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**Core skills for all**  
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# Our world is moving quickly

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## Foreword

We live in a time of unequalled global collaboration. New technologies allow us to work together and share ideas and insights in ways which were unimaginable a decade ago.

The potential to solve problems, create innovative solutions and facilitate constructive relationships between diverse groups of people is endless. However, to realise this potential our education systems must ensure that all young people – regardless of their gender, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic background, health or medical condition – are able to access and engage in their education successfully in order to develop the knowledge, skills and values to live and work in a globalised economy and contribute responsibly both locally and globally.

Our education systems and young people are facing significant challenges. First, while we have much to gain from our increased connectivity, we are also faced with the reality of increasing inequalities. Our young people need not only to be globally competitive but also globally competent – able to analyse and understand intercultural issues and with the social, emotional and leadership skills to face the world's challenges. This is what a relevant education needs to offer.<sup>1</sup>

Second, recent education to employability reports highlight the paradox of large-scale youth unemployment and employers struggling to fill entry-level vacancies. The most often cited reason is that while employers still require and value subject knowledge, they are placing a much greater premium on soft skills to sit

alongside that knowledge than they have previously. It is these soft skills that students are struggling to demonstrate because few education systems are focused on giving students the opportunity to develop them.

And finally, as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals stress, 'inclusive and equitable quality education' needs to be achieved across the world. However, the Global Monitoring Report from 2016 shows that only 70 per cent of children in low-income countries will complete primary school in 2030, a goal that should have been achieved in 2015. In addition, while others are in school, many are not learning the basics, and many others are intellectually disengaged from that schooling because the education they receive does not appear to be relevant to their lives nor provide the skills they need to thrive.

As educators, our responsibility is to prepare every young person for their future in the best possible way. While qualifications and knowledge remain important, they are no longer enough to secure a successful future. Rather, young people need and deserve the opportunity to grow into well-rounded, creative and critical citizens, ready to engage with labour markets and shape the future for themselves and future generations.

Our work with schools directly addresses these issues through contribution to education discourse, system development and provision of support services for teachers and leaders. We are committed to working with school systems to create more inclusive classrooms and have brought together international thinking and practice in this area to examine it further. We believe this is the most productive way to invest in our shared future.

For inclusion to be successful and sustainable the three pillars of policy, practice and culture need to align in a way that empowers and enables our school leaders and teachers to make changes within their own unique systems and contexts. Through our work, we aim to empower individual educators to make informed decisions about how they can best provide for all their pupils.

We know there is no single template for success, but we believe that all young people should have an entitlement to high-quality, inclusive education and that this is worthy of our investment. These are challenging issues but with mutual respect and commitment, I am certain we can enable more young people to play their part in a successful and prosperous future global community.

1. Brookings Institution (2017) *What will the Sustainable Development Goals really mean for education?* (Part I). Brookings Institution. Available online at: [www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2015/06/18/what-will-the-sustainable-development-goals-really-mean-for-education-part-i/](http://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2015/06/18/what-will-the-sustainable-development-goals-really-mean-for-education-part-i/)

# Access and engagement: core skills for all

## Introduction

Susan Douglas

The two statements ‘all children have an entitlement to education’ and ‘all children have the capacity to make progress’ are easy ones to make and to secure agreement on.

But while these fundamental beliefs are common, the building blocks that create our educational landscapes – policies, infrastructure, teaching practices, societal values and resources – often mean that fully achieving such aspirations can be at best challenging and in the worst cases almost impossible.

In 2015, the World Education Forum adopted the Incheon Declaration, committing to ‘a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no one behind’. The declaration continues ‘Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all.’

The British Council believes that the inclusion of children and young people into the regular education systems of their respective countries is an entitlement and a fundamental human right regardless of their gender, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic background, health or medical condition.

If the inclusion of all children and young people is to be successful and sustainable then it must be predicated on an approach that is achievable, empowering and based upon a thorough and sensitive understanding of the current context of the particular school and education system. The commitment to developing inclusive practice therefore requires a multi-tiered response that addresses policy, practice and culture at all levels within the education system.

### Access and engagement

The basic principles to consider in developing more inclusive education are those of access and engagement.

- **Access** is related to pupils being able to freely attend school regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, ability or health needs. Access therefore focuses mainly on policies and structures.
- **Engagement** is about ensuring that what pupils experience when they do access their school is relevant, meaningful, empowering and beneficial. Engagement is therefore focused on practice and pedagogy.

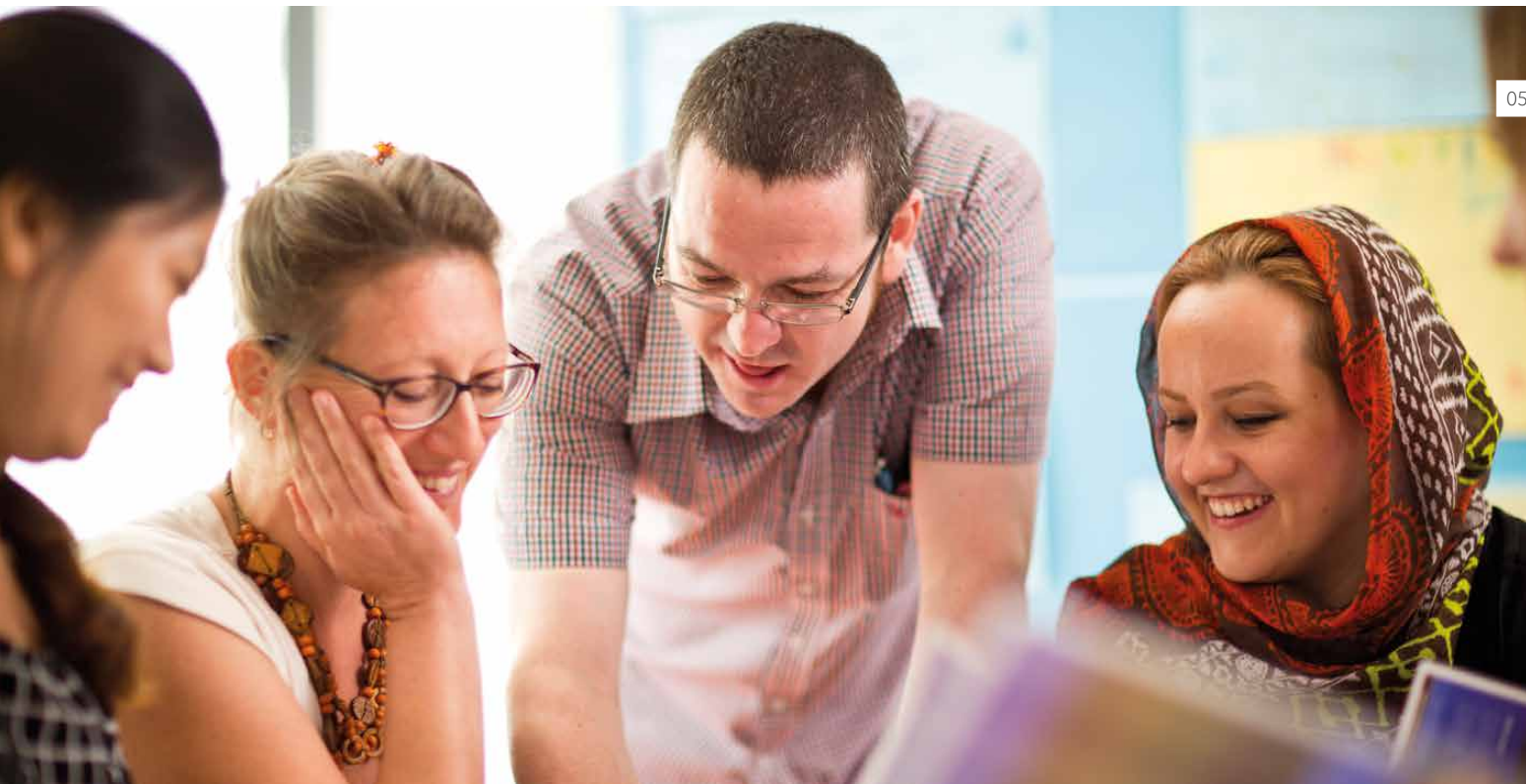
Without access, an engaging curriculum is of no relevance. Without engagement, access is simply about being there rather than about learning and achieving. These two things cannot be attained without a culture that supports and expects high standards for all.

Of course, in order to secure changes in policy, practice and culture, the people that work within the system need to be both empowered and enabled to make those changes.

- **Empowerment** is about giving practitioners not only the permission but also the encouragement and incentives to change, as people are far more likely to put in the time and effort if they feel there is an agreed direction of travel to follow and that they have the authority to act.
- **Enablement** is about supporting our practitioners to develop the skills and knowledge they need to teach children with a wide range of needs and from a wide range of backgrounds effectively.

Successful inclusive practice will only be secured by change at all levels within the system. While there have been significant gains in expanding access to education over the last 15 years, there is still a long way to go. However, schools and teachers can still positively effect change for students by altering and improving their experiences and the expectations that surround them, and by creating supportive and enabling environments. Simply put, teachers can improve engagement.

The rest of this paper therefore concentrates on how a consideration of theoretical models can empower a practitioner to look at issues from a fresh perspective, allowing the development of new ways of thinking and finding new solutions to some old challenges.



### Fresh perspectives

There is a fundamental difference between equality – where everyone is treated the same – and equitability – where everyone is treated according to their own needs. Inclusion is not about treating everyone the same, it is about demonstrating the skills and awareness as a teacher of how to identify and respond to the diverse needs of any group of pupils.

To help teachers acquire and hone these skills, consideration of the following three theoretical models is useful.

#### 1. Social relations and gender equality

Inclusion in society and education is affected by many factors, both externally from the environment and internally from our attitudes and beliefs. Some of these factors are explicit and easily seen while some may be hidden or unrecognised.

The social relations framework originated with academics led by Naila Kabeer at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, and explores how, in any organisation or society, exclusion and poverty arise out of unequal social relations, that is to say an unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunities among certain groups, based on gender or other characteristics such as class, disability, caste or ethnicity. The research shows that it is the people who make the rules and distribute the rewards who are the decision makers and who ultimately hold the resources and the power.<sup>2</sup>

**Social relations theory** is interested in looking at five aspects of institutions.

**Rules** – who makes them? They usually prescribe how things get done – what is done, how it is done, by whom it will be done and who will benefit.

**Activities** – what is done and by whom? For example, certain tasks often get assigned to certain social groups such as women caring for the young, sick and elderly. The rewards for this type of work are often much smaller than for other types of work.

**Resources** – what is used and what is produced? This includes human resources such as labour or education, physical material like food, assets or capital, and intangible resources such as goodwill, information or networks.

**People** – who is in and who is out? This refers to the question of who is allowed in and who is excluded from institutions as well as who is allowed into the higher offices and positions.

**Power** – who decides and whose interests are served? Who loses power if social relations change? Who gains it?

These social relations are not fixed, however, and can change over time and with commitment from the people and institutions in a society.

#### 2. Unconscious bias

We all tend to have unconscious biases which we have developed over time about certain groups of people – usually those that are different from us. Unconscious bias is defined as ‘an inflexible positive or negative prejudgement about the nature, character and abilities of an individual, based on a generalised idea about the group to which the person belongs.’<sup>3</sup>

Left unchallenged, these unconscious biases, which are influenced by background, cultural environment and personal experience, can have a significant impact on our decisions, actions and behaviours without us realising. Importantly, in an educational setting, this can mean a practitioner having significantly lower expectations of one or more groups of pupils within their context.

2. Kabeer, N (1994) *Reversed realities*. London: Verso.

3. Thiederman, S (2003) *Making Diversity Work*. Chicago: Dearborn.



### 3. Social model of disability

What is posing the problem – the wheelchair or the stairs?



© iStockPhoto – Boguslaw Mazur

The social model of disability moves away from a deficit-focused approach to disability, where the differences of the individual are seen as a personal inadequacy or abnormality. This medical model of thinking requires that the individual is 'mended' or 'cured' and then supported to enable them to fit in. Social models of disability turn the medical model around. It is the school or the organisation that carries the responsibility to change, not the individual. Barriers to inclusion are social, not personal. If steps are an issue for a physically disabled child, then a ramp must be provided; if a child's intellectual abilities are too high or too low for the current curriculum offer, then the curriculum must be developed or extended.

All three of these theoretical models are useful to explore in terms of inclusion and can challenge our thinking. Who makes the policies and promotes best practice in relation to inclusion? Are we as a school and as practitioners actively challenging our unconscious biases and prejudices? To what extent are we currently adopting social or medical models of disability in our policies and practices?

#### Fresh approaches

All learners flourish in well-managed classrooms. When teachers discuss and communicate basic rules and understandings with their learners, classrooms become places to learn pro-social behaviour. Teachers have the opportunity to model and demonstrate pro-social behaviour daily in how they speak and act. This is important with regard to the inclusion of all learners. Learning to behave in a pro-social and inclusive way is of benefit to the learners, their peers, the school community and society as a whole.

In creating an inclusive classroom, teachers will need to consider not only how they teach and what they teach, but also how inclusive values such as respect, co-operation, collaboration, helpfulness and empathy demonstrably underpin the culture, ethos and relationships within the classroom. This need not be complicated but must be explicit, and is often seen in class-generated rules or contracts for behaviour.

Equally, there are many simple but effective techniques that can support a more inclusive pedagogy. Using a variety of strategies for choosing which child should answer a question, such as 'pose, pause, pounce, bounce', hot seating or random draws, would be a good example, as would be learning more about other methods of differentiating effectively.

As we develop our self-awareness and reflect on our practice, our techniques and pedagogies will undoubtedly become more sophisticated. Successful inclusion, without doubt, relies on a continual process of reflection, adjustment and planning but maybe, above all else, it relies on our educators having an unwavering commitment to and belief in the Incheon ambition that 'No education target should be considered met unless met by all.'

There is no more important an ambition – education is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development. It is the key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication, and therefore we cannot afford to have any child left behind.

# Effective leadership for effective inclusion

Philip Garner

Widespread agreement exists among educators in many countries that the key determinants of meaningful inclusive education relate to the skills, knowledge, attitudes and practices of school leaders. Successful schools are invariably those that are led by individuals who are able to establish a clear sense of purpose concerning education for all, and the recognition that this is best realised by an effective organisational structure based on continuing professional development. In fact, the most effective schools of all are those who have school leaders who actively seek to continuously build a capacity among teachers to be more inclusive practitioners.

The personal attributes of school leaders who promote the growth of inclusive school communities are the key features in developing school climates that support all students, educationally as well as socially. As Zammit and her colleagues have noted, 'values of social justice and equity usually underpin the passion, enthusiasm, persistence and optimism of successful leaders'.<sup>4</sup> The inference made in much of the literature on school leadership is that, first and foremost, the emotional intelligence of the school leader is an essential vehicle in promoting this mindset across the whole school.

But how do these individuals promote their vision of a school that is more inclusive? A popular contemporary approach has been signalled by the notion of 'communities of inclusive learning practice'.<sup>5</sup> This is based on the growth of a collective, shared vision within the school by promoting reflection, supportive critiques of practice and a school-wide commitment to enabling all students to access learning to realise their optimum capacity. Such communities of practice also hold a fundamental belief in the value of problem-solving approaches in teaching and learning, as well as the concept of lifelong learning. The latter enshrines a belief that all members of a school's community – head teachers, teachers, teaching assistants, support staff, students and parents – should continuously seek to develop new skills and knowledge to promote a climate of inclusive learning.

In fact, recent research indicates that school leaders improve the quality of teaching and student outcomes by establishing vibrant, robust and strong professional communities. Ingvarson and his colleagues (2006)<sup>6</sup> commented that schools with such distinct professional cultures are 'characterised by shared norms and values, a focus on student learning, collaborative approaches to work (and) reflective inquiry into teaching practices'.

Leaders themselves must be at the very heart of promoting a community of inclusive learning practice within their own school, both by modelling inclusive practice themselves and by giving others the opportunity to realise their potential. Above all, their big challenge is to recognise these imperatives while providing resources and support. They need to do this by acknowledging that, for many schools, such a culture change will be a long-term effort involving significant attitudinal shifts on the part of all concerned. Also notable is that this will involve changes in institutional organisation and pedagogic practice to enable all learners to access a broad and relevant curriculum. The role of leadership within the community of inclusive learning practice is to be the principal catalyst in enabling everyone to have the best chance to thrive as a learner.

4. Zammit, K, Sinclair, C, Cole, B, Singh, M, Costley, D, Brown a'Court, L and Rushton, K (2007) *Teaching and Leading for Quality Australian Schools*. Sydney: AITSL.

5. Australian Special Education Principals Association (2017) *Leading Learning for All*. Perth: ASEPA (forthcoming).

6. Ingvarson, L, Anderson, M, Gronn, P and Jackson, A (2006) *Standards for School Leadership: a critical review of the literature*. Available online at: [http://research.acer.edu.au/teaching\\_standards/3](http://research.acer.edu.au/teaching_standards/3)



The implication is that school leaders need to ensure that strategic actions take place at every level of school operation, so that the vision of education for all based on a community of practice has a greater chance of becoming a reality. This will undoubtedly require a focus on:

- developing or reviewing a whole-school policy on inclusive education
- reviewing or auditing existing practices to identify future needs
- formulating an action plan linked to key targets and timelines
- establishing a human resources plan so that the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills are developed through training opportunities.

While all four focal points are interdependent, the final requirement, linked to the promotion of self-learning within the school, is the area where the personal attributes of the school leader can have the most powerful effect.

In summary, inclusive practice in our schools will not develop as an effective approach for all children unless the involvement and support of school leaders is highly visible. Many schools, in widely different international settings, are proving that an effective response to the diverse needs of learners can be achieved – often in spite of economic or social disadvantages. The common denominator informing these successes is a commitment of the school leader to the promotion of lifelong professional learning, within a community of inclusive learning practice.



Pledge cards from the Connecting Classrooms global inclusion conference which was held in Dubai in November 2016.

# Language for resilience: the role of language as a tool to support resilience and inclusion

Marie Delaney



They are just sitting in class, don't know Turkish, what can I do... and I can't do one-to-one with them.

Turkish teacher, speaking about Syrian refugee students<sup>7</sup>

This comment from a teacher in Turkey shows how a lack of language proficiency in the language of classroom instruction can be a real barrier to inclusion in education for refugee students. Recent global conflicts and mass migrations, in particular from Syria, mean that many students are now requiring education in countries other than their home country and often in countries where the medium of instruction is a foreign language. Language differences act as barriers for the refugees and their host communities. Children who do not have the language to access the curriculum struggle in class, and teachers, without an awareness of the child's home language, can struggle to teach them. In the wider community, misunderstandings and mistrust can arise due to the inability to communicate with each other.

Language for resilience is a concept which highlights the contribution that language learning can make in enhancing the type of individual, community and institutional resilience needed for education systems to cope with mass influxes of refugees. An insufficient grasp of a required language excludes and marginalises people throughout their education and life. Students who do not have the language to access the curriculum are at a severe disadvantage. Many do not attend school

or drop out due to feeling frustrated and confused. Even those students who remain in school can feel excluded and not engaged if they feel that their own home language is not valued and respected.

Without a common language of communication, the parents of these students often struggle to communicate with the school and to be accepted into the wider community – they quite simply do not have a voice. People who already face the barriers of displacement, loss, poor housing and low income are further disadvantaged by lack of language.

## Definition of resilience

Resilience can be defined as 'the ability of individuals, households, communities and institutions to anticipate, withstand, recover and transform from shocks and crises'.<sup>8</sup> It is also enhanced by the level of social competence which individuals have<sup>9</sup> and by features such as meaningful engagement, purpose and achievement, as identified by Seligman.<sup>10</sup>

Language can therefore be considered to enhance resilience on:

- an individual level (the student who copes with adversity by developing good relationships through being able to communicate with classmates)

- the community level (strengthening the family's social capital by gaining school- and university-level qualifications and access to employment, thus giving meaningful engagement and achievement)
- the institutional level (for example the capacity of ministries of education to train significant numbers of qualified teachers to cope with the rise in student numbers and the languages they speak).

More specifically, there are five interconnected ways that language is an essential component in enhancing the resilience of individuals, communities and institutions.

## Home language and literacy development: creating the foundations for shared identity, belonging and future study through home language use

Children need to have opportunities to improve and maintain their understanding of their own home language in order to retain linguistic and cultural links to their home, thus preserving their sense of identity. Moreover, children and young people's ability to attain high levels of success at school relates to the language of their education. This is especially the

7. British Council (2017) *Language for Resilience: supporting Syrian refugees*. Available online at: [www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/thought-leadership/research-report/language-resilience](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/thought-leadership/research-report/language-resilience)

8. UNHCR (2017) *Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2015–2016. In response to the Syria crisis*. Available online at: [www.unhcr.org/uk/partners/donors/54918efa9/regional-refugee-resilience-plan-2015-2016-response-syria-crisis.html](http://www.unhcr.org/uk/partners/donors/54918efa9/regional-refugee-resilience-plan-2015-2016-response-syria-crisis.html)

9. Luthar, SS and Cicchetti, D (2000) The construct of resilience: Implications for interventions and social policies. *Development and Psychopathology* 12/4: 857–885.

10. Seligman, M (2011) *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*. New York: Free Press.



case in relation to the degree to which mother tongue instruction occurs in the early years and how additional languages are introduced in subsequent years. Having a strong foundation in their home language provides a secure base for additional learning.

**Access to education, training and employment: language competence provides access to, and engagement in, the world of education, training and employment**

Proficiency in additional languages provides new opportunities for education and employment. Learning the language of the host country allows young people and adults to reduce their vulnerability and to contribute to their new communities. It is vital to identify the support refugees need to develop their additional language competence so that they can gain access to employment and training. For some this will involve mastering specialised and vocational language to enter specific professions or trades.

**Dignity and life skills: language learning activities as a basis for developing individual resilience; ensuring dignity, self-sufficiency and life skills**

Language is vital for everyday life and interaction with services and support. Women in particular are often marginalised due to poor language skills. Research in the UK has found that many migrant

women benefit from learning English with their children, as it has a positive influence on physical and mental health as well as providing much-needed opportunities to come together with other women in a safe environment. Ward and Spacey<sup>11</sup> found that, although many women valued strong communities and supported their neighbours, few were active citizens outside their own community, primarily because of language, low confidence and lack of information.

On a personal dignity level, language is needed to access medical help, to interact with support and welfare agencies, to shop and to communicate with schools. Too often children become language brokers, translating for their parents and taking on adult responsibilities, leading to difficulties when the child has to translate on their own behalf in school meetings with those in authority. Lack of language prevents parents, particularly mothers, from supporting their child's right to education.

**Learning together and social cohesion: language learning activities as a basis for bolstering social cohesion and intercultural understanding**

Language learning allows people from different communities to interact with each other, to learn more about each other and to mitigate any misunderstandings. Feeling connected to a community and to others is a key factor in personal resilience, and

being able to communicate with each other is a key factor in community resilience. Classes where communities come together to learn new skills in the new language, or language classes where everyone is learning a new language together, provide refugees with opportunities for increased levels of integration into their new homes.

**Language programmes as a supportive intervention and a way to address the effects of loss, displacement and trauma on behaviour and learning**

Language learning activities can be supportive interventions to address the effects of loss, displacement and trauma experienced by many refugees. Language gives a voice so that stories can be heard and understood. This may be through the provision of creative activities, play and stories. Using stories and the arts in language learning allows feelings to be expressed in the indirect third person with meaningful engagement in language and emotions.<sup>12</sup> This can be particularly powerful in the safe space of a second or third language.

**Building the capacity of language teachers to create inclusive classrooms and enhance institutional resilience**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>13</sup> identifies the need to support national systems as the core

11. Ward, J and Spacey, R (2008) *Dare to Dream: Learning journeys of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali women*. Leicester: NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education).

12. Sunderland, M (1997) *Using Storytelling as a Therapeutic Tool with Children*. Speechmark Publishing.

13. UNDP (2015) *Pathways to Resilience for Syrian Refugees Living in Camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq*. Erbil: Middle East Research Institute.



of the resilience-based development response. In the context of language for resilience, this means identifying the needs of the teachers (both language teachers and other teachers) and the resources that could help to build their capacity to support students with additional languages. There is a need for teacher training programmes which:

- change teacher attitudes – research on inclusion shows that teaching is affected by personal attitudes and professional values, in many cases teachers need to understand that refugee children may have been out of school for several years and are not ‘unintelligent’ – they may simply lack language skills
- raise the awareness of all teachers about the importance of valuing home languages and provide strategies which help students who are not working in their home language
- help teachers to understand how important their own ethnicity and language knowledge are in responding to students from different cultures
- encourage the use of the creative arts as a vehicle for learning languages in class and for schools to form partnerships with creative arts organisations

- help teachers to understand the psycho-social impact of displacement and loss and for language teachers to understand the opportunities for safe exploration in the language classroom
- develop student-centred learning, sharing language knowledge and peer support systems such as study buddies
- encourage teachers to be critical of the language curriculum and to be aware of which languages are being valued at the expense of others
- train non-language teachers in ways to teach their subject to students who are not operating in their home language.

### Conclusion

Language is an important tool in supporting the resilience of refugee students and their families while at the same time reducing their vulnerability, and ministries, schools and teachers of all subjects have an important role to play in developing this.

All staff will need to be aware of the benefits of a multilingual approach to inclusion and how the lingua franca may exclude some groups. It is important to audit regularly, for example, which languages staff speak, where in the hierarchy these staff are, how and where communication takes place with parents and how the school provides learning for the wider community.

Schools can become hubs for formal and informal language learning where communities come together to learn and interact positively with each other. Students can teach teachers their home language, parents and children can learn the language of the host country together, and parents can come together after school in language life skills learning groups or to learn a foreign language together.

Language learning and language awareness link with all areas of inclusion, diversity, citizenship, cultural awareness and life skills. It is not a separate discipline and an emphasis on language enhances the resilience and skills of all students in communication, collaboration and building peaceful communities.

# Supporting speech and language, and developing language learning by using inclusive practices

Phil Dexter

We know that good communication is vital for successful learning, so it is understandable that as language learning is based so much on communication and interaction, this can be a significant challenge for many learners.

These may be learners identified as having special educational needs, not identified but still demonstrating challenges associated with special educational needs, or who have other sorts of challenges such as having a different first or home language to their classroom peers.

## **What types of speech and language difficulties might we identify in our learners?**

Speech and language needs vary. A learner may have difficulty with speaking (expressive language) or understanding (receptive language). They may have problems expressing feelings and interacting with others. This can cause low self-esteem and frustration, and may lead to behavioural problems. As speech and language problems are not always obvious, we have to think about what lies behind a behaviour and a need the learner may be trying to express.

Many learners with speech or language difficulties may well be of average or above-average intelligence, but may have other specific learning difficulties such as those associated with the autistic spectrum. In addition, speech and language difficulties can also be associated with conditions such as hearing loss, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy, more profound autism or connected to speech impediments and stammering. Some learners have difficulty with both language input and output and need to be taught the communication skills that other learners acquire more intuitively.

## **Expressive language difficulties**

Expressive language difficulties can also affect the ability to put words in the right order in a sentence or tell stories with the correct sequencing, which means that speech can be jumbled up and hard to understand. Sometimes the learner will use inappropriate grammatical structures and their speech may sound immature for their age. They may also have trouble with learning and accessing vocabulary. These problems may occur in their own language and therefore are also likely to appear when learning English or another foreign language.

## **Receptive language difficulties**

Some learners have problems with how they hear and process language. This can impact on their ability to understand what others are saying and respond appropriately. This is often associated with difficulties around 'pragmatic language' where, although the learner can hear what is being said, they do not understand the meaning. They may not know how to use social language and may lack an intuitive understanding of social cues and conventions. There can also be problems understanding 'figurative language', which includes the use of irony, humour and metaphor. This can lead to a tendency to take things too literally. A learner with receptive language difficulties may have trouble in areas including:

- following instructions and sequencing
- starting, doing and completing tasks
- understanding abstract concepts
- concentration and attention
- understanding stories, both written and spoken, and working memory
- understanding metaphorical language
- making friends
- listening to others.

### Teaching and learning strategies – what can we do to help?

As with all pedagogical approaches, there is no single all-encompassing solution, but effective teaching interventions can make a big difference – especially when they are based on inclusive practices.

### Encourage and accept all forms of communication

Learners with speech and language difficulties are often lacking in confidence and shy about speaking in public, so avoid asking them to repeat mispronounced words or finishing their sentences for them. It is better to model the correct form in your response. Concentrate on the message the learner is trying to communicate rather than the grammar or language structure. Allow alternative ways of communicating, such as gestures, writing, drawing or more visual presentations that can support speech.

### Be conscious of your own communication style

Make sure your language is clear and direct and face the class so that learners can see your expressions and read your lips if necessary. Give instructions one at a time in the order you want them to be carried out, using visual cues and gestures to support them. Try to avoid ambiguous language and always be prepared to repeat anything the learner does not understand.

### Teach active listening skills

Explain to the whole class that it is important to be attentive and look at someone when they are talking to you, and to not interrupt. You can teach turn-taking by having a special object which is the 'speaker's token'. The holder of the object is the only person who may speak. When they have finished, they pass it on.

### Give time to think and respond to questions

Using the 'think, pair, share' model in class provides learners with the time needed to process information and organise thoughts before having to answer. Support making connections between literal and metaphorical language with work on the meaning of phrases or double meanings.

### Use sound discrimination exercises

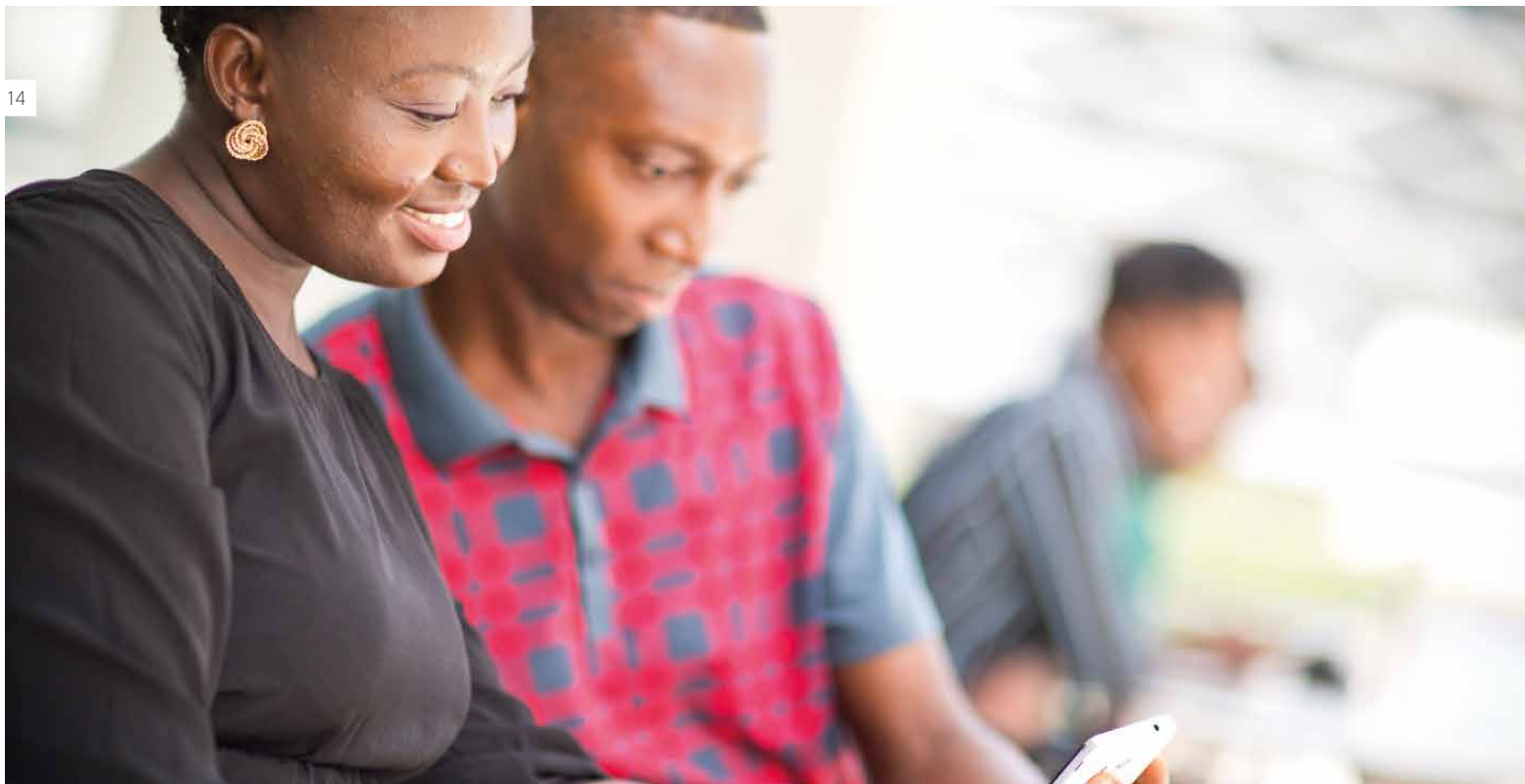
Phonemes are the building blocks of language. You can help learners who have difficulty recognising and decoding phonemes by using multisensory activities like clapping and stomping out syllables in new vocabulary or colour-coding different groups of phonemes. A fun and useful technique is to get each learner or groups of learners to write down one word on a sheet of paper – all the words will make a sentence that is grammatically correct – and the class or group line up and physically make the sentence. This can be used for pronunciation, word and sentence stress and intonation. The placing of the words can then be changed in the sentence while ensuring that grammar, meaning and syntax are appropriate. Learners can make their own judgements on what is appropriate.

### Help with sequencing and word order

If the learner has difficulty explaining things or telling stories in the right order, just ask them to give bullet points of what they want to say and put them in the correct sequence on a timeline. It is also helpful to cut up a story into a jigsaw of lines or paragraphs so they can practise putting them in order. A technique called BROGY (blue, red, orange, green, yellow) – where different colours can represent different sounds or indeed different parts of speech, such as articles, nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives – can support many learners in systematising sentence structure.

### Building vocabulary, grammar and skills

Use pictures, objects, modelling and photos to help understand and remember new vocabulary. Encourage learners to use their visual memory by making a personal vocabulary box of key words on picture cards. A good participatory drawing activity is to ask learners to come to the front of the class and draw something (no words). The teacher can start it off and then a number of learners add items. This produces a visual text that can then be used for any grammar activity, for example vocabulary building, storytelling, working with prepositions, dialogues, question forming – asking and answering. The visual nature of the setup of the activity can be supportive for many learners and it becomes 'their' text.



### **Help build self-esteem and make needs known**

Make sure to notice and praise good interactions and speech. Describe what learners do well and identify, and work with their other strengths. Always check that the learner has understood the task, and clarify any misunderstandings.

### **Are these approaches not good practice for all learners?**

Clearly the approaches described above are likely to be engaging and helpful for all learners and will also be beneficial in other subject areas outside of the language classroom. Above all, ask your learners which approaches and methods are working for them – this will be the key to both understanding and meeting their learning needs. Communication skills are not just important in the language class, and what we do in language learning can be beneficial for learning across the school curriculum. This is an important example of inclusive practices reaching beyond the classroom and across the school.



# A window on inclusion: an overview of inclusive education policies and practices in ten Sub-Saharan African countries

Rose Izinga

The British Council in sub-Saharan Africa has identified inclusive and special needs education as a priority area of interest for its work in education.

It forms an important part of the British Council Connecting Classrooms programme,<sup>14</sup> which focuses on the development of core skills and competencies for all students. This is achieved by supporting teachers to develop their pedagogy in the areas of critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, and student leadership and personal development.

As part of this work, the British Council commissioned the University of Cape Town Disability Studies Division, led by Professor Theresa Lorenzo, to conduct a piece of research on Inclusive Education (IE) and Special Needs Education (SNE) for learners with disabilities in ten sub-Saharan African countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, which culminated in the report *Overview of inclusive education policies and practices in ten sub-Saharan African countries*.

The report covers the following broad areas: country overview, policy framework for inclusive education, access to education, resources, teacher education and professional development, and successful strategies and good practices.

## Country overviews

Clear statistics on inclusive education and the education of learners with disabilities are hard to come by from the countries' Education Management Information Systems. However, using the World Health Organization estimates of the percentage of the population who are likely to have disabilities, the scale of the challenge is significant. In Nigeria alone, it is estimated that there are around 12.5 million learners with disabilities in school and over 3.5 million in Tanzania. However, it should also be noted that in all ten of the countries examined, the numbers of children who remained out of school were even more worrying – far exceeding the numbers that had been integrated into schools – although these out-of-school children were excluded for a range of reasons including disability, gender, socioeconomic status or because of their geographical (generally rural) locations.

One of the issues adversely affecting the provision of special needs education is people's 'negative attitudes and beliefs with regard to the causes and consequences of special needs and disabilities in many communities leading to stigma and discrimination.'<sup>15</sup> People with intellectual disabilities in South Africa, and in a number of the other nine countries, experience high levels of sexual and gender-based violence,<sup>16</sup> with people with intellectual, speech and language impairments suffering most.

## The policy framework for inclusive education

Nine countries, with South Sudan as the exception, ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which adopts the social model of disability. Kenya and Zambia have not ratified the optional protocol which allows its parties to recognise the competence of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to consider complaints from individuals. The rights of persons with disabilities are enshrined in the constitutions of nine countries, Zambia being the exception. All ten countries have robust national and international policy frameworks on inclusive education for learners with disabilities, for example each country has a disability act and education sector plans, which focus mainly on learners with impairments.

14. Connecting Classrooms is designed to help young people develop the knowledge, skills and values to live and work in a globalised economy, and make a positive contribution locally and globally. The programme, running from 2015 to 2018, will build the capacity of 45,000 teachers and 12,000 school leaders worldwide to support them to integrate a range of core skills into the curriculum. It is funded by the Department for International Development and the British Council.

15. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2014) *National Education Sector Plan, Volume One: Basic Education Programme Rationale and Approach 2013/2014 – 2017/2018*. Available online at: [www.globalpartnership.org/content/education-sector-plan-2013-2018-kenya](http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/education-sector-plan-2013-2018-kenya)

16. Dlakavu, S (2013) *Gender-based violence: Is the plight of mentally and physically disabled women sidelined?* Daily Maverick. Available online at: [www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2013-11-26-gender-based-violence-is-the-plight-of-mentally-and-physically-disabled-women-sidelined/#WIC\\_7FWLSUK](http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2013-11-26-gender-based-violence-is-the-plight-of-mentally-and-physically-disabled-women-sidelined/#WIC_7FWLSUK)

South Africa is the only country with an inclusive education policy, and this is focused on broader barriers to learning. The South African National Curriculum and Policy Statement has been adapted for learners who experience barriers to learning, and guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom were developed in order to assist teachers with differentiation strategies. However, practice on the ground relates mainly to disability.

Nigeria has a final-draft national policy on inclusive education whose objectives and targets reflect identified gaps in understanding, skills and practices on inclusive education in the country, and sets benchmarks of a minimum standard. Uganda is currently in the process of formulating similar policies. South Sudan has recently approved an SEN policy as well as a new national strategy focused on disability and education.

All countries (with the exception of South Sudan) have active disabled persons' organisations which engage in advocacy and support capacity building. Reasonable accommodations for examinations for learners with special educational needs are legislated for in four countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa and Uganda.

### Forms of education

The majority of learners with disabilities who are in school are in special schools. These mainly cater for the different types of physical disability, although there are also examples of students being educated in specialised units in mainstream schools or being integrated into mainstream school classrooms. However, the number of special school places is generally not sufficient to meet the demand; South Africa is the only exception, with 450 special schools educating learners with both physical and intellectual disabilities. The special schools are located in urban areas and are mainly run by missionaries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs). Community rehabilitation is implemented on a small scale and mainly by these NGOs and CSOs.

The ministries of education in some countries have special needs departments or units in place which are co-ordinated at

commissioner level; these also exist at district level in Uganda and Ghana. There is, however, no specialised curriculum for learners with special educational needs and those who are functioning below age-related expectations in any of the ten countries. Funding for special needs education is often inadequate, and opportunities in tertiary institutions and universities for those with special educational needs are minimal.

### Resources

Although governments are clearly committed to improving inclusive and special needs education, capacity (both in terms of skills and personnel), and technical, physical and financial resources remain limited. However, governments in Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa pay for special needs teachers in special schools and Tanzania provides a grant of TZS 20,000 for each learner with a disability.

Governments and NGOs have invested in mobilisation campaigns to ensure that more students with special educational needs attend school. Access to assistive devices is not universal, and what is available is mainly contributed by NGOs, as government contributions are limited.

### Teacher education and professional development

There are few universities and teacher training colleges which provide specific training in SNE or community-based rehabilitation courses at diploma, undergraduate or postgraduate levels in any of the ten countries. Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa have the most universities offering specialised curricula for SNE. All teacher training colleges are required to teach a compulsory course in inclusive education in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Continuous professional development (CPD) is formalised in Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. However, most inspectors, ministry officials, school principals, and directors do not have sufficient knowledge about inclusive education, nor the skills to disseminate such knowledge more widely to school staff. NGOs are the main providers of in-service teacher training on inclusive education and special educational needs.

### Successful strategies and good practices: IE and SNE

Despite the hurdles involved in delivering SNE, a number of successful strategies exist. A good example is that of parents and civil society organisations working together in Zambia. Communities identified young, educated people who were then trained by the NGO, Sight Savers, for two years. They then went back to teach in their community schools in order to disseminate their expertise.

Zimbabwe offers another example of how CPD can enable schools to become more inclusive and better able to meet the needs of more children. Barbra Karimazondo, a child with intellectual challenges at the Jairos Jiri Association's (JJA) Mukombwe Primary School, used to stay at home because the nearest school was not accessible, and the teachers did not have the basic skills to provide for children with disabilities. The teachers at the primary school received training from the JJA staff in the JJA Inclusive Model. Barbra settled well into life at school and in September 2015 she won a silver medal in the Danhiko Paralympic Games. As Mrs Mteskwa, the School Resource Teacher, noted: 'Barbra has shown tremendous improvement in her school work as well as in her interaction with peers and teachers. I have personally put forward the recommendation that she be added to the team of school prefects.'<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion

The report *Overview of inclusive education policies and practices in ten sub-Saharan African countries* brings to light the need for clarity about what inclusive education is, and offers an approach that a country could take when formulating policy and practice, while keeping in mind that monitoring, tracking and evaluation of the policies is imperative. There is a lot of work that NGOs and development partners can do to support the development of good practice in these areas including advocacy around ensuring adequate resourcing. In terms of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning', it is imperative that a focus on the needs of all children is retained at the heart of all we do.

17. Fembek, M, Heindorf, I, Kainz, W and Saupe, A (2016) *Zero Project Report 2016: Education and Information & Communication Technologies*. Available online at: <http://zeroproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Zero-Project-Report-2016-final.pdf>

# Gender and education: exploring the role of education systems in challenging gender inequality and realising the potential of all

Gillian Cowell

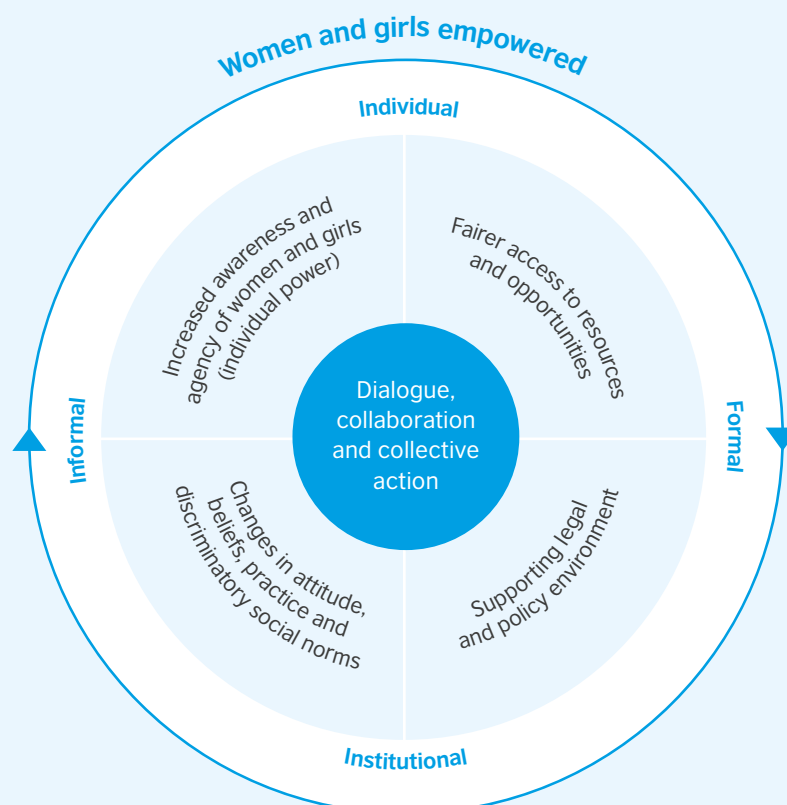
Gender<sup>18</sup> impacts on everyone and shapes the opportunities open to us and the expectations of our roles, capabilities and interests at all stages of life and learning. Gender inequalities tend to disproportionately disadvantage women and girls and persist in all countries, meaning that the potential of many women and girls worldwide is not realised. Education policy, institutions and processes play a key role in setting the framework and expectations, and also in enhancing the opportunities and choices open to girls and boys, but they can also recreate and replicate gender inequalities. In addition, education has the potential to be a space in which restrictive gender norms can be challenged and where it is possible to create an enabling environment for gender equality. Through our work in education and our focus on inclusion the British Council is committed to collaborating with policymakers, school leaders and teachers in developing curricula, methodologies and educational materials that support the objective of promoting gender equality to ensure that the potential of all children can be realised.

## The British Council approach

The British Council aims to work holistically to tackle gender inequalities from a number of perspectives, recognising that action is needed at different levels and from a number of stakeholders. We recognise that change is needed to support women and girls' awareness, capacities and abilities as well as creating opportunities and an enabling

environment for gender equality. This approach is captured in our theory of change (Figure 1), which shows the outcomes that we aim to achieve through our work. Its relevance to education will be explored below.

**Figure 1: Theory of change for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**



18. Gender in this instance refers to the socially constructed (rather than biological) characteristics of men and women including roles, norms and relationships.

## Policy and legislation supports gender equality

In most countries, there is a right to education for all and there has been significant success in the implementation of this policy – and in particular, closing the gender gaps at primary level – over the past two decades. However, the implementation of policy is not always supported with adequate resources. In some countries, for example, there is a lack of publicly funded provision and even when access is ‘free’, the hidden cost of uniform, transport and materials can still be a barrier for families. Research has shown that overcoming some of these financial barriers, through for example, targeted, conditional cash transfers, can rapidly improve access to education,<sup>19</sup> something which is further explored later in this article.

School-level policies can support gender equality, including the involvement of women in school governance, community mobilisation to support gender equality, adopting gender mainstreaming approaches to facilitate institutional culture change, and providing formal and informal opportunities for learning outside the classroom. These policies have led to improved participation, learning outcomes and empowerment of girls in the education system.<sup>20</sup> Policies which address sexual and gender-based violence within schools – which disproportionately impacts on girls – is also increasingly under the spotlight in the UK<sup>21</sup> and other countries, with a whole-school approach being recommended to address this problem. Creating policies at both national and institutional level that support gender equality is crucial to ensuring all girls and boys can benefit.

## Fairer access to resources and opportunities

There are still many children worldwide who are not able to access education, and gender is an important factor in this. It is estimated that out of 121 million children under 15 who are out of school, 53 per cent are girls, even though they make up only 48 per cent of the population.<sup>22</sup>

In Nigeria and Pakistan – which have the highest rates of out-of-school children, the gaps are significant – with fewer than 80 girls attending school for every 100 boys. In a smaller number of countries, for example Jordan, the gender gap is reversed, with fewer boys attending school than girls.

There are multiple reasons for the disproportionate number of girls missing out on school, including early pregnancy, financial pressures around the cost of schooling, and boys’ education being seen as a better investment than girls’. There are also practical barriers to education that disproportionately impact on girls, including distance to be travelled to school, risk of gender-based violence and availability of toilet facilities, particularly affecting girls at secondary level. There is a key challenge therefore to ensure that there is an understanding of the underlying reasons for girls and boys being out of school and for policymakers, school leaders, parents and wider communities to work together to address the gaps and ensure that all children are able to access their right to education and the benefits that a quality education can offer.

Once in school, access to opportunities for learning can also be impacted by gender, leading to some differences in learning outcomes for girls and boys. Learning outcomes are context specific, but overall, girls tend to out-perform boys at school, although boys do better in mathematics and girls in reading.<sup>23</sup> Gender differences are more apparent at secondary and tertiary level through the choice of available subjects, which then impacts on future work opportunities and lower income potential for women. Supporting children and parents to understand the impact of educational choices and opportunities and their potential long-term influence is an important role that teachers can play, as well as developing skills for learning.

## Attitudes and cultural norms

Cultural norms differ across countries and context and can play a large role in contributing to access issues as well as influencing learning outcomes and choice of studies. In some countries, there is a lower value placed on girls’ education, particularly where there is a focus on ‘reproductive roles’ of caring for children, family and the household. In some contexts, there is an expectation for boys to contribute to family income, meaning that many drop out, particularly at secondary level. When there is a greater expectation that women will engage in productive or paid roles, often there is gender segregation in the economy, which impacts on educational expectations and choices and vice versa. In the UK for example, women are over-represented in caring sectors, which tend to be low-paid areas of work, and there are very few in the higher-paid construction industry.<sup>24</sup> Gender can therefore have a substantial influence on current and future opportunities, including potential to earn income. While the education sector alone cannot address these inequalities, it can play a role in ensuring they are not reinforced and replicated.

Wider societal attitudes and cultural norms can be reinforced in the classroom by the actions and language of teachers and pupils, materials and information that teachers and students are exposed to, and how students engage with the learning process. Educationalists, school leaders and teachers need to ensure that they are not (unthinkingly) reinforcing gender inequalities through their own and others’ actions. In very practical ways, this is about challenging the unconscious bias of school leaders and teachers by means of training and awareness. This will ensure that they are not falling back on gender stereotypes, not reinforcing expectations of capabilities and interests based on sex, and are selecting appropriate gender-sensitive materials to be used in the teaching process. There is good evidence that training teachers in gender equality and gender-sensitive pedagogy and management improves both retention of girls in school and their learning outcomes.<sup>25</sup>

19. Unterhalter, E, North, A, Arnot, M, Lloyd, C, Moletsane, L, Murphy-Graham, E, Parkes, J and Saito, M (2014) *Girls’ education and gender equality*. Available online at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/326205/Girls\\_Education\\_Literature\\_Review\\_2014\\_Unterhalter.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/326205/Girls_Education_Literature_Review_2014_Unterhalter.pdf)

20. *Ibid.*

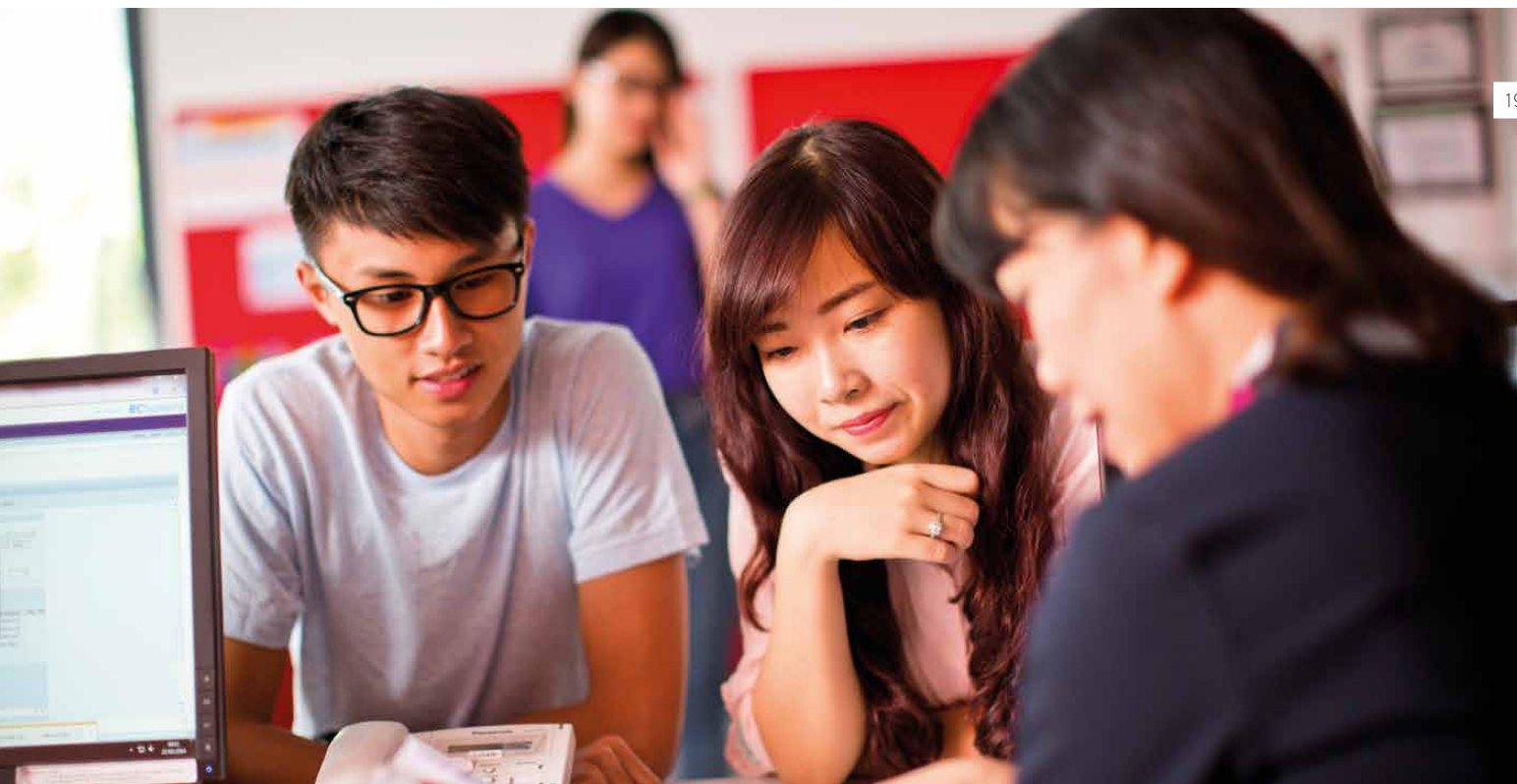
21. Publications.parliament.uk (2017) *House of Commons – Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools – Women and Equalities Committee*. Available online at: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/9102.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/9102.htm)

22. UNESCO/GEM (2016) *Leaving no one behind: How far on the way to universal primary and secondary education?* Available online at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002452/245238E.pdf>

23. OECD (2014) *Are girls and boys equally prepared for life? OECD Publishing*. Available online at: [www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/PIF-2014-gender-international-version.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/PIF-2014-gender-international-version.pdf)

24. ONS, referenced in British Council (2016) *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in the UK*. Available online at: [www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/gender\\_equality\\_an\\_empowerment\\_in\\_the\\_uk.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/gender_equality_an_empowerment_in_the_uk.pdf)

25. Unterhalter, E, North, A, Arnot, M, Lloyd, C, Moletsane, L, Murphy-Graham, E, Parkes, J and Saito, M (2014) *Girls’ education and gender equality*. Available online at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/326205/Girls\\_Education\\_Literature\\_Review\\_2014\\_Unterhalter.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/326205/Girls_Education_Literature_Review_2014_Unterhalter.pdf)



However, the education system does not operate in a bubble from the rest of society, so a key role that the school and teachers can play is to develop children's critical thinking around issues of gender and inclusion and support them to recognise and challenge the cultural norms that restrict the potential of some children based on their sex. This can be done by exploring and questioning gender norms and the inequalities in society. It can also be proactively addressed within the school environment by means of policies and practice, as well as working with parents to understand and encourage the capabilities of girls and boys.

### **Skills confidence and agency of women and girls**

With higher numbers of girls missing out on education, they also miss out on the benefits of education such as developing the capacity, skills and confidence relevant to other roles in employment, community and family. However, even if girls are in school, studies show that there is often a gap between boys and girls (as there is between men and women) in confidence and belief in their ability to succeed, particularly in sciences and mathematics.<sup>26</sup> This gap, which may be explained by how

girls and boys are socialised differently, has the potential to hold girls in particular back from achieving their full potential in terms of both educational outcomes and also work and leadership in later life.

The 2012 PISA survey – which looked in depth at the gender differences in confidence and performance in mathematics – challenged the commonly held assumption that boys outperform girls in mathematics, as this is reversed in some economies, for example Iceland, Qatar and Malaysia. The link with confidence found 'the relationship between drive, motivation and mathematics-related self-beliefs on the one hand, and mathematics performance on the other, is particularly strong among the best-performing students. Unless girls believe that they can achieve at the highest levels, they will not be able to do so.'<sup>27</sup> Supporting the confidence of girls is therefore critical to their success, rather than there being any particular capability gap.

### **Dialogue, collaboration and collective action**

Addressing gender inequalities and ensuring that girls and boys are able to realise their full potential is not a simple

matter, and needs dialogue, collaboration and action from a wide range of stakeholders from government, society and the private sector both nationally and internationally. The education system provides a space in which the common interests of all these stakeholders can coalesce, and progress can be made which opens up the potential for all children as well as the men and women who work within the system. This requires finding new relationships and ways of working, which can be explored in classrooms, schools and communities and within the policy spaces of education.

Although a great deal of progress has been made, no country has yet achieved gender equality. Our education systems are hugely influential in our lives, so they offer an important opportunity to challenge and address gender inequalities and set a strong foundation on which the potential of all children can be realised. To achieve this, it is important that our children's learning is seen within the context of wider gender inequalities – and it is not just access to education and learning outcomes that matter but also building awareness of the educational choices and opportunities in later life.

26. Ziegler, A and Heller, KA (2000) Conditions For Self-Confidence Among Boys And Girls Achieving Highly in Chemistry. *The Journal of Secondary Gifted Education* XI/3: 144–151. Available online at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.4219/jsge-2000-627>

27. OECD (2014) *Are girls and boys equally prepared for life?* OECD Publishing. Available online at: [www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/PIF-2014-gender-international-version.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/PIF-2014-gender-international-version.pdf)

# Case study

## Promoting the Gender Equality in Education Project (ETCEP) in Turkey

Fatma Uluç

Gender equality in education has long been a major goal in the international community. Turkey is dedicated to achieving gender equality in education by contributing and committing to major international treaties.

Awareness of gender equality in Turkey is still not at the required level and there is a need to focus on education to receive perdurable results.<sup>28</sup> Gender equality in education is sometimes perceived as equating to gender parity in schooling, but it is much more than that. It is a multi-dimensional concept and it means mainstreaming gender equality into each and every aspect of education from educational policies and programmes to everyday practices, and from textbooks to curricula, at every level of education. It means instilling gender equality into central and local Ministry of National Education (MoNE) bodies and into all education-related parties such as NGOs, and also into individuals, including school leaders, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents.

The *Promoting Gender Equality in Education Project* (ETCEP) was launched in 2014 as a 24-month project to bring together the individuals, institutions and organisations focusing on the issue of gender, to develop a common understanding and purpose, and to ensure that the broad definition of gender equality in education is understood. The project was funded by the European Union and the government of Turkey and was implemented by a consortium led by the British Council.

The project has been implemented in 40 pilot schools in ten provinces across the country, and the outputs are crucial for Turkey in the context of fulfilling national and international commitments.

ETCEP was intended to promote gender equality in schools and to inculcate an equality- and gender-sensitive approach throughout the education system, notably by:

- developing tools to make the whole school gender-sensitive
- training a large number of educators using specially developed training packages
- developing recommendations to ensure gender equality by reviewing education policies, legislation, curricula and textbooks, and sharing these recommendations with the authorities concerned
- raising awareness about gender equality in different segments of society, starting with schools and their environs.

The project started with a baseline assessment and needs analysis to identify the current context and needs of the 40 pilot schools with respect to gender equality.

The most striking finding was that gender equality, and specifically gender equality in education, was an unfamiliar issue to many of the educators who participated in the study, and not one which they had done anything to address.

The research also showed that students in the pilot schools held traditional views and attitudes about gender equality, with male students in particular supporting traditional assumptions. The students learned about gender roles mainly in their own families. In addition, respondents cited schools, books, television and the internet as major sources for their knowledge of gender roles.

Teachers in the pilot schools were found to attribute different roles to female and male students, and to have different expectations of them. The language the teachers used, their behaviour in the classroom and the teaching strategies they adopted all contributed to the reproduction of traditional gender roles.

The research further pointed to gender-based differences in the use of physical spaces within the school, and to different levels of participation by female and male students in various types of activity.

28. Turkey is ranked 130 out of 144 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index. Ranking in education is better, at 109 out of 144 countries. World Economic Forum (2016) *Global Gender Gap Report 2016*. Available online at: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=TUR>



During the research, it was observed that the majority of decision makers were men, and that this situation had been internalised by both female and male teachers. When asked why women were not willing to work in executive positions in schools, or in other units of the Ministry of National Education, most respondents referred to the problems which women face in harmonising their family and professional lives, to existing male dominance in positions of authority and to the lack of a supportive environment that would enable women to compete for decision-making roles.

To help guide schools to become more gender-equal, the Gender Sensitive School Standards were developed. These standards have been put into practice and monitored in the pilot schools. Explanatory guides were prepared on how to make use of the standards, and trainers from each pilot school were educated in how to support schools in implementing them. The efforts of the pilot schools were evaluated both through the monitoring and evaluation visits and through self-assessments conducted among the school staff. The evaluation indicated that awareness of gender equality in education, environment and management had been raised and that schools were mobilised to become gender-sensitive, with 50 per cent of the schools having achieved sustainability in the implementation of the standards.

The revision work carried out following the pilot implementation mostly involved adjustments in terms of the school improvement process and the support provided to the schools. It was recommended that a participatory action research should be conducted in a smaller number of schools before expanding the pilot implementation.

A Gender Equality Certificate Programme has been developed and used with educators, who play a vital role in ensuring gender equality. The certificate programme and the related materials were developed with contributions and feedback from a working group made up of representatives from various units of the ministry, other related ministries and NGOs. In the project provinces, approximately 6,000 educators raised their awareness and knowledge of gender equality in education by means of cascading training. A Leadership and Entrepreneurship Training for Female Teachers programme has also been developed to enable female teachers to acquire the competencies which they need to apply for administrative positions and to become role models for their students. A total of 542 female educators have been trained through this programme.

Participation in the training programmes was based on voluntary applications. By adopting this approach, the ministry ensured that more schools were reached, and that the participants were highly motivated. Findings of evaluations of the training programmes show that the participants increased their knowledge of how to uphold gender equality and ensure a gender-sensitive approach in the school environment as well as developing their leadership skills. The capacity-building work has underlined that concentrating on pre-service training as much as – or even more than – in-service training would be a better strategy. Targeting education faculties would yield a more comprehensive, lasting and sustainable impact. In addition, introducing complementary family training from this perspective would be very effective in terms of ensuring lasting results.

During the project, awareness was raised about gender equality in general and gender equality in education by providing information about the project's activities and their results to various sections of society, starting with schools and their environs. The project website and social media communication campaign were very active throughout the project, and became channels of continuous communication.<sup>29</sup> In addition, awareness was also raised via two public information broadcasts and the use of billboards. Schools received 1,000 posters with five different designs.

29. As of 18 September 2016, the ETCEP Facebook page had received 13,233 likes and had been visited 25.8 million times. The project web site had been visited 148,144 times.

In addition to the above, local social mobilisation campaigns lasting for one week were carried out in each pilot school. These campaigns contributed to an increased awareness of gender equality in education among students, parents, teachers, administrative staff, NGO representatives and the local media, and played a significant role in increasing the influence of the project and reaching a larger target audience. A *School Based Gender Equality Campaign Guide* was developed and distributed to provincial authorities and schools. The campaigns were planned collectively, and teachers were given both the chance to make changes in the suggested activities and the flexibility to organise other activities. Examples of unique activities were recorded in a *Good Practices Report*. During the campaign week, informative meetings were also organised for parents, NGOs, local media and administrators. The activities carried out during the campaign week were documented using videos and photographs.

The campaigns had a positive impact, particularly on primary and secondary school students. In the schools where the administrators and teachers actively participated in the campaign process, the activities were carried out with excitement and enthusiasm, and the messages delivered were memorable. Stereotypes were seen to be more common among male students over the age of 15, which created resistance in some cases. At the same time, there was intense interest in the campaign in vocational and technical high schools attended only by male students.

In addition to school-level activities, the project had other activities which provided evidence for policy-level change, such as an analysis of policy legislation and an analysis of curricula textbooks from the perspective of gender equality.

Accordingly, Turkey's education policies and legislation have been reviewed, and the *Gender in National Education Policy Papers and Legislation: Analysis and Recommendations* report was prepared. Study visits were made to Sweden and Finland to monitor the experiences of different countries. The report found that the education policies of Turkey do not address the issue of gender equality within a holistic and systematic strategy framework, nor do they regard gender equality as an independent strategic policy area or objective. In response, the report recommends that in future, policy papers should contain specific objectives and strategies for gender equality. The legislation analysis showed that a limited approach has been adopted which only focuses on the schooling rate and access to schools for female students. However, this does not mean that the legislation governing the education system is fully gender-sensitive.

A total of 14 curricula and 82 textbooks were also reviewed by a commission made up of representatives of various units of the MoNE, subject teachers and academic experts. Using content analysis methodology, texts and visuals were compared in terms of basic criteria such as gender, age, place and action. The analytical process was also informed by the experience which the commission members gained during a study visit to the United Kingdom. The analysis report has been shared with the relevant units of the ministry, teachers, private publishing houses and textbook authors. The findings of the report are expected to be considered during the development of curricula and textbooks in the future.

The process of reviewing education policies and legislation as well as the curricula and textbooks from a gender equality perspective proved to be an informative one that strengthened the capacities of those who were involved in the process. It seems that the people involved in this process will act as pioneers in this field, and although the sharing of the reported results regarding the curricula and textbooks was highly structured, no briefing activities with regard to policy and legislation review had been planned. The process of delivering the recommendations developed for both works would be of a complementary nature as an act of advocacy.

It is not easy to bring about change in such a sensitive area as gender equality. However, a systematic and continuous effort based on the outputs and experiences of this project would make a direct contribution to this goal.

The project has produced key outcomes towards gender equality in different dimensions of education. The ministry has shared all the outcomes with the relevant partners and wants to continue the internal training programmes. The prerequisite for being able to sustain this work is that all parties are aware of the outputs and experiences, and as such, working groups and commissions created during the project have great importance. These working groups and commissions were formed from participants from different units of the ministry, and it is advised that a task force is created which would be responsible for monitoring the sustainability of project outputs.

With the current political climate in Turkey and many competing priorities, there is a risk of gender equality slipping down the agenda again. It would be a tragedy if this were to happen, so it is vital that international partners and stakeholders should advocate and support this area of work if the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals are to be realised.

# Case study

## Creating safe spaces for adolescent girls in Nigeria

Mohammed Ahmed

In collaboration with Girl Effect Nigeria, the British Council has been actively engaged with the education sector in Nigeria to support the development and expansion of work on safe spaces.

### Why are safe spaces important?

Safe spaces are an increasingly effective way of helping adolescent girls and young women develop critical life skills and knowledge such as effective communication, negotiation, leadership and conflict management, which help them participate more effectively in the social life of their communities. Many safe spaces also address difficult issues such as sexual and reproductive health, and gender-based violence, which are commonly swept under the carpet in conservative societies. Additionally, safe spaces are providing an alternative pathway to return to school for girls who have dropped out of the formal education system.

### What we did

In collaboration with Girl Effect Nigeria, we convened a National Technical Working Group on Safe Spaces drawing from sector experts, practitioners and programme implementers. The goal of the working group was to enhance and improve knowledge and awareness among the safe space community of practice focusing on innovative models, sharing learning about what works well and promoting a thorough and holistic approach to safe spaces.

To implement this objective, three sub-communities were set up: learning evidence and best practice, curriculum development, and safe spaces in conflict zones. This approach recognised the most common needs identified by practitioners, and in particular the need for common standards and guidelines for the implementation of safe spaces.

To better understand the landscape of safe spaces in Nigeria, we supported a mapping exercise which assessed what training content was being used, how girls participated, what learning and teaching models were used and what the impact was. While each safe space reflects the context in which it is implemented, common elements and themes were identified across the majority of implementations. These include the skills and knowledge identified above, as well as support for development of livelihood and vocational skills. These are particularly important, as many of the participants in safe spaces come from poor backgrounds and have reduced access to education due to being engaged in some form of economic activity.

### What next?

Building on the mapping research and additional consultations carried out with adolescent girls across the country, the Technical Working Group is working with the Nigeria Education Research and Development Council – the body responsible for curriculum development in the country – and the Federal Ministry of Education to begin the process of writing the standardised safe spaces curriculum. Development of a standardised curriculum and implementation guidelines will provide a mechanism through which we can better understand the progress that girls make by participating in safe spaces, assess more effectively how different models and implementations compare against each other, and improve the consistency and quality of safe spaces implementation.

# A window on inclusion: understanding the situation of SEN in Maharashtra

Girish Ingle

India has made a constitutional commitment to provide a free and compulsory education to all children from the age of six to 14 years by passing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act in 2010. To arrive at this legal, rights-based framework, the Indian education system has travelled a long way over the last 62 years.

In the post-independence era, the Indian constitution mentioned inclusive education as a fundamental right for all citizens of India. In 1966, the Kothari Commission emphasised the significance of educating children with disabilities and suggested that students who were blind, deaf and intellectually or physically challenged should have access to education, and that education facilities should be extended and adapted to facilitate this. In 1974, the central government introduced the Scheme for Integrated Education for Disabled Children to provide equal opportunities for children with additional needs within schools and to facilitate their retention. The scheme helped children with disabilities to access education, although there was no legislation or policy until 1986. The first National Policy on Education, launched in 1986, put an emphasis on basic education for all and

called for strenuous efforts to reduce disparities and increase the equality of educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who had historically been denied those opportunities. Students with special needs received assistance in terms of expenses related to books, stationery and uniforms, an allowance for transport, and readers and escorts for students with disabilities. During this time, the focus was more on catering to the needs of children with physical disabilities. Children with learning difficulties, cognitive issues and mental health problems – disabilities which are less visible – were excluded from receiving the assistance. It should be noted that the schemes were designed with welfare in mind and were not necessarily formed from a rights-based approach.

The education of children with disabilities and special needs in India received a boost as a result of international developments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), the Standard Minimum Rules (UN, 1993) and the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). India is a signatory of the Salamanca Statement, which strongly influenced national policy.

Following the National Policy on Education, India adopted the World Declaration for Education for All (1990), the Persons with Disability Act (1995), the Rehabilitation Council Act (1992), the District Primary Education Programme (1994) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (2002). SSA has a zero-rejection policy and ensures every child should get access to education between the ages of six to 14 years. No child can be rejected from a school for any reason, including having a disability. Though SSA has the ambitious goal of universal access and retention, the reality remains starkly different. According to the *All India Survey Of Out-Of-School Children Age 6–13 Years*, 1.8 million children are out of school, and millions more do not attend a school regularly.<sup>30</sup> Shockingly, nearly 34 per cent of children with disabilities are out of school. To corroborate the data, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) cited that even after achieving near-universal enrolment in primary education, 41 per cent of children drop out before they reach class VIII.<sup>31</sup>

This shows that the policy commitments of government are not being translated to action on the ground, and children with special needs remain out of mainstream education.<sup>32</sup>

30. SRI-IMRB (2010) *All India survey of out-of-school children of age 6–13 years*. Available online at: [www.educationforallindia.com/aii\\_india\\_survey\\_of\\_out\\_of-school\\_cgchildren\\_2010.pdf](http://www.educationforallindia.com/aii_india_survey_of_out_of-school_cgchildren_2010.pdf)

31. Ministry of Human Resource Development (2012) *Statistics of School Education, 2010–2011*. Available online at: [http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/SES-School\\_201011\\_0.pdf](http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/SES-School_201011_0.pdf)

32. O'Keefe, P (2017) *People with disabilities in India: from commitments to outcomes*. Available online at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/577801468259486686/People-with-disabilities-in-India-from-commitments-to-outcomes>



Along with issues around access and retention, learning is a major challenge for children with disabilities or special needs admitted into schools. Very often, learning does not take place and the school fails to create a suitable learning environment. The Sixth All-India Educational Survey, conducted in 1998, reported that of India's 200 million school-aged children (six to 14 years), 20 million required additional support. There is scant literature available about the performance of children with disabilities or the different levels of provision in various states of India. Although Maharashtra is one of the wealthiest and most progressive states, there is still not sufficient data currently available on this subject.

This study explores the situation of schools in the Mumbai and Thane districts with respect to children with special educational needs. The study was conducted in 50 schools in Mumbai and Thane which have urban, rural and tribal populations. The method used for the study was an exploratory descriptive research study using survey and case study methods. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study. The schools were selected by quota sampling.

The study explored practitioners' understanding of children with special educational needs, the concept of inclusion, challenges and barriers of identification, barriers to accessing the curriculum, and the attitudes of government, parents, communities, school management, head teachers and teachers.

### Result and discussion

#### Identification of children with special needs

The identification of children with special needs is a difficult task for teachers, as many do not have a broad, in-depth understanding of this area. Many teachers were confident in identifying children with profound or visible physical disabilities, so the children with complete blindness, poliomyelitis, cerebral palsy and limb differences were easily recognised. Teachers were less able to identify children with learning disabilities, visual impairment and cognitive difficulties.

One teacher said, 'We don't need a special training for identifying the special needs. It is very obvious and visible that the disabled child is a child with special needs.' This demonstrates that there is a lack of understanding, knowledge and skills in schools with regards to correctly identifying children with special needs.

There are other obstacles in terms of identifying children with special needs. One of these is that identification is completely dependent upon judgement from a medical facility. Only authorised medical centres are allowed to analyse a child and decide on the nature and degree of their disability or need. These centres are situated in tertiary medical facilities, which are crowded and far from many schools. The long distances and the cost of attending medical centres combine to prevent parents from taking their children for diagnosis. The parents of children from the government, rural, slums and tribal schools are daily wage earners who cannot afford to lose their wages by missing work to take their children to these centres. This leads to the non-identification of children with special needs.

There are also misconceptions around the language of inclusion. All those involved in the study felt that if they enrolled a child with a visible disability this meant that they were an inclusive school. According to Booth and Ainscow, inclusive education involves 'increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.'<sup>33</sup> It is apparent that there is a limited understanding of inclusion and exclusion in an educational context.

33. Booth, T and Ainscow, M (2002) *Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools*. CSIE. Available online at: [www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Index%20English.pdf](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Index%20English.pdf)

To understand inclusion there is a need to recognise that there are many factors which can create barriers and challenges which essentially exclude young people from actively accessing and engaging in their education. It is important to recognise that exclusion never occurs in isolation or because of one cause. Exclusion never has a single cause, but has an interlocking framework. Children with special needs and disabilities belong to a group which can be more easily excluded because they are seen as a problem in the medical model of inclusion, and unfortunately teachers do not receive ongoing formal training to support them in addressing these issues.

### Barriers to the curriculum

The curriculum can act as a potential barrier for including children with special needs in the classroom. The curriculum is designed mainly with an 'average' child in mind, and many teachers felt that the curriculum was intended for teaching children that did not have additional needs. Teachers felt helpless and lacked the skills and knowledge to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of the children within the classroom. As one teacher said: 'How can we teach the students who do not understand what we are teaching? There are not enough resources to support the learning of children with special needs.'

There is a need for orientation and training for teachers so that they can adapt the curriculum for children with special needs. It should be possible for schools to adapt the curriculum so that it is less content-focused and more interactive and inclusive in nature.

There is a significant need for training that enables teachers to create individualised educational plans which can accommodate both the curriculum and the needs of the child. This becomes a challenge when the curriculum needs to be adhered to rigidly; inflexibility does not allow for teachers to make suitable modifications to accommodate the varying needs of groups within the classroom.

Details regarding the quality of education and the learning outcomes for pupils with special educational needs are not published or analysed, which further hampers development. The *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013–14* reiterates that attention must be given to the quality of provision of all children, paying particular attention to those that may be marginalised.<sup>34</sup>

### Policy barriers

Lack of support from the government is identified as a major barrier for the inclusion of children with special needs in the classroom. Though the government has a policy that focuses on special educational needs, this is low priority in terms of implementation. Teachers perceive that they receive less support from the government in this area, given that they lack both the resources and training skills required to teach those with additional needs. The lack of appropriate identification and method of additional resources given by the schools go hand in hand. Government centres are limited, crowded and geographically challenging. Parents struggle to take their children to a centre for diagnosis and are thus unable to produce the required certificates to the school. Without the certificates, schools cannot sanction the concessions and resources. Concessions are generally adult writers in examinations, time extensions in examinations, and different evaluation and assessment criteria.

### Barriers created by society

There is significant stigma associated with children with special needs, and many of those surveyed cited that parents did not want to send their children to schools which catered for these pupils (although this was mainly a concern in private schools). There is an urgent need to educate wider society, including parents, and indeed school management in this regard. In some instances, school managers were concerned about admitting children with special needs in case it had an adverse effect on other parents. According to the RTE act, it is

mandatory for private, unaided schools to reserve 25 per cent of their places for children from marginalised communities. However, these rules are sometimes disregarded and in particular schools do not admit those with additional needs. Meanwhile, many other schools are adopting segregation policies. According to DFID, 'Inclusive education in a developing country implies the equal right of all children to the educational package, however basic that package may be.'<sup>35</sup>

### Training and support

There is a significant lack of training for teachers in this area, which needs to be frequent and practical in nature as well as being predicated on well-researched methodology. Without proper training and support, schools will not be in a position to create more inclusive environments or to keep in education those whose needs are not being met, thereby risking a further rise in dropout rates.

### Conclusion

The situation facing children with special needs in the schools of Maharashtra remains extremely challenging. There are several factors responsible for this situation. The state should give more attention to ensuring appropriate provision for those with special educational needs, providing support to teachers in terms of training and resources in a timely manner. In addition, there is a need for significant advocacy with all stakeholders – and in particular parents and the communities – to bring about a change in attitude towards those with additional needs and a change in the expectations for all children. Finally, curriculum reforms need to be mindful of those with a wider range of needs ensuring that schools and classrooms are truly inclusive.

34. UNESCO (2014) *EFA Global Monitoring Report. Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All*. UNESCO. Available online at: [www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr-2013-14-teaching-and-learning-education-for-all-2014-en.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr-2013-14-teaching-and-learning-education-for-all-2014-en.pdf)

35. Department for International Development (2000) *Disability, Poverty and Development*. Available online at: <http://hpod.org/pdf/Disability-poverty-and-development.pdf>

# Case study

## Becoming a more inclusive school

Reem Al-Hout

The American Academy of Beirut (AAB) is a co-educational day school for students from Nursery to Grade 12, attracting pupils and teachers both locally and internationally.

The school believes that all young people should have access to high-quality, inclusive education regardless of their gender, ethnicity, ability, background, health or medical condition. The school is now described as one of the most inclusive schools in a country which is still in the early stages of developing its inclusion policies and practices. AAB has been closely involved with British Council programmes since 2008, and recently participated in a course on inclusive pedagogies.

### What we did

Building on our learning from the British Council's Inclusive Pedagogies course, we decided that an important element of improving our inclusive practice would be to develop a strategy for working with the broader school community and specifically with our pupils' families. We decided to do this in two ways: first, through providing outreach support from our therapists, and second, by finding ways to inspire our parents to have high aspirations for their children, whatever challenges they may face.

Faculty members in our AAB Learning Center held group therapy sessions for parents which proved to be very successful. They gave parents the opportunity to meet others who were facing similar challenges, and provided a safe space in which to share some of those challenges and discuss possible solutions.

The sessions also allowed parents to access advice and support from our staff and an educational psychologist.

We also invited parents to a presentation by a young lady who was paralysed in a car accident when she was 14 but who had gone on to gain a degree in business and establish a successful career. By sharing her experiences she inspired parents and teachers, and provided a fascinating example of how a person can overcome barriers and meet challenges. We felt that it was particularly important to promote high aspirations for pupils with special educational needs because in Lebanon, society sometimes assumes that these pupils are always limited and constrained by their disability.

### What we have achieved so far

The group therapy sessions equipped parents with a better understanding of their children's needs and some skills to help them address some of the issues they face. Parents were introduced to each other to extend their support networks. One positive example of the impact of these discussions was that some parents made adaptations to their home environments to provide more positive stimuli for their children. Many reported having a better understanding of the social model of inclusion applied at school and were therefore reinforcing this at home.

During school celebrations and special events, it is now an expectation that our pupils with special needs are integrated into the performances – we have wheelchair dancers, for example. This takes a great deal of preparation and planning but is breathtaking to watch, and contributes to our school community accepting differences, appreciating abilities and celebrating inclusion throughout the whole school.

### What we plan to do in the future

We aim to spread our principles of integration, appreciation and acceptance of children with special needs and disabilities outside the school to extended communities. We plan to invite further guest speakers to share their special educational needs and disability (SEND) experiences and success stories, and our experts will give presentations providing further advice to parents and teachers.

We want to involve the community in helping to educate our SEND pupils, and to expose them to vocational opportunities and further community-wide inclusion. We aim to train staff to enhance their skills in differentiation so that they can meet a range of needs in the classroom.

## Contributors



### Susan Douglas

Since leaving headship in 2006, Susan has worked as a Senior Adviser at the British Council, providing sector expertise and advice to a wide range of educational programmes involving ministries, school leaders, teachers and young people in around 60 countries worldwide.

Since 2012, she has also held the role of Chief Executive Officer of the Eden Academy Trust in West London, a multi-academy trust comprising five schools providing education for children aged three to 19 with a range of complex needs.



### Philip Garner

Philip Garner is Professor of Education within the School of Education at the University of Northampton. He worked in mainstream and special education as a teacher and head teacher for 17 years, then moved into teacher education and academic research. For over 25 years he has been involved in teaching and research concerning aspects of special and inclusive education, particularly in matters relating to emotional and behavioural difficulties and on associated professional development. He is the

Editor of *Support for Learning*, *The British Journal of Learning Support* and was the National Director of Behaviour4Learning. Philip is a British Academy Fellow and has extensive international experience, he has undertaken funded research and consultancy on behalf of various sponsors, including UNICEF, the European Commission, the Irish government, the UK and Australian governments, and the Training Agency and the National College of School Leadership in England.



### Marie Delaney

Marie Delaney is a teacher, educational psychotherapist, trainer and writer. She is the Director of Learning Harbour in Ireland. She has worked in non-formal education, mainstream and special school settings and has extensive experience of working with students who have been affected by trauma and who display challenging behaviour. Her main interests are applying therapeutic thinking approaches to understanding learning and behaviour in school, supporting wellbeing,

and facilitating language learning as a vehicle for inclusion and social cohesion. She is the author of *Teaching the Unteachable* (2008), *What can I do with the kid who...* (2010) and *Special Educational Needs: Into the Classroom* (2016). She is co-author of the British Council's course for teachers on SEN and co-author of the British Council Language for Resilience Report (2016).



### Phil Dexter

Phil Dexter is an English Language Teacher Development Adviser for the British Council in the UK. Phil has previously worked internationally for the British Council on a range of diverse English language teaching projects involving teaching, teacher training, vocational work, working with militaries on peacekeeping English, and advising governments and ministries of education. Phil's current responsibility involves the development of courses and resources as part of the British Council Teaching for

Success CPD Framework for primary, secondary and special educational needs and in support of refugees and displaced peoples. Phil has a master's degree in English language studies from the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne and a diploma in Special Educational Needs. Phil also advises British Council offices globally on SEN policy and teacher development programmes, and has recently been appointed as a British Council accredited equality, diversity and inclusion facilitator.



### Rose Izizinga

Rose Izizinga is the Headteacher of Kitante Hill School, Kampala. She holds a bachelor's degree in Literature, a diploma in Education, a postgraduate diploma in Education for Sustainability, and is a John Templeton Fellow of Gifted and Talented Education. Rose was the first female President of the African Confederation of Principals and the first female Chairperson of the National Association of Secondary School Headteachers of Uganda, she is also a member of the Forum for

African Women Educationalists. Rose is a member of the national training team for HIV and AIDS prevention in Uganda and a member of the Uganda Law Council. She is a mentor, coach, motivational speaker, and her school is one of the first Ashoka Changemaker schools in East Africa. Rose facilitates school leadership and professional development courses for the Connecting Classrooms programme.



### Gillian Cowell

Gillian Cowell is Head of Gender and Inclusion at the British Council, leading the strategy for work on gender equality and empowering women and girls. She also provides technical inputs to the design and delivery of programmes focused on women and girls as well as providing support to gender mainstreaming on British Council funded programmes. She provides technical inputs and consultancy to projects funded by DFID, the EU and the FCO and has commissioned and input into

research reports and learning-from-practice papers. Gill has over 20 years of experience working in international development and has held various programme and project management roles with the British Council, leading programmes focused on governance and social development including those focused on child protection, addressing VAWG, women's leadership, girls' education and empowerment of women and girls. She has a master's in Development Management.



### Fatma Uluç

Ms Uluç has a PhD in Educational Policy, Management and Planning, and has over 20 years of experience in education. She has led the office of the Education Programme of UNICEF in Turkey for 14 years where she has worked closely with MoNE and other stakeholders. She has extensive experience in project planning, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, including seven years managing EU-funded projects in the areas of preschool education, child

protection and good governance. She has knowledge of gender issues gained through project management and working for the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, and also has ten years of experience in policy and legislation development in the field of education. Since 2014 she has been the Team Leader of the EU funded Technical Assistance Project on Promoting Gender Equality in Education on behalf of the British Council in Turkey.



### Mohammed Ahmed

Mohammed is Director, Schools and Society for the British Council in Nigeria, responsible for a portfolio of programmes and projects in the areas of gender relations, civil society, youth engagement, teacher training, school development and English language training. He also contributes to a wide research portfolio acting as senior responsible officer for research in the areas of gender and education. He is a member of the country's British Council senior leadership team which

co-ordinates strategy and provides quality assurance to the regional and global leadership teams on portfolio implementation. Prior to joining the British Council, Mohammed was Special Advisor to the CEO of the Abuja Investments Company and started his professional career as Special Assistant to the Director of the Nigeria Financial Intelligence Unit. Mohammed holds degrees in Chemistry, Computer Science and Project Management.



### Girish Ingle

Dr Girish Ingle has over seven years of experience working with children and policy makers, and as Head of Research and Development of Schools for the British Council in India, he has experience of working in education across the country. He graduated from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and holds a degree in Medicine from Mumbai. He was awarded a Fellowship in Future Leaders in Development from Sanford School of Public Policy, Dukes University, USA. Equity, access and

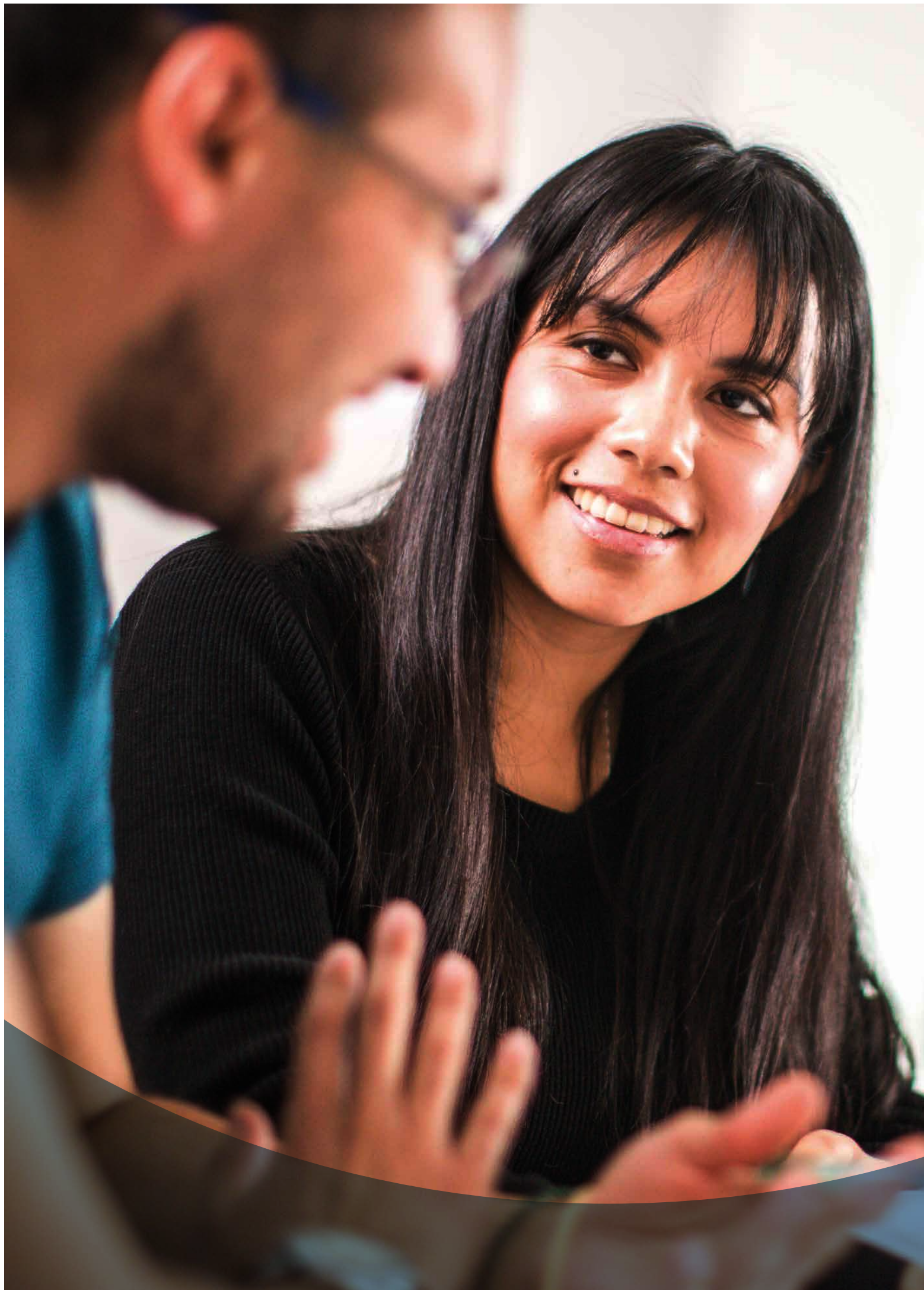
quality in education are his interests, and he is currently working with state government schools to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. He is passionate about creating and providing equal opportunities for socially excluded groups, children and communities. He has worked with not-for-profit organisations, government, and bilateral development agencies, and has spoken at international conferences with his work surrounding the need to create inclusive societies.

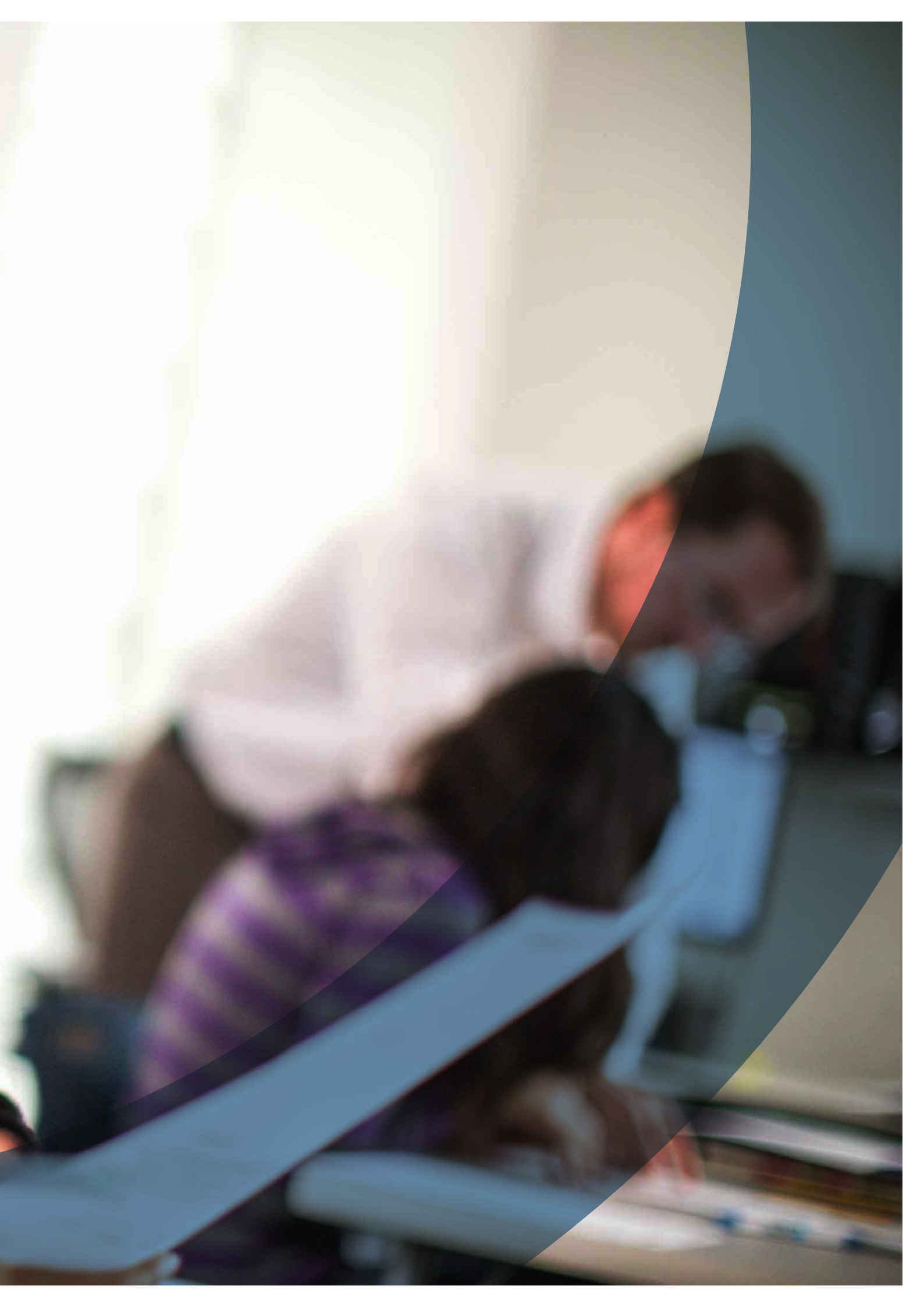


### Reem Al-Hout

Reem Al-Hout has served children and education communities for 31 years. She attended the American University of Beirut, gaining her Arts and Science bachelor's degree in Biology, teaching diploma in Elementary Education, and master's degree in Educational Psychology. For 11 years, she has been the Principal of the American Academy of Beirut, a school that champions the inclusion of students with learning difficulties. Mrs Reem enriches her school curriculum

with international partnership projects that enhance the students' international dimension and promotes their global vision, earning the International School Award in 2015. She performs workshops and teacher training sessions in Lebanon and abroad, and is a British Council local trainer for school leaders and teachers. Her main objective is to make a difference in education by working with school leaders and teachers to impact on children's academic, social and emotional performance.









# Library of Experience for Diversity and Inclusion

Inclusive education is about supporting access and engagement for all children, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, ability, socio-economic background, health or medical condition.

The British Council and Microsoft are proud to be collaborating on a joint new initiative to help share innovative practice in diversity and inclusion in education.

The Library of Experience for Diversity and Inclusion is made up of educators who have developed innovative and effective solutions that have helped provide more inclusive education policy and practice.

Educators from around the world have volunteered time to an online library. They can be borrowed from the library via Skype in the Classroom so you can connect with them and learn in more detail what they did and why it worked.

If you have relevant experience and would like to volunteer to be a resource with the library then please apply through <https://education.microsoft.com/diversity>

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