black lines, one shape that is 6 cm in height, and the others that are 4.5 cm, 3 cm, 1.5 cm, 0.5 cm, and 0.25 cm.

Step 2

It is very important to give each letter the correct shape. Each horizontal line should be the same size, and the space between the lines should be the same.

Step 3

Let the children test each other. Hang the chart where the light is good. Make a line on the ground six metres from the chart. The child being tested stands behind this line and holds a copy of the figure on the chart. Test each eye separately while the other eye is carefully covered. Another child points to the shapes on the chart. The child should point to the larger figures first and then to smaller and smaller figures. **The child being tested must hold up his "figure" in the same direction as the one being pointed to by his friend.**

Step 4

When the children know how to give the test, help them to think of ways to give the test to young children, especially those who will soon be going to school. At school, the children in higher grades can test the sight of those in the lower grades.

³ This section on "Children Who Have Difficulty Seeing" was adapted from: Baily D, Hawes H and Bonati B. (1994) Child-to-Child: A Resource Book. Part 2: The Child-to-Child Activity Sheets. London: The Child-to-Child Trust.

Practical Tips for Helping Children Who Do Not See Well (who are blind or have low vision):

- When a child, who has difficulty seeing, first comes to school, meet him/her and the parents alone. Let the child know who you are by talking with the child and explaining that you are the teacher, and what a teacher does.
- Introduce the child to his/her classmates. Explain to the other children that a child who cannot see well can do many things using his/her other senses, such as touch, hearing, and smelling. Suggest that while the child may need help with some tasks, he/she can all learn from each other.
- Introduce the classmates to the child. If the child cannot see them (if he/she is blind), tell the child the names of the other children in the class. Let the child speak with each one of them until the child remembers all their voices and names, so that he/she will begin to know all the others.
- Children who are blind usually do not know when people are near them, who they are and how many they are. So, when you are with a child who cannot see well, speak to him/her, so the child will know that you are there. Tell the children in your classroom to do the same.
- Use large letters when writing on the blackboard (if the child is not blind, but have low vision), and teach the other children to do the same.
- Read out instructions; never assume that everyone can read them from the blackboard.
- Allow children to touch the teaching devices if they cannot see them; for example, maps can be outlines with string.
- If you do not have Braille books, blind children need readers to help them. The reader will read and explain books to the child and help the child to learn. The reader can be a classmate, an older child, a friend, a parent, or a volunteer teacher.
- A child who has low vision (who cannot see well) may be able to learn to read and write in the same ways that other children learn. Teach the child first to write letters and numbers. You can start to teach the child to write with chalk on a slate. Fix pieces of string across the slate so that the child can touch and use them as guidelines while writing. When a child begins writing on paper, fix the strings in the same way on a piece of wood. Teach the child to place the paper under the strings.

Children Who Have Difficulty Hearing or Speaking

Children who have difficulty hearing or speaking often have difficulties communicating with others. This is because we use hearing and speaking most often when we communicate, even if we also use other forms of communication.

Identifying Children Who Cannot Hear Well

Some of the signs that can tell us if a young child has difficulties with hearing:⁴

- The child does not notice voices or noises if he/she does not see where they are coming from.
- The child is disobedient or is the last person to obey a request.
- The child's ears are infected (among others if liquid or pus is coming out).
- The child watches people's lips when they are talking.
- The child has more difficulties understanding you when it is dark or when he/she cannot see the mouth of those who speaks properly (both face wails and bears (facial hair) obstruct the view).
- The child turns his/her head in one direction in order to hear.
- The child speaks rather loudly and not very clearly.
- Sometimes the child appears to be quiet and prefers to be alone.
- The child may not do as well at school as he/she should.

⁴ Adapted from: Baily D, Hawes H and Bonati B. (1994) Child-to-Child: A Resource Book. Part 2: The Child-to-Child Activity Sheets. London: The Child-to-Child Trust

Practical Tips for Communicating with a Child Who Has Difficulty Hearing

- Some children who are born without hearing may not learn to speak. They should be taught how to use Sign language when expressing their thoughts, needs, and feelings
- If there is a child in your class who cannot hear or speak, use different forms of communications, such as; signing; speaking slowly and clearly with visible mouth movements; hand, face, or body movements; or writing. Teach the other children to do the same.
- Before speaking to the child, get the child's attention, so he/she will know that you are speaking. Make sure that the child can see you clearly. Stand in the light so that it falls on your face.
- Children who have difficulty hearing or speaking will sometimes have difficulties with concentrations. They may not always pay attention, or they may not listen carefully to what is being said. Observe them carefully. If they do not pay attention, find ways to make them interested in what you are saying.
- Seat yourself and your children in a circle so everyone can see each other's faces. This will help listening and understanding. Use visual clues to introduce the lesson, such as a picture, object, or key word.
- Some children who have difficulty hearing can hear more clearly if others speak close to their ear. Find out if this helps the child you teach. If it does, tell the other children to do the same.
- When you communicate with the child give him/her time to listen and to think. If the child responds by making sounds that are not proper words, repeat patiently, correctly and slowly the words the child has tried to say. Make sure that the child can see your face when you do.
- Use facial expressions, mimics and body language to underline what you talk about.
- Use your hands when you speak; for example, you may use your hands to show the size of objects.
- Teach the other children to use expressions and movements to communicate with the child who has difficulty hearing.
- Try to understand the different ways in which the child expresses himself/herself. Also continue using different methods of communication with the child to make him/her understand what you want.

Children who can hear some words should be taught to speak. Some children learn to speak clearly; others try to but only succeed in making certain sounds that can be understood. You may be able to get some help in developing sign language skills from non-governmental organizations, foundations, or educational institutions that specialize in assisting children with hearing impairments.

If hearing-aids are used, be aware that they amplify all sounds including background noise. It can also be hard to distinguish between voices if several people speak at the same time. Encourage children with hearing difficulties to sit with a friend who can take notes for them, so they can concentrate on lip-reading

Action Activities: Games and Exercises

Games and exercises can be ideal opportunities to create a more inclusive classroom. Try to introduce ones that everyone can enjoy, such as the following.

Physical exercise helps all children to be healthy. When you organise exercise periods for your class, make sure that children with various backgrounds and disabilities join in as much as they can. For example, for children who cannot see to play ball games, put a bell inside or on the outside of the ball so that the children can hear the ball as it moves.

Some children are not able to play very active games. Include games for them which can be played with less effort or which are played sitting down. Moreover, most children enjoy music even if they

cannot move or sing because of a disability. In addition, children who have difficulties in learning often enjoy music. Even children who cannot hear may enjoy music, especially if it has a rhythm that can be seen through body movements (such as dance), or if the instruments with which the music is played give off rhythmic vibrations that they can feel.

Examples of Games

Game 1 - Learning by Looking

One child closes his/her ears with their fingers, while another child tells a funny story to the group.

Then one of the other children pretends to be the teacher. The "teacher" asks each child to answer questions about the story.

When the "teacher" has finished asking questions, he/she asks the child who had his/her ears closed to open them and listen. The "teacher" asks this child to tell the group what it felt like not to be able to hear the story very well. The child is asked to explain what he/she was able to understand from the faces and gestures of the teacher and the other children.

The child who can tell most of the story from reading the faces and gestures wins the game. Each child should have the chance to have his/her ears closed. This will help the children to understand the problems of a child who has difficulty hearing. They will then be able to understand the child's problem.

Game 2 - Learning by Touching

One child has his/her eyes covered and stands in the middle of a circle made by the other children.

One-by-one, the children in the circle go to the child with the covered eyes. This child touches the faces of each one of the others and tries to guess who each person is. Only one minute is allowed to guess the name of each child.

The child who can recognise the most faces of his/her friends wins the game.

Each child should have the chance to have his/her eyes closed. This will help the children to understand the problems of a child who has difficulty seeing.

Tool 4.3

Making Learning Meaningful for ALL!

LEARNING FOR LIFE

Earlier in this Toolkit we learned that one potential barrier to inclusive learning and getting all children in school is "relevance of education." On the one hand, parents and children may not see how the information learned in school is meaningful for their daily lives. For parents that depend on their children to help earn an income, they and even the children themselves may feel that "learning to work" is more important than being in school.

Even for children who do not need to earn an income to support their families, they may feel bored in the classroom if they don't see the connection between what they are learning in school, as well as what they need to know and want to work with in future. They may therefore not value school, or attend regular on a regular basis, if at all.

Our challenge, therefore, is to create a learning-friendly environment that motivates children to learn by linking what they are learning in school to their personal interests, to what knew before they came to school, and what they what they may need in their daily lives in future. How can we create this linkage? Let's look at a case example.

I was walking down the street in Kabul. I saw a lot of young children running here and there trying to get the attention of the people. They offered passersby to wash their cars, polish their shoes, offering incense (which is supposed to heal and drive away bad spirits), selling chewing gum, and begging for money or something to eat. I couldn't walk by without talking to these children. I ask them; why are you not going to school? They said; we are working, we don't have time to go to school, our families need money. From morning till evening we are on the street. Most people see us as a "bad children", so the school will not accept us as students, so who could help us to go to school? I told them; I am teacher in one of the schools nearby, so I can talk to the school right now. Some of them got afraid and said; ok but who will help us with money for our family? I said; first we should agree to go school and talk with the principle, then we will make a plan on how you can both work and study.

The day after, some of the children came with me to the neighbourhood school, we talked with Principal and he agreed to enrol them into his school. However, their language problem, most of them spoke Pashto, and the school was teaching in Dari, so we put them in a class where the teachers knew Pashto. The principal asked them when it was most suitable for them to come to school. They said; in the afternoon, so that they work in the morning, so as a temporary solution they were enrolled in the afternoon shift. Next year we will see how we can find even better solutions for the children concerned. It is not just about money, it's about flexibility and proper planning.

Their teacher was part of the pilot programme on inclusive education, she used different methods to support these children in school, and she tried to make the lessons related to their daily lives. It was very interesting, both for the children and the teacher.

*Master Trainers for the Pilot Schools on Inclusive Education in Kabul
Ministry of Education with support from UNESCO and UNICEF*

When teachers get to know their children better, and are aware of the backgrounds of the children, and the environment they live in, they can start to adapt the curriculum to include more local topics and examples. Many working children handle money as part of their jobs; this can easily be linked to mathematics. Linking subject matters to the practical experiences and lives of the different children in the school will help them to become more motivated to come to school, and their learning would be more meaningful for them and for their parents.

Action Activities: Linking Learning to Community Life

Review the national curriculum and list its important topics on the basis of what your children have already learned and what you think they should know in relation to their daily lives. Try to link topics that fit with the annual cycle of the community, such as the agricultural or migration calendar, or topics that will help them survive, such as topics related to health, drug prevention and emergency preparedness.

Think about the children in your class and their community. Do you know what kind of work their parents are doing? Do you know where most of the children live? Are many children absent from school? When are they absent? Do you know why? Does your school have a child learning profile containing this information (see Booklet 3)?

Consider the topics that you will teach this term and complete a table like the one shown here. List the topics, see how relevant the topics are to children's daily lives, and think of ways of making them more meaningful.

Subjects & Topics	Links to children's daily lives	Ways to adopt the topic
Example: Topic: Forests & Trees	<i>There are quite a few trees on the hill sides surrounding the village as well as near the river in the valley, but the nearest forest is far away.</i>	<i>First study the local trees by observing and doing practical activities that link science, history, mathematics, and language. Then make the connection to nearest forests in the region and then finally globally issues like the preservation of rainforests.</i>
Your Example:		

CREATING A LEARNING-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT WHERE LEARNING IS MEANINGFUL AND RELEVANT

Preparing for Learning That is Meaningful

"Meaningful Learning" means that we link what the children are learning in school (topic and content), and what the children are taught to through their everyday lives in their families and communities.

Teaching is a complex activity. We must consider many things when preparing for meaningful learning. Above all, no one can force a child to learn. Children will learn when they are motivated to learn. They will learn when given opportunities to learn effectively and when they feel that the skills they will

learn will lead to success. They will learn when they receive positive feedback from friends, teachers, and parents who compliment them on how well they are learning. How can we prepare for meaningful learning? Here are some questions you should ask yourself in preparing your lessons.

- **Motivation.** Is the topic meaningful and relevant to the children? Are they interested in what they are expected to learn?
- **Opportunities.** Are the opportunities suited to the developmental level of the children? For instance, is the topic too hard or too easy for many of the children? Are the activities appropriate for both girls and boys? Are they appropriate for children with diverse backgrounds and abilities?
- **Skills.** Do the children have the skills to achieve the expected result?
- **Feedback.** Is the type of assessment and feedback given to the children designed to increase motivation to continue learning?

Action Activity: Linking Learning with the Lives of the Children in your Class

Try again to think of a topic that you will be teaching. Add it to the table above. Can you make connections with any of the children's daily activities? For example:

- housework (preparing food, collecting fire wood, looking after brothers and sisters, taking care of older family members, or cleaning);
- looking after animals;
- finding food by hunting, fishing, or gathering, or;
- growing food and working in the fields.

Creating a Meaningful Learning Environment

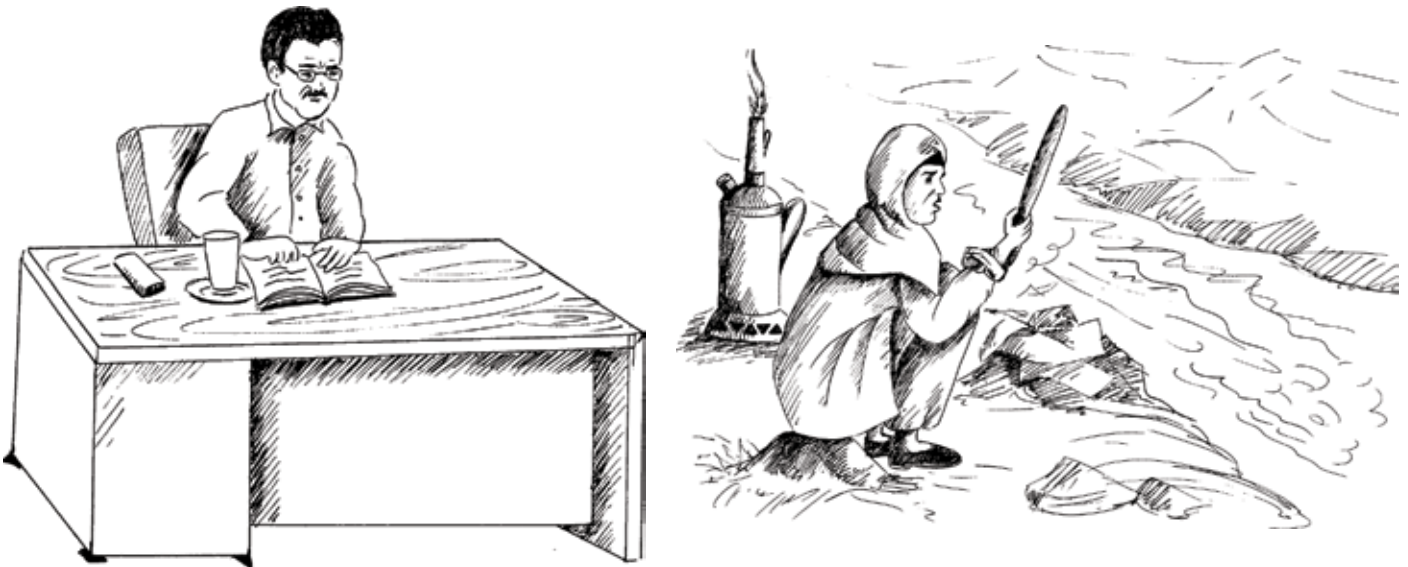
Classroom should be learning-friendly, as they encourage students to ask open questions, identify problems, start conversations, and discuss solutions with teachers, friends, and family. All children (boys and girls, as well as children from diverse backgrounds and abilities) must be made to feel confident and comfortable to participate actively, without fear.

In a learning-friendly classroom, we as a teacher must play different roles. In the past, our role has been that of an "information giver." But in order to help children learn to the best of their abilities, we must expand our role to that of a facilitator, classroom manager, observer, and learner. What do these new roles entail?

- **Facilitator.** We need to provide appropriate learning opportunities for all the children and encourage them to freely present ideas and talk about important issues in a constructive manner.
- **Manager.** To be a successful facilitator, we must plan well and carefully guide the discussions, giving every child a chance to express their own views.
- **Observer.** Observe the children while they work in a group, in pairs, or alone. This will help us to understand them better and to plan even more meaningful learning activities in future. For instance; can an activity that a pair of children is doing well be expanded into a group activity? Can the two children be group leaders together?
- **Learner.** We become learners when we reflect on our lessons and how well the children have been learning. We can then develop ways to make our teaching even more meaningful and effective. For instance, was one activity effective in helping children to understand a difficult topic or concept? Can this activity be applied to other topics and concepts?

MAKING LEARNING GENDER RESPONSIVE

We learned in this Toolkit's Introduction that "gender" refers to the social roles that men and women are assigned within a given culture, such as "men as breadwinners" and "women as child caregivers." Gender roles are created by society and are learned from one generation to the next as part of the society's culture. Gender roles are not static because they change over time, similar to other cultural traditions and perceptions. Unfortunately, these roles can harm the learning of our children because they often restrict how girls and boys behave and what they are allowed to learn. The following case study is an example of how this can occur.



Sima is 14 years old and lives in Kabul. Her parents are very poor. Their house is surrounded brick making factories, so the environment is extremely polluted because smoke from all the ovens. Black smoke and dust is coming into her house day and night, making everything dirty. Because her family is very poor they cannot afford to move away, because the rent for this house is very cheap, and rent elsewhere is very expensive. Sima was in 5th grade in school, she has many other brothers and sisters, and because she is the oldest girl she has to take care of all her siblings, and other members of her family. She wakes up every morning at 05:00, after she says her prayers she wakes up her younger brothers and sisters, and start working with carpet weaving. At the same time she is responsible for cleaning the house and preparing breakfast for all family, as well as getting her sisters and brother ready for school. Her brothers had time to do all their homework but she couldn't because she was busy with all her chores at home.

The school is very far from their house, so by the time they reach school they are tired, both from work as well as from walking to school. If they reach the school late the guard becomes angry; he says bad and insulting words, and sometimes even beats them. They feel shameful and discouraged from going to school. However, Sima loves school, so she tries to overcome all the difficulties she faces, but the school environment creates barriers for her. Once she decided to not go any more to school, however she missed school so after a few days she went back to school again. When she came back, her teachers and the school management did not treat her well. She was upset and finally decided to stop coming to school and continue doing her chores and work at home. However, her brothers could continue their studies and are doing well in school.

Sima is just one example of how gender roles and duties can lead to marginalization and drop out both among girls and boys. Moreover, girls and boys are socialised into a way of thinking about themselves and what they can do. For example, you might hear "boys don't cry" or "girls shouldn't play rough games."

If we want to include all children in our inclusive, learning-friendly classrooms, we need to ask ourselves: "Do all of the children have the time and energy to complete the tasks I have assigned?" One of the ways to help answer this question is to conduct a small classroom project on how much work girls and boys do at home. Ask your children to talk about or write a short story on "What I Do At Home." You might be surprised at how much work your children, especially girls, have to do for their families. You can then adjust your learning plans to fit the needs of all the children in your classroom.

To help girls feel more at ease in school and to ensure equal opportunities for them, work with your colleagues and school administrators to undertake the following actions.

- Support the revision of learning materials and the elimination of gender and other biases (see Tool 4.2) or the stereotyping of children with minority or from poor economic backgrounds, as well as street children and working children. This is a task for the whole school to undertake, but all the teachers in your school need to be aware and know how to take action.
- Introduce a more flexible curriculum and self-directed learning materials, since some girls may have many demands on their time, such as domestic work and care for siblings. Both boys and girls from poor economic backgrounds often find little time to do school work, since the family needs everyone to help out in order to survive. Try to complete learning activities during school time, and allow a choice when homework is being given.
- Give enough time ("waiting time") for children to answer your questions. If you do not have a colleague to observe you in the classroom, you can try a participatory activity with the children to assess whether you treat boys and girls differently. For instance, ask each child to collect five stones (you may already have a collection for use in mathematics). Ask each child to put one stone to one side of his/her desk every time you speak to him/her, ask them a question, or allow them to answer. Together you can assess the pattern of interaction and discuss why this might be happening. What other strategies can you use to treat children more equally? What skills will the children need to learn so that they can participate equally?

All of these components will strengthen your ability to create a learning-friendly environment for boys and girls. Many of the above activities will need the support of parents or other caregivers. For this reason, these issues should be discussed at school committee meetings, and a practical action plan should be developed. It will help all teachers if school policies on such matters as discipline and gender bias are discussed and agreed upon by all teachers and parents.

ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATORY LEARNING

Inside and outside the classroom, children are learning all the time. They should be active in their learning in order to practice what they have learned and gain competence. They should also be encouraged to work with all of the other children in their class, including those with diverse backgrounds and abilities. Cooperation encourages understanding and acceptance. Pair and small group work allow better participation and interaction amongst children and help to build independence as well as the ability to work constructively with others. Examples of good learning opportunities include field visits and games for learning.

Action Activities: Field Visits

In field visits, children go outside of the classroom, to parks or farms, to a well or a community dam, or to a river or a hillside. They can observe specific organisms or natural phenomena, as well as learn from farmers; herders and other experts (learn more about how such visits can promote better health and hygiene in Booklet 6).

Field Visits to Support Group Work

In a visit to a community dam, for example, each group in a fifth-grade class can be given a set of assignments. Before going to the dam, group members can learn about the importance of water to human life and agriculture. At the dam, each group can be asked to: estimate the width of the dam; map the area immediately affected by the dam; draw the different kinds of trees around the dam; or formulate questions while they listen to information offered to the class by a government engineer.

When the class returns from the dam, each group can use the information that they have gathered to prepare presentations or reports of their observations. They can also discuss the importance of the dam with their families.

Depending on the nature of the field visit, you can undertake various actions before the field trip so that children will learn better while they are on the field trip. The actions that you can do in advance include:

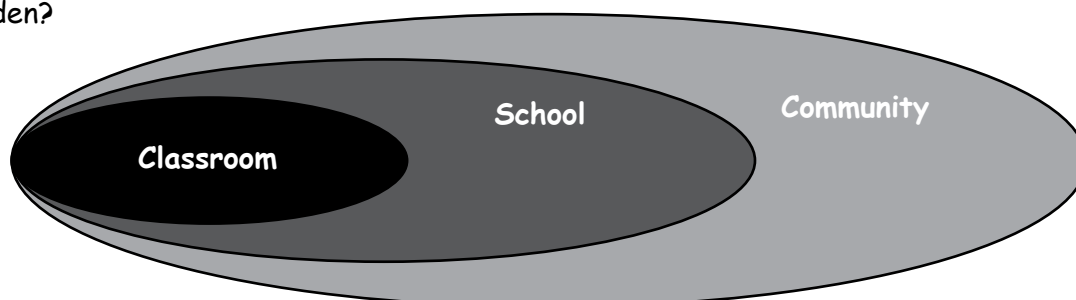
- conducting preparatory research, whole-class discussion, or inquiry about what the children might see during the field trip;
- obtaining assistance from helpers or family members to organise the field trip and participate in it;
- finding opportunities to listen to and interview experts, and;
- assigning specific activities for groups, pairs, or individual students that will help them to understand what they will see during the field trip.

The field visit allows for meaningful learning. It also is an example of integrated learning where, for instance, research on the dam or garden involves mathematics, science, language, and social studies.

Circles of Learning

This is a good activity to do by yourself in order to plan your lessons. It is also one that you can do with your students!

Identify all of the different opportunities for field visits within a short distance from your classroom. In the middle of a piece of paper, draw a small circle or oval to represent your classroom. Around it, draw a circle to represent your school. Around the school circle, draw a larger circle to represent your community, town, or district. Start with the school circle. Does the school keep farm animals or other types of animals? Is there a garden plot or a park? Are there trees or fields? Are there bird nests or ant hills? Within the school circle, list the names of every learning opportunity outside the classroom. Are you able to create a new learning environment for children, for instance, a school garden?



Move on to the circle for your community, town, or district. Consider the shops and businesses that might be interesting for the children to study. Is there a farmer with special crops, or special animals? Is there a museum, a forest, park, or a field? Write the names of these learning opportunities in the circle.

Use the sites on your school grounds to help your class learn about appropriate behaviour outside the classroom and to learn how to work together in groups.

Remember those children who have walking difficulties or impairments. How will they have access to these learning opportunities? You may need to survey the route first. You also may need the help of parents or other students.

Action Activities: Games for Learning

Children love to play games and, given the opportunity, they will make up rules for new games. In these games, they may use balls, bottle caps, stones, string, leaves, or other low cost or waste materials. Games that involve role-playing, problem solving, or use of specific skills and information are good ways to get children interested in what they are learning.

Games can incorporate active learning which can improve communication skills, as well as analysing and decision-making skills. Examples of such games include dominoes, bingo, and "five questions" (where children try to guess what an object is by asking only five questions). You and your students can design the materials for many games, and you can adapt the same game for different purposes and different grades.

These games and their materials can be changed to connect more directly to the curriculum. You can, for example, create domino cards with geometric shapes that can be matched with each other. For example, a square shape on one domino can be paired with a domino with the name of the shape in words (square).

Can you and your students create learning activities based on simple games? Here's how!

- Observe or discuss with your students what games they play outside. What rules do they use for keeping score? Do they sing songs or use rhymes? Are there different games for girls and boys? Why?
- Ask children to develop a book of games from which other children can learn. Can children research games that their older family members may have played when they were at school, or those that are a part of the local culture or cultures?
- Connect any of these games or activities to a topic that you teach, for example, mathematics.

Both field trips and games can motivate all children to learn. Here are some more ways to increase motivation.

- Use concrete examples from the local area that are meaningful to boys and girls as well as children with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- Provide opportunities for these children to use what they have learned in their daily activities, such as fishing, growing wheat, raising chickens, or collecting water.
- Use a variety of teaching methods that are interesting and involve children's active participation in learning.

MAKING MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, AND LANGUAGE MEANINGFUL FOR ALL

Mathematics, science, and language (reading and writing) are the core subjects in all our schools. They are also the most challenging for children. In all of these subjects, children learn abstract concepts that may be difficult for them to understand, unless children can link these concepts to their daily lives. Once they make this connection and can understand abstract concepts, they can start applying them when learning skills related to the following subjects:

Learning-Friendly Mathematics

We use mathematics when we guess how long it will take us to walk home. We use mathematics to estimate how much water will fill a bucket, and how much three kilograms of potatoes will cost at the market. We use mathematics when we are selling fish at the side of the road. We use mathematics when we play sports, make music, and when we sing (use of rhythm and time).

In school, however, mathematics often seems to be unrelated to the activities we do every day. If we try, we can help children make the connections between mathematical skills, mathematical concepts and thinking, and the mathematics of daily life, such as buying and selling goods at the local market. For instance, role-playing, where children pretend to go to the market, can be fun and meaningful for children in learning mathematics. It is also an opportunity for children to develop confidence when speaking in front of a class.

Build Basic Skills Using Concrete Objects

Young children can more easily understand addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division when they use objects, such as small stones, bottle caps, dried beans, shells, thin sticks, or fruit seeds. These objects can help make mathematics something that students can see or feel (for instance, for those children with visual impairments), not just think about.

When children see or touch and then move the objects themselves, they experience the processes physically, step-by-step, as well as mentally. Both visual learners, and those who learn by touch, can benefit greatly by using practical materials.

Use Objects with Different Shapes

Differently shaped objects help children understand volume, dimension, and geometry. These objects can include cubes, pyramids, rectangular blocks, cylinders, and other shapes carved from wood or made by folding thick paper. Ask groups of children to explore the school and its environment to discover the range of shapes that are used in everyday life.

For example, a tin can is a cylinder, a brick has rectangular sides, triangles make the shape of roof supports, etc.

Linking Mathematics to Daily Life

By making mathematics practical, you enable children to draw connections between simple operations and more complex ones. Focus on mathematical functions in daily life, such as calculating time and distance for walking from home to school, estimating the amount of space needed for a sports field, and estimating the cost of vegetables bought at the market. Because they are practical tasks, and because they focus on elements that are familiar to students, such problems develop mathematics skills using real objects, not just abstract ones.

Children can further build their understanding of mathematical concepts when they use language to describe the ways that they are applying mathematics. Give the children frequent opportunities to write down or describe verbally, in their own words, each step in their solutions, and what each step means. As in other subjects, you need to observe children working, and talk with them about how they found their answers. You need to be patient and try different methods if a child is having difficulties.

You can help children with different learning styles and needs by basing their mathematical understanding on a wide range of different activities, such as those they do regularly during the day. You can help them by using concrete objects and by describing mathematical concepts verbally, visually, and through touch. Consequently, we are ensuring that learning mathematics is meaningful for all children.

Action Activity: Mathematics and the Community

List the different ways that your community uses mathematics; for instance, ask your children to undertake a simple survey on how mathematics is used in their homes. This is a good way to get them thinking. Begin with your own routines and activities, and list every way that you have used mathematics over the course of the last week.

Talk with your children or community members and find out if there are any local stories or legends that involve time or distance, or if there are any songs or dances with an interesting rhythm or timing. Incorporate these into your lesson plans.

Use local names and places so that children can better understand your questions. For instance, Aziz walks 1 kilometre from his home to his grandfather's house to help him to collect, from there he walks for 2 kilometres to collect water from the community well. His bucket can hold 5 litres of water. He carries the water to his grandfather's house. How far does Aziz have to walk in order to help his grandfather as well as reach home before night? (Using this example, there could also be a discussion about the tasks boys and girls do within their families and communities).

Action Activity: Mathematics and Health

There are many opportunities for children to learn about their health and development through practical mathematical activities.

- Children can measure their height and weight. These measurements are recorded on graphs for all the children and updated frequently (see Booklet 6).
- An illness survey can be carried out in the class or school. For instance, children can record the number of their classmates who have had measles, ringworm, malaria, or another health problem during a certain time period. The results are given as a ratio or percentage. Actions can then be taken to prevent some of these illnesses.

Learning-Friendly Science

When we study science, we explore the smallest building blocks of matter and life, such as atoms, as well as the farthest reaches of space. The difficulty is that we know that atoms and galaxies exist. However, we don't see them every day, and we don't think about them regularly. We also do not talk about them on a daily basis. Consequently, to make science learning-friendly, we need to strike a balance between what is real (what we regularly see, touch, or smell), and what is known (abstract things, such as atoms and galaxies). By starting with what is real and linking science to what children see or do every day, children can develop better communication skills. They can more easily talk about science and "real life." They can then work towards understanding and talking about ideas or concepts that are more abstract scientifically.

As in mathematics, learning science can be encouraged through concrete activities about such topics as: plants and animals, the human body, water and landforms, natural and man-made environments, sound and music, the solar system, etc. Moreover, labelling a drawing of a plant is a way of integrating writing and drawing skills, and it is an excellent form of communication in science. It is also a good step towards labelling other, more abstract, things like planets or internal organs of the body.

In all of these areas, the key is to discover ways that children can explore their own experiences with these topics. For example, to learn about sound and music, they can experience pitch and vibration using stringed instruments, even home-made ones. To learn about the solar system, they can observe the phases of the moon, or they can chart the movement of the sun by using a stick and measuring the angle of the shadow every hour of the day.

These kinds of concrete experiences can be supported by good introductions to scientific processes. In learning about science, students can practice their observation and questioning skills, and they can design experiments to answer their own questions.

Children can be introduced to the roles that science and the scientific method play in society. For example, when girls and boys experiment with how to dry fruit in a simple solar drier, or to make compost, they are learning good science while also finding practical solutions to community problems.

It is important that we as teachers learn important scientific concepts so that we can easily relate our children's daily activities to those concepts and help them to learn. For example, classifying is a key concept in science. Classification of living and non-living things is a good starting point. You can use rocks and vegetables as practical examples. One model for helping children to understand classification goes like this.

Steps for Helping Younger Children with Classification

1. What do I want to classify?
2. What things are alike that I can put into a group?
3. In what ways are these things alike?
4. What other groups can I make? How are the things in each group alike?
5. Does everything fit into a group now?
6. Would it be better to divide any of the groups or to combine them together?
7. Can I draw a diagram to represent how I have classified the objects?

Other Ways of Thinking

In many communities and cultures, people have developed other ways of understanding nature and the world around them. These ways of understanding may be linked to social experiences or observations rather than scientific experimentation. Some children may become confused because the way that things are explained in school may be different from the stories that they have heard at home. These stories are an important part of a community's culture and are taught from one generation to the next. It is important that the children learn these stories as part of their cultural heritage, but at the same time understand that they are part of subjects like; history and language, but not necessarily of science.

Inclusive learning means embracing a diversity of ideas as well as a diversity of children and their learning styles. Children need to understand that there are many different ways to explain objects or events, and we are willing to accept different explanations without judgement. As teachers, we need to find ways to respect these ways of thinking, while helping learners to gain an understanding of science as a specific form of knowledge.

Action Activity: Science and Daily Life

Identify some of the ways that scientific knowledge can contribute to our understanding of the ways we live our lives. For example, water is a topic that can be explored in many ways, and it is vital for every person's life. By studying water, we can integrate different forms of scientific knowledge as well as link with other subjects, such as mathematics, language, and social studies. When we boil water to purify it; for instance, we are killing invisible micro-organisms that were unknown before scientists discovered them. When we use a hand-pump to pump water out of a well, we are using a simple machine, the lever, to create a vacuum. When clouds form, lightning strikes the earth and rain falls, we experience the forces of nature.

Design one new lesson that connects scientific knowledge and investigation to daily life.

- What resources will you use in teaching your students?
- Will learners be asked to frame a question? For instance, will the shadow formed by the stick when you pray at midday, than when you say your afternoon prayers?
- What activity can they do to test their questions?
- What information resources, such as a textbook, can they use?
- How will you assess their understanding of the activity?

Lesson Planning and Teaching

Practical science needs careful planning so that all children can take part in a safe way. Consider some of the topics within your science curriculum that can relate closely to daily lives of children.

When planning lessons, it is important to plan how the children will participate in their learning. Usually, this depends on the different teaching methods we select. One example of an effective teaching method is:

- Ask children an open question, such as one that asks them to decide on something or express an idea.
- Ask them to think about their answer.
- Ask them to write notes about their answer (for children who are blind a Braille slate is a useful tool for writing short notes like this).
- Ask them to exchange their views with a partner.
- Ask for volunteers (girls and boys) to share the results of their discussions with the entire class.

This method ensures that all children have the opportunity to answer and discuss their ideas or answers. This is very important. Ask yourself, "In my classroom, are there children who almost always raise their hands first to answer my question?" The problem is that as soon as these children's hands are raised to answer you, other children stop thinking. They may need a longer amount of time to prepare their answers, or they assume that other children will answer your question. Moreover, many children are afraid to express themselves, particularly if their mother tongue is not normally used in the classroom. The pair work presented in the teaching method above allows all children to practice correct vocabulary and to express their views with one other person. This exchange builds their confidence and encourages their participation in answering your questions or those asked by their classmates.

Learning-Friendly Language Skills

Language skills are extremely important because they affect the abilities of children to learn in all other subjects. Meaningful learning will take place if the language of instruction is meaningful. Sometimes the home (local) language will need to be used so that all children have access to information, can communicate their ideas, and can be understood in a meaningful way.

You can create opportunities for children to listen by reading stories out loud to the class. You can also invite people from your community to visit the class and tell about their jobs, their lives, or the history of your area. Be sure to invite older people; they often have more stories to tell and more time to tell them. When people are invited, prepare the visitor first by explaining the purpose of his/her visit. Help girls and boys develop their social skills. Who will welcome the visitor? How do we welcome someone we do not know? How do we talk to an elder? Where will the visitor sit? How do we thank someone who has helped us? These are also good ways of practicing communication as well as social skills.

Reading Approaches

Many parents worry about their child learning to read. This anxiety sometimes puts pressure on children and may make learning to read a punishment instead of a pleasure. Reading is complicated, and there are many different ways of helping children to learn to read. Two approaches that are used are the Phonics approach and the Whole Language approach.

In the Phonics approach, a written word is broken down into its component letters. These written letters are matched with their corresponding sounds and then blended together to produce the word.

The Whole Language approach involves forming the meaning between the whole word and the spoken one, normally in the context of how the word might be used. The word might be presented in a short phrase, such as "One blue ball...".

Both approaches should be used because different learners will learn to read in different ways. To teach reading to a variety of learners, with different learning styles and backgrounds:

- use a variety of approaches;
- never separate skills from meaning
- remember that readers learn to read and write because they want to communicate;
- know that learning to read takes place in a supportive environment where children build positive attitudes about themselves and the language, and;
- read daily to small children to introduce them to reading for information and entertainment, and to show them that you enjoy reading too.

Other Ways to Support Reading

Children should have appropriate books and articles to read, and these can be available in a special reading and writing area. If books are not available, you may be able to create your own books that present local stories and folk tales. (You can also create big books for reading to groups of students.) Other ideas include the following.

- Invite the children to tell stories about their observations of the world around them and about events in their lives such as holidays or family celebrations. They will learn how to sequence events in a story, as well as how to change the type of language they use depending on the story's purpose and its audience. If they have difficulties in writing, someone (such as an older child or a parent) can write down the story as the child speaks. The child can then illustrate his/her own story.
- Create a classroom "reading-and-writing" environment by posting charts of alphabets, pictures, word lists, and other information. These may come from stories, lessons, or the children's own work. You can also label different objects around the room. If there is little wall space, you can hang letters, words, and pictures on a string across the room. If there is a local newspaper, headlines, articles, and pictures can be displayed to illustrate the different uses of language.

- Mix language practice with other subjects. For instance, when children have developed skills in writing, they can write descriptions of plants or sources of clean water for science class. Invite them to write story problems for each other in mathematics, or they can write about how they solved a scientific question. Guide older learners in small group discussions, as well as dramatizations of stories from class, to give them an opportunity to frame ideas in their own language. By role-playing situations from school or by using puppets to focus on social issues, such as bullying, the children will also be developing their "emotional wellbeing" and how to handle difficult situations well.
- Give all learners the opportunity to write, to share their writing out aloud, and to talk about their writing. All writers benefit from reading their work to themselves while they are working on it as well as to others. Working in "writing pairs" can help your students to try out ideas and decide on the best vocabulary to be used. All except the earliest writers (young children who are just starting to write) can benefit from peer editing groups in which they read their work, share constructive criticism, and plan revisions.

Tips for Teaching Writing

Teaching writing is important, but it is also difficult. If you give your children the chance to write often, and the chance to revise and refine their writing, you will be building the foundation for successful writing. Above all, make writing meaningful! Young writers, both girls and boys, can express themselves about topics that are important to them. These can include their families, special events in the community, topics in social studies, and so forth.

Children's writing should have a specific purpose and an audience. Children often are writing just for the teacher, but in life we use writing for many different types of audiences. We need to alter our writing style to suit the purpose and the audience; for example, a list, a letter, or a note for ourselves; or a poster or a story for younger children. This is meaningful writing. Here are a few more tips:

- Invite young writers to write freely without worrying about correctness (spelling and grammar should be dealt with separately). Children who are just learning to write can build language structures and expression even if they use imaginary spellings and strange punctuation. Imagined or made up spelling is a normal part of writing development. The child is "hearing" and trying to decide on what the word could look like. They need to use their own strategies first. Children need to try and work out spellings on their own. At the same time, they should be learning how to memorise and how to use a dictionary.
- Words should be learned in context either with a picture of the word, such as a "door or ball," or using the word within a phrase like "the green door" or "the yellow ball."
- You can teach young children to spell in many ways, such as spelling out loud, spelling games, and crossword puzzles. However, when they write and become too concerned with correct spelling and punctuation, they may have difficulty building a deeper relationship with the language. Rather than correcting spelling, you need to be observing and writing down children's writing problems. You can then diagnose their difficulties and provide them with specific support in that area, such as how to use adjectives effectively or create meaningful comparisons (analogies).

The goal of writing is to communicate an idea well so that everyone understands it. The central rule for teachers of writing is to create opportunities for meaningful communication, such as the following.

- Invite young children to dictate stories to a “scribe” who could be an older student who needs to practice his/her writing. (Remind the learner to be patient and speak slowly to the person who is writing.) The young storytellers can then illustrate their stories. This exercise builds a bridge between speaking and writing. This is also an activity we can use to help children who can see to learn about those who cannot see.
- Ask children to write about their lives and experiences. Whether it's a visit to their grandparents or any other experience outside the classroom, young writers write best when they write about something they know well.
- Conduct short writing periods. For children under the ages of 8 or 9, they may become very tired holding a pencil or piece of chalk to make the letters, while they are also trying to focus on the message they want to communicate. Writing often, for brief periods, is much more effective than trying to write for a long period of time.
- Encourage young writers to keep journals or diaries to help them structure their thoughts. Journal writing is important because it's not public. For the writer, it can be a chance to write in a very free way. For this reason, if you are planning to collect and review children's journals, you tell them so in advance.
- Give writers the chance to revise their writing. Professional writers may spend up to 85 percent of their time revising their first drafts. In classroom writing assignments, it's important to encourage students to write freely and in their own words. They should try to cover all of their thoughts on a topic. (Revision is more important for students over the ages of 8 or 9 who have begun to write more naturally to express themselves.) Give comments on their ideas and the sequence of their story. Show them how to use a dictionary so that they can learn to correct their own spelling or perhaps with a spelling partner.
- Allow opportunities for every imaginable kind of writing. When older learners write about how they solved a mathematics or science problem, or about how the weather affects the lives of their family members, they are using writing as an effective tool.
- Publish writing to make it meaningful. Girls' and boys' writing can be “published” on classroom walls or made into simple books. It can also be shared with learners in other classes, with families and the community, and with friends. When learners write letters to a community leader to ask questions, offer opinions, or simply express appreciation, they have the opportunity to write about things that are important to them and that have a real purpose and an audience.

Reflection Activity: Teaching Language Meaningfully

Think about your current teaching practices and your children.

- Which ways of using language receive minimal attention in your classes? How can you improve this situation?
- Do you give opportunities for children to talk together in pairs and discuss in groups of four?
- How can you make learning and using language more interesting, relevant and meaningful?

Tool 4.4

What Have We Learned?

LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING AND LEARNERS

- All children can learn, but they learn in different ways, and at a different pace.
- As teachers, we need to provide a variety of learning opportunities and experiences for children.
- Children learn by linking new information with what they already know.
- We must make sure that the learning is relevant to the lives of children, their families and the community.
- We must also help parents and other caregivers to support children when they learn.
- Talking and questioning together (social interaction) strengthens learning, which is why pair and small group work, if well organised, is very important.

As well as knowing more about how children learn well, we reviewed some of the barriers to children's learning. One major barrier is low self-esteem. Low self-esteem reduces children's motivation to learn and can have damaging effects on their cognitive and social development. Self-esteem can be promoted through an improved learning environment. This environment is one where appropriate praise is given when children are successful, where efforts count as much as results, where cooperative and friendly grouping is encouraged, where children know that they are cared for, and where they will be supported when learning.

DEALING WITH DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

In this Booklet, we explored ways to make the curriculum accessible and relevant for all children in terms of what you teach (content), how you teach and how children learn best (process), and the environment in which the children are living and learning. When planning lessons it is necessary to think of these three areas: **content**, **process** (such as teaching methods), and **environment**.

We also looked at **threats** to children's learning and at bullying in particular. We must remember that:

- threats from and fear of others (teachers, parents, and other children) can prevent children from learning;
- differences, such as ethnicity, religion, and social class, can be used by bullies to justify their bullying;
- observation is a key skill for any teacher, and we need to observe children during play and in the classroom to identify poor social relationships between children that could threaten their learning; and
- once teachers have assessed their situation, they need to be proactive in preventing opportunities for bullying rather than reacting to a situation after it has already occurred.

Prejudice and discrimination are also barriers to learning. They can be reflected unintentionally in our curriculum and learning materials. This is the case especially for girls as well as children with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

We have included a checklist to analyze textbooks for bias. Are you able to review your textbooks and learning materials for bias or unintentional discrimination? What actions will you take when you find it; for example, can you provide new illustrations?

Children with learning difficulties can be provided with an environment where they learn how to help themselves. Are you aware of those children who, for whatever reason, have difficulty learning? What actions can you take to help them? Some will need understanding and support from other children, but the goal is to provide learning activities that they can have easily access without asking for help.

MAKING LEARNING MEANINGFUL FOR ALL

The key idea in this Booklet is how to make learning more meaningful for all children. We need to make learning meaningful so that all children will want to come to school, will be motivated to learn, and will know that what they learn is relevant to them.

You will need to link issues in your local area with the curriculum and topics you are teaching. Allow children to bring into the classroom the knowledge that they and their parents already have.

Meaningful activities include pair and small group work outside of the classroom, where children can explore and understand their own environment.

Making learning meaningful may require adapting the national curriculum to fit the local context of your school. This can be done more effectively through work with other teachers.

Have you been able to adapt textbook examples and activities to relate better to your local area?

The core subjects in school are mathematics, science, and language. You can motivate children to want to learn these subjects by developing and playing games. Mathematics and language games can make learning fun as well as meaningful. If you are able to work with a group of teachers or parents, then several games can be developed for use in the classroom.

Mathematics can be made more meaningful by using practical materials and solving problems that are common in everyday life. These problems can relate to measurements and calculations around the school, at home, or at the market.

In **science**, concrete experiences help children to understand scientific concepts. In learning about science, students can practice their observation skills. They can be encouraged to ask questions and plan experiments to explore different answers to their own questions.

By investigating their local area, children can be introduced to the role that science plays in society. They can find practical solutions to community problems while learning valuable scientific concepts and skills.

Have you been able to find time to allow children to investigate problems rather than just learn the answers from the textbook?

We considered different teaching methods, such as "Do, talk, and record" and "Think, ink, pair, share." These methods help children interpret their ideas together, improve understanding, and increase their participation in class.

Are you able to use different teaching methods in science and mathematics? Do you have practical materials in your classroom for children to explore scientific and mathematical concepts?

Language is not just a subject; it is a range of skills that children need in order for them to access the curriculum and to help them think and learn. They need to be able to talk, listen, read, and write in as many situations as possible. We can develop these skills in all subjects.

Are you able to make language learning meaningful by providing opportunities for language learning in science and mathematics?

Book 5:

Managing Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Classroom



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

TOOL GUIDE

This Booklet will give you practical advice about managing diverse classrooms. It explains how to plan for effective teaching and learning, how to use resources effectively, how to manage group work in a diverse classroom, as well as how to assess your students' progress and thus your own progress.

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Tool 5.1

Planning for Teaching and Learning

Razia is a teacher in a mobile community based school for Kuchi children in Afghanistan. She has not had much training, but she volunteered to teach when there was no teacher willing to work with the nomadic children, so far away from the town. Although she loves children, she finds teaching very challenging. There are so many things to think about: what to teach, what materials to use, where to get the materials from, how to teach a large class with different grades, how to plan lessons for different grades, etc. How can one teacher do everything?

Many teachers find their work challenging. Although we should be able to react to the interests and needs of individual children, we also need to be structured and well organised. We need to manage teaching and learning. This Tool will give you many ideas on how to plan your lessons, optimising the use of available resources, as well as managing an inclusive, learning-friendly classroom with a large number of children, all with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

CLASSROOM ROUTINES

Regular and routine classroom activities help children to start work quickly and meaningfully at the beginning of their school day. The children should agree on the rules and routines, better yet, they should organise them. For example, a student committee can be in charge of taking the register and reporting to the teacher about absences.

When developing routines with children, it is important to explain and decide upon: (i) what should be done; (ii) who should do it; (iii) when should it be done, and; (iv) why is it important to do this routine activity on a regular basis (at the beginning and end of every class, day, or week). Here are some ideas about routine activities that you can organise with your children:

- What children should do while waiting for the class to start;
- What the consequence should be of coming late for class;
- How books and other learning materials should be distributed, collected, and stored, and who should take responsibility for these activities (perhaps rotating this responsibility among individual children, or teams of children);
- How children can get help from each other when the teacher is unavailable;
- What the children should do when they have finished an activity;
- How to get the attention of the teacher in a polite and non-disruptive manner;
- What are acceptable levels of noise;
- How to move around the classroom in a considerate and non-disruptive manner, and;
- How to leave the classroom.

Children should actively develop some of these rules because they are more likely to abide by them if they have participated in setting the rules. However, some rules may be non-negotiable, especially when they are intended to protect children; for instance, rules about when they can leave the classroom, or rules about asking permission of the teacher before leaving the school grounds.

CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITIES

All children should participate in helping with classroom duties and tasks. In this way, you will be helping yourself to manage the classroom while also teaching your children responsibility. Here are examples of some of the responsibilities you can assign to your children:

- Teach younger children;
- Teach those who may need additional help in learning;
- Lead groups or committees who makes sure that a learning activity or routine is completed, and who reports back on what has been learned or accomplished;
- Participate in a health committee who makes sure there is water and soap for washing hands, and clean water for drinking;
- Take attendance register and recording it on an attendance chart, and;
- Empty the class suggestion box, and record the suggestions.

Choosing which responsibilities to give to children depends upon their age, skills and level of maturity. However, it is very important not just the "brightest" or the most "sensible" children should benefit from being given real responsibilities, but all the children in your classroom should be involved. We also need to be careful not to reinforce gender stereotypes by asking girls to water the plants and boys to move the desks. Given the right support, all children can participate in, and benefit from, all classroom tasks and routines.

LESSON PLANNING

To make the best use of your time and the time available for learning, lessons need to be well planned. Of course, this takes time at first, but it is an important professional skill for all teachers, and a time-saver in the long-run.

Start a lesson with a "name game" to get children to remember each other's names at the start of the year. This activity helps to build solidarity and friendship among the children in the class. Another activity is called "gift giving." Children work in pairs, talking to each other and asking questions. After a few minutes, they write down what they have discovered about their partner and then report back to the class on their partner's personal qualities or "gifts." They can report back like this: "My friend's name is Parween and she brings the gift of a sense of humour." "My friend's name is Abdullah and he brings the gift of being a good listener." This activity shows that everyone can bring something to the class and that these personal qualities are valued.

Children learn best when they are active and thinking. They also learn well when activities are based on real life experiences and contexts so that they can apply their knowledge more effectively. Teachers who know their children and community well can more easily include local examples when planning lessons.

Unfortunately, many teachers have never been guided in planning lessons. They have been taught to rely on textbooks. This is because textbooks are often the only available teaching aid in the school.

In any case, they must plan how to communicate the information in the textbook in a manner that their children will understand. For the inclusive classroom, this planning is a necessity because we must consider the needs of children with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

We need to know at least the following:

- What are we teaching (topic, content)?
- Why are we teaching it (goals/objectives)?
- How are we going to teach it (methods/process)?
- What do the children already know (prior learning; pre-testing)?
- What will the children do (activities)?
- How will we manage the lesson (including organising the physical and social environment)?
- Will activities be appropriate for all children?
- Will the children have the opportunity to work in pairs or small groups?
- How will children record what they have been doing (learning products, such as drawings)?
- How will we know if the children have been learning (feedback and assessment)?
- What do we do next (reflection and future planning)?

Some of the ways we can organise ourselves and plan our lessons well is through using a simple lesson planning matrix, and a lesson plan outline, as in the examples below. These tools will give you a good start in organising your teaching; a way to monitor whether or not children understand what is being taught; and a chance for you to think about what to do next and how to improve your teaching.

Lesson Planning Matrix

Topic	Objective	Teaching methods	Pre-Test	Classroom arrangement	Children's activities	Learning products	Feedback	Comments (Reflection)

Lesson Plan Outline

Subject: _____

Class or Teaching Group: _____

Number of Children: _____

Time: _____

Learning Objectives:

- What do you want the children to learn in this lesson?
- Think about the knowledge, skills, and attitudes you want them to learn.
- Choose two or three to focus on in one lesson.

Resources:

- What resources do you need for the lesson?
- What materials do the children need?
- How can the children help to obtain resources?

Children with Different Learning Needs:

- Are there children in the group who will need extra help?
- What kind of support will you need to provide to these children?
- Do you need to help them on an individual basis?
- Do you need to make sure that they sit in a special place in the classroom? (Often it helps to have children who need extra help at the front of the room where you can easily help them, especially if your classroom is crowded, or near the window where the light conditions are better.)

Introduction:

- Tell the children what you want them to learn in this lesson.
- Some teachers write this on the board at the start of the lesson.
- Think about how you will start the lesson.
- Remember to review briefly what the children learned in the previous lesson.
- Try starting with a problem for the children to solve, with an open-ended question, or with a picture to discuss that can lead on to your main activities.

Main Activities:

- What do you want the children to do in the main part of the lesson?
- Make sure that your tasks ensure that the children will reach the learning objectives.
- Try to include a variety of activities; for example, try asking the children to work in pairs or small groups.
- Decide how you will introduce and explain the tasks.
- Decide how you will spend your time when the children are working on a task (this is often a good time to support children who need extra help).

Conclusion:

- Choose an activity or discussion at the end of the lesson that reinforces the learning objectives.
- Ask the children what they have learned.

Self-Reflection After You Have Taught the Lesson:

- Use this space to write a quick note for yourself on how the lesson went and how you could improve it the next time.
- Did the children achieve the objectives?
- Were all of the children involved?
- What could you do differently next time?

Teacher's Daily Lesson Planning Format		
Date:		
1.	Learning Objectives:	Resources:
	Lesson Structure:	
2.	Learning Objectives:	Resources:
	Lesson Structure:	
3.	Learning Objectives:	Resources:
	Lesson Structure:	
4.	Learning Objectives:	Resources:
	Lesson Structure:	
5.	Learning Objectives:	Resources:
	Lesson Structure:	

Tool 5.2

Optimising Available Resources

Successful teachers maintain an interesting learning environment for all children without regard to age, sex, abilities, or backgrounds. Their classrooms are exciting and stimulating places in which to learn. Even if learning materials and furniture are scarce and furniture is poor, the classroom can be well ordered, clean, and be made interesting by using creative ideas and decorations made by low-cost or waste materials. Here are some ideas!

If it is possible, desks or chairs should be able to be moved easily to facilitate group work. There may be more than one blackboard or other suitable writing surface. There should be adequate display space for the art work of the children, so they can take pride in showing others how well they are doing. There may be learning or activity corners for specific subjects or even a small "library."

We may find it hard to maintain an organised and stimulating classroom, especially if animals, insects, or vandals have easy access, and can destroy classroom materials. For this reason, we need to work with parents and community leaders to protect displays and learning materials. Some materials may have to be put away each day in a cupboard. Children may have to take responsibility to take things home and bring them back the next day.

PHYSICAL SPACE

Room to Move

- Children, both with and without disabilities, need to be able to move freely between groups of desks or chairs, or between other children sitting on the floor, without disturbing others.
- Vary the seating arrangement so that you and the children can find the best seating arrangement for the entire class and small groups.
- Children with diverse backgrounds and abilities need to be sitting together with all the others (and not being segregated and placed separately)?

Light, Heat, and Ventilation

- Arrange the desks so that the children do not have to work facing into direct sunlight. The light should come from the side of the child.
- Brains need oxygen! Classroom corners can be very stuffy. If there is poor ventilation in your classroom, you may need to allow children to do some activities outside of the class.
- Rotate the seating position of children so that they are not always sitting in corners with poor light and ventilation.

LEARNING CORNERS

Children are often curious about the natural world around them. Science and mathematics corners can stimulate their curiosity and improve learning. Children can collect and organise all of the things that interest them, and these resources can be available for use by all the children. Children may grow seeds in these corners, collect fruits, and display objects they have found, such as feathers or the empty shells (of snails). You will need to think carefully where these learning corners should best be located so that all children can work in these areas without disturbing others.

- For science and nature corners, living things like fish can be very appropriate in an active classroom. However, children need to learn how to care for living things, to reduce cruelty, and to return them to the wild after the study, if possible.
- In the mathematics corner, empty cans (with lids) and bottle caps can fill the shelves. They can serve as learning materials themselves (for instance, equating numbers with objects), as well as places to keep other materials, such as beans and seeds. The children can make “paper money” from cardboard and paper and use them in role-playing activities, such as going to the market.

Objects found, labelled, displayed, and used by the children, help them to make the link between school, daily life, and the local community.

Children should participate fully in organising and managing the classroom and these learning materials. There can be small groups, teams, or committees that can establish and maintain the different learning corners. Their participation will help to manage classroom learning materials, and help the children to develop responsibility and citizenship skills. Classroom committees can comprise a coordinator and secretary who are held accountable by the rest of the class to take their responsibilities seriously.

Some classrooms are not large enough to have separate corners. In some schools parents would therefore weave baskets that are stacked on the floor, full of shells, stones, seeds, and anything else that can be used in science and mathematics lessons. The important thing with all of these learning materials is that they are used by the children.

DISPLAY AREAS

Proper displays of teaching devices, learning materials and children's work in your classroom will help children take an interest in their learning and feel a sense of belonging to the class. Parents will also be more interested and will understand better about the work going on in the classroom. The work of all children should be appropriately displayed to show their unique abilities.

Children like to see their names by their work because it makes them feel proud. Change the displays regularly so the children remain interested and to allow each child to have some good work displayed during each term. Work displayed and then taken down can be used to build children's portfolios for assessment and reflection (see Tool 5.4 to learn about portfolios and portfolio assessment).

An interesting display board will provide a lively focus in the classroom. Display boards can be made from local materials, such as woven palm, with help from the local community. Display boards are important because they give you the opportunity:

- To give children information;
- To display children's work and improve their self-esteem;
- To reinforce the lessons you have taught;
- To encourage children to work together and support each other, no matter what their background or ability, and;
- To make sure all children can learn from each other's work.

You can also hang children's written work or drawings on strings across the classroom or along the walls. Work can easily be attached to the strings with tape, staples, or thorns. This “washing line” can also be used for language and mathematics information (“hanging learning corners”).

CLASS LIBRARY

Many communities lack library facilities, children would therefore not have access to many books. A class library can be created just by using a cardboard box that is decorated and then filled with locally made books. When children create their own books, no matter how simply these books are made, they take pride in seeing their story "in print." They also learn about how books are made, classified, and cared for. You can even have children make "zig zag" books. These books are made from pieces of paper that are folded two or three times, with text on each "page," like a brochure. The children can illustrate these "books," and they can become treasured reading materials when few books are available.

Books made by children can be very effective teaching devices. The explanations or illustrations that children include in their books may help other children understand important concepts. Children look at problems in different ways than adults; they use language that is easier to understand; and they may communicate important information in a more simple way than most teachers.

Moreover, books can be used to teach other skills, especially for children who may have difficulty seeing. For example, a "book" can be made by gluing objects onto pages. A child learns what these objects are by feeling them; for instance, a triangle is pasted onto a page so that children with sight impairments can learn what a triangular shape feels like. Even children who can see well may enjoy creating and "reading" tactile books, and they can practice using them by closing their eyes. Tactile posters can also be made and put in display areas.

A classroom or school library can also be an important community resource, especially when children "publish" the results of their community data collection projects (such as school-community maps as presented in Booklet 3). Information about weather, rocks and soils, agricultural calendars, the locations of specific houses, etc. can oftentimes be used by community workers and non-governmental organizations when planning community development activities.

Action Activity: Assessing Resources

Look around your own classroom and identify what resources you have now, as well as what you and your students may be able to make during this school year. Ask the children what they would like in their classroom and add it to the table below.

Classroom Resources	When should we start this project	What resources are needed?	Who can help us?	What can children learn from using these additional resources?
Display board for the work of children				
Learning corner or basket for mathematics and science.				
Language area for storytelling, a small library, etc.				
More than one blackboard				
Class committees who can organise learning materials				
Small class library containing books or other materials made by children				

Tool 5.3

Managing Group Work and Cooperative Learning

APPROACHES TO GROUP WORK

Effective teaching means combining different teaching and learning approaches. You can use the following approaches.

(1) Direct teaching to the entire class.

This approach works especially well for introducing topics, provided that you prepare questions in advance to ask children at different grade levels and different abilities. You can use whole class teaching for telling a story or making up a story together with children, for writing a song or poem, for problem-solving games, or for doing a survey. Since every class has children at different developmental stages, you have to choose and adjust the content to make it suitable for all the children in your class.

To encourage all children to participate in all the different learning activities, you may have to provide different tasks for different groups of children. For example, you can give story-writing to one group, completion of sentences to another, and tactile model-making to yet another. It is also possible to give the same task to all of the students, but you should expect different results. Remember: No two children, or groups of children, are the same. All classrooms are diverse.

(2) Direct teaching to one group of children in your classroom (very useful in multi-grade settings and large classes).

While you are teaching one group, the other groups do their own work. Peer teaching can be useful in developing confidence among the children in your class. At first, groups will not have developed the skills to be able to work consistently without guidance. But with practice and specific skills-based activities, they can learn to work cooperatively, and independently.

(3) Individual teaching

Individual teaching is when you work with a child on a one-to-one basis. This may be to help a child who has fallen behind because of absence, who experiences learning difficulties, or who is new to the class. You may also need individual teaching to assist "gifted" children and encourage them to do tasks that are more challenging. However, you need to keep individual teaching brief during lesson time so that you can focus most of your attention on the majority of children in the class.

(4) Small group teaching

You can divide your whole class into small groups (of two to six children in each group) for learning. This is a very effective strategy, but you need to be well organised, and well prepared. It can be time consuming in terms of preparation, and children also have to be prepared to work together. However, this is a very effective way of meeting the needs of all your children, especially if you have many children in your class, as well as if the children in your class have different mother tongues, different abilities and disabilities, or if they belong to different age groups.

EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT CLASS GROUPINGS

You can group children in many different ways; for example:

- Single grade or age groups (all the children in the same group should have the same age or be in the same grade);
- Mixed grade or age groups (each group should have children of different ages and grades);
- Same sex groups (with boys and girls in separate groups);
- Mixed sex groups (with boys and girls in the same group);
- Same ability groups (the children in each group should have level of development and abilities);
- Mixed ability groups (children with different abilities should learn together in one group);
- Interest groups (children with similar interests, i.e. physics; literature; environment; sports; crafts, etc.)
- Social or friendship groups;
- Pairs (two children learning together), and;
- Groups of four to six children.

Children gain a great deal from being grouped in different ways and at different times.

Be flexible. Move children between groups.

Children need to be given the chance to sit and work with as many of their classmates as possible, younger or older, as well as those with diverse backgrounds and abilities. This helps to teach the children patience and to recognise the talents of all the children in the class.

Beware of labelling children as slow learners.

Some children may learn mathematics slower than others, but they may be particularly bright in doing practical, hands-on work, such as conducting science projects or making books for children. We need to be careful when we give feedback to children, because if we make children feel like "failures", they will actually fail! They may lose interest in school, because they don't receive any rewards and positive experiences from learning, so they may eventually drop out.

Prepare materials to facilitate group work.

Games, work-cards, and other materials can be time-consuming to make, but do not forget that they can be used over and over again. The children in your class or school can help you to make these materials as part of group works or "projects" which will save work for you and your teacher colleagues, at the same time as it will help the children to learn, and share.

Think about your classroom layout.

How best can the furniture be arranged quickly and easily for effective group work? Children should learn to organise and re-organise the classroom depending on the activity. Work with them to decide the best classroom arrangement for everyone.

Make sure routines are firmly established.

Children need a clear understanding of how to move to a group, how to get started, what to do when they have finished their task, etc. Develop routines as early as possible.

ALL children should be given the responsibility of leading groups.

Group leaders have a key role to play in helping the teacher, such as passing on instructions, distributing materials, leading the group through the activity, and reporting back to the teacher.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative learning occurs when children share responsibility and resources, as well as when they work together toward common goals. The development of cooperative learning skills involves time, practice, and reinforcement of appropriate behaviours. The teacher plays an important role in establishing a supportive environment, where children feel they can take risks, and where the opinions of all the children class are valued.

To succeed with group work and cooperative learning all children need to develop positive speaking as well as active listening skills. Some children may not have learned how to value the ideas of others. This can be particularly obvious when children work in mixed groups, with girls and boys, or children with different abilities and disabilities, or with different backgrounds.



If some children continually dominate discussions, other children will miss out on opportunities to express their ideas and clarify their opinions. How can children with diverse backgrounds and abilities become confident in expressing their thought, ideas and opinions? In some cases, it may be necessary to have groups of children with similar abilities, or similar backgrounds at first so that skills and confidence are developed. These groups can then be mixed later on as children develop their communication and interpersonal skills.

In some cultures, people believe that learning only comes from the teacher. They do therefore not see the value or the benefits of children working and learning together in groups. It is therefore important to inform parents of changes in teaching and learning approaches, and help them to discover the advantages of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning skills can be most effectively developed within meaningful contexts. Activities that include problem-solving tasks are particularly suitable for developing cooperative learning skills.

DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Building a group spirit will lead to the success of the whole class. Competitions that divide girls from boys, segregate children with diverse backgrounds and abilities, or promote favouritism hinder the learning of all children. As a teacher, you can help children to think of themselves as a **learning team** or a **learning community** where the success of one child helps everyone to succeed.

Effective communication involves listening, speaking, and taking turns. These are skills needed for cooperative learning and for democratic citizenship skills. A good teacher **manages** communication to be sure that none of the children, or groups of children always answer all the questions, or dominate discussions. Using the local language (if it is different than the language of instruction) in class may also help all children to participate.

ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR GROUP WORK

Guidelines for group work will help you to organise discussion sessions with your children. These guidelines provide the basis for open, respectful dialogue and allow all children to participate. The best way to create guidelines is to allow the children to generate a list.

1. Listen actively, respect others when they are talking, but participate fully.
2. Speak from your own experience ("I" instead of "they").
3. Do not make personal attacks; focus on ideas, not the person.

It is also important to set a ground rule for how participation will be managed. For instance, so that everyone has a chance to speak, the group can use a "magic microphone." This can be a stick or stone that is passed around, and when someone receives it, it is their turn to speak if they want. If they would prefer to "pass," then they pass the stick or stone onto the next person. This can reduce domination by one or two confident speakers.

Re-visit the ground rules occasionally and, if time allows, ask whether the children would like to add any new rules or change old ones.

Action Activity: Assessing Interpersonal Skills

Observation is a key skill for assessing interpersonal skills. Try to analyze the way one particular group works.

Skills	Child A	Child B	Child C
Listens well			
Expresses clearly			
Takes a leadership role			
Accepts the leadership role of others			
Supports others			

Based on your observations, you can provide extra activities for some children in order to develop a particular skill that is necessary for group work.

MANAGING PEER LEARNING

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring, also known as peer teaching and child-to-child learning, occurs when more able or older children finish their own work, and then they help younger or other learners to finish their assignments. Tutors help these children with their work, but they do not do the work for them! A special time each day may also be set aside for children to help each other to learn mathematics or language, either one-on-one or in small groups.

Peer tutoring is very a worthwhile educational technique because it helps to meet the individual needs of children. It also promotes a cooperative, rather than a competitive, approach to learning. Mutual respect and understanding are built between the children who are working together. Child "tutors" takes pride in teaching, while they also learn from the experience. It also helps to solidify what they have learned, and they benefit greatly from being given responsibilities in the classroom. When children are learning with their "peer tutors," learners also develop a better ability to listen, to concentrate, and to understand what is being taught in a meaningful way. Children explain problems in a different way than adults, and they often use language that is more learner-friendly.

Peer Teaching in Reading

Peer teaching is often used to make sure that all the children get as much time as possible reading aloud, it can also help slower readers, or readers who are shy when reading in front of the whole class. It also has a positive effect, both educationally and socially, for all the children, both those who read and those who listen.

However, it is necessary to explain carefully to the children exactly what you want them to do. Tutors and learners must understand what you expect of them. Tutors should work with the learners in a quiet, friendly, and supportive way. Impatience should be avoided.



SELF-DIRECTED / INDEPENDENT LEARNING

This is important because children need to learn independently of the teacher. This allows both the students and teachers to make optimal use of their time. Here are some ideas on how you can increase independent learning in your classroom.

- Ask children to learn part of a lesson from the textbook or prepare for a new lesson.
- Ask them to make a survey so that they have their own data to work on during a lesson.
- Give children in higher grades practical exercises to develop new concepts and introduce new content.
- Evaluate the results afterwards.

PLANNING FOR DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiation means to attend to the learning needs of a particular child or small groups of children, rather than the teaching the entire class as though all the children were exactly the same.

Here are some of the fundamental principles that support differentiation:

- **Flexibility.** Teachers and children understand that materials, ways of grouping children, assessing learning, and other classroom elements are tools that can be used in a variety of ways to promote individual and whole-class success.
- **Effective and continuous assessment of the needs and progress of learners.** In a differentiated classroom, student diversity is expected, appreciated, and recorded as a basis for planning lessons. This principle also reminds us of the close connection that exists between assessment and instruction. We can teach more effectively if we are aware of the individual learning needs, interests, and progress of the children in our class.
- **Appropriate work.** Every child needs to feel challenged and appreciated, and finding what he or she is work on interesting and relevant.
- **Collaboration.** The teacher assesses learning needs, facilitates learning, and plans an effective curriculum. In differentiated classrooms, teachers study their children and continually involve them in decision-making about the classroom. As a result, children become more independent learners.

What Can be Differentiated?

Content:

Content consists of facts, concepts, generalisations or principles, attitudes, and skills related to the subject and topic being studied. Content includes what the teacher plans for children to learn, as well as how the child learns the desired knowledge and skills, as well as how they develop understanding. In a differentiated classroom, essential facts remain constant for all learners. What is most likely to be "differentiated" how children gain access to core learning, what materials they will use, and what level of skills they will develop.

Some of the ways a teacher might differentiate access to content include the following:

- Using objects with some learners to help children understand a new mathematical or scientific concept;
- Using texts at more than one reading level;
- Using a variety of reading-partner arrangements to support and challenge children who are working with text materials;

- Repeating for children who need another demonstration; and
- Using texts, posters, and tactile learning materials as ways of conveying key concepts to different learners.

Activity:

Effective activities involve children, allow the children to use skill the master, provide understand of key ideas, and the activities have specific learning goals. For example, you can differentiate activities by providing different options; all with different levels of difficulty (such as option 1 is easy, option 2 is somewhat difficult, or option 3 is very difficult). You can also differentiate activities by providing several options that are based on the different interests the children may have, as well as offer different levels of teacher support for each activity.

Products (Tangible results):

You can also differentiate products. Products are something tangible that the children can use to show what they have learned and understood. Products can be portfolios containing the work the children have made; exhibitions; models; etc. Different groups or individuals can make different products, based on their interests, skills and abilities.

Good products cause children to rethink what they have learned, apply what they can do, and extend their understanding and skills.

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Children may misbehave if they are not noticed or cared for. They may just need attention, particularly if they do not receive adequate care or attention at home. We (as adults) may disapprove of certain behaviours, but this should never mean disapproving of the child as a person. It is important to separate the behaviour from the child! Some of the ways to deal with misbehaviour include the following.

- Classrooms need one main rule, namely: **Respect One Another**;
 - Teachers should respect the students;
 - Students should respect the teacher, and;
 - Students should respect all their peers.
- If we create an interesting curriculum with materials that are meaningful and relevant to children, they will be interested, become involved, behave better, and pay more attention.
- We need to determine what causes a particular behavioural problem, discuss with our students, and decide together (with our students) what to do about it.
- **Most importantly**, we need to create an environment where children are actively engaged and motivated. That will be good teaching for all children. It also means the teacher is not always the person in control, but she or he is part of a team of problem-solvers including children, parents, and other teachers.

Other common strategies for content area instruction and solving behaviour problems include peer tutoring and cooperative learning, as discussed above.

Problem-Solving Approach

A problem-solving approach involves a team consisting of the child, parents or caregivers, teachers, and external professionals. The team discussed issues related to the classroom environment;

- Learning environment;
- Physical environment;
- Social environment;
- Emotional environment, and;
- Non-school or community environments.

As we will learn in the Tool on bullying (Booklet 6), it is not just the behaviour we are interested in but the reasons for this behaviour. We need to know something about children's needs and what they are trying to communicate.

Needs that Children are trying to Communicate

Self Needs	What it sounds like
Gratification	I want it now!
Task avoidance	I don't want to!
Panic	I am scared!
Social needs	What it sounds like
Attention seeking	Look at me!
Power seeking	I want to be in charge!
Revenge	I didn't want to be part of this group anyway!

Action Activity: Analyzing Problem Behaviours

Choose one child who concerns you because of his or her inappropriate behaviour, and note down why this behaviour concerns you. Is it that it disrupts your lesson? Does it affect the learning of other children? Is the behaviour related to a particular time of day, day of the week, or a particular curriculum activity? How is the situation at home for the child? You might want to consult the child's profile if your school has it (see Booklet 3).

Start to undertake a study of the child so that all of the factors are considered that might affect the behaviour of the child.

What actions can you take with the child, their peers, parents, and within your classroom that might help the child to change his or her behaviour? Try out each of these actions.

Which actions appear to help the child? Keep a record of successful actions. You might need them again with other children.

Teachers need to observe children's behaviour and to note it down consistently so that patterns can be observed. Once the classroom is a safer and more cooperative place to learn, there are likely to be fewer difficulties with behaviour.

Positive Discipline

There are times when discipline is necessary. But the question is: What type of discipline is the best? Remember that the goal of discipline is not to control children, make them obey, or punish! Discipline must never involve physical punishment, ridicule or public embarrassment, as this is forms of abuse!

The goal of discipline is to give children skills for making "smart" decisions, gradually gaining self-control, and being responsible for their own behaviour.

Reflection Activity: What is Your Approach to Discipline?

Read through each of the boxes in the table below and put a tick in the box that you think you are most likely to use. Be as honest as you can. Use this table to explore your approach to discipline and to maintaining order in your classroom. By reflecting on and confronting your approach, you may discover areas in which you could adopt alternative actions as well as those areas in which you are using discipline effectively.¹

Negative Disciplinary Measures	Tick if yes	Positive Disciplinary Measures	Tick if yes
I tell learners what NOT to do, often beginning with a negative statement.		I present learners with possible alternatives and focus on their positive behaviours.	
I attempt to control the behaviour of learners by punishing bad behaviour		I focus on rewarding learners for their efforts as well as good behaviour	
My student follow the rules because of fear threats or bribery		My students abide by the rules because they participated in making them and have agreed to them.	
The consequence of breaking a rule are often punitive, illogical and unrelated to the learners behaviour		The consequences of breaking a rule are directly related to the learner's behaviour.	
When I used time out, it is meant to isolate and banish a learner for a set time period.		When I use time out, it is open-ended and managed by the learners, He or she determines their readiness to gain self-control and return to class.	
I do not take the needs and circumstances of learners into consideration		I base my actions on empathy and an understanding of the individual and his or her needs, abilities, circumstances and development stages.	
I regard children as in need of control from an external source. For instance myself, the principal or the children's parents.		I recognise that children have an innate sense of self-discipline and can be self-directed. They can be guided to learn self-control on their own.	
Even for minor issues or mistakes, I am constantly reprimanding or punishing my children		I regard mistakes as an opportunity for my children and myself to learn. I treat my children with empathy and give them opportunities to sincerely regret their misbehaviour.	
I criticize the learners because of his or her behaviour.		I focus on the behaviour not the learner and on helping the child to change it in a positive, constructive way.	

If you have ticked "yes" many times in the left column, you need to reassess (change) the way you create discipline in your class!

¹ Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: The Learning Experience. (2000) Department of Education, Ministry of Education, Pretoria, South Africa.

Approaches to Positive Discipline

How can you establish a positive disciplinary environment in your classroom? Here are some ways to create a positive culture of learning and teaching.²

Adopt a whole school approach and make sure that your classroom discipline reflects the school's policies.

Establish ground rules in your classroom and get your children to participate in setting them. Be serious and consistent in implementing these rules.

Know your children and focus on developing positive relationships with them.

Manage the learning process and the learning environment enthusiastically and professionally.

Be always one step ahead through good planning. For example, anticipate that some children may finish their work before others, and have something for them to do while they wait, such as involving them in setting up classroom displays. Be self-critical. If something doesn't work, consider all of the reasons why this may be so, including that perhaps you could have done something differently.

Develop learning materials, teaching methods, and classroom management practices that include conflict management, problem-solving, tolerance, anti-racism, gender sensitivity, and so on.

Be inclusive. Leaving learners out, or not understanding their needs and circumstances, can alienate them.

Give learners the opportunity to succeed. Learners who feel positive about themselves and their ability to succeed will make better learners.

Allow learners to take responsibility. Provide them with opportunities to be responsible, be it in the way they conduct themselves in class, in running a community project, in taking care of a class pet, or in filling in the class attendance sheet for the teacher.

Give attention seekers what they want - ATTENTION! Even if a learner constantly seeks attention through misbehaviour, find ways that you can engage him or her in a positive way, even if it is through simple strategies like giving them a task to do, sending them out of the room for a few minutes on an errand, giving them responsibility for something, or anything else that will acknowledge them.

Be a model. Children always imitate the adults in their lives. They will copy manner, tone of voice, language, and actions, both appropriate and inappropriate. The most powerful teaching skill you can learn is to model the behaviour that is expected from the child. Setting a good example is critical in teaching. For instance, how can we expect children to resolve conflicts in a non-violent manner if adults use physical punishment to punish children?

Focus on solutions instead of consequences. Many teachers try to disguise punishment by calling it a logical consequence. Get children involved in finding solutions that are related, respectful, and reasonable.

² Adapted from: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: The Learning Experience. (2000) Department of Education, Ministry of Education, Pretoria, South Africa, as well as the MCH Early Childhood Development and Parent Education Program at <http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/mchecd/posdisc.html>

Talk respectfully. Communicating with a child cannot be done effectively from a distance. The time spent talking to a child and making eye contact with him or her is quality time. Many teachers have noticed a dramatic change in a "problem child" after spending five minutes simply sharing what they both like and do for fun.

Tell them what you want. Children respond better to being told what to do rather than what not to do; for example, instead of saying, "Stop kicking the desk!" say, "Please keep your feet on the floor."

Give choices. Giving a child choices allows him or her some appropriate power over his or her life, and it encourages decision-making. The choices offered must be within acceptable limits and the child's developmental and temperamental abilities. As children grow older, they may be offered a wider variety of choices and allowed to accept the consequences of their choices.

Use professional assistance. If there are learners who display particular difficulties in class, and especially if it involves bullying or other aggressive behaviours, seek help from your colleagues and, if necessary, from other professionals, such as counsellors.

Tool 5.4

Active and Authentic Assessment

Aziza is a young girl from a very poor family. She is very smart but she does not participate actively in the class. Whenever the teacher asks her something, she will answer, otherwise she will sit quietly. She got good scores in her examinations, but she has a lot other responsibility at home, taking care of other sister and brothers. She has good manners and has many friends in school. She is very supportive for all her classmates. In the last month of school year she fell ill and she couldn't attend school for many weeks. When came to join the exam, her teacher told her that she couldn't join the exams because she had been absent for too many days. Aziza was really sad, and decided not to come to school. She always thinks about her friends in school, and that she cannot play with them anymore, and that she will never be able to complete her education.

Many children drop out of school due to demands from home, demands by their teachers and, sometimes, because they do not enjoy school. The story above illustrates this problem, and it also highlights the problem of testing children just once or twice a year to assess their progress. As teachers, we need to understand children better and to learn how to assess their learning in many ways. Consequently, a more complete picture of children's development and achievement can be created.

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

Assessment is a way of observing, collecting information, and then making decisions based on that information. Continuous assessment means making observations continuously (throughout the year) to identify what children knows, what they understand, and what they can do, and what they still have to learn. These observations are made at many times during the year, for instance, at the beginning, middle, and end of terms, or even more frequently. Continuous assessment can be achieved through: observations; portfolios; checklists of skills, knowledge, and behaviours; tests and quizzes; and self-assessment and reflective journals.

Continuous assessment ensures that all children have opportunities to succeed in school. By using continuous assessment, the teacher can adapt his or her planning and instruction to the needs of learners so that all will have the chance to learn and succeed.

With continuous assessment, all learners have the chance to show what they know and can do in different ways according to their different styles of learning. Continuous assessment can tell you which children are falling behind in their understanding of particular topics. You can then design new learning opportunities for those particular children. The continuous feedback that children receive helps them to know if they are learning well, as well as what they need to do to further improve, and what they still need to learn.

Continuous assessment can also help you when you talk with parents and caregivers about the strengths and weaknesses of their children. This will help the parents to participate more actively and support what you do in school, such as linking classroom activities with those at home. Usually, the results of end-of-year exams arrive too late for parents to help children who are not learning well.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As we learned in the last Tool, each learning activity should have an objective that needs to be assessed in some way. Assessments should describe learning outcomes, and tell us how well a child has developed skills, knowledge, and behaviours over the course of a learning activity, topic, or a larger curriculum unit. Descriptions of learning outcomes are often called learning standards or objectives, and they may be identified for specific subjects, skills, and grade levels.

Learning activities and assessments improve when the teacher identifies specific learning outcomes. When planning a new learning activity, begin by identifying the learning outcomes. You may wish to answer the following three questions when planning your activity:

- What skills will be used or developed by the children?
- What information will be learned?
- What behaviours will be practiced?

The answers to these questions can be phrased as learning outcomes. For example, if you create a unit in which fifth-graders learn about time-distance equations in mathematics, you might develop the following outcomes.

- The learner working independently will use multiplication and division to solve time-and-distance equations as a homework assignment.
- The learner working in a learning pair will write his or her own mathematics story problems that express time-and-distance equations in space-travel scenarios.

When we are looking at specific outcomes, such as in science or mathematics, it is helpful if we have a guideline stating the different levels of outcome we expect for a specific activity. Below is one such guideline based on classifying and grouping fruits and vegetables:

Outcomes for a Classifying Activity

Very Good

The child puts the fruits and vegetables into the right groups. The child discusses the important characteristics of each group. The child makes conclusions.

Good

The child puts the fruits and vegetables into meaningful groups. The child discusses the important characteristics of each group.

Must Do Better

The child puts the fruits and vegetables into groups that do not have much meaning, or doesn't try to do the task.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES

Authentic assessment means involving children in evaluating their own achievements. Observation, along with talking with children about their learning, can take place at any time during the assessment.

Observation

During systematic observation, young children should be observed when they are working alone, in pairs, in small groups, at various times of the day, and in various contexts.

Observations can include the following:

- **Anecdotal records**
These are factual, non-judgmental notes of activities that children do or participate in. They are useful for recording spontaneous events.
- **Questions**
A useful method of gathering information is to ask children direct, open-ended questions. Open-ended questions, such as; "I'd like you to tell me about ...", help you to assess their ability to express themselves verbally. In addition, asking children about their activities often gives insights into why they behave as they do.
- **Screening tests**
These tests are used to identify the skills and strengths that children already possess, so that teachers can plan meaningful learning experiences for their students. Results should be used along with more subjective materials, such as that contained in portfolios as discussed below. Assessment information should not be used to label children.

Observation can reflect learning successes, learning challenges, and learning behaviours.

Portfolio Assessment

Content

One method of authentic assessment is to create and review individual portfolios of children's work. Portfolios are records of what children have learned and how they have learned it. Portfolios enable children to participate in assessing their own work. Portfolios keep track of their progress, and follow successes rather than failures. Moreover, portfolios should follow children if they move to different schools.

Samples of work that can be placed in portfolios can include: written samples, such as essays, stories, and reports; illustrations, pictures, maps, and diagrams; as well as mathematics worksheets, other assignments, and graphs. Non-curricular activities can also be recorded, such as taking responsibility in a class committee.

You can select samples that demonstrate specific aspects of their work. You can also invite children to select what they would want to put in their portfolio for their parents to see and, if possible, sign. Then every semester or term, the whole range of work is given to the children and their families for review.

When children are advanced to a new grade level, teachers may pass on specific sections of the portfolios to their new classroom teachers. This will help these teachers to become familiar with the varied talents and needs of their new students.

Each portfolio entry should be dated and the context of the piece be given. The context might be stated like this: "This was a piece of unaided free writing. Only the theme was given and some basic vocabulary. Thirty minutes were given for this task."

Using the Portfolio in Evaluation

The material in a portfolio should be organised in chronological order. Once the portfolio is organised, the teacher can evaluate the child's achievements. Appropriate evaluation always compares the child's current work to his or her earlier work. Portfolios are not meant to be used to compare children with each other. They are used to document the progress of individual children over time. The teacher's conclusions about a child's achievements, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and needs should be based on the full range of the child's development, as documented by the items in the portfolio.

FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT

Feedback is an essential element in assessing learning. Before giving feedback, it is important that a safe, secure, and trusting relationship exists between the teacher and the child.

Children benefit from opportunities for formal feedback through group and class sessions. When this works well, there is a shift from teachers telling pupils what they have done wrong, to pupils seeing for themselves what they need to do to improve, and then to discussing it with the teacher.

Negative feedback is illustrated by: "Why can't you improve your spelling? You're always making mistakes." Negative feedback reduces the self-esteem and confidence of children and do not lead to improved learning and better results.

Positive and constructive feedback is illustrated by the following: "Aziz, I like the way you started your story and the ending was quite exciting. If you ask a friend to check some of your words, then this will help you with your spelling." Positive feedback acknowledges strengths, identifies weaknesses, and shows how improvement can be made through constructive comments.

Characteristics of Effective Feedback

- Feedback is more effective if it focuses on the task and is given regularly while it is still relevant.
- Feedback is most effective when it confirms that the pupils are progressing well and when it stimulates the correction of errors or other improvements in a piece of work.
- Suggestions for improvement should act as "scaffolding;" that is, pupils should be given as much help as possible in using their knowledge. They should not be given the complete solutions as soon as they have difficulties. They should be helped to think things through for themselves often in a step-by-step manner.
- The quality of discussion in feedback is important and most research indicates that oral feedback is more effective than written feedback.
- Pupils need to have the skills to ask for help and feel comfortable in doing so in the classroom.

Self-Assessment

Children need to:

- reflect on their own work;
- be supported to admit problems without risk to self-esteem, and;
- be given time to work out the problems.

Self-assessment takes place whenever children are asked to describe their own abilities, knowledge, or progress. Self-assessment builds knowledge, the love of learning, and a realistic self-image. In addition, self-assessment can occur in discussions with children or through their own journals.

As soon as children can write, they should be asked to record their learning experiences in journals. When a learning activity or unit of study is completed, you can ask each student to reflect on their progress.

ASSESSING SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

It is difficult to assess many of the goals in education, yet skills and attitudes are fundamental to the learning and future development of children. Consequently, we should try to assess these as best we can. Below are examples of the criteria used to assess four levels of skill and attitude achievements.³

Overall skill: Cooperation. Cooperation means being able to work with others and accept a variety of roles that involve listening, explaining, negotiating, and compromising

	Child A	Child B
Level 1: can work with a partner taking turns to listen, speak, and share ideas and resources		
Level 2: can accept and negotiate others' differing and critical viewpoints		
Level 3: can work in a mixed group (age/ability/sex)		
Level 4: can lead any mixed group can suggest alternative solutions to problems using cooperative strategies		

³ This section is based on: Miriam S. (1993) Learning from Experience. World Studies. Trentham Books Ltd., United Kingdom.

Attitude: Empathy is to be willing to imagine the feelings and perspectives of other people, trying to put oneself in the position and situation of others ... walk a mile in their shoes ...

	Child A	Child B
Level 1: can accept that there can be more than one side to a disagreement can share feelings and explain behaviours		
Level 2: can describe the feelings of characters in stories can recognize that another child or adult has reasons for wanting something different from you		
Level 3: can explain that people do things differently because of their background and situation is able to challenge the use of insults in school based on gender, disability, nationality or poverty		
Level 4: can challenge stereotypical statements made about people different from themselves		

Activities that are often used in continuous and authentic assessment include both performance and product assessment.

Performance assessment may include:

- Science investigations;
- Mathematical problem-solving using real objects;
- A music or dance performance;
- A role play with one or two others;
- Dramatic reading;
- Pitching in a cricket game;
- Etc.

Products that can be assessed may include:

- An illustration or drawing;
- A model related to a science phenomenon;
- An essay or report;
- A song which has been written and composed by the child;
- Etc.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG WITH ASSESSMENT?

The final outcome for students should be related to what they could do **before** and what they can do **now**. It should not just be related to a standardised test at the end of a year. Children in the same year group (class or grade) may have at least three years difference in general ability between them, and in mathematics there may be as much as seven years difference. This means that comparing children using one standardised test is unfair to many children.

A teacher, parent, or caregiver should not view this end-of-year test as the most important assessment as far as the child is concerned.

One of the greatest sources of low self-esteem in children is the use of comparisons, particularly in school. The end-of-year test should just be one component of an all-round, comprehensive assessment of the progress children have made. This assessment is aimed at raising the awareness of the teacher, the child, and their parents or caregivers about the abilities of individual children. It should also be used to develop strategies for further progress. We should not emphasise the weaknesses of a child, but we should celebrate what the child has achieved and decide how we can help them to learn even more.

Authentic and continuous assessment can identify what the children are learning as well as some of the reasons why they are not learning (sometimes described as "learning faltering"). Some of these reasons include the following:

- The children have not learned the skills to do the task. Many learning tasks are sequential, particularly in mathematics and language. Children need to learn one skill, such as counting to 10, before they can attempt subtraction of numbers.
- The instructional method was not the right one for the child.
- The child may need more time to practice what he or she has learned.
- The child is suffering from hunger or malnutrition.
- The child has emotional or physical problems that cause difficulties in learning.

If a child is having difficulties, continuous assessment using authentic methods may reveal these difficulties, thus allowing us to intervene and help the child. We should understand that not all children learn in the same way and at the same speed. Some children may have been absent during an important step in the sequence of learning. Additional instruction, when used at appropriate times, can provide children who are falling behind with other ways to learn knowledge and skills. "Learning partners," who have attained skills to a good standard, can be asked to help those who have been absent or who need more attention.

Reflection Activity: Assessing Progress

Think about last term. Think of one subject, such as mathematics or science. How did you assess your children's progress? Through observation, weekly pencil and paper tests, something they produced (product), a portfolio, an end-of-term exam, etc.?

How will you report to parents or caregivers? Through an informal discussion, a report card, or at a parent-teacher meeting?

Awareness to Action.

- Now that you are better aware of the value of continuous assessment, what actions can you take to get a better picture of the strengths and weaknesses of your children?
- Can you establish portfolio assessment at your school, or at least in your class?
- Try to work out an assessment plan for the entire year.
- Try to think of ways that are manageable in your context, yet give a full picture of children's progress throughout the year.
- Remember also that assessment should be included in your initial planning of topics and lessons.

Tool 5.5

What Have We Learned?

In this Booklet, we explored many of the practical management issues that need to be dealt with if our classrooms are going to provide learning opportunities for all children including those with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

Some questions we need to consider are:

- Can children learn to take more responsibility for their learning in the classroom?
- Can we make better use of local resources for learning materials?
- Can children help each other through peer teaching?
- Can we plan differentiated lessons so that all children can gain success at their own pace?
- Can we be proactive when we are managing behaviour in the classroom?
- When needed, can we use positive discipline as a tool for learning?

If a classroom is well managed, lessons well planned, and all stakeholders have an interest in children's learning, then all children can be successful in their learning.

We also reviewed some of the ways that children's learning can be assessed over the course of a year. We need to know where each child is starting from, because we know that children of the same age may learn at different rates. We need to provide them with feedback as they are learning (sometimes called "formative assessment"), and we need to know what progress they have made by the end of the year ("summative assessment"). We looked at authentic assessment as a means for providing formative assessment for children and parents or other caregivers.

We learned that authentic assessment involves a variety of ways of assessing children's progress including direct observation, portfolios, problem-solving activities (perhaps in pairs or small groups), presentations (an example of a product of a learning activity), and some appropriate pencil and paper questioning.

Are you confident when reporting to parents or caregivers on the progress of all of the children in your class during the middle of a school year? Are there any ways in which you can include children in the process of assessment, for example, by asking them to choose pieces of work to include in their portfolio?

Book 6:

Creating a Healthy
and Protective ILFE



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

TOOL GUIDE

This Booklet will help you and your colleagues to begin developing an effective health and protection component in your schools and communities. In Booklet 3, we worked to get all children in school. If our efforts have been successful, more children with diverse backgrounds and abilities will be entering your inclusive, learning-friendly classroom. These children are the ones who have the most to gain by learning in an environment that is healthy and safe.

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Tool 6.1

Creating Healthy and Protective Policies for All Children

Ensuring that all children are healthy, safe, protected, and able to learn is an essential part of an inclusive, learning-friendly environment. This Tool presents activities that you can use to promote, plan and implement school health policies, as well as to identify which policies are most urgently needed.

School policies with room for adjustments according to local conditions and needs

Improving the health and learning of children through school health and safety programmes is not new. Many schools already have such programmes because they realise that the ability of children to attain their full potentials depend on good health, good nutrition, and a safe learning environment.

School health policies state what actions we will take to improve the overall health, hygiene, nutrition, and safety of all our children, . Such policies ensure that our schools are safe and secure, and promote a positive emotional environment for all our children regardless of their abilities, disabilities, backgrounds or circumstances.

Involving teachers, children, parents, community leaders, community based organisations and initiatives, as well as social service providers are the best way to develop school health policies. The key is to get these people to begin thinking about what needs to be done, talking and discussing together, and agreeing on a practical plan of action.

What do school health policies look like? The following table shows some of the major issues that schools face in trying to create healthy, safe and protective learning environments for all.

Examples of School Health, Safety and Protection Policies

Policy Issues	Examples of School Policies
Early Marriage and Pregnancy, and Exclusion from School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourage early marriage • Discourage young (school aged) couples from having babies. • Do not exclude pregnant girls from school. • Encourage students to come back to school after childbirth. • Include responsible sexual behaviour education in the curriculum (where young girls and boys can learn how to plan when to have children, and how many children they should plan for in order to provide properly for their entire family). • Include family life education in the curriculum. • Prohibit all types of discrimination based on sex.

Tobacco, Hashish and Drug Free Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit smoking (cigarettes and hashish) in schools for teachers and students. • Prohibit selling cigarettes to children (parents are often setting bad examples by sending their children to buy cigarettes for them). • Prohibit tobacco advertisements and promotions. • Prohibit using nazwar (snuff) in schools.
Sanitation and Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate latrines for male and female teachers and staff members, as well as boys and girls. • Protective walls around toilets. • Safe water in all schools. • Active commitment from the PTA or School Management Committee for maintaining water and sanitation facilities. • Wash hands after going to the toilet. • Wash hands after sneezing.
Hepatitis, HIV, and other disabling health conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills-based health education focusing on Hepatitis and HIV prevention. • Stimulate peer support as well as Hepatitis, and HIV and AIDS counselling in schools. • No discrimination of teachers and students with Hepatitis. • No discrimination of HIV positive teachers and students. • No discrimination of teachers and students with Hepatitis and other disabling health conditions. • Ensure access to all means of prevention and treatment.
Physical, mental, verbal and sexual abuse and harassment of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that fighting, bullying and corporal punishment (physical and verbal abuse) is prohibited in the school, by teachers, school staff and student. • Ensure that name-calling, bullying and discrimination (mental and verbal abuse) is prohibited in the school, by teachers, school staff and student. • Ensure that sexual abuse and harassment is prohibited in the school, by teachers, school staff and student. • Make the school policies on violence, bullying, abuse, discrimination and harassment well-known and accepted by everyone, empower adolescents to report cases, and enforce effective disciplinary measures for abusers. • Implement a zero-tolerance policy violence, bullying, abuse, discrimination and harassment, respond to all offences, even if they seem "small" to reduce the dangerous "acceptance" of violence that exists in many schools and communities.
Simple school health and nutrition packages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train teachers to deliver simple health and nutrition messages in collaboration with health sector workers and with the involvement of the local communities. • Regulate food vendors who operate on or near school premises to ensure that they provide good quality food and snacks, prepared in a hygienic manner.

Based on: Focusing Resources on Effective School Health. Core Intervention 1: Health Related School Policies. <http://www.freshschools.org/schoolpolicies-0.htm>

ADVOCATING FOR SCHOOL HEALTH POLICIES

Enacting policies to ensure healthy, protective, and inclusive learning environments requires broad support. Gaining this support starts with advocacy, that is, developing meaningful, persuasive messages that help decision-makers see that policies are actually needed.

Action Activity: Identifying Messages for Healthy, Protective, and Inclusive Policies

- Assemble a small group of your colleagues who are interested in promoting school health programmes in your schools.
- Involve members from the 7 School Working Committees and/or ILFE Coordinating Team (see Booklet 1), and/or those who have been involved in school-community mapping or constructing child profiles (as discussed in Booklet 3 in this Toolkit) from you in your school in improving children's learning through school health programmes.
- Organise yourselves into two or three groups
- Give each group a large sheet of poster paper. Ask them to list their ideas about how the health and safety of children and their families affect learning, and how the school can be made more accessible for students and teachers with disabilities.
- After each group has finished, share your ideas. Then, choose three or four of the most common issues raised by each group.
- Finally, work together to develop effective messages that you can use in promoting and advocating for school health policies that address the different issues raised by the groups. You can use the following example as a guide. These messages will be the basis for consensus building.

Reasons for Creating Healthy, Protective and Inclusive School Policies¹

Issues:

We work hard to give our children the knowledge and skills they need for life. But school attendance drops when children or their family members are ill, when the school is not clean or not equipped with sanitary facilities, or when students fear violence or abuse on the way to, from, or in school.

Message:

The time, money and resources devoted to our schools are among the most important investments that we can make. But our investments in education will only pay off if our children feel safe and comfortable attending school.

Issues:

Children, and especially girls as well as children from poor economic backgrounds, who are ill, hungry, weakened by fungal and parasitic infections (abdominal worms, etc.), scared, or tired from doing domestic labour are not capable of learning well. Preventable physical and emotional health problems, especially those that affect vulnerable children, can interfere with learning in children in whom much time and effort have already been invested.

¹ Adapted from: World Health Organization (2000) Local Action: Creating Health Promoting Schools. Geneva.

Message:

We can provide quality education only if all the girls and boys who attend school have sufficient health and strength to learn.

Issues:

School attendance drops when parents fear for the safety of their children.

Message:

Since our school's resources are limited, gaining access to additional resources rests on a close collaboration with families, communities and religious leaders. But if they do not have confidence in the school and school policies, then getting access to additional resources and support will be difficult.

BUILDING CONSENSUS

Once our advocacy messages are developed, we need to communicate them so that we can build the support we need to initiate important school health and safety policies. One way to build support is to share ideas and examples about what an inclusive, healthy, and protective school environment is what it does, and what it offers students, families, teachers, and the community as a whole. Schools, in turn, will benefit from hearing what the community thinks about local health issues and how the school can help address them.

Action Activity: Consensus Building through Sharing

Increase your base of support by sharing ideas and examples of school health and safety activities. It is important that you recruit a range of people, such as formal and informal leaders, women, men, and students. Some of the actions that will help you to do this include the following.²

- Talk about the basic threats to health and safety that affect children's learning, in general, and how school policies and programmes can benefit students, staff, and the community. Meet with community leaders to discuss the basic ideas.
- Talk with parents and students to share information and get their ideas.
- Invite parents and other community members to an informal meeting, or hold an informal discussion after important school events when the most people are there.
- Promote the need for school health and safety policies and programmes through public-education techniques, such as flyers, radio, speeches, and posters (these can even be created by students).
- Hold a contest to develop a local theme or slogan.
- Sponsor a street display in a busy area of the community, or encourage children during art classes to decorate the school or community centres with health promotion artworks.

As you promote the need for school health policies and programmes — especially those aimed at addressing the needs of children with diverse backgrounds and abilities—you will soon identify likely community supporters. These persons can be strong advocates, and they can help you to deal with any disagreements or misunderstandings that may arise over sensitive health issues and the role of schools in addressing them.

² Adapted from: World Health Organization (2000) *Local Action: Creating Health Promoting Schools*. Geneva.

A Note to Remember:

School health policies should benefit girls and boys from all groups of society, not just those with diverse backgrounds and abilities. Policies that address the needs of all children are likely to gain the most support and be the most successful. Creating policies for separate categories of children is time-consuming and expensive, and it can cause conflict.

ASSESSING AND MONITORING OUR SCHOOL HEALTH POLICY SITUATION

Once you have support to develop effective school health and protection policies, the next question is: "Where do we go from here?" One of the best ways is to assess and monitor existing school health policies as well as prevailing community health problems. One of the ways to do these activities is to use checklists, such as the following.

Action Activity: Assessing and Monitoring School Policies

The checklist below is not exhaustive, and you may want to add items to it based on your school's situation. It will give you and your colleagues a chance to reflect on what needs to be done as a first step in action planning.³

Does my school have policies against discrimination that guarantee:**(check if yes)**

- _____ Respect for human rights and equal opportunity and treatment regardless of sex, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other characteristics?
- _____ Protection from sexual harassment or abuse by other students or school staff and effective disciplinary measures for those who abuse?
- _____ Accessibility for students with disabilities so they can participate in all classroom activities and enjoy other facilities necessary for learning in a healthy environment?
- _____ Protection for pregnant girls so that they will not be excluded or dismissed from school?
- _____ Right-of-return for young mothers so that they will be encouraged and helped to come back to school after giving birth to continue their education?
- _____ That children with diverse backgrounds and abilities receive quality education - such as girls, orphans, children from language, ethnic and religious minorities, children affected by conflict and war, children with disabilities as well as those affected by chronic illnesses?
- _____ That teachers and other staff are appropriately prepared, supported, and paid?
- _____ That male and female teachers and other staff members are given equal opportunities for employment and promotions, as well as equal pay for equal work?
- _____ That teachers and other staff members with disabilities or from language, ethnic and religious minorities are given equal opportunities for employment and promotions to their peers, as well as equal pay for equal work?

Does my school have policies against violence and substance abuse that guarantee:

- _____ That the school is safe, healthy, and protective, where the physical environment and the psychosocial environment both encourage learning?
- _____ Zero tolerance for violence, bullying, or the use of corporal punishment?
- _____ Prohibition against knives and other weapons on school grounds?
- _____ A drug, and tobacco-free environment?

³ Adapted from: UNESCO (2002) FRESH: A Comprehensive School Health Approach to Achieve EFA. Paris. (ED-2002/WS/8 Rev.)

Does my school have policies for safe water, sanitation, and environment that guarantee:

- An adequate supply of clean drinking water that is easy to get to and stored properly?
- That all the children have their own cup for drinking water to prevent the spread of infections?
- An adequate supply of clean water for washing hands that is easy to get to and stored properly?
- Separate latrines for male and female teachers as well as girls and boys?
- Adequate numbers of latrines?
- That latrines are accessible for children with disabilities?
- Proper management and treatment of garbage and other waste?
- Proper maintenance of water and sanitation facilities?
- Waste recycling education and mechanisms?

Does my school have policies to promote skills-based health education that guarantee:

- The provision of age-appropriate, skills-based health and family life education to girls and boys as a regular part of the basic education curriculum?
- Programmes to prevent or reduce risk-taking behaviours associated with substance abuse (drugs, alcohol and tobacco), Hepatitis B and C as well as HIV?
- Programmes to prevent early marriage and unplanned pregnancies?
- Social support and counselling for students affected by Hepatitis B and C, as well as by HIV?
- Provide for youth-friendly outreach and on-site services to address the health problems of adolescents, particularly girls?

Does my school have policies to promote health and nutrition services that guarantee:

- Maintenance of school health records for each student?
- Regular health, dental, and nutritional status screening?
- Equal opportunities for physical exercise and recreation for girls and boys, as well as for children with disabilities?
- Teacher training and support to deliver simple health interventions?
- Timely and effective emergency response mechanisms in cases of personal injury, natural disasters, as well as armed attacks (both ground and aerial attacks)?
- Access to food for malnourished children?
- Regulation of food service vendors and the quality, hygiene, and standard of food provided in and around the school?
- Involvement of the local community in developing and providing health education and services targeting preschool and school-aged children?

A Note to Remember:

Take it Slowly! The pace of policy development, and the introduction of changes, should be slow so that those involved feel comfortable with the changes and fully understand the need for them.

Action Activity: Assessing and Monitoring Community Health and Safety Problems

The ability of children, and especially those with diverse backgrounds and abilities, to stay in school rests not simply on what policies and programmes we enact in our schools. It also rests on how well our policies relate to the major health problems in our communities.

For the problems that has the strongest affect on children and their learning environment, school policies and programmes should be developed first. These problems need to be solved both in

the school and at home, and solutions should be found in close collaboration with families, formal community leaders, elders, religious leaders, and communities. Following is a tool for assessing and monitoring community health problems as a first step in talking with community leaders and then developing appropriate policy and programme actions.⁴

Directions: Based on your knowledge of health problems, use the list below to note those that are common in your community. Circle a number to indicate how serious each problem is:

- 1 = not a problem; 2 = fairly small problem; 3 = somewhat of a problem**
- 4 = a serious problem; 5 = a very serious problem**

Then describe the different ways each problem affects students, teachers, the school, and the community in terms of health and well-being, absenteeism, academic performance, repetition of grade levels, economic vitality, quality of teaching, and burden on health services. Finally, identify what school policy is needed to reduce the severity of a particular problem.

For instance, if physical punishment and abuse is a serious problem in the community, the school should formulate and enforce a policy to make the school violence free. Discuss alternative ways of discipline (positive discipline) with parents and elders, and prohibit teachers and other school staff members to use corporal punishment, so they can serve as good role models for the children as well as for their parents.

Health and safety problems	How serious	Effect on students, teachers, school, and community	Supportive school policies and actions
Drug use	1 2 3 4 5		
Tobacco use	1 2 3 4 5		
Immunizable diseases	1 2 3 4 5		
Injuries	1 2 3 4 5		
Vision and hearing problems	1 2 3 4 5		
Stomach worm infections	1 2 3 4 5		
Malaria	1 2 3 4 5		
Mental health problems	1 2 3 4 5		
Micronutrient deficiency (vitamin A, iron, iodine)	1 2 3 4 5		
Protein energy malnutrition	1 2 3 4 5		
Oral health problems	1 2 3 4 5		
Respiratory infections	1 2 3 4 5		
Unsafe water	1 2 3 4 5		
Poor sanitation	1 2 3 4 5		
Hepatitis B and C	1 2 3 4 5		

⁴ Adapted from: World Health Organization (2000) Local Action: Creating Health Promoting Schools. Geneva.

HIV	1 2 3 4 5		
Early marriage and unplanned pregnancies	1 2 3 4 5		
Violence (domestic or non-domestic)	1 2 3 4 5		
Armed attacks on schools, teachers and/or students	1 2 3 4 5		
Kidnappings by armed groups	1 2 3 4 5		
Landmines and unexploded ordinances in areas around the school	1 2 3 4 5		
Other _____	1 2 3 4 5		

DEALING WITH VIOLENCE: TURNING POLICIES INTO ACTION

Once attending school, children with diverse backgrounds and abilities are the most prone to discrimination and violence, oftentimes aimed at highlighting their "difference" from others and seeking to push them away from others within and outside of the school. At worst, this involves sexual harassment and physical violence which can lead to death.

Violence can take many forms and is understood differently in different cultures. In this Toolkit, violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community. It results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, poor physical development, or deprivation.

Although we usually think of violence in terms of one child hitting another, actually violence comes in three basic forms.

Self-inflicted violence refers to intentional and harmful behaviours directed at oneself, for which suicide represents the fatal outcome. Other types include attempts to commit suicide and behaviours where the intent is self-destructive, but not lethal (such as self-mutilation).

Interpersonal violence is violent behaviour between individuals (mainly child-on-child, parent-on-child, and teacher-on-child). Types of interpersonal violence include corporal punishment, but also bullying and harassment.

Organized violence is violent behaviour exhibited by social or political groups that are motivated by specific political, economic, or social objectives. Examples here include racial or religious conflicts occurring among groups, gangs, or mobs.

What are the causes of violence? The causes of violence are complicated and varied. Below is a list of factors that are thought to contribute to violent behaviour. You can use these factors, and even expand upon them, to assess how predisposed and vulnerable the children in your schools, families, and communities are to violence, and whether school policies and programmes are needed to counteract them.

Causes of Violence: Do These Exist in My School and Community?⁵

Child level characteristics

- Lack of knowledge about the consequences of violence
- Poor attitudes towards others, especially towards children with a different language, ethnic, religious and social backgrounds, as well as children with disabilities and disabling health conditions
- Poorly developed communication skills
- Drug and alcohol use
- Having witnessed or been victimised by interpersonal violence
- Access to firearms and other weapons

Family level contributing factors

- Lack of parental affection
- Lack of parental guidance
- Exposure to violence in the home
- Exposure to violence in the community
- Having parents or siblings with substance abuse problems (drugs and alcohol)
- Being sexually abused by parents, siblings or other family members
- Having parents or siblings involved in criminal behaviour

Community and other environmental factors that contribute to violence

- Socio-economic inequality
- Urbanization, and overcrowding
- High levels of unemployment among young people
- Negative media influences
- Social norms supporting violent behaviour
- Availability of weapons
- Conflict and war

Action Activity: Mapping Violence

Many of us may not think of our schools and communities as violent places. But unfortunately, much violence goes unnoticed because neither the victim nor usually the offender wants others to know about it. Moreover, violent episodes may occur outside the school, such as when a child is abused on her or his way to school, but the effects carry over into the school and your classroom.

Determining the degree of violence in a school can be done in several ways, such as by asking students to answer questionnaires, involving them in discussion groups, or through mapping.

School mapping aims to determine where and when violence occurs within schools, what type of violence is involved (self-inflicted, interpersonal, or organised), and who are the most common victims and offenders. The mapping process is a valuable tool for monitoring and controlling violence because it can:

⁵ Adapted from: World Health Organization (1998) WHO Information Series on School Health, Document Three - Violence Prevention: An Important Element of a Health-Promoting School, Geneva.

1. Encourage students, teachers, and administrators to start talking about violence in schools, which can lead to more effective policies;
2. Assist in evaluating violence intervention programmes that are created to support policies against violence in the school, and;
3. Increase the involvement of the school in other violence interventions.

To map violence in your school, you can use a process similar to that for school-community mapping as presented earlier. Start by giving teachers and students to create a map of the school and ask them to identify where they think violence occurs. When and under what conditions it usually occurs, and who is usually involved. You can then analyse these maps to identify problem locations.

The results of work of teachers who have used such maps, suggest that violence occurs at predictable times and locations around the school grounds.⁶ Not surprisingly, violent events usually take place in locations where few or no teachers, or other adults, are present.

Teacher-initiated and implemented policies and interventions have the greatest likelihood of success in reducing school violence. However, children must be involved as well. Group discussions should be conducted to talk about where the "hot spots" for violence are located in the school, why some children are susceptible to violence, and what can be done to reduce violence in these locations and among students.

Increasing the participation of community members in stopping school violence can improve the community environment as well. This is particularly important where violence occurs outside of the school grounds, such as when children are coming to or going home from school. Here, the mapping strategy can be used to map violence in the community as well as the school.

The school-community mapping exercise presented in Booklet 3 can be used here, where children also map places in their communities where violence to children most often occurs, what type of violence is involved, and who are the most common victims and perpetrators. This type of mapping is an excellent first step in working with community members to identify why certain locations are the most violence prone, to propose solutions, and to undertake effective community-school intervention programmes.

Creating safe spaces for girls!

In Afghanistan many families are not willing to send their girls to schools because they are afraid that their girls might be harassed on the way to school. Harassment of girls is not acceptable in Afghan culture, and might reduce the chance for girls to get married and start a family later in life.

⁶ Monitoring School Violence: Publications and Related Research Summaries. Global Program on Youth, University of Michigan, School of Social Work. This is an excellent Web site for resources on dealing with violence in the school. It can be found at <http://gpy.ssw.umich.edu>.

Warning Signs for Abused Children

Girls and boys will rarely tell us if they are victims of violence or abuse, or if they are in crisis. Rather, they show us. Although changes in the behaviour of a child can be due to a variety of reasons, sometimes they arise from the stress of being abused physically, emotionally, or sexually. Teachers who are alert to these changes can often intervene in abusive situations. Below is a list of external characteristics that an abused child may exhibit.⁷ Keep in mind, however, that some clues may be normal behaviour changes for a given child at a given time. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the regular behaviour patterns of children and to be aware of new behaviours that arise, extreme behaviours, or combinations of the following characteristics. If all these warning signs are evident, try to talk the child or seek help from a school counsellor or others who could help.

How to Identify a Potentially Abused (verbally, socially, emotionally, physically or sexually) Child

Abused Children Are Often

- Fearful of interpersonal relationships and have difficulties making friends
- Overly compliant to requests and demands
- Withdrawn and aggressive
- Abnormally active (hyperactive)
- Constantly irritable
- Listless
- Detached
- Unable to show "normal" affection
- Overly affectionate (which can be misconstrued as seductive)

Physical Symptoms

- Bruises, burns, scars, welts, broken bones, continuing or inexplicable injuries
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Vaginal or anal soreness, bleeding, or itching

Activity and Habit Clues

- Nightmares
- Fear of going home or to some other location (where the abuse takes place)
- Fear of being with a particular person
- Running away
- Delinquency
- Lying

⁷ Source: National Center for Assault Prevention (NCAP). Education, Information and Resource Center, Sewell, New Jersey, 2000. <http://www.ncap.org/identify.htm>. NCAP also has an international division with some materials translated in Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Romanian, Russian, and Japanese. Learn more about this at: http://www.ncap.org/cap_international.htm.

Age Inappropriate Behaviours

- Thumb sucking
- Sexual awareness or activity, including promiscuity
- Bed wetting - if this reoccurs after the child learned to stay dry during the night
- Drug, alcohol or other substance abuse
- Assaulting younger children
- Taking on adult responsibilities

Educational Concerns

- Extreme curiosity
- Extreme imagination
- Academic failure
- Sleeping in class
- Inability to concentrate

Emotional Indicators

- Depression
- Phobias, fear of darkness, fear of places where the abuse take place (restrooms, bedrooms, barns, water wells, etc.)
- Chronic ailments
- Self-inflicted injuries
- Injuring or killing animals
- Excessive fearfulness
- Lack of spontaneity
- Lack of creativity

WAYS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AMONG CHILDREN

You can take the following actions to help prevent violence in your school.⁸

1. Set firm, consistent limits on aggressive and coercive behaviour in consultation with students and parents.
2. Teach young children healthy, non-violent patterns of behaviour and communication skills.
3. Learn and apply effective, non-violent patterns of disciplining and consistently correcting children when they misbehave - if we are using corporal punishment we are teaching children that aggression and violence is acceptable form of control! (See Booklet 5 on ways to use positive discipline.)
4. Present yourself as an effective role model for resolving conflict non-violently.
5. Improve communication with your children (such as being available to listen).
6. Supervise the involvement children have with internet and other forms of media
7. Supervise the contact children have with peer groups and community organisations that could have a negative influence on their behaviour.

⁸ Adapted from: World Health Organization (1998) WHO Information Series on School Health, Document Three - Violence Prevention: An Important Element of a Health-Promoting School. Geneva.

8. Establish appropriate expectations for all children, on how they should:
 - a. Behave
 - b. Interact with and be kind to others
 - c. Show respect to other inside and outside the family
 - d. Do their home work
 - e. Wash and observe proper hygiene practices
 - f. Etc.
9. Encourage and praise children for helping others and solving problems non-violently.
10. Identify drug, tobacco, alcohol, or other substance problems.
11. Teach appropriate coping mechanisms for dealing with crisis situations.
12. Get help from professionals (before it is too late).
13. Lead community efforts to undertake an analysis of violence in the school and community (such as through the mapping exercise) and to develop, coordinate, and effectively implement school- and community-based support services.
14. Provide opportunities for children to practice life skills, especially how to solve problems non-violently and to communicate effectively.

Bullying & Teasing

Bullying is a common form of violence. When we think of bullying, usually we think of one child or group of children (the offenders) threatening another child (the victim) oftentimes because the victim is different in some way. They may be better than the offenders in terms of learning (they get better grades); they may be from a different cultural, ethnic, or religious group; or they may just be poor. The behaviour of adults and teachers, not just children, also can be considered bullying.

These are some of the most common forms of bullying:

- Physical bullying, when children are being threatened or beaten by peers, teachers, or caregivers;
- Intellectual bullying, where the ideas of certain children are systematically ignored or not valued;
- Emotional bullying, where children are being harassed, embarrassed in front of friends and peers in school, or where rewards withdrawn, which may be related to intellectual threats;
- Verbal bullying, where children are called names, insulted, and repeatedly teased;
- Indirect bullying like spreading rumours or excluding someone from social groups; and
- Cultural or social bullying stemming from prejudice or discrimination due to differences in class, ethnic group, caste, sex, etc.

Bullying is usually some form of aggressive behaviour that is hurtful and deliberate. It can continue for weeks, months, or even years. Without help, it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

In many societies, those who are different are often bullied. Their difference may be due to sex, ethnicity, a disability, or other personal characteristic. Although boys are often involved in physical bullying activities, girls may use more subtle, indirect forms of bullying, such as teasing, and they may bully in groups rather than individually.

Children who are bullied will often not admit to being bullied because they are afraid that the bullying will increase. For children who are being abused by an adult, they may be unwilling to admit it because they fear that adult and possibly adults in general.

For teachers, it is difficult to deal with bullying because it often takes place outside of the classroom, such as on the way to school or in the play area. However, the effects of bullying usually influence how well the abused child learns in our classroom.

We need to take bullying seriously and find ways of knowing the extent of bullying in our classrooms. Observation is a key skill, and we need to observe children during play as well as in the classroom. Children who are always on their own, who have few friends, or who are different in some way, could be targets for bullying. Signs of bullying include:

- Children who suddenly become listless;
- Children who suddenly lose confidence;
- Children who avoid eye contact and become quiet;
- Children who used to learn well but now achieve poorly;
- Children who begin to have unexplained headaches or stomach-aches, and;
- Children who begin to attend school irregularly without proper cause.

Communication with the children affected, with parents and other caregivers are necessary, when we become alert to changes in their behaviour. We should make in order to identify changes in the behavioural patterns of children in our class that may be the result of bullying.

It also is possible to undertake a survey to gain a picture of the relationships within the class or school. You can ask your students to fill in the questionnaire⁹ anonymously (no names).

Occurrence of Bullying

	Did not happen	Once	More than once
I was pushed, kicked, or hit on purpose.			
Other children told bad stories about me.			
I had things taken from me.			
I was called nasty names because I'm different in some way from the other children.			
I was called nasty names for other reasons.			
I was laughed at or insulted for no reason.			
I was left out of a game on purpose.			
Someone was bad to me in another way.			

⁹ These checklists have been adapted from checklists originally designed by Tiny Arora and published in "Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers," S. Sharp and PK Smith, editors. Routledge. 1994.

After analysing the results of the questionnaire, we can identify the level of bullying that is going on in our school. However, even if the questionnaire is anonymous, some children may not admit to being bullied. From the information you receive through the questionnaire, you can start to plan further actions with other teachers, parents, caregivers, and the children, themselves.

Actions against Bullying

To prevent or reduce bullying, teachers can take a range of actions:

- Conduct exercises to help children to relax and reduce tension and using games to help children to get to know each other better and respect each other;
- Increase the amount of cooperative learning within the classroom;
- Improve the assertiveness of children by giving all students more power, such as by allowing them to make class rules and take responsibility within a student committee;
- Increase responsibility within the class by establishing committees and to work more closely with parents and the local community;
- Develop child-to-child strategies to deal with conflict in non-violent ways; and
- Allow our children to identify what disciplinary measures should be taken towards those who bully others.

What NOT to do!

When a young boy in a school in Kabul was teased by some of his classmates because he had a slight speech impairment the teacher asked all the children who had teased him to line up, and told to boy to slap them all of the in the face!

Teacher Training Department (TTD) in Kabul

This teacher may have thought that he acted in the best interest of the child, but what he did was to "teach" the children in his class that violence is OK and sometimes an acceptable solution, which it NEVER is! Because violence, begets more violence, an increases the problem rather than reduces it!

Prejudice and Discrimination

Oftentimes, the roots of bullying are prejudice (unjust behaviours or opinions about people) and discrimination (unjust distinctions between groups of people; "they" versus "us"). One way to understand how prejudice and discrimination operate in our classrooms is through our own experiences.

Action Activity: Understanding Discrimination

This activity can be done with teachers, parents, or older children. The purpose is to develop their understanding of how different forms of prejudice and discrimination affect individuals. In addition, this activity encourages people to reflect on how they may have been affected by prejudice or discrimination themselves.

Instructions: The time required for this activity will depend on the size of the class or participant group. Allow ten minutes per student or per number of students in each small group.

Divide the participants into groups of five or six. Ask them to share a story about a time they saw prejudice or experienced discrimination. A few hints and guidelines will be helpful.

1. Prejudicial or discriminatory practices are not always intentional.
2. Their experience can involve students, teachers, administrators, or just the general atmosphere of the school.
3. Mention that they might think about curricula, teaching styles, educational materials, relationships, or other aspects of the school environment.
4. Remind your participants that identity is multidimensional. It is not just about ethnicity and religion. Try to help them to see other dimensions of discrimination or prejudice, such as believing that girls are not good at science, or that children with disabilities cannot play sports.
5. Finally, suggest that their experience can be either of being oppressed or of being the oppressor. Few people will ever choose the latter, but when someone does, it provides a powerful moment for reflection.

Allow each of the participants five minutes to share their stories, and, if necessary, another five minutes for them to answer questions about their experiences, and how it made them feel. You might also ask individuals how their experience has affected their own attitudes and practices or their own ideas about how the situation could have been avoided.

Tool 6.2

Giving Children Life Skills!

SKILLS-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION

All children need skills to be able to use their health knowledge to practice healthy habits and avoid unhealthy ones. One way to impart these skills is through “skills-based health education.”¹⁰

Most schools teach some form of health education. But how is skills-based health education different from other approaches to health education?

- Skills-based health education focuses on changing **specific health behaviours** in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. These help the child to choose and practice (not simply learn about) healthy behaviours.
- Skills-based health education programmes are **planned around student needs and rights** and, therefore, are relevant to the daily lives of young people.
- There is a **balance** in the curriculum of: (i) knowledge and information, (ii) attitudes and values, and (iii) life skills. The aim is to **turn knowledge into immediate action**.
- Rather than being passive receivers of information, **children participate actively** in learning through **participatory** teaching and learning methods.
- Such programmes are **gender-responsive**, that is, they address the needs and constraints of both girls and boys.

In skills-based health education, children participate in a combination of learning experiences in order to develop their knowledge, attitudes, and life skills. These skills help children to learn how to make good decisions and take positive actions to keep themselves healthy and safe. These skills can be practical, “doing” skills, such as knowing how to give first aid. They can also be ways of thinking, such as how to find out or solve problems, or ways of communicating, feeling, and behaving that help children work together with others, and especially those with diverse backgrounds and abilities.¹¹

These skills are often called **life skills** because they are essential for living a healthy happy life. The teaching of these life skills is sometimes called “life skills-based education,” a term that is often used interchangeably with skills-based health education. The difference between the two is in the type of content or topics that are covered. Not all of the content may be “health-related,” for example, life skills-based literacy and numeracy, or life skills-based peace education.

The term “life skills” refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills that can help children make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that can help them to lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be aimed at developing one’s personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it healthy.

¹⁰ This section was originally developed from: www.unicef.org/programme/lifeskills/whatwhy/distinguish.html

¹¹ This section was originally developed from: <http://unicef.org/programme/lifeskills/whatwhy/define.html>

Life skills are also linked to the development of good attitudes. Four of the most important attitudes that need to be developed through skills-based health education include the following.¹²

1. Self-respect, such as I want to be clean, fit, and healthy.
2. Self-esteem and self-confidence, such as I know I can make a difference to the health of my family, even though I am still a child.
3. Respect for others, such as I need to listen to others, to respect them, and their customs, even when they are different or when I cannot agree with them.
4. Concern for others, such as I want to do my best to help others become healthier, especially those who particularly need my help.

The development of attitudes that promote gender equality and respect among girls and boys, as well as the development of specific skills, such as dealing with peer pressure, are central to effective skills-based health education. When children learn such skills, they are more likely to adopt and sustain a healthy lifestyle during schooling and for the rest of their lives.

Reflection Activity: Life Skills and YOU

Giving children skills for life requires that we, as adults, act as role models and develop and use these skills in our own lives. For this activity, ask yourself, "In what ways am I showing self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence, respect for others, and concern for others?" Fill in the table below and identify what actions you can take to bring out these behaviours more for yourself and for the benefit of your students. Try out some of these behaviours over a two- to four-week period. Do you see any improvement in how you feel or how others treat you?

	What I'm doing now	What I can also do (new behaviours)
Self-respect (such as ways to improve myself)		
Self-esteem, Self-confidence (such as ways that I show myself that I am a valuable person)		

	What I'm doing now	What I can also do (new behaviours)
Respect for others (such as ways that I show admiration for others or take into consideration the feelings of others)		
Concern for others (such as ways I help others to improve themselves)		

After you have tried this activity, don't forget to try it with your students as well. Ask each of them to fill out the table and decide how they can improve their behaviours regarding self-respect, self-esteem, as well as respect and concern for others. This activity can be incorporated into your skills-based health education or life skills programme.

¹² Son V, Pridmore P, Nga B, My D and Kick P (2002) Renovating the Teaching of Health in Multigrade Primary Schools: A Teacher's Guide to Health in Natural and Social Sciences (Grades 1,2,3) and Science (Grade 5). British Council and the National Institute of Educational Sciences: Hanoi, Vietnam.

WHAT SKILLS ARE NEEDED?

There is no definitive list of life skills. The table below lists those that are generally considered important.¹³ Which skills are chosen and emphasised will depend upon the topic, the situation of your school and community, and, most importantly, the needs of your students.

Although the categories of skills listed in the table are separate, they actually overlap. For example, decision-making often involves creative and critical thinking ("what are my options") and the clarification of values ("what is important for me?"). Ultimately, when these skills work together, powerful changes in behaviour can occur, especially when supported by other strategies, such as school policies, health services, and the media.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Decision-Making and Critical Thinking Skills	Coping and Self-Management Skills
<p>Interpersonal communication skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal or nonverbal communication • Active listening • Expressing feelings; giving feedback (without blaming) and receiving feedback <p>Negotiation/refusal skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation and conflict management • Assertiveness skills • Refusal skills <p>Empathy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to listen and understand the circumstances and needs of others, and the ability to express that understanding <p>Cooperation and Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing respect for others' contributions and different styles • Assessing one's own abilities and contributing to the group <p>Advocacy skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencing skills • Persuasion skills • Networking and motivational skills 	<p>Decision making and problem solving skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathering skills • Evaluating future consequences of present actions for self and others • Determining alternative solutions to problems • Analysis skills regarding the influence of values and attitudes of self and others on motivation <p>Critical thinking skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing peer and media influences • Analysing attitudes, values, social norms, and beliefs and the factors affecting these • Identifying relevant information and information sources 	<p>Skills for increasing internal locus of control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self esteem and confidence building skills • Self awareness skills including awareness of rights, influences, values, attitudes, rights, strengths, and weaknesses • Goal setting skills • Self-evaluation, self-assessment, and self-monitoring skills <p>Skills for managing feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger management for dealing with grief and anxiety • Coping skills for dealing with loss, abuse, and trauma <p>Skills for managing stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management • Positive thinking • Relaxation techniques

¹³ This section was originally developed from: www.unicef.org/programme/lifeskills/whatwhy/skills.html

In the previous Tool, we explored areas in which your school may need more effective policies, such as preventing violence and substance abuse, improving water and sanitation, etc., as well as what health and safety problems might exist in the community. An important part of implementing and monitoring these policies is to give children the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to adopt healthy behaviours in exactly these areas.

Using the information from the policy analysis in the previous Tool, work together with your colleagues to determine which skills in the table are most important for your students to learn, given your school and community's prevailing policy and health situation. Then develop ways to integrate these skills into the subjects that you teach. Ideas from the section on Hepatitis and HIV presented at the end of this Booklet will help you. Don't forget that children should participate actively in this process.

HOW CAN THESE SKILLS BE APPLIED?

By teaching children necessary skills, such as those listed in the table above, they will be able to deal with the many challenges in their lives that affect their health and the health of those around them. Following are some of the ways in which skills-based health education can be used in your school to prevent major health problems.¹⁴ Discuss with your colleagues about whether or not these problems are affecting your students, and if the skills listed under each problem should become the core focus of your skills-based health education programme. If so, the activities mentioned later for Hepatitis and HIV can be adapted to address these issues as well.

Prevention of Substance Abuse

Substance abuse means the excessive use of such addictive substances as drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. To identify students who are affected by substance abuse, you will need to observe their behaviours closely and also develop positive relationships with their families. They will then feel confident in sharing their concerns about their children. When used to prevent substance abuse, one or several life skills can enable students to:

- Think about the consequences of substance abuse - physical, social, emotional, economic, and religious consequences (critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, communication skills, coping with emotions, and self-awareness skills);
- Resist peer pressure to use addictive substances (decision-making, communication skills, and coping with emotions);
- Resist pressure to use addictive substances without losing face or friends (decision-making, communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills);
- Identify social factors that may cause them to use addictive substances and to decide how they will personally deal with those causes (critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills);
- Inform others of the dangers and personal reasons for not using addictive substances (communication, self-awareness, and interpersonal relationship skills);
- Effectively request a smoke-, drug-, and alcohol-free environment (communication skills);
- Identify and counter persuasive messages in advertisements - especially related to tobacco (critical thinking, communication skills, and self awareness skills);
- Support persons who are trying to stop using addictive substances (interpersonal relationships, coping with emotions, coping with stress, and problem solving skills); and
- Deal (cope) with substance abuse by parents and others (interpersonal relationship skills, coping with emotions, coping with stress, and problem solving skills).

¹⁴ This section was originally developed from: www.unicef.org/programme/lifeskills/whatwhy/issues.html

Violence Prevention

For violence prevention, one or more life skills can enable students to:

- Identify and implement peaceful solutions for resolving conflict (problem solving, decision-making, critical thinking, coping with stress, coping with emotions, communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills);
- Identify and avoid dangerous situations (critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making skills);
- Evaluate ways to avoid violence that often appear to be successful the way it is depicted in the media - TV, books, computer games and the Internet (critical thinking skills);
- Resist pressure from peers and adults to use violent behaviour (problem solving, decision-making, critical thinking, coping with stress, coping with emotions, communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills);
- Become a mediator and calm down those involved in violence (self awareness, problem solving, decision-making, critical thinking, coping with stress, coping with emotions, communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills);
- Help prevent crime in the community (problem solving, decision-making, communication skills, and coping with emotions), and;
- Reduce prejudice and increase tolerance for diversity (critical thinking, coping with stress, coping with emotions, communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills).

Healthy Nutrition

For healthy nutrition, one or more life skills can enable students to:

- Identify personal preferences among nutritious foods and snacks, and then choose them over foods and snacks that are less nourishing (self awareness, and decision-making skills);
- Identify and counter social pressures to adopt unhealthy eating practices (critical thinking, and communication skills);
- Persuade parents to make healthy food and menu choices (interpersonal relationship skills, and communication skills), and;
- Evaluate nutrition claims from advertisements and nutrition-related news stories (critical thinking skills).

Improving Sanitation and Hygiene

Improving sanitation, safe water supplies, as well as personal and food hygiene can greatly reduce illness and disease. An important component of hygiene improvement programmes is hygiene education. Using a skills-based approach to hygiene education, rather than only providing information, can help students to:

- Identify and avoid behaviours and environmental conditions that are likely to cause water- and sanitation-related diseases (problem solving, and decision-making skills);
- Communicate messages about diseases and infection to families, peer and members of the community (communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills), and;
- Encourage others (such as peers, siblings, and family members) to change their unhealthy habits (critical thinking, communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills).

Mental Health Promotion

For mental health, skills-based health education can be one part of a broader effort to create a healthy psycho-social environment at school. A healthy school environment enhances students' psycho-social and emotional well-being and learning outcomes when it:

- Promotes cooperation rather than competition;
- Facilitates supportive and open communication;
- Views the provision of creative opportunities as important, and;
- Prevents physical punishment, bullying, harassment and violence.

HOW CAN THESE SKILLS BE TAUGHT?

Children can only learn life skills if we use teaching methods that allow them to practice these skills, as well as when we practice these skills ourselves (role-modelling for children). That is why the **way** you teach is just as important as **what** you teach.

Life skills should be taught in an interactive, inclusive and learning-friendly way as we have discussed in Booklet 4 and Booklet 5.

SKILLS-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION TO PREVENT HEPATITIS B AND C, AS WELL AS HIV

This section describes how skills-based health education can be used to prevent Hepatitis and HIV and reduce the stigmatisation of those affected by these infections. The activities in this section can also be adapted for use in dealing with other health problems in your school and community.

Education is the key to reducing stigma and promoting greater understanding of Hepatitis and HIV. Your school is an important setting for educating children about Hepatitis and HIV, as well as for stopping the further spread of these infections. Success in doing this depends upon how well we reach children and young adults in time to promote positive health behaviours and prevent the behaviours that place children and youth at risk.

It is our responsibility to teach young people how to avoid either contracting the infection or transmitting it to others, as well as to promote the development of related school policies. In this way, we can make important improvements in the quality of health education provided to children and youth in our schools, and we can take an important step towards improving the health of our communities.

A skills-based approach uses participatory (active) learning techniques to:

- Help individuals evaluate their own level of risk;
- Examine their personal values and beliefs;
- Decide what actions to take to protect themselves and others from Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV, and;
- Acquire skills that will help them to actually make decisions in real life.

Skill-based health education to prevent infections by Hepatitis and HIV can be linked to other relevant issues already addressed in many of our schools, including drug prevention, responsible sexual behaviour and reproductive health, pregnancy, population education, and family life education.

What are some of the ways you can begin a skills-based programme to prevent Hepatitis and HIV amongst our children and youth? Let's look at some of these in terms of activities that you and your schools can do, as well as what you can do with our children.

Action Activity: What Teachers and Schools Can Do¹⁵

1. Be Informed and Active

- Acquire the most up-to-date, relevant information on Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV, its modes of transmission and prevention, and its social consequences.
- Understand your own attitudes, values, and behaviours regarding Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV, and develop confidence in communicating the messages you wish to convey to your students.

2. Establish Partnerships

- Develop a partnership with at least one other teacher in your school. Teamwork is recommended.
- Find out about organisations and services involved in Hepatitis and HIV prevention and care in your community. Meet with their representatives, and learn how they can help you with information, teaching materials, and other resources.

3. Introduce Open Communication

- Prepare yourself to openly discuss five to ten issues in the classroom that you consider most sensitive. Define and explain them, explore their advantages and disadvantages, and discuss them with colleagues.

4. Use Participatory Teaching Methods

- Gain experience and knowledge in using active learning and participatory methodologies. Practice these methods with a sample group of students before you use them with the entire class.
- Avoid lecturing your students; have them play an active role in class. Help your students become your partners in seeking information, analysing it, discussing the epidemic, and identifying ways to prevent infection.
- Encourage questions, discussion, and the fostering of new ideas.

5. Use Innovative Teaching Sessions

- Use a curriculum that offers a variety of teaching mediums. Make the classes on Hepatitis and HIV special, relevant, and interesting for your students.
- Plan for multiple sessions, at least four classes spread out over time. □ Through participatory teaching, messages on Hepatitis and HIV prevention can be brought to the home by students. Develop "take home" information cards and letters, and suggest that parents talk to their children about blood born and sexually transmitted infections.
- Involve parents and, if possible, other sectors in the community. Holding separate teaching and learning activities for parents may improve their communication with their children on Hepatitis and HIV prevention.

¹⁵ Adapted from: Schenker II, Nyirenda JM. (2002) Preventing HIV/AIDS in Schools. International Academy of Education and the International Bureau of Education. Educational Practices Series 9. Paris.

6. Use Gender-Responsive Approaches

- Address the needs of both boys and girls, and promote learning about Hepatitis and HIV in single sex groups.
- Relate your teaching to the existing balance of power between boys and girls, as well as between children and adults.
- Strengthen the negotiation skills of both girls and boys related to early marriage, responsible sexual behaviour and sexual abuse.
- Carefully present scenarios with explicit situations to enhance the skills and courage of children to say "NO!" to early marriage, "NO!" to sexual abuse by older relatives and strangers, and to demand testing for blood born and sexually transmitted infections (STI) before getting married.
- Collaborate with religious leaders in promoting the teaching of drug prevention and responsible sexual behaviour in schools and homes.

7. Deal with Culturally-Sensitive Content

- Locally developed prevention programmes are most effective when they incorporate local traditions, methods of teaching, and terms.
- Identify the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, values, skills, and services in your community that positively or negatively influence behaviours and conditions most relevant to Hepatitis and HIV transmission.
- Provide concrete examples from their culture when discussing Hepatitis and HIV prevention with students.

8. Value of Peer-Based Support

- Develop a safe space for open discussions in class. Encourage students to support each other in learning about Hepatitis and HIV prevention and in talking about risk taking.
- Acknowledge the existence of group norms. Try to influence their direction so that they support effective strategies to prevent drug use, and encourage responsible sexual behaviour (including the use of condoms) in preventing the spread of Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV.

9. Actively Use Skills-Based Education

Promote skills-based education targetting:

- Life skills (negotiation, assertiveness, refusal, communication);
- Cognitive skills (problem solving, critical thinking, decision-making);
- Coping skills (stress management, increasing internal locus of control), and;
- Practical skills (using a condom).

Action Activity: What We Can Do With Our Children

School children are the future community and must learn to be responsible for others as well as themselves. Guided by teachers, health workers, and community leaders, even young children can learn how to protect themselves, their families, and their partners against Hepatitis and HIV.

WHAT EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

Schools should develop a health policy that every child should leave school knowing these essential facts. Health workers and youth group leaders can make a similar commitment to pass on this vital knowledge.

What is Hepatitis B and C?

Hepatitis is a blood born or sexually transmitted viral-infection that affects the liver and immune system of those who are infected. Hepatitis B can be prevented through vaccination. Every child under 5 years of age in Afghanistan is offered Hepatitis B vaccination as part of the immunization package made available by the Ministry of Public Health. However there is no vaccination against Hepatitis C. Treatment of both Hepatitis B and C is costly and not yet available in Afghanistan (as per 2010)

What is HIV?

HIV is a blood born or sexually transmitted viral-infection that affects the liver and immune system of those who are infected. There is no vaccination against HIV. Treatment through anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) is costly, but is made available for free in parts of Afghanistan. There is currently no cure for HIV. With proper treatment a person who is infected with HIV can have near normal life expectancy. However, the treatment can have severe side-effects and will limit the possibilities of those infected of getting married and having children.

What is AIDS?

Unless HIV is treated with ARV it will lead to AIDS. AIDS makes people unable to protect themselves against many kinds of diseases, such as diarrhoea, tuberculosis, and pneumonia. Due to AIDS, these diseases can make people become very sick and die.

How is Hepatitis B Spread?

- Blood transmissions with infected blood supply and other forms of blood-to-blood contact
- Unprotected sex (both intercourse and oral sex)
- Kissing (mouth-on-mouth)
- Sharing needles and syringes (when injecting drugs)
- Mother-to-child during delivery
- Sharing toothbrushes, razors or earrings

How is the HIV Spread?

- Blood transmissions with infected blood supply and other forms of blood-to-blood contact
- Unprotected sex (both intercourse and oral sex)
- Sharing needles and syringes (but if these are not sterilised properly)
- Mother-to-child during delivery/pregnancy - However this can be prevented if pregnant women are tested and when those who are found to be infected receives ARV (anti-retroviral drug) treatment according to WHO recommended protocols
- Through breastfeeding if the mother is HIV positive
- Tattoo needles (but only if these are contaminated with the HIV virus and has not been sterilised properly)

HIV is NOT Spread by:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Insect Bites | - Living in the same house |
| - Touching | - Using the same glass |
| - Playing together | - Using the same cutlery |
| - Doing sports together | - Caring for each other |
| - Learning together | - Hugging |
| - Being best friends | - Kissing |

All teachers, not just the health education teacher, have a responsibility to include teaching on Hepatitis, HIV, drug prevention, and responsible sexual behaviour in their lessons.

When and where to discuss about Hepatitis and HIV:

- Children should start to learn about Hepatitis and HIV in primary school. This is particularly important in Afghanistan where a majority of children drop-out of school before secondary school.

In getting the facts right about HIV/AIDS, children can:

- Play a true or false game. The teacher writes down true or false statements about Hepatitis and HIV on separate pieces of paper, such as "You can catch HIV from mosquitoes" (false); "You cannot catch the HIV virus by shaking hands" (true). On the floor mark three areas: "TRUE", "FALSE", and "DON'T KNOW". Each child takes one statement, places it on one of the three areas, and explains the reason for their choice. Anyone else can challenge the decision.
- Write quiz questions about Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV and discuss the answers in pairs.
- Visit a local health centre. Health workers can talk about why they give injections and demonstrate how needles and syringes are sterilised.

In discussions and role plays about attitudes to others who have Hepatitis B or C, or HIV, children can:

- Collect newspaper cuttings concerning Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV and discuss the attitudes the articles suggest.
- Write poems expressing their feelings about these viral infections and its effects upon their own or other people's lives.
- Use pictures, such as of someone caring for a friend with Hepatitis B or C, or HIV, to help them to imagine how they would feel in the role of one person in the picture. They can ask questions about what events led to the scene shown, and what might happen in the future.
- Listen to the stories below, and then try to answer the following questions:

In assessing how well children have learned about HIV, teachers can:

- Ask children different questions to find out if they know what does - and does not - spread the HIV virus
- Ask children to write stories about people catching the HIV virus or about caring for people with AIDS. Then look at the stories. What do they tell us about children's knowledge and about their attitudes?

Tool 6.3

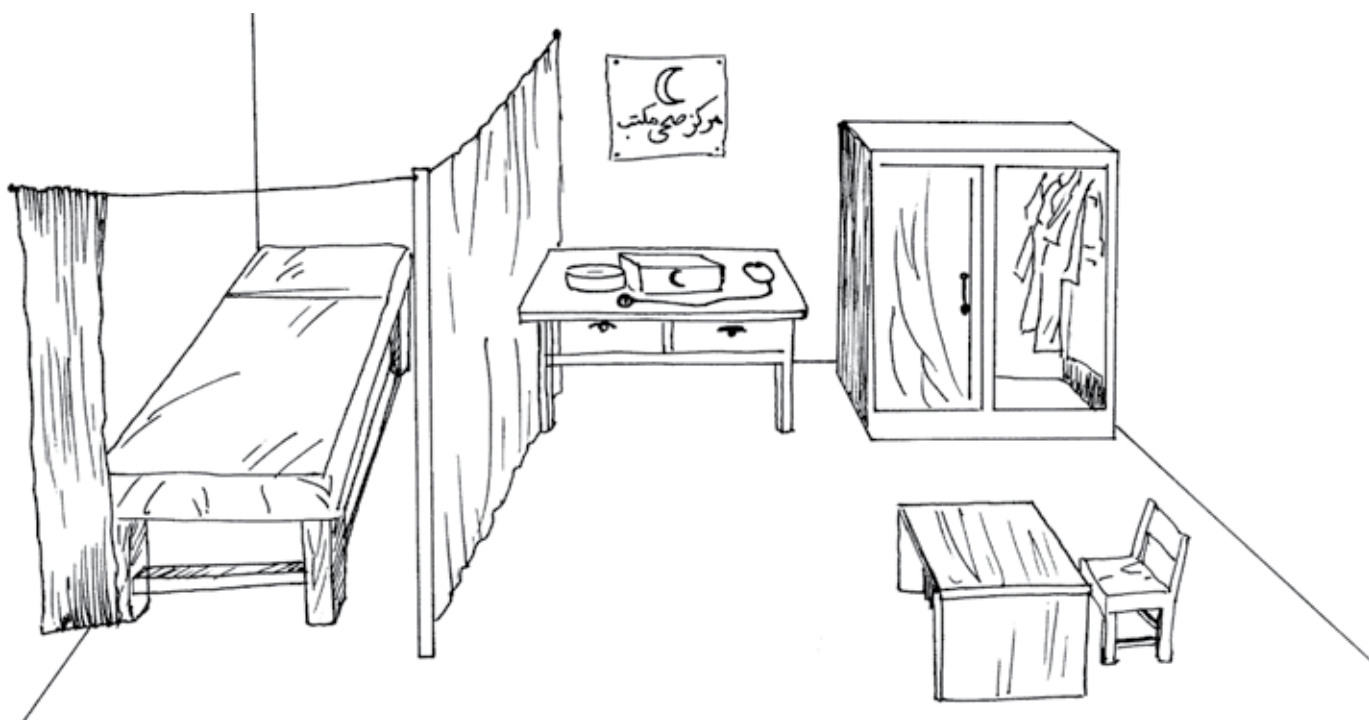
Providing School Nutrition and Health Services and Facilities

Although we sometimes do not like to admit it, our school environment can harm the health and nutritional status of our school children, particularly if it increases their exposure to hazards, such as infectious diseases. Children with diverse backgrounds and abilities are especially susceptible to poor health and nutrition problems. School nutrition and health services and facilities can benefit these children the most through providing food, encouraging healthy hygiene habits, and working with parents and families to improve the availability of safe water.

Our schools can effectively deliver some health and nutrition services if the services are simple, safe, and familiar, and they address problems that are prevalent and recognised as important within the community. Furthermore, in the previous Tool, we learned about the importance of life skills in educating children to adopt healthy habits. But this education has less credibility if our schools do not have clean water and adequate sanitation facilities.

A realistic goal, therefore, is to ensure that our schools offer basic nutrition and health services as well as provide safe water and sanitation facilities. By providing these services and facilities, we can reinforce the health and hygiene life skills and messages we are communicating, and the school can act as an example for students and the wider community. This in turn can lead to a demand for similar services and facilities by the community. If we are successful with these interventions, the community will see the school and ourselves more positively, and we perceive ourselves as playing an important role within and outside of our schools. This Tool will help you in this process by giving you a means for assessing your school's nutrition and health services and facilities, a step-by-step framework for establishing a school food and nutrition programme, as well as ways to involve children in creating a clean school environment.

ASSESSING OUR CURRENT SITUATION



Before we can formulate objectives and draw up an action plan, we need to assess our school's nutrition and health services. This process is similar to what we did to assess our school's policies in this first Tool in this Booklet. The process entails three main steps.

1. Complete the checklist below. Remember to encourage the participation of community members, religious leaders, health workers, parents, and children in the assessment and action planning process. Some additional participatory activities you can undertake include:
 - Working together to complete the school policy and community health assessment profiles discussed in the first Tool in this Booklet on creating healthy school policies;
 - Drawing maps of the school and community, indicating health service locations, water sources, latrines, and areas where children and adults usually defecate or urinate (this could be a part of, or an addition to, the school-community mapping activities discussed in Booklet 3);
 - Developing stories that present real life health situations in your school or community; and
 - Having children draw or write essays depicting "Our Clean, Dream School and Community."
2. Thereafter, prioritise those services and facilities that are most urgently needed considering your school and community's health situation.
3. Develop action plans for obtaining these services and facilities, thus improving your school's health and nutrition situation. You can use the action planning processes in Booklets 1 or 3 as guides in developing your plans.

Checklist for Nutrition and Health Services and Facilities¹⁶

This checklist is designed to determine if our school's health and nutrition services are adequate. This checklist is not exhaustive, and you may want to add to it based on your school's situation.

Does my school provide services that include: (check if yes)

- Establishment and maintenance of student health and dental records;
- Height/weight screening to identify malnourished children (Body Mass Index);
- Detection and treatment of micronutrient deficiencies (such as vitamin A, iron and iodine) that affect learning among children;
- Feeding programmes, such as healthy meals or snacks;
- Detection and treatment of parasitic infections that cause disease and malnutrition;
- Screening and remediation for vision and hearing deficits;
- Basic first aid training;
- Physical education, sport, and recreation classes;
- Child- and youth-friendly outreach services by specially trained staff for the prevention, testing, treatment, and psychosocial support or counselling for Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV, substance abuse, sexual abuse, etc.;
- Establishment and management of a system to make referrals to community-based providers of medical and mental health services that are not offered by schools;
- Links to welfare and social support mechanisms, especially for orphans;
- First aid and emergency response equipment;
- Surroundings conducive to learning, play, and healthy interaction, and which reduce the risk of harassment or anti-social behaviour;
- Accommodations for students with disabilities;
- Adequate lighting within and outside the school;
- Prevention of exposure to hazardous materials?

¹⁶ Adapted from: (1) UNESCO. FRESH: A Comprehensive School Health Approach to Achieve EFA. Paris, 2002 (ED-2002/WS/8 Rev.), and (2) UNICEF and the International Water and Sanitation Centre. A Manual on School Sanitation and Hygiene. Water, Environment and Sanitation Technical Guidelines Series - No. 5. New York, 1998.

Does my school have facilities that provide: (check if yes)

- _____ Adequate and conveniently located water supply for safe drinking, hand-washing, and latrine use;
- _____ Regular monitoring and maintenance of all water supplies;
- _____ Separate latrine facilities for girls and boys, as well as male and female teachers and school staff;
- _____ Adequate number of latrines that are readily accessible by all persons in the school;
- _____ Regular and effective use of water (with a scouring agent, like soap) for hand-washing;
- _____ Regular cleaning of latrine facilities and presence of cleaning materials;
- _____ Sanitary drainage of wastewater;
- _____ Safe, efficient, and hygienic disposal of faeces;
- _____ Waste (such as refuse and garbage) disposal and/or recycling mechanisms?

SCHOOL FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAMMES: HELPING CHILDREN WHO DO NOT EAT WELL

A hungry child cannot learn well. Your school can be an important source of additional food for children who cannot get enough food at home (if they have a home). With a feeding programme your school could provide malnourished children at least one nutritious meal a day. This meal may be especially important for children who must work as well as learn, who live or work on the streets, or whose families are in dire economic circumstances.

Providing nutritious food at school is a simple but effective way to improve literacy rates and to help children to break out of poverty. When school meals are offered, enrolment and attendance rates increase significantly. In traditional cultures where girls are expected to stay at home, school feeding and "take-home rations" often convince parents to send their daughters to school. In emergencies, school feeding provides a critical source of nutrition and ensures that education is not interrupted.¹⁷

Nutritious meals ensure that children receive all of the nutrients they require for healthy growth and development. These include protein, fat and carbohydrates, as well as important micronutrients, such as vitamin A, iron, and iodine. All of these nutrients affect the physical and intellectual development of children.

Here are some examples of valuable sources of vitamins that are available and that are commonly used in Afghanistan:

Fruits	Dry fruits and nuts	Vegetable	Lettuce
Apple	Almonds	Beans	Onion
Apricots	Dried apricots	Cabbage	Parsley
Bananas	Pine nut s	Carrots	Potatoes
Cherries	Pistachio nuts	Cauliflower	Pulse
Grapes	Peanuts	Chili	Radish
Lime	Raisins	Coriander	Spinach
Melon	Walnuts	Corn	Spring Onions
Oranges	Different kind of	Cucumber	Squash
Peaches	seeds	Eggplant	String beans
Pomegranate	Apricot seeds	Green Beans	Tomatoes
Watermelon	Pumpkin seeds	Ladyfingers	Turnips
	Sunflower seeds	Leek	
	Watermelon seeds		

¹⁷ World Food Programme (2002) Fact Sheet: School Feeding. Rome.

Implementing a school food and nutrition programme requires five basic steps. As with all such programmes, gaining the participation and support of parents and the community is extremely important in obtaining the resources needed to establish and maintain these programmes and ensure their success.

Step 1: Establish a partnership with a local health care provider who has the expertise needed to detect and treat protein-energy malnutrition (through weight and height screening) as well as micronutrient deficiencies. If your school has a nurse, she or he may be able to serve in this capacity.

Step 2: During the first month of school, assess the nutritional status of all children, and enrol those with deficiencies in a treatment programme under the supervision of the local health care provider. For children with protein-energy malnutrition, their weights and heights will tell you if they are undernourished (below average weight for their age), stunted (below average height for their age), or wasted (below average weight for their height). These correlate to first, second, and third degree malnutrition, respectively, and affected children will need food that is high in protein and energy. Children with signs of vitamin A deficiency may benefit from vitamin A capsules. Their meals should also be high in green leafy vegetables as well as orange and yellow fruits. For children suffering from iodine deficiency, they can benefit from iodine capsules or the inclusion of iodized salt in their meals. Adolescent girls, in particular, may need appropriate iron supplementation.

Step 3: Based on the information gained in Step 2, determine the types of food supplements that can be offered by the school to meet the needs of your children. Ask the nutritionist or dietician at the nearest hospital or health centre to help plan the school's nutrition programme and meal schedule. At this point, it is crucial to involve families, religious and community leaders, since they can be valuable sources of assistance for establishing school nutrition programmes. For instance, they may be able to set aside community food stores to be used by the school to supply a school lunch programme. They may also provide assistance in establishing school gardens, or they may actually help to make the lunches or snacks for the children.

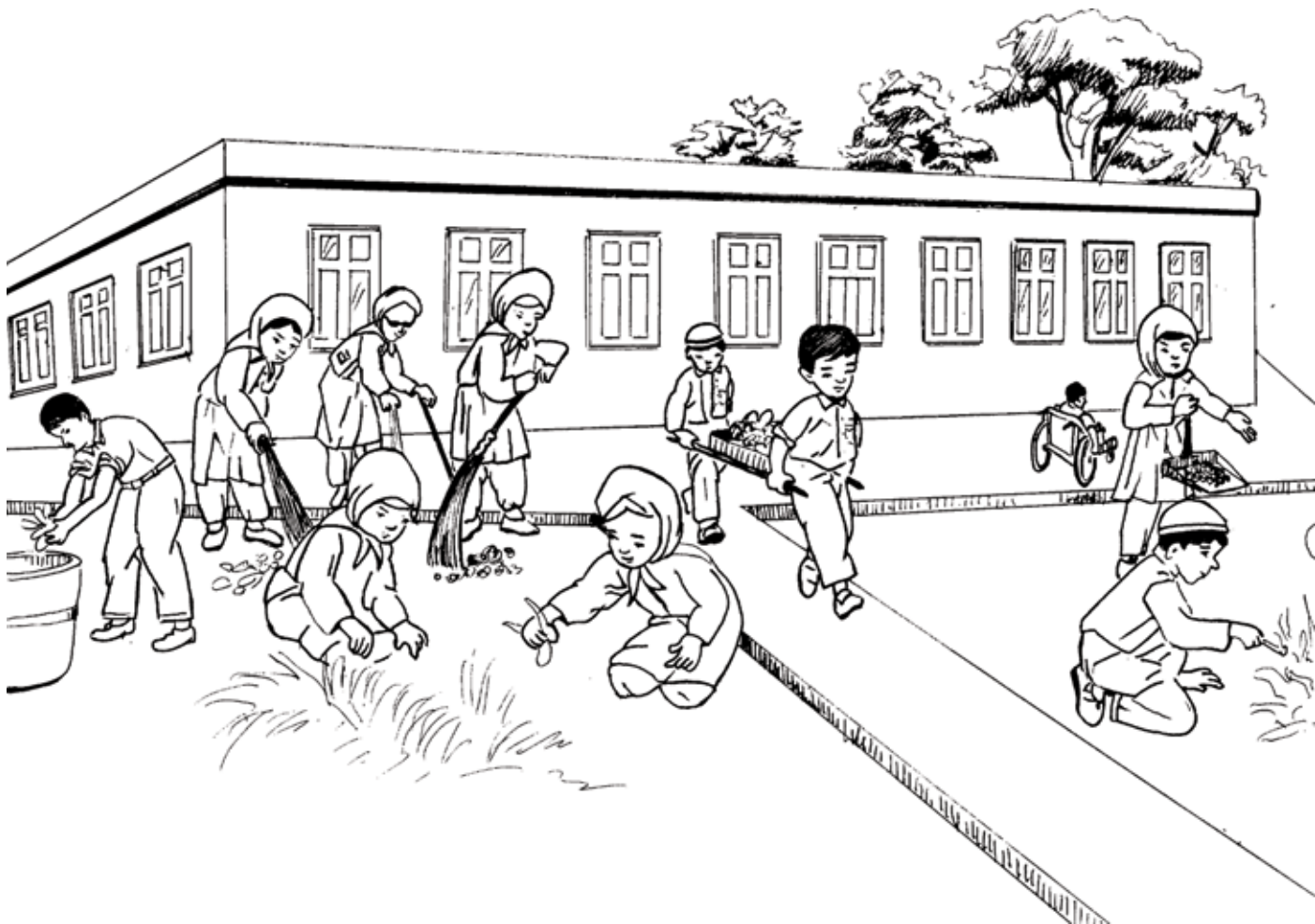
Step 4: As part of their life skills training, teach children what healthy foods they should be eating as part of the school's health education programme. Children can participate in monitoring their own nutritional status and in developing the school's food for education programme.

Step 5: Monitoring and surveillance. At the end of the school year, Step 2 above should be repeated to see if the children's nutritional status has improved. This is also an important time to make plans for the feeding programme to be undertaken during the next school year. Once again, parents, religious and community leaders must be actively involved in this process and encouraged to help their children remain well-nourished during school break.

While this strategy is presented here for improving the nutrition of children, similar steps can be used to screen, take action on other health problems, such as dental health and the control of parasitic infections, as well as monitor the progress of these interventions.

IDEAS FOR CREATING A CLEAN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Clean hands and clean water can go a long way in preventing diseases in your school and in the homes of your children. While this may seem to be common sense, it is often a major challenge for many schools. Sometimes the motivation is not there, but more often teachers are at a loss about how to teach hygiene and sanitation effectively, as well as how to mobilise the needed resources that are required to build safe latrines and water supplies. Effective strategies that are being used today are child-to-child and child-to-adult education on hygiene and safe water. Here are some activities that you might consider using to promote proper hygiene and safe water supplies in your schools.



Action Activity: Involving Children in Hygiene Education

Diarrhoea, worms, cholera, typhoid, polio, and some other diseases are caused by germs. These germs can pass from one person to another on the hands, in dust, in food, and in drinks. Here are some activities that you can incorporate into your school's skills-based health education programme to improve the hygiene habits of children.¹⁸

- **Discussion groups.** Why do some children, especially girls and children with disabilities, not want to use a latrine? Are there any children who do not come to school because there are no suitable latrines for them? Talk about these reasons and agree on ways of encouraging use of the latrine, and improve the access to (especially for children with disabilities) and cleanliness of the latrines in school. This is an important issue, because the lack of any sanitation facilities (latrines) for girls is an important reason for girls not wanting to come to school. Girls don't want to share latrines with boys (for reasons both of modesty and safety). Heavy rates of urinary infections have even been reported among girl students because of their inability to use a latrine during the entire school day!
- **Discussion groups.** Talk about the way to teach younger children to use the latrine and keep it clean, and why this is important. Older children can discuss some things that help the germs to spread. Examples could be either taking a piece of cloth, wiping the bottom, and leaving the cloth lying around, or simply holding the child out bare-bottomed over the floor or the ground.



- **Role plays on practicing good hygiene.** Practice good habits at school with the children; for instance, use the latrine; keep it clean; keep hands clean after using the latrine; wash hands before taking foods. Encourage children to act out how they will practice good hygiene habits.

¹⁸ The source for this activity is: Baily D, Hawes H and Bonati B. (1994) *Child-to-Child: A Resource Book. Part 2: The Child-to-Child Activity Sheets*. London: The Child-to-Child Trust.

- **Stories.** Have the children write stories about when, how, and why they should practice good hygiene habits.
- **Teamwork.** Form a group to make regular inspections of the latrines. The group could check that the latrine holes are covered and that the latrines are clean. If they are not clean, the group could report to a teacher or health worker and ask advice about how to clean the latrines. This activity will help them to develop key life skills, such as decision-making, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- **Demonstrations (school or community).** Older children can build a child-size latrine in the school compound as an example, measure the pit and make a mould for the plate. A teacher or other adult should supervise the children who do the construction themselves. Parents can help by providing the materials like sand, cement, wood, etc. The children can be grouped according to the places from which they come. In class, they can develop plans for helping each other build child-size latrines at their homes. A progress chart in class can show each home with a small child. Put a tick when a latrine is built at that home and another when the small child has learned to use it. This may be done for boys and girls separately.
- **Monitor learning.** In discussion groups, or through essays, ask the children to explain:
 - What causes diarrhoea and how can diarrhoea be prevented?
 - Why is it important to be careful about younger children's stools?
 - What are some good hygiene habits that can help to stop the spread of germs?
 - Does the school now have a latrine and a place to wash hands?
- **Encourage community participation.** Teachers and health workers can emphasise the importance of keeping clean and using latrines to prevent the spread of diarrhoea. Science lessons can be used for learning more about germs; for example, what are germs and how do they spread disease. Teachers and parents can work with older children to plan and build a child-size latrine.
- **Encourage child-participation.** Children can spread the ideas of good hygiene, good food, clean water, and keeping clean, through their own good example. They can teach younger ones how to use a latrine and how to keep themselves clean, and help to build suitable child-size latrines where they are needed.

Action Activity: Involving Children in Safe Water

In teaching children about water and sanitation, it is important to communicate that every living thing needs water to live, but dirty water can make us ill. We must be careful to keep water clean and safe, especially where it is found, when we carry it home, when we store it, and when we use it. Here are some activities that you can incorporate into your skills-based health education programme to improve water safety.¹⁹

- **Children can discuss:** Why is water important? List all of the things you can do with water at home, in the community, in hospitals, on farms, and in the whole country. Is water which is clear or which has a good taste always safe, clean drinking water? (The answer is "no". Why?) How do germs get into water? In what ways can water help us? In what ways can water harm us? Do some of the children often have an upset stomach or diarrhoea? Are there other people in the family who do, too? What about the babies? What do you think might have caused this illness?
- **Group work in the community.** In small groups, let the children go to see the sources of water in the community and make a map to show where they are (make use of your school-community map if you have developed one as part of Booklet 3). Find out which sources are clean and well looked after, and which ones are dirty. Note these on the map. If the source is dirty, what is making it dirty? Watch how people draw water and how they carry it home. Is the water kept clean and safe? Discuss what you have seen with the other children.

¹⁹ The source for this activity is: Baily D, Hawes H and Bonati B. (1994) *Child-to-Child: A Resource Book. Part 2: The Child-to-Child Activity Sheets*. London: The Child-to-Child Trust.

- **Group work at school.** Make a list of illnesses that can be spread through unsafe water, and find out more about them. Examine the water sources of the school. Where does the water come from? Are the latrines near the water source? How often is the water container cleaned? Are cups used? Are ladles used? Are cups and ladles washed before and after use? Do you have to dip your hand in the water to fill the cup? Is there somewhere to wash hands before eating and drinking? Do the students always use it?
- **Individual work at home.** Ask the children to make a list of all of the containers used for water in their home. Make a list of people in the family who had an illness that may have been caused by dirty water. Who collects the water for the home? Can you help them? Who keeps the water clean and protected? Is the water container covered? Is there a ladle? Do they wash their hands after using the toilet, and before eating and drinking? Find out what is the best way to get clean drinking water in the community.

Children Can Help

Children can help to keep water clean and to take care of it. They can discover activities that are suitable for their age, and can do them alone, or in teams, or in pairs. Here are some examples of the kinds of things they can do.

- **At the source of the water,** children can help to keep the water supply clean. Explain to very young children that they must not urinate in the water or pass stools anywhere near the water. Collect rubbish and other objects from around the edge of the water source and take them away. Keep animals away from water. Where there is a tap, help people to use it. Make sure taps are turned off after use. Where there is a well, the surroundings must always be kept clean. If there are stones, help to build a small wall around the well. Check to see that the rope and the container are clean. Help to make a support (such as a hook) to hang them on so that they do not lie on the ground. If there is no cover for the well, help to make one if possible. If there is a special bucket provided, make sure people are not allowed to use their own container or bucket to lift the water out of the well. If there is a hand pump, make sure people use it carefully. It should not be pumped too violently, and it should never be used for play.
- **When people collect water and take it home.** Explain that the containers they use must be clean. If the water at the source is not clean, explain to people that they should filter or boil the water.
- **At home.** Explain to younger children that they should not put their hands, dirty objects, or anything else but the ladle into the water. Help to keep the container where the water is stored clean and covered. Help younger children to use a ladle properly to get water out of the storage container without contaminating it. Teach them to put the cover back on the water container when they have finished. Do not put the cover on the floor while taking water out of the container. Avoid spilling water on the floor, and store the ladle or jug used for taking water out of the storage vessel in a clean place. It should be put out of the reach of animals and not be placed on the floor.

Monitoring

After several weeks or months, children can be asked to discuss with the other children what they have remembered; what they have done to make water cleaner and safer; and what more they can do.

Is the place where water is collected cleaner? Has all the rubbish been taken away? Are the water containers always clean, especially on the outside? Do more children wash their hands after defecating and before eating? How many people are still getting illnesses from unsafe water?

Tips to improve your school environment

(The following information, developed by Karin Metell, addresses ways to help create a hygienic and healthy school environment)

1. Assess the school environment. How can you make it more learning-friendly, safe, and healthy? Identify five areas for easy improvement and make an action plan together with the children
2. Assess together the hygienic habits of children and their parents in school and at home. Identify five bad behaviours that affect children's health and set goals to change them.
3. Make sure children have safe water for drinking in school!
4. Organise regular "Clean and Healthy School Days." For example, all students can clean their school compound once a week.
5. Select "child monitors for health" who report on disease prevalence in their community. Link monitoring to environmental action.
6. Invite children to make an environmental map of the community to identify resources and sites in need of protection and improvement. Take action!
7. Involve parents in concrete activities to improve hygiene facilities at school, such as constructing latrines.
8. Take early steps to an environmentally-friendly school by recycling, setting up a compost bin, arranging a kitchen garden, planting trees, and making sure that water is not wasted.
9. Arrange hand-washing facilities with soap or ash close to the latrines. Make sure they are used and maintained!

From: Exploring Ideas. UNICEF Website: Teachers Talking about Learning.

www.unicef.org/teachers

Tool 6.4

What Have We Learned?

CREATING HEALTHY AND PROTECTIVE POLICIES

School health policies that mandate a healthy, safe, and secure school environment are the guidelines we need to take action to improve the learning of all children. Determining what policies are needed requires the participation of many stakeholders within the school and community. Development and implementation of such policies is a process of awareness-raising and partnership building. We can benefit by working closely with health officials and care providers, as well as with teachers, students, parents, and community leaders.

Once policies are in place, they must be effectively enforced and monitored by all parties, including children and youth, to ensure that they benefit all children equally.

Now ask yourself, "What policy changes are needed in my school?" Discuss these with your colleagues and students, and then develop action plans for making your school a healthier place to learn!

GIVING CHILDREN SKILLS FOR LIFE!

Through skills-based health education, children develop their knowledge, attitudes, and life skills. They can then make decisions and take positive actions to promote healthy and safe behaviours and environments.

Skills-based health education programmes focus on changing specific health behaviours that are related to health needs of both girls and boys (gender sensitive). Children actively participate in learning information and, more importantly, how to turn their knowledge into immediate actions.

Some of the important life skills that children learn include communication and interpersonal skills, decision-making and critical thinking skills, as well as coping and self-management skills. These life skills help children to deal with such issues as the prevention of substance abuse and violence, as well as to promote healthy nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, and mental health. They are particularly valuable in preventing Hepatitis B and C, as well as HIV and in reducing stigmatisation for those who are affected.

Some of the ways we can integrate a skills-based education programme into our teaching is through using active learning methods, such as discussion groups, drama and role playing, as well as stories and demonstrations.

Now ask yourself, "What changes can I make in my classroom teaching to promote skills-based learning amongst my students?" Come up with three personal targets and compare and discuss with your colleagues and students. After one month, compare how you are progressing.

IMPROVING SCHOOL NUTRITION, HEALTH, AND SANITATION

Children with diverse backgrounds and abilities are particularly susceptible to poor nutrition, health, and sanitation. School nutrition and health services and facilities can benefit these children the most through providing food, encouraging healthy hygiene habits, and working with parents and families to improve the availability of safe water and sanitation facilities.

Our schools can effectively deliver some health, nutrition, and sanitation services if they address problems that are prevalent and recognized as important within the community and are simple, safe, and familiar.

Effective school nutrition, health, and sanitation practices can be valuable means for teaching children important life skills and allowing them to practice them at school.

Our schools should be examples for the community and our children. We should not only teach good health, nutrition, and hygiene habits; we should also practice them!

Now ask yourself, "What services or facilities does my school need, or need to improve with regard to nutrition, health, and sanitation?" Discuss these with your colleagues and students, and then develop action plans for improving your school's situation.