Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Diplomatic Academy.

MARGINALISATION

EDUCATION LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT MODULE

Practitioner Level

2021

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ECD	early childhood development
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
FFA	Framework for Action
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1 INTRODUCTION

This Practitioner level module is designed to ensure staff members who engage with and lead policy dialogue with international and domestic partners understand the patterns of marginalisation in education and the policies, strategies and structures that can be put in place at the national, school and community level to reduce marginalisation.

It is recommended that staff complete the *Marginalisation: Foundation level* module as background information to this *Practitioner level* module.

2 WHAT ARE THE PATTERNS OF MARGINALISATION FOUND AT DIFFERENT EDUCATION LEVELS?

Inclusive education systems

An education system which is committed to including all learners has several characteristics.

- It insists on access for all children and youth into regular, public schools/mainstream systems and/or private systems of (at least) equal quality.

- It is concerned not only with initial enrolment, regular participation, and grade promotion but also longer-term achievement through improving the quality of education provided.

- It requires both an analysis of the causes of marginalisation and proactive targeted support to those who are marginalized.

- It promotes school cultures, policies, and practices that accept and include a diversity of students.

- It supports adult literacy programs.

- It focuses on continuous improvement, always 'in-process'.

Early childhood development

Large numbers of children lack any pre-school experience and therefore any preparation for formal primary school. It is the most disadvantaged children who miss out on early childhood development (ECD), putting them further behind when they do commence primary school and widening the disadvantage that they face.

Source: UNESCO Bangkok, 2009, Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments.

As the *Early Childhood Development: Foundation level* module notes, early childhood encompasses the period of human development from conception to the age of eight years. Policies and programs around early childhood take on many names in different combinations of childhood (C), education (E), development (D), and care(C) – ECCE, ECED, ECD, etc.

These policies and programs focus on providing good quality care and education in order to ensure the optimal, holistic development of girls and boys; through which they can 'survive, be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent, and able to learn.'

Although ECD programs are expanding around the world – both centre-based day care for children aged zero to three and pre-schools and kindergartens for children aged three to six – they remain largely urban and elite.

The disparities can be great: there is more than a 20 per cent disparity favouring urban areas in the attendance of children aged three to four in care and learning programs in Vietnam, Mongolia, and Myanmar; and more than a 20 per cent disparity in attendance between the rich and the poor in Vietnam, Mongolia, and the Philippines. ECD programs seldom penetrate to the urban slum dwellers and rural poor who need them most as a step up to school readiness.

Source: UNESCAP, 2015, Technical Working Session on Profiling Equity Focused Information.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

1. What is the difference in the enrolment rate for pre-schools in this country, between urban and rural locations?

2. Is this data even available?

3. If it is available, is it disaggregated by sex, children of different ethnic/linguistic communities, children of different socio-economic quintiles, and children with disabilities?

Primary education

Despite the general progress that has been made in primary education around the world, many children of the most marginalised population groups never enter primary school, or they drop out for many reasons that may include:

* schools not actively seeking out children not enrolled

* lack of adequate support by teachers, schools and governments for children who are over-age, speak a different language, have a disability, live in remote communities, and who are poor

* lack of willingness by parents to send all their children to school, especially girls, because of household duties, child employment, perceived low relevance of school education, and safety concerns.

- for girls, having curtailed access to education is due to the costs associated with schooling (and a preference to invest in a boys' education as compared to girls); a lack of 'gender-friendly' schooling environments; and social norms that dictate girls' time as better invested in domestic duties, and that girls 'belong' in the private sphere.

Early drop-out

For children who pass the first hurdle and enrol in primary school, repetition and drop-out rates are often high, especially in the early grades.

A high early drop-out rate may indicate the child's lack of readiness for the school due to factors including a non-literate home environment or no experience in ECD programs. Drop-out and repetition may also be due to the school's lack of readiness for the child (e.g. a child-unfriendly environment, instruction not in the learner's mother-tongue). The early grades of primary school are especially problematic for learners at risk of later marginalisation. Early grade classes are often the largest, their teachers often the least experienced, and the hours of instruction or 'time on task' are often fewer than for pupils in higher grades.

Primary exclusion

Children are excluded from school throughout the primary cycle. Children typically continue to repeat and drop out throughout primary, with often another peak in the drop-out rate at Grades 5 and 6 when children reach an age to work for money or their families. Children often drop out when what is being taught in school is not relevant to their lives or are pushed out by schools wanting good results in examinations or standardised tests.

An excellent analysis of primary exclusion has been made by Helen Abadzi of the World Bank:

> *'Many problems compromise the likelihood that the excluded populations will acquire the expected knowledge. These include malnutrition, poor mother tongue vocabulary, little knowledge of the official language, poorly developed math sense, parents who are illiterate or lack time to monitor homework. Children with such problems may fall behind on the first day of grade. Crowded classes in low-income areas may teach very little to children from excluded groups.*
>
> *Materials may be scarce, and teachers may be overwhelmed with the high enrolments. To deal with these problems, teachers in low-income schools may do "triage"; that is, identify those few who can keep up with the curriculum and focus on them. Weak students may be isolated in favour of those likely to pass high-stakes examinations. Some countries expect non-performing students to repeat grades, but others have instituted social promotion policies in order to reduce dropout and repetition.*
>
> *However, there is often no provision for remedial classes, so those falling behind are unlikely to catch up. Teachers of later primary or secondary grades find it impossible to implement the curriculum with such students. The class goes on, but with just 3-4 students who can handle the material.*

The rest may come to school off and on and gradually drop out. As a result, enrolment statistics in some low-income countries may be misleading. The classes may have 20 or 100 students enrolled, but in fact the class size may be only 4. And of the rest, only half the students may come on a given day."

Source: Abadzi, 2009, cited in Asian Development Bank, 2010, Strengthening Inclusive Education.

CREATE Zones of inclusion and exclusion

The figure below schematically represents children in different zones of inclusion and exclusion as they progress from pre-school age to livelihoods and employment.

Figure 1 – Zones of inclusion and exclusion
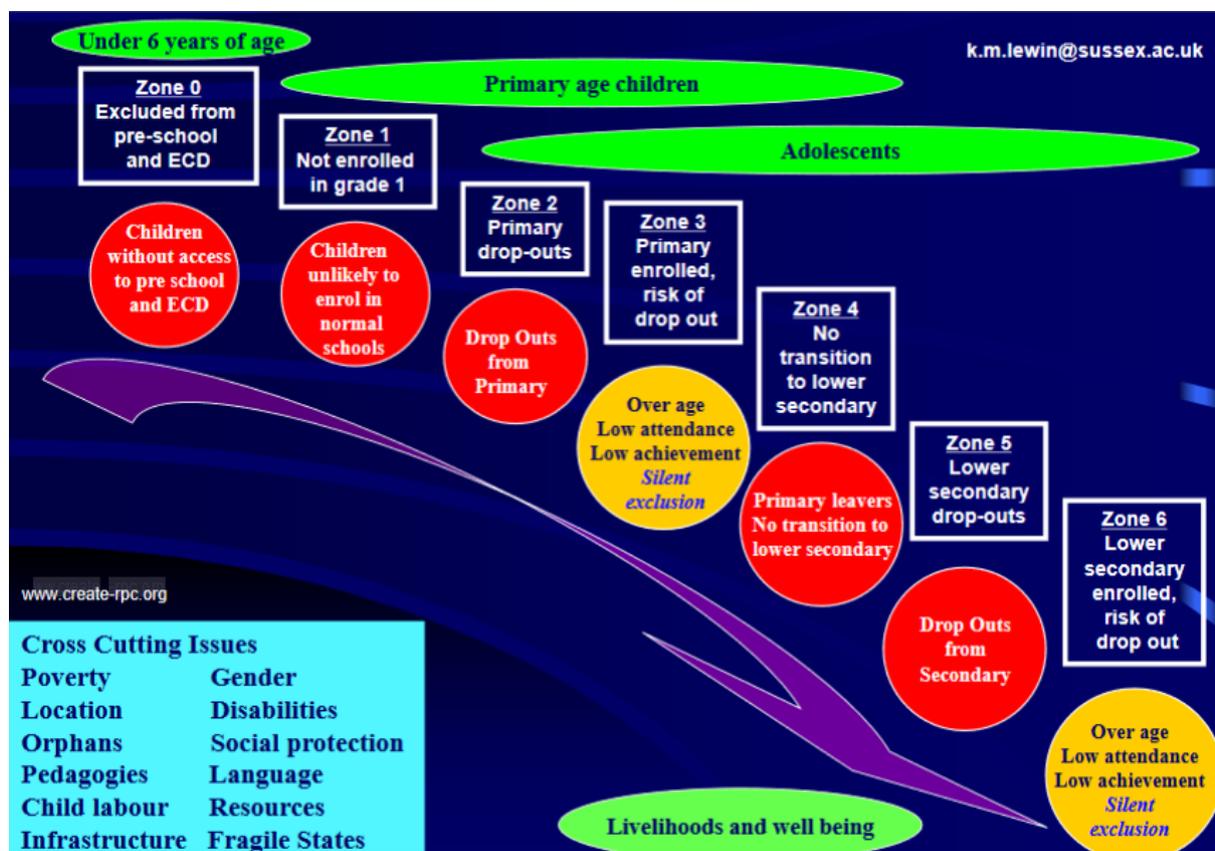
Source: Lewin, 2015, Educational access, equity, and development: Planning to make rights realities.

Seven zones of inclusion and exclusion are identified for school age children. Zone zero relates to participation in pre-school for children below school age. Each zone has different characteristics. It is important to note that the red zones locate children who are not enrolled in formal school systems and who are in the community.

Those who are below the legal age of work (15 years in many countries) are in a different position from those above the legal age for work. The yellow zones identify children who are enrolled but whose levels of achievement may be so low they might as well be out of school.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

1. What are the drop-out/push-out rates by grade level in this country?

2. Is this information available and can it be trusted?

3. Is drop-out data being collected in regard to boys and girls, children of different ethnic/linguistic communities, children of different socio-economic quintiles, and children with disabilities?

4. How are differences between drop-out rates in the early grades and the later grades explained?

Secondary education

Although gross enrolment ratios in secondary education have increased dramatically in most regions of the world between 1970 and 2016, entry barriers to secondary education still remain forbidden to many traditionally marginalised groups and is high amongst girls and female adolescents.

Source: UNESCO, 2017, A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education.

Secondary schools:

- are often not found in rural and remote areas

- may be expensive for the poor (either through direct or in-direct costs)

- demand even greater mastery in the national language

- are even less disability-friendly than primary schools

- depending on restrictive gender attitudes and norms and economic/poverty factors, are often unavailable to and/or unsafe for girls, due to a range of issues, including early and forced marriage, unwanted pregnancies, and care burdens within the household

- may promote exclusion by only funding higher performers.

Source: UNESCO, 2017, A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

1. Are girls or boys the most marginalised from secondary education in this country across access, retention and performance?

2. What might be the reasons for these patterns?

3. Is data on secondary education enrolment being collected in regard to rural-urban locations, children of different ethnic/linguistic communities, children of different socio-economic quintiles, and children with disabilities?

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is learning for the world of work. Ideally, vocational education is matched to the human resource needs of industry thus increasing a nation's productivity. Most education systems focus on academic education instead of vocational training. However, global economic challenges and regional economic trends mean that TVET has become an increasingly important sub-sector among education planners.

In terms of marginalisation, few public TVET systems focus on skill-building for learners with disabilities or provide adequately flexible programs for children outside of the formal system (e.g. street children and working children). There are typically fewer TVET institutions and/or more limited course options for people living in more remote and rural areas.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

1. What is this country's attitude toward TVET?

2. What is the availability of TVET opportunities for people from normally excluded population groups?

3. Do TVET courses stream males and females into different courses (consciously or unconsciously), therefore reinforcing traditional gender roles and social norms?

Higher education

Higher education enrolments have expanded dramatically in many parts of the world. Higher education, however, is the most exclusionary of any system, due to the many barriers and hurdles in being simply eligible for university level study.

Relatively few members of marginalised groups (especially, for example, learners with disabilities, learners from remote regions, and, in some countries, girls) get through the secondary level of education needed to apply for higher education. Many of those that might be eligible will find the financial burden difficult to overcome.

Adult education, literacy and life-long learning

Literacy rates too have increased across the world, however adult literacy still remains low among women, people in rural areas, speakers of languages other than the national language, and those living in poverty. Some 781 million adults were illiterate in 2015, two thirds of them girls and women. Official literacy rates are often inflated so that the actual levels of functional literacy, even in industrialised countries, may be lower than the figures reported.

Note: You can read more information at the 2017 Global Education Monitoring Report UNESCO.

Source: United Nations, 2015, The World's Women 2015 Education.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

1. How seriously does the Ministry of Education take its responsibility to expand adolescent and adult literacy?

2. What percentage of the total Ministry budget, for example, is used for literacy and adult education?

3. What are the differences in literacy between females and males and how does this relate to the country's social political factors?

3 HOW CAN WE BETTER INTERPRET INFORMATION AND DATA TO IDENTIFY KEY MARGINALISATION CHALLENGES IN SPECIFIC CONTEXTS?

Literacy rates

National aggregates of data such as net enrolment and literacy rates – even analysed over time – are of little use in identifying the nature of marginalisation and the challenges it presents to an education system. This is because national results mask sub-national disparities, and the disparities among sub-populations.

National level data disaggregated by indicators such as sex (usually available), social-economic status (sometimes), ethnicity/language or disability (often not) can be useful information. But to really understand marginalisation, data must be collected (and preferably analysed) at the sub-national level – at whichever administrative levels have the capacity to do so: province or state, district and sub-district, even cluster, village and school.
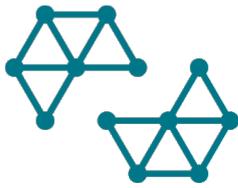
Case study: Literacy rates in Lao

The 'Reported Literacy Rates in Lao Language' at Table 1, for example, indicate the wide differences in tested literacy rates by various factors (ethnic group, sex, socio-economic quintile, location).

Table 1: Reported Literacy Rates in Lao Language

(n=43,194)

Area / Sub-group	Adults: Aged 15+			Adults: Aged 15-39			Adults: Aged 15-59		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lao PDR	77.0%	60.9%	68.7%	80.2%	71.1%	75.4%	79.5%	65.5%	72.3%
Urban	87.3%	78.7%	82.8%	89.1%	87.0%	88.0%	88.9%	82.5%	85.6%
Rural	74.3%	56.0%	65.0%	77.9%	66.7%	72.0%	76.9%	60.7%	68.6%
North	69.1%	48.8%	58.7%	73.0%	58.5%	65.4%	71.7%	53.0%	62.2%
Central	81.0%	66.9%	73.8%	84.4%	78.0%	81.0%	83.9%	72.0%	77.7%
South	78.4%	63.3%	70.6%	79.3%	71.7%	75.3%	79.7%	67.0%	73.1%
Tai-Kadai	82.9%	71.9%	77.2%	85.6%	82.8%	84.1%	85.1%	77.1%	81.0%
Austroasiatic	69.7%	47.3%	58.3%	73.3%	56.9%	64.7%	72.2%	51.2%	61.5%
Sino-Tibetan	50.4%	31.4%	40.7%	53.3%	38.7%	45.8%	52.7%	34.5%	43.5%
Hmong-Yao	65.0%	22.9%	44.6%	71.0%	30.4%	51.5%	69.5%	24.8%	47.7%
Lowest 20%	55.2%	31.8%	43.3%	59.5%	40.2%	49.5%	58.0%	34.4%	45.9%
Lower-Middle 20%	70.8%	46.8%	58.5%	75.0%	58.1%	66.1%	73.4%	51.2%	62.1%
Middle 20%	77.0%	59.1%	67.8%	81.0%	70.7%	75.6%	80.0%	64.2%	71.9%
Upper-Middle 20%	80.8%	66.4%	73.5%	84.6%	79.2%	81.8%	83.6%	72.2%	77.8%
Highest 20%	89.4%	81.1%	85.1%	91.1%	89.1%	90.0%	90.6%	85.3%	87.9%

Key features of these results include:

- The lowest literacy rates are amongst minority groups such as the Hmong-Yao females of all age groups.
- The highest literacy rates are amongst urban males of all age groups.
- Female literacy levels are lower than males in all areas and age groups.

Only when such data are available, can the Ministry of Education (and its development partners) begin to see the patterns of marginalisation broken down by:

- geographic location (urban-rural-remote) and administrative region
- smaller ethnic/linguistic groups often not separated out in national surveys
- disability (are learners with disabilities even counted? If so, how many are schooled and how many are not?)
- regions at special risk from conflict, disasters, and other emergencies.

A difficulty is that available official, administrative data may not always be accurate. There are particular challenges with literacy data. Self-report ('are you literate?') or proxy indicators ('did you complete Grade 4?') can lead to inflated literacy rates. Surveys based on actual literacy performance (e.g. in standardised assessments) in countries such as Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Bhutan have shown rates more than 20 per cent lower than the official statistics. Disparities in these independent assessments are even greater between men and women and between different linguistic groups.

More and more evidence is accumulating that this same kind of inflation occurs in school statistics – official enrolment on the first day of classes is often much higher than daily attendance in the middle of the school year. Many systems have built-in incentives (e.g. per pupil operational cost subsidies) which encourage schools to report more students than actually enrol or attend regularly.

Source: UNESCO, 2004, Lao National Literacy Survey.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

1. To what extent (down to what level and disaggregated by what characteristics) are education data in this country analysed in order to identify particularly marginalised regions and groups?

2. Can you identify what kinds of learners in the country may experience multiple factors of marginalisation?

3. What processes exist to identify out-of-school children and analyse the barriers keeping them from participating in education?

4. Has literacy ever been assessed by performance rather than self-report?

5. What steps are taken, if any, to assess the accuracy of school administrative data?

4 WHAT NATIONAL POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND STRUCTURES CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE MARGINALISATION

Inclusive education systems

Addressing marginalisation requires a strong political commitment to – and more financial resources for – an education system which includes and responds to all learners. This has several implications for the kinds of policies, strategies, and mechanisms that education systems around the world might put in place in order to be more inclusive.

Characteristics that drive inclusive education systems

As you consider the list, below, it is important to recognise that it may not be easy – or even feasible – to implement all of the domains identified. But depending on the priorities identified in a partner country, and the nature of the Australian aid program's involvements, the information which follows may provide a productive starting point for dialogue with country stakeholders.

Characteristics that drive inclusive education systems include:

- Welcome diversity as an opportunity to promote better learning
- Respond to the diversity in the classroom and include those from marginal groups
- Consider the specific needs and safety of marginalized groups
- Modify teaching to encourage participation from all children
- Building a safe school environment, free from violence, based on the principle of 'do no harm'

The sections below delve into more detail as to other characteristics that drive inclusive education systems.

Support the adoption of a national vision and goals on full inclusion

As development partners, we can support the adoption of a national vision and goals based on the principle of full inclusion. This includes:

Equity: equal opportunities, of equal quality, for all.

Equality: the identification and removal of all barriers to educational participation and achievement which may include providing additional services for disadvantaged groups or individuals.

Diversity: the welcoming of diversity and difference.

Focus on the last five per cent and learning outcomes for the 95 per cent

Maintain the focus on the last five per cent (or two per or 10 per cent or 20 per cent) not in school or not literate. If a Ministry (and Minister) of Education are satisfied with achieving a few (or more) percentage points less than universal primary education, often with the excuse that the remaining few are not educable or it is too expensive to educate them, then the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved.

Furthermore, simply being in school does not mean children are learning. Typically it is the most marginalised individuals that are learning least. This is the 'other 95 per cent'. There is a need to ensure that enrolled children are learning children.

Source: United Nations, 2015, The World's Women 2015 Education.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

How seriously does the Ministry of Education take its responsibilities towards the small (or large) percentage of children not yet in school – or children not demonstrably learning?

Understand the fundamental need to start early

Understand the fundamental need to start early with early childhood development (ECD) as the foundation for combating marginalisation through its ability to offset family disadvantage and social inequality and lead to successful learning.

Exclusive, largely urban, and elite day- care programs and kindergartens can replicate and even reinforce marginalisation.

ECD programs of good quality targeted at those most excluded will even the playing field, promote initial enrolment in primary education, reduce the exclusionary acts of repetition and drop-out, and promote successful learning.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

To what extent does the Ministry of Education invest in starting early to combat marginalisation?

Contain constitutional and legislative mandates

Contain constitutional and legislative mandates, particularly, Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA). The FFA should be the focus, but also to ensure its attainment through guaranteeing non-discrimination in line with the international conventions and declarations in areas such as:

- disabilities

- working and trafficked children

- children of refugees

- children of indigenous populations

- early and forced marriage

- gender equality

Any related compulsory education legislation needs to not only compel families to send their children to school but also compel the Ministry of Education to make schools available, accessible, and affordable.
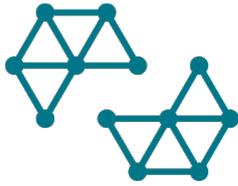
Case study: The right to education in India

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act was passed by the Indian parliament on 4 August 2009. It describes the modalities of the provision of free and compulsory education for children aged between six and 14 in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. The Bill makes education a fundamental right of every child between these ages and specifies the minimum norms in government schools such as standards relating to pupil teacher ratios, buildings and infrastructure, school-working days, teacher-working hours for example.

It specifies reservation of 25 per cent seats in private schools for children from poor families, prohibits the practice of unrecognised schools, and makes provisions for no donation or capitation and no interview of the child or parent for admission.

According to research commissioned by the Indian government to assess the impact of the legislation, there was improvement in the social infrastructure across the country, and an improvement overall in learning outcomes. The report found that for children in the age group of six to 13 years, the number of children not enrolled in a school in 2009 was eight million, a figure that declined to 6.04 million in 2014. Despite this India has a long way to go to impart quality education to its citizens.

Source: KPMG, 2016, Assessing the impact of Right to Education Act.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

Does it have any constitutional or legislative requirement in regard to compulsory education, and the right to free education of good quality?

Clearly and explicitly identify the marginalised groups and analyse the causes of marginalisation

This requires a more inclusion-focused Educational Management Information System (EMIS) that includes out-of-school children. A system which more systematically collects data on all children, youth, and adults in the country; and disaggregates data sub-nationally (province, district, community), by sex, ethnicity/language, urban/rural/remote location, poverty level, disability, and other factors important to the country context.

Education planners need to carry out analysis with these data to identify those groups systematically not enrolled, not participating regularly, and not learning, and then implement interventions to address marginalisation.

Such a 'child EMIS' exists in many schools in the Philippines and Thailand and in Lao PDR. For example, one important function of the Village Education Development Committees (in Lao PDR) is to identify children in the community who are not in school and enrol them.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

Is the Ministry's EMIS sensitive to issues of marginalisation and the identification of especially excluded groups?

Develop policies, programs, structures, and budgets

Develop policies, programs, structures, and budgets which specifically target marginalisation, discrimination, and resulting inequality derived from a clear analysis of where and how processes of marginalisation occur.

What programs and structures could be implemented?

These might include:

- Prevention programs to confront the causes of marginalisation before the process begins. These include health and nutrition services for mothers and young children to prevent childhood disability and developmental delays.

- Good quality ECD programs which target the most disadvantaged and promote the use of mother-tongue as the basis for initial literacy.

- More comprehensive school health programs (beginning at day-care and pre-school) to provide additional needed health services such as de-worming and nutritional supplements.

- The early identification of learning difficulties through user-friendly teacher observations and checklists and subsequent referrals, when needed, to more specialised services.

- Non-formal education systems that serve as a 'bridge' to provide out-of-school and marginalised children with the academic skills they need to successfully enter the formal school system.

- Education that meets local needs such as mobile schools for remote regions and multilingual mother tongue-based education.

Note: For further information see the *Early Childhood Development: Foundation* and *Practitioner level* modules.
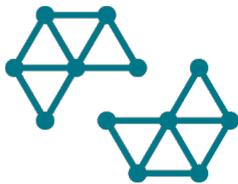
Case study: The national Inclusive Education Policy in Lao PDR

One useful approach is the establishment of a national Inclusive Education Policy and Action Plan as has been done in Lao PDR.

This policy, approved at the level of the Prime Minister and Parliament, lays out a comprehensive definition of inclusive education. It sets goals for the education system and defines clearly what a wide range of actors inside and outside the system must do to achieve the goals of making mainstream public education inclusive of and responsive to all learners. The policy and action plans are monitored by a dedicated Inclusive Education Centre.

Source: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2011, National strategy and plan of action on inclusive education.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

Has the Ministry of Education developed a broadly defined national policy on inclusive education?

Focus on reducing financial barriers to education

Focus on reducing financial barriers to education through, for example, the targeted provision of:

- scholarships and other cash transfer mechanisms (I.e. child support and disability grants) targeting women and mothers, to reduce unpaid care burden on girls, and engaging in risk behaviour (such as transactional sex) to access resources

- block grants to schools or clusters of schools linked to locally developed school improvement plans with a strong focus on equity and inclusion

- greater private sector involvement in education, especially in ways which limit education cost for normally marginalised groups

- government commitment to free basic education

- removing any hidden costs of education that parents continue to bear such as uniforms, textbooks and (often unofficial) tuition fees.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

How concerned is the Ministry of Education with providing financial support to children of very poor families?

Provide flexible, non-formal alternatives to formal schools

Enable the provision of flexible, non-formal alternatives to formal schools, but with appropriate assessment mechanisms, and the ability of successful learners to move back into the formal system.

Non-formal education is learning that happens outside of the school walls and is usually linked with community groups. For example, agricultural extension and training, pre-school centres, literacy support classes, social media sites providing information and training, village facilitators delivering health and nutrition information, trade union education and awareness training.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

To what extent has the Ministry of Education developed 'second-chance', non-formal alternatives to formal schools?

Note: For further information about second chance programs see the *Education Pathways: Foundation* and *Practitioner* level modules

Curricula and materials

Contain curricula and learning materials which:

- represent the full range of diversity found in the nation including men's and women's work, urban-rural environments, ethnic/linguistic traditions and languages

- are adaptable to the diverse needs of the range of students actually sitting in the classroom

- actively promotes gender equality and challenges harmful social norms and masculinities (i.e. the acceptability of on using violence in the classroom and outside it)

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

To what extent is the curriculum tailored to the national and local contexts?

Inclusion-focused teacher education programs and materials

Pre-service and in-service teacher education programs and teaching materials are inclusion-focused if they:

- reflect the diversity of the nation

- deal explicitly with issues of gender inequality, disability, ethnicity, and human rights

- provide teachers with the skills to reflect on their own sub-conscious bias and identify, assess, and respond to the individual needs of their students. This should also include an explicit focus on improving teacher capacity in terms of pedagogy and engaging learners can be an impactful approach to fostering non-violent classroom management.

A 2013 study carried out by UNESCO Bangkok reviewed the development of school texts and teacher education materials regarding their treatment of diversity.

Some of the findings include:

- A review of school texts in Cambodia showed that people from rural and remote backgrounds are badly under-represented and often negatively presented. People with disabilities are nearly invisible with most of the few illustrations showing them as ugly, unintelligent, hopeless, or sad

- Most authors of teacher education materials, in almost all countries, are university-based, urban-resident, and/or upper-class men. This demographic background can colour the development of content and may not naturally represent the diversity of the nation.

Source: UNESCO, 2013, Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education Materials.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

Have any analyses been made concerning the content of the Ministry's curricula and materials – for students and training teachers – in regard to how they represent (or don't) the nation's diversity?

Pedagogical strategies and practices

Instructional strategies and practices should be interactive, child-centred, personalised, and flexible. They should promote processes such as differentiated instruction, multi-grade teaching, and teaching to multiple intelligences and encourage all children to enrol and learn.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following question.

To what extent does the Ministry's in-service and pre-service training place a focus on teaching practices which are meant to decrease exclusion?

Promote the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction

Evidence continues to show that mother-tongue based bilingual education programs are essential for the inclusion of linguistic minorities in the education system.

Teaching ethnic minorities exclusively in the dominant language reduces their ability to learn and to take up the dominant language, risking higher dropout rates from education which in turn leads to further disadvantage and exclusion.

Worldwide, nearly seven thousand languages are spoken today. Many languages are spoken by ethnic minorities, who are educationally and economically disadvantaged because of limited language fluency. More than two hundred million children globally live in homes where languages spoken are different than the ones used in school. These children are vulnerable to non-enrolment, repetition and drop-out. This gap must be bridged if countries are to fulfil the millennium development goals and the Education for All aims.

Multilingual education means teaching through more than one language. For example, if you have a minority child, that child will be taught in its mother tongue for as long as possible through primary education and then another language; say the national language would be added at a later stage and then maybe even a third language, an international language would be added.

Mother tongue based multilingual education assists learners to build a good bridge between the home languages and the official languages and contributes therefore to national unity and also to preservation of linguistic and cultural identity. Educational research also around the world indicates the extent of development of a child's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their capacity to acquire a second and a third language and their overall educational achievement.

Mother tongue based multilingual education starts by teaching a child in his or her mother tongue and then gradually one or two other languages are introduced. To be successful,

these programs need the support of community leaders, teachers and government officials.

By understanding and respecting differences in languages, we can better bridge communication and cultural gaps and more effectively meet our APGs through the promotion and mutual understanding of trust and positive relationships.

Note: For more information on mother tongue teaching, see the MLE Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded published by UNESCO Bangkok featuring case studies from China, Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines.

A successful pattern for language and literacy development is:

- Initial literacy in the mother tongue (zero to six years of age, including in ECD programs).
- Gradual introduction of the national language in early primary, used together with mother tongue (Grades 1-3).
- Transition to national (and then potentially international) languages, with the mother tongue still available for informal use or taught as a subject (Grades 4 and up).

Note: The importance of mother-tongue based schooling for educational quality by Carole Benson for UNESCO (2005) is a useful resource for further thinking and information on this topic.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

To what extent does the Ministry of Education recognise the diversity of languages and cultures?

How receptive is it to the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction?

Use innovative programs to reach remote groups

Ministries of Education can use various innovative programs to reach remote groups, including mobile schools (for nomadic groups), mobile teachers (who service two or more communities), the use of multi-grade teaching, and properly resourcing small schools.

An activity for you

Think about your country program or a developing country known to you and answer the following questions.

What percentage of the country's population is considered to live in remote areas?

To what extent has the Ministry of Education developed programs – such as multi-grade teaching – to make education accessible to this group?

5 WHAT POLICIES CAN BE PUT IN PLACE AT THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LEVEL TO REDUCE MARGINALISATION?

Develop child-friendly schools

Develop child-friendly schools which are:

- effective in helping children learn what they want to and need to learn

- protective and healthy for children's physical and psychological health

- sensitive to issues of gender inequality and contexts with high rates of gender-based violence in schools and communities, by creating safe learning environments.

- welcoming of student, parent, and community participation; and, above all,

- inclusive and gender responsive.

UNICEF and Save the Children, among other agencies, have been developing the child-friendly schools approach. In the best of cases such as in Sri Lanka, Lao PDR, and Cambodia, child-friendly schools have become the basis for education system reform.

The overall intent is to ensure a healthy, protective, and inclusive school culture and learning environment. One that is hygienic, safe, free of corporal punishment, and respectful of difference and diversity. In more and more countries, Ministries of Education and Health are working together to ensure that schools are academically effective, healthy and protective.

Many countries in the Caribbean are working hard to create school environments free of frequent school-based violence, including both psycho-social violence such as bullying and corporal punishment. Such schools aim to teach students skills to practice non-violence in all parts of their life.

Promote more targeted, affirmative action at the school level

Promote more targeted, affirmative action at the school level in regard to marginalised learners. This can mean:

- the abolition of school fees and other costs for some or preferably all students

- targeted school food programs

- targeted support for girls to attend and stay in school, safely (e.g. ECD programs to take care of younger siblings, the provision of low energy stoves to limit the time required to collect firewood, life-skills programs, including information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and where to seek services, and provision of menstrual hygiene products and disposal facilities)

- assistance with transport

- support for teachers to recognise and respond to children with emotional-behavioural problems
- developing basic counselling skills for teachers
- the provision of teacher aids and other special support (so-called 'assistive devices') for children with disabilities
- the remediation for children with learning difficulties such as delayed literacy.

Assess learning differences

Assess learning differences among students and then:

- personalise instruction to match these differences
- work in the mother-tongue of the students (even when more than one language is spoken in a classroom)
- provide special assistance to children with disabilities such as putting sight- and hearing-impaired students at the front of the room
- teach in more gender-responsive ways in contexts where the sex of learners makes a difference.

More and more countries are providing initial literacy in the early grades in mother tongue – either as national policy, as in the Philippines and Cambodia, or as pilot projects such as in Thailand and Vietnam.

Ensure an inclusive school design and infrastructure

Ensure that school infrastructure is physically inclusive is safe (i.e. separate toilets for boys and girls, WASH and integration of child protection and violence service provision) and serves the diversity of students who should be attending. Schools are seldom built to cater for children with disabilities, and sanitation and hygiene issues relevant to education for girls are often neglected.

UNICEF and UNESCO have been especially concerned with ensuring that schools are not only accessible to learners with physical needs (ramps, wheel-chair accessible) but also resilient to the frequent disasters which affect many countries e.g. earthquakes in Iran and typhoons in the Philippines.

Develop local curriculum content

Revising the curriculum to the local context and needs of learners is more inclusive than using a standardised national and often urban-biased curriculum. Many education systems including Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia mandate that a certain percentage of the curriculum in basic education (e.g. 25 per cent) can be 'local content'; but this is easier said than done.

There is therefore the need to develop local competencies and skills to adapt and develop curricula to local and more inclusive contexts. The building of teachers' capacities to be co-developers of such curricula is an important and often missing part of the process.

Encourage community involvement

More inclusive education cannot be achieved without the support and assistance of the local community. This is partly a matter of attitudes. If parents do not want children with disabilities, or of different castes or ethnicity, or affected by HIV/AIDS in the same classroom with their own children – and the school does nothing to combat this exclusionary attitude, then inclusion will never be achieved. Communities must therefore be encouraged to support the education of all children living in them.

How can parents and the community support inclusive practices?

Parents and other community members can also actively support inclusive practices. They can be involved, for example, in:

- mapping children not in school

- supporting with enrolment campaigns, emphasizing equitable gender norms and the important of out of school girls returning to school

- providing support in the classroom for marginalised groups of learners or for mother-tongue teaching and learning.

- increasing parent and community engagement in school governance, to support girls education, and increase awareness on sexual violence in schools

- engaging teachers, parents and community members knowledge and attitudes about girls' bodily integrity.
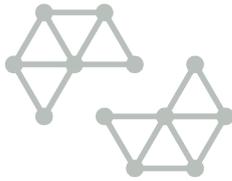
Resources and toolkits

A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education.

This guide is relevant to all countries and educational systems. While targeting improvements in formal education, it recognizes that education occurs in many contexts – in formal, non-formal and informal settings – and across one's lifetime. The guide can either be used independently or it can be incorporated into other policy review processes and tools to ensure attention to equity and inclusion.

The guide is built around an assessment framework that can serve to:

- review how well equity and inclusion currently figure in existing policies
- decide which actions are needed to improve policies and their implementation towards equitable and inclusive education systems
- monitor progress as actions are taken.

The guide includes evidence that informs the assessment framework, examples of initiatives that are contributing to more inclusive and equitable education systems in different parts of the world, and recommendations for further reading

Source: UNESCO, 2017, A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education.

Index for inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools

This toolkit is an important resource for school-level planning for inclusion. It helps schools to systematically review all aspects of their cultures, policies, and practices related to inclusive education. It has now been adapted for use in over 25 countries and translated into over 20 languages. The Index promotes a detailed investigation of what values, such as respect for diversity, equity, community, and participation, mean for how education is provided in classrooms, schools, homes, and communities.

Source: Booth & Ainscow, 2011, Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools.
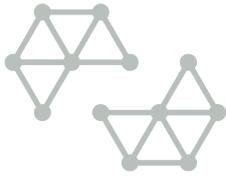
6 TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Assessment questions

Answer the following questions by ticking 'True' or 'False'. Once you have selected your answers to all the questions, turn the page to 'The correct answers are...' to check the accuracy of your answers.

Question 1

Teachers are usually trained to welcome diversity and difference in their classroom and see it as an opportunity rather than a problem.

Is this statement true or false?   ☐ True   ☐ False

Question 2

Ministries of education and schools need to accept some of the responsibility for children dropping out – or being "pushed out" – of school.

Is this statement true or false?   ☐ True   ☐ False

Question 3

Although secondary school enrolment is generally increasing around the world, many barriers related to poverty, gender, disability, and geographical distance remain.

Is this statement true or false?   ☐ True   ☐ False

Question 4

Given the importance of preparing adolescents and youth for the ever-changing world of work, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is usually a well-financed and respected part of the education system.

Is this statement true or false?   ☐ True   ☐ False

Question 5

Official literacy rates published by ministries of education are usually accurate estimates of literacy ability, reliably disaggregated by gender, regional, and ethnic disparities.

Is this statement true or false? ☐ True ☐ False

Question 6

Participation of all children in early childhood development programs is an important means to decrease marginalisation in primary education.

Is this statement true or false? ☐ True ☐ False

Question 7

Textbooks and other materials usually reflect the diversity of the children and teachers of the country.

Is this statement true or false? ☐ True ☐ False

Question 8

Gender inequality is not the only barrier to enrolling or completing basic education.

Is this statement true or false? ☐ True ☐ False
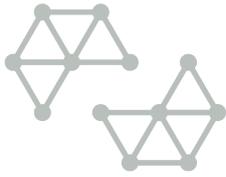
The correct answers are...

Question 1

Teachers are usually trained to welcome diversity and difference in their classroom and see it as an opportunity rather than a problem.

This statement is false. Teachers are not always trained to welcome diversity and difference and often see it as an additional burden/task to teaching to the 'norm'.

Question 2

Ministries of education and schools need to accept some of the responsibility for children dropping out – or being "pushed out" – of school.

This statement is true.

Question 3

Although secondary school enrolment is generally increasing around the world, many barriers related to poverty, gender, disability, and geographical distance remain.

This statement is true. There are still many barriers such as poverty, gender, disability, and geographical distance in relation to students enrolling in secondary school. Education may also be inadequate for those who do have a chance to enrol, as young people often leave secondary school without basic literacy, numeracy or the skills required to enter the world of employment.

Question 4

Given the importance of preparing adolescents and youth for the ever-changing world of work, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is usually a well-financed and respected part of the education system.

This statement is false. TVET is a comparatively poorly resourced sector of education; the infrastructure, equipment, curricula and standards for effective TVET programs are often lower priorities in developing countries' education systems. Discussing with partner governments the potential benefits of TVET is made harder as vocational education can be relatively expensive and an under-appreciated type of qualification.

Question 5

Official literacy rates published by ministries of education are usually accurate estimates of

literacy ability, reliably disaggregated by gender, regional, and ethnic disparities.

This statement is false. The data on literacy rates are often not disaggregated sufficient to give details against these groups. The method of assessing literacy data is often flawed resulting in overestimation of literacy rates. Definitions of literacy vary widely between countries with literacy often based on a self-assessment or a family head assessment. This means that official literacy figures are generally accepted to be over-estimates.

Question 6

Participation of all children in early childhood development programs is an important means to decrease marginalisation in primary education.

This statement is true. Participation of disadvantaged children in early childhood development programs is an important means of ensuring vulnerable children start school on an equal footing.

Question 7

Textbooks and other materials usually reflect the diversity of the children and teachers of the country.

This statement is false. The same textbooks and materials are usually used regardless of children or teachers' specific backgrounds, circumstances or needs. Minority children can feel marginalised and disengaged if textbooks only illustrate the majority.   Students' learning materials should, wherever possible, reflect the children and teachers of a country, particularly in the examples provided of concepts being taught.

Question 8

Gender inequality is not the only barrier to enrolling or completing basic education.

This statement is true. Gender inequality is not the only barrier to enrolling or completing basic education. However, it is a significant barrier particularly when it interacts with other constraints to enrolment and completion such as poverty, cultural factors, ethnicity, disability, remoteness and safety concerns.

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Learn more about…

- *Technical and Vocational Education – China, found at,* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K6Tz9v8AGE&playnext=1&list=PL9C77B40B576D81E1&feature=results_main

- *The Lao National Literacy Survey, found at,* http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001352/135263eb.pdf

- *The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, found at,* https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/The%20Right%20of%20Children%20to%20Free%20and%20Compulsory%20Education%20Act,%202009.pdf

- *UNESCO's MLE Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded, found at,* https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Inclusion%20and%20Gender%20Equality%20in%20Education/publications/MTB%20MLE/MLE_Advocacy_Kit_-_Policy_Makers_Booklet.pdf

- *Mother tongue-based multilingual education: the key to unlocking SDG 4: quality Education for All, found at,* https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247333

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