

Creating an inclusive school environment

Edited by Susan Douglas



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Sub-editors: Psyche Kennett, Rebecca Ingram,
Phil Dexter and Yvette Hutchinson

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Foreword

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are at the heart of what we do at the British Council and are directly linked to our values. They represent the mutual trust, respect and understanding we strive for on behalf of the UK. They are integral to our reputation, success and business sustainability because they allow us to draw on the widest possible field of talent, skills and inspiration. That in turn puts EDI at the core of our cultural relations mission. In our practice we aim to achieve alignment between what we say and what we do. We want everyone who comes into contact with us, both offline and online, to feel valued and respected, and our programmes, services and ways of working to demonstrate our stated commitment to EDI. We believe this will enrich everyone's experiences and ultimately lead to more inclusive societies.

At the British Council we focus on six areas of diversity, aligned to those protected by UK equality legislation: age, disability, ethnicity or race, gender, religion or belief, and sexual identity. We recognise that these different areas intersect and, together with other characteristics such as socio-economic status and geographical location, form our multifaceted identities. We help colleagues understand the business case, the moral and ethical case, and the legal case for our commitment to EDI and have developed a range of tools and initiatives to help us embed EDI into our programmes, projects, events and services. These also help to hold us to account and track our own progress.

We recognise that we live in challenging times where our commitment to EDI is being tested. We believe, though, that it is even more necessary to highlight inclusion in education at a time when there appears to be increasing suspicion of 'the other'. Indeed, we believe that the need to understand and empathise with alternative perspectives and differences has never been greater. Whether this is in response to the challenges of socio-economic disparities, mass migration, evidence of increased nationalism or the seeming desire to batten down the hatches rather than to open ourselves to diversity and attempt to recognise, understand and counteract our own unconscious biases. These feed into and are reflected in who has access to quality education and who does not.

Nor are we alone. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals – and specifically SDG 4, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' – is a high priority both for us and others.

This book represents our approach to inclusion, drawing on the best evidence and research globally. Most importantly, it demonstrates how approaches to inclusive education are relevant to both local and global contexts. We believe that inclusive education today calls for a broad rights-based concept of education that encompasses anyone who might be excluded from or have limited access to the educational system within a country, and where there may be barriers that affect learning, whether they be environmental, societal, organisational or attitudinal. We take a social model approach aimed at overcoming socially constructed barriers and empowering both individuals and society as a whole.

As someone involved in education through the whole of my life, as a learner, teacher, manager and leader, I know how important it is to strive for equity, diversity and inclusion, not as a one-off exercise but continuously, from one class to the next, one cohort to the next, and from one generation to the next. We need to be constantly vigilant to counter the prospect of backsliding, the emergence of new prejudices or the persistence of those that endure. I hope this volume proves to be both an inspiration and a useful tool in our shared journey towards creating more inclusive and open societies.

Professor Jo Beall

Director Cultural Engagement (Executive Board)
British Council

Introduction

Creating an inclusive school environment

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.

Internationally there is a shared commitment to securing more inclusive education systems. Sustainable Development Goal 4, set by the United Nations General Assembly, aims to ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’, while the World Education Forum adopted the Incheon Declaration in 2015, 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, language of choice, socio-economic 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, socio-economic background, ability, health or language needs. Access therefore focuses mainly on policies and structures.
- **Engagement** is about quality and 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 and ensuring that pupils learn successfully.

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 achieved 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 course 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 effectively teach children with a wide range of needs and from diverse backgrounds.

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 pupils by altering and improving their experiences, the expectations that surround them, and by creating supportive and enabling environments. Simply put, teachers can improve engagement, which will ultimately lead to improved learning outcomes.

A consideration of some of the research related to inclusive education 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.

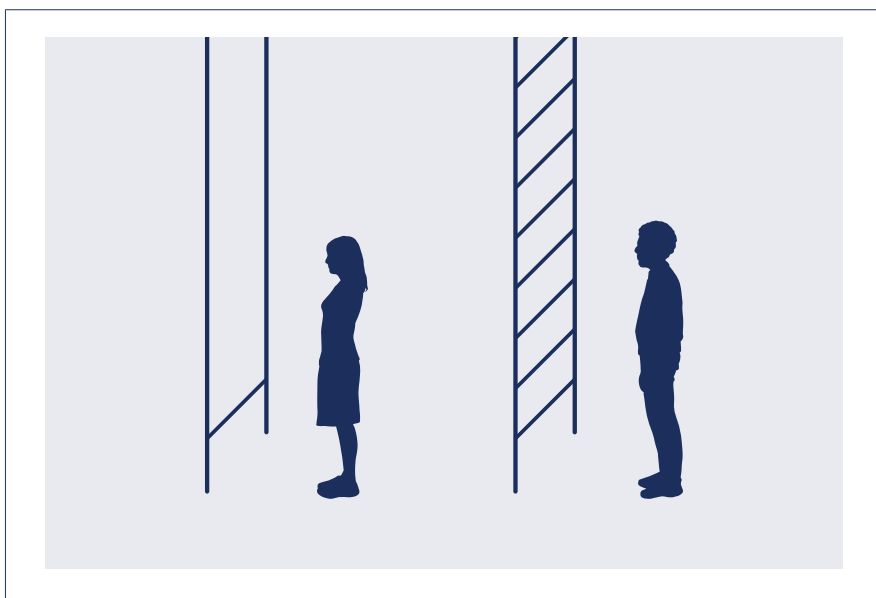
There is a fundamental difference between equality – where everyone is treated the same – and equity, where everyone is treated according to their own needs. Inclusion is not about treating everyone the same, it is about demonstrating the skills and awareness as a teacher of how to identify and respond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

To help teachers acquire and hone these skills, consideration of the following three 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. It explores how, in any organisation or society, including schools, 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 decisions and hold the power who make the rules and distribute the rewards.¹



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

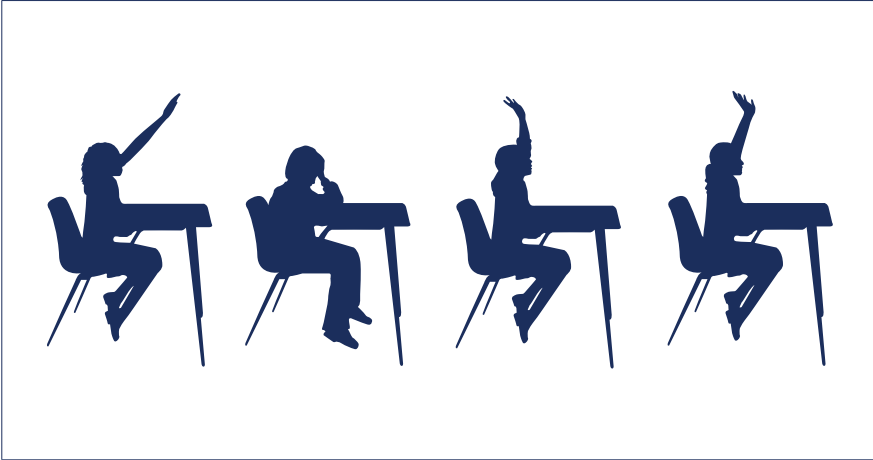
- **Rules** – who makes them? They usually prescribe how things get done – what is done, how it is done, by whom it will be done and who will benefit.
- **Activities** – what is done and by whom? For example, certain tasks often get assigned to certain social groups, such as women caring for the young, 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 physical material like food, assets and capital, human resources such as labour or education, or 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 higher 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 through time and with commitment from the people and institutions in a society.

Practitioners in school might consider their own organisations in relation to the five aspects outlined above. How diverse is the senior leadership team? Do all pupils have a voice in terms of decision-making? Can they all access the same opportunities?

2. Unconscious bias

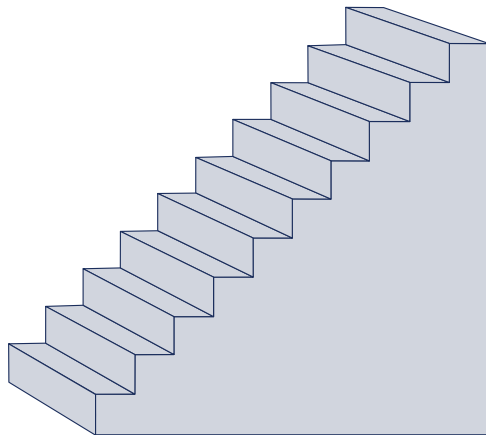
We all tend to have unconscious biases which we have developed over time about certain groups of people – usually those that are different from us. Unconscious bias is defined as ‘an inflexible positive or negative prejudgement about the nature, character and abilities of an individual, based on a generalised idea about the group to which the person belongs.’²



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.

3. The social model of disability

What's posing the problem – the wheelchair or the stairs?



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, a training institution or as a practitioner 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?

New approaches

All pupils flourish in well-managed classrooms. When teachers discuss and communicate basic rules and structures with their pupils, 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 regarding the inclusion of all pupils. Learning to behave in a pro-social and inclusive way is of benefit to the pupils, their peers, the school community and the wider society.

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.

New voices

The rest of this book is dedicated to previously unpublished papers that focus on research and evidence related to teacher and school leader capacity and development both in terms of continuous professional development (CPD) and initial teacher training and the ability to create inclusive school environments.

For ease, it is divided into four sections.

Displaced populations

The refugee crisis in the Middle East and North Africa and in Sub-Saharan Africa is part of a global phenomenon of forcible displacement. Populations can be displaced internally, cross-border or to third countries by conflict, natural disaster or economic hardship, and excluded from education because of language, culture, ethnicity, social status, trauma or a lack of resources.

Gender and inclusion in the classroom

Gender disparities in both access to school and achievement of learning outcomes persist globally for both girls and boys in different contexts. School-based factors, including gender bias and harmful stereotypes in curriculum and school practice, overcrowded classrooms, untrained teachers, a lack of resources and gender-based violence, prevent many children from receiving a quality education, restrict children's learning and make an early exit from schooling likely. The impact of the learning crisis persists into adulthood, affecting health, aspirations and self-esteem, poverty and employability.

Special educational needs and disability

Special educational needs and disability refers to pupils who have identified needs concerned with, for example, communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health or sensory and/or physical needs. Because of these needs, they may encounter barriers to learning which create a gap between performance and potential.

Minority ethnic groups in the classroom

In many countries, pupils from some of these groups are outperforming their white counterparts. However, this is far from consistent, with significant disparities across communities sitting alongside evidence that progress can be slow, resulting in underperformance in national assessments.

However, it is fully recognised that there are significant intersectional issues between and among these groups, and this is fully acknowledged within the papers which include both research and conceptual pieces that are evidence-based, describing practical experiences and examples including case studies. We hope they will offer policymakers, school leaders and teachers food for thought as they consider the challenges and opportunities of creating more inclusive school environments.

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 perhaps, 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: inclusive education is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development. It is the key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication, and we cannot therefore afford to have any child left behind.

Susan Douglas

Senior Schools Adviser for the British Council and Chief Executive Officer of the Eden Academy Trust

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1. Kabeer, N (1994) *Reversed realities*. London: Verso.
 2. Thiederman, S (2003) *Making diversity work*. Chicago: Dearborn.


Displaced populations



Displaced populations

Psyche Kennett

There are currently more than 68 million people around the world who have been forcibly displaced by conflict or persecution.¹ They include internally displaced people (IDPs) and people displaced across borders or to third countries. Nigeria is host to all three. In Iraq, about three million are internally displaced and a quarter of a million are Syrian refugees. Lebanon hosts a higher density of refugees per capita than any other country in the world. Greece has around 60,000 refugees who were prevented from moving to third countries by the EU–Turkish agreement.

Approximately 27 million refugees and IDPs are children, many of whom have been out of school for years due to conflict. Other factors that exclude these children from a normal education in new host communities include language, ethnic discrimination,  religion, differing parent and teacher expectations and culture, school systems and a lack of resources. Factors that exacerbate their vulnerability include the trauma of war, loss and displacement, and fear for their own safety.

This section explores support for children, youth, new teachers and experienced teachers who are displaced or must deal with displacement because of conflict: in Nigeria because of Boko Haram, in Iraq because of ISIS, and in Lebanon and Greece because of the war in Syria.

In ‘Teaching on the run: safe learning spaces for internally displaced persons’, Titilope Fakoya describes vulnerability to violence in school settings in its most extreme form. Girl students and women teachers are kidnapped, raped and killed by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria for claiming their basic rights to learn and to teach. Fakoya catalogues a series of formal and informal education interventions that support inclusive teaching and learning for IDPs in ‘safe spaces’. She concludes, however, that although these emergency education measures have provided some solutions for girls and women excluded by conflict, they do not address the root causes – inherent in Nigerian society in general and the public school system in particular – of gender bias against girls’ education, and the lack of respect and remuneration for teachers.

In 'Developing resilience through English language teaching in youth centres across Iraq', Fiona Robertson describes an English language programme that helps integrate minority ethnic groups forcibly displaced by ISIS into host communities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The English for Resilience project trains new teachers and provides youth from both local and displaced communities with much-sought-after English language skills. The programme strengthens social inclusion and builds social capital by putting into practice the British Council's 'Language for Resilience' approach. It helps teachers and students to access education and employment, build social cohesion by learning together in mixed groups, address the effects of trauma on learning, create safe educational spaces, and develop capacity for dealing with diversity, displacement and inclusion.

In 'Capacity building for inclusive classrooms: the Living Together training', Eirini Adamopoulou discusses working on forcible displacement from a host government perspective. She analyses how the Living Together training incorporates lessons learned from informal education programmes to strengthen inclusive practices for refugees and migrants in the formal Greek education system. The programme builds a positive loop around inclusive alliances for inclusion. It works with integrated groups of state school and non-governmental organisation (NGO) refugee camp teachers, school leaders and environment, health and culture education professionals. It advocates inclusive pedagogy, life skills and a rights-based approach to deal with multilingual, multigrade, psychosocial challenges. Word networks are used to analyse these educators' perceptions of needs, learning, best practices and challenges concerning refugee student populations at primary and secondary level.

In 'Integrating Syrian refugee children and their parents into Lebanese early education systems', Isabelle Grappe and Claire Ross introduce a plurilingual approach to inclusion for very young learners in the Lebanese preschool system. They present a practical training pack that is designed to link teachers, young children and their parents in a positive class-work, home-work cycle. The activities are specifically designed to 'awaken' children, parents and teachers to linguistic and cultural diversity and inclusion. The very simple pre-primary multilingual tasks also support parents who do not understand the Lebanese school system, cannot necessarily communicate with their child's teacher, and may be semi-literate themselves. 'Before' and 'after' comments from parent and teacher focus group interviews bear testimony to the inclusive impact of the approach.

1. UNHCR (2018) *Figures at a Glance*. UNHCR. Available online at: www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html

Teaching on the run: safe learning spaces for internally displaced persons

Titilope Fakoya

The effect of Boko Haram

In September 2017, the government of Borno State in Nigeria announced promotion and salary increases for 3,000 teachers across the state in an attempt to improve teacher welfare.¹ For many, the promotion exercise was viewed as an ineffective response to the underlying risks that educators and students face in regions affected by Boko Haram.

Since gaining worldwide media attention in 2009, Boko Haram, whose name loosely translates as ‘Western education is forbidden’, has repeatedly conducted violent campaigns throughout the north-east of Nigeria. In April 2014 it infamously captured 276 schoolgirls from their dormitories in Chibok, Borno State. Boko Haram has been responsible for over 1,600 terrorist attacks and over 14,000 fatalities, including those on schools and commercial areas.² North-eastern Nigerian states including Borno, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe have received up to 1.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result, and around 16 million people – their entire resident populations – have been affected by the insurgency in some way.

Even before the terror attacks, educational achievement in the north-east of Nigeria was already at the lowest levels in the country, with over 50 per cent of boys and 60 per cent of girls over the age of six having received no education. However, since the increase in terrorist activities, the situation has worsened. Schools in the affected states are in Boko Haram’s direct line of fire, and teachers and students are much sought-after targets. Over 600 teachers have been killed and approximately 19,000 educators have been displaced by the insurgency. Furthermore, Boko Haram has destroyed over 900 schools, ensured the closure of 1,500 others and, critically, abducted more than 2,000 people, many of whom are women.³

Boko Haram’s open hostility towards women, girls and educational institutions has drastically reduced the opportunities for girls’ education in the affected region. Boko Haram has also deliberately conducted a psychological campaign against educators and students living and working in targeted areas. The pursuit of teaching under the threat of attack, including instances of rape and forced religious conversions, has severely hampered teachers, leaving them struggling with vulnerability, suspicion, distrust and the breakdown of normal social interaction.⁴

Legacy issues pre-Boko Haram

The effects of the Boko Haram insurgency, though extreme, do not account for all of the observed deficiencies in educational achievement in the north-east of Nigeria, especially in states like Borno. To a large extent, some aspects of the crisis find their roots in legacy issues which are the result of government policy and planning failures, and systemic societal and community biases against basic education for girls and women in the north of Nigeria.⁵

In the immediate period after Nigeria achieved independence, authorities charged with the provision of public education encountered a general apathy in the north of the country towards schooling and learning delivered along the lines of the Western model. At the same time, many rural agrarian communities in the north-east were quite willing to subscribe to Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools where most arrangements were built around the schedules of itinerant imams. Though these school settings offered flexible learning hours, they were often strictly segregated along gender lines.⁶

Previous attempts at unifying the popular Islamiyya and Qur'anic schools with state education guidelines recorded moderate success, with governments inviting imams in 1990 to situate their travelling educational operations in publicly provided facilities.⁷ However, even with these provisions in place, the education outlook in the north-east of Nigeria remained bleak. Despite the introduction of Universal Basic Education legislation in the 1999 Nigerian constitution and the 2004 Universal Education Act,⁸ states like Borno still have not achieved the stated educational achievement goals.⁹ Unfortunately, the onset of the Boko Haram insurgency eliminated any signs of the moderate progress being made.

Early marriage has also been an influencing factor in the educational achievement of girls in the north-east as it has a significant impact on their ability to complete schooling. Moreover, some male teachers, as members of the wider community, endorse the practice of early marriage and are actively in support of the withdrawal of girls from schooling after marriage. These teachers often promote the same for their wives, daughters and sisters.

Teaching in trouble

Further complicating this situation is the low esteem in which the teaching profession is regarded – a fundamentally flawed perspective that prevails in Nigeria. There remains very little appreciation of the factors that enhance teacher motivation for the job, especially in regions like the north-east. Worse still, little or no recognition is given to the effect of psychological factors on the general well-being of students and teachers. This attitude stems from the common view of teachers primarily as providers of academic instruction, while their additional roles as providers of counselling and care are not acknowledged. In particular, if female teachers are going to continue to be relevant in the lives of married girls, they need to forge new relationships that extend beyond the boundaries of the schooling experience. After the student's marriage, the role of the female teacher needs to expand so that in addition to academic instruction, it may also include being a mentor, confidante, protector or adviser on domestic and marital matters.

The crafting of solutions to address the effects of early marriage on girls' lives is normally championed by female teachers as they have a personal interest in the issue. These female teachers are often found at the forefront of advocating for more inclusive arrangements that bring schooling closer to married girls in their home environments. The policy response to this widespread practice has taken the form of a number of measures designed to broaden the options for girls who have dropped out of school because they got married. These are loosely called 'second-chance' initiatives. The measures accord special recognition to the unique challenges posed by being married at an early age and the realities and responsibilities of being a spouse and mother.

Girls' clubs

One intervention in keeping with the second-chance approach is found in the form of 'safe space girls' clubs'. These are community-based informal learning arrangements designed to cater for girls who have either dropped out of formal schooling or have no previous experience of it. In these spaces the girls are provided with opportunities to learn life skills, socialise and build social networks, and access social and psychological services. In the safe-space environment, female teachers have found increased opportunities to play a meaningful role as providers of care and counselling. Graduates of these programmes have been known to exhibit a significant boost in their self-awareness, self-esteem and leadership skills, in addition to other skills and competencies. Consequently, they are able to better articulate their own interests within their homes.

There are also a number of benefits that trickle down to the host communities as a direct result of the participation of their girls in girls' clubs. For example, girls who have learned skills in budgeting and saving through the clubs have been able to communicate these skills to other women in their communities. Likewise, where clubs have emphasised improved general hygiene, girls have also been able to relay this information to their family and community members, and further bolster public health interventions in northern Nigeria. As a result, girls' increased skills have in turn increased community confidence in the value of education for women and girls.

Female teachers have been able to step up advocacy efforts in support of the continued operation of girls' clubs by emphasising some of these wider benefits to the community from the continued participation of their girls in the programme. It is into this reality that the Boko Haram insurgency comes, with its anti-education philosophy and hard-line support for harmful practices against women and girls – an additional complication which has devastating effects.

Safe Schools Initiative

In May 2014, at the World Economic Forum meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, the Nigerian government and the Global Business Coalition for Education, in conjunction with Nigerian business leaders, announced the launch of the Safe Schools Initiative to pilot 500 safe schools in the north-east of Nigeria following the educational consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency. The Safe Schools Initiative also established a \$10 million fund to support the requirements and growth of the programme. Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, visited Nigeria to support the establishment of this initiative and pledged the support of the international community in bringing education to the regions affected by Boko Haram. Beyond the initial investment, the initiative also aimed to bolster the physical protection of schools, train school staff as safety officers, and provide school counsellors and counselling to affected schools.¹⁰

By November 2014 the government identified 2,400 students from Yobe, Adamawa, and Borno states as the primary enrolment cohort into the Safe Schools Initiative. In May 2018, the Safe Schools Initiatives Secretariat reported the following three points of progress: the first 2,400 students had been transferred to 43 federal colleges; three schools in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states had been chosen to pilot a Schools Rehabilitation Programme to upgrade physical infrastructure, introduce deterrents to potential attackers and formulate rapid response plans for teachers and students; and double-shift schooling had been introduced to over 47,000 displaced children in Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Gombe states. By August of 2015, over 600 teachers had been trained by the Safe Schools Initiative and approximately 22,000 learning resources had been provided to internally displaced children.¹¹

Under the Safe Schools Initiative, participating schools had to commit to global standards for inclusive learning spaces and systems. In addition, because these schools were staffed by teachers aware of the dangers of the Boko Haram terrorists and attended by students who were also familiar with the conflict, other skills and competencies were included in the curricula. After training from UNICEF staff and support staff of the Safe Schools Initiative, teachers instructed their students in the mechanics of safety drills in the event of a terrorist attack. Similarly, the teachers themselves were taught how to provide psychosocial support to the students. However, the physical safety of teachers, students and schools in the programme was not guaranteed; many schools lacked official security personnel and were guarded instead by neighbourhood volunteers.¹² In addition, it became increasingly clear that many government officials and IDPs in the north-east of Nigeria were not aware of the Safe Schools Initiative or the benefits it offered.¹³

Education Crisis Response Program

Alongside the Safe Schools Initiative, other education projects have been initiated in the north-east of Nigeria including the Education Crisis Response Program, which is a US Agency for International Development (USAID) initiative in collaboration with the Nigerian government, civil society organisations, and community organisers and leaders. As well as providing basic numeracy and literacy skills, these programmes include a crucial life skills component that readies internally displaced children for reintegration into their home communities when the conflict subsides. Education Crisis Response has implemented an effective approach by sourcing teachers and mentors for these schools from the local communities affected by the crises. The success of this approach has been felt by many of the affected communities, with 294 learning centres having been established, either as schools or informal meeting spaces provided by the communities. To address the psychosocial needs of internally displaced, conflict-affected children, the teachers in these schools are specially trained to approach teaching in a student-friendly manner that encourages group activities and a message of peace.

Trauma counselling

Back in Chibok, the location of the kidnapping of the schoolgirls in 2014, the government of Borno State, in addition to providing ongoing relief measures, embraced an alternative solution for providing support to the victims of the insurgency: trauma counselling.¹⁴ In collaboration with the African Development Bank, the Presidential Committee of the North East Initiative organised a five-day trauma counselling programme for the affected Chibok community, drawing participants from religious groups, traditional leaders, community members and, importantly, some parents of the girls who had been kidnapped. The government of Borno also announced that it would incorporate elements of trauma counselling into the primary and post-primary schools that taught students affected by Boko Haram and into the curricula of the state colleges of education.¹⁵ Through this it was intended that pre-service teachers would be trained to understand the effects of trauma on children, how to cope with their needs in the classroom and how to recognise children who should be referred for more specialised help.

The sheer number of people in need of trauma support and ongoing counselling is staggering. Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, where the insurgency has hit hardest, has a ratio of one psychologist for every 375,000 residents. Estimates of the ideal ratio would be closer to one for every 4,000. There simply aren't enough trained psychologists in all of Nigeria to answer that need. In the meantime, efforts geared at meeting the acute demand for trauma support and counselling are focused on training lay counsellors and religious leaders who can at least conduct group therapy sessions with the IDPs.¹⁶

New threats

The initial successes of schools for internally displaced children, with teachers fulfilling multiple roles, has not gone unnoticed by the terrorists. Though the schools and internally displaced children have not necessarily been the primary targets, the effects are still felt as Boko Haram has recently begun to focus its attacks on IDP camps. In February 2018 two Boko Haram suicide bombers attacked an IDP camp in Dikwa, Borno State, resulting in the deaths of 58 people.¹⁷ According to the Institute for Security Studies the number of Boko Haram attacks on IDP resettlement camps rose from four in 2015 to 15 in 2017. These attacks are not random: IDP camps and the education initiatives they promote have become soft targets. As Nigerian security forces have attempted to address incursions into IDP camps, the impact of the violence on the schools has only worsened.

However, the question cannot be avoided as to whether the legacy issues – the lack of gender parity in schools as the result of poor planning and weak political will, as well as harmful practices and gender stereotypes which exclude girls from education – remain beyond the reach of the interventions described above. These pre-existing problems have their origins in the choices and biases that are deeply ingrained in the life of the affected communities and, if unaddressed, will endure long after the Boko Haram crisis is resolved.

The twin issues of exclusion and gender-based violence in Nigeria had already assumed the proportions of a regional crisis in the education sector, but because of the ‘slow-burn’ nature of this crisis, many of the indices, especially those which pertain to the educational achievement of girls and women, were not seen as acutely addressable. The Boko Haram insurgency exacerbated the problem and brought global attention to the education issue in the north-east, especially in hard-hit states like Borno.

Conclusions

The unprecedented increase in violence attributed to Boko Haram in the north-east of Nigeria has drastically affected the social and developmental landscape of the region. It has also had a devastating effect on the educational system. In spite of the tragedy, interventions such as the Safe Schools Initiative and other community-level programmes have demonstrated ways in which children and residents of affected communities, especially girls, can begin to gain access to the education that, as citizens, they deserve.

The practice of teaching in formal and informal contexts in the north-east of Nigeria has, from the onset, been beset with challenges that have reduced potential outputs to the barest minimum. These challenges have incapacitated school systems, hamstrung teachers and disenfranchised some of the most deserving recipients of an education: girls in the north of Nigeria. To change this, commitment is required, first for the continued development of educational systems to a point where they are on a par with internationally acceptable standards, and second at a regional level to get commitment to a comprehensive plan to deal with the underlying attitudes, cultural practices and biases that have produced the present problems.

The emphasis has to be on the long term. This will mitigate against the tendency of election cycles to lock successive administrations into short-term thinking of the sort that sees them build more schools, deploy more facilities and recruit more teachers in an attempt to justify their electability.

Safe schooling and safe-space initiatives as responses to the ongoing crisis are expressions of more inclusive learning arrangements. Teachers have played a crucial role in their establishment and running. Teachers who continue to teach in the Boko Haram insurgency-ravaged north-east of Nigeria must be commended. In the face of a clear risk to life, limb and mental health, they exhibit a continued determination to halt the perpetuation of the very factors that have produced the conflict; by educating the next generation they offer a ray of hope in a dire situation that continues to be fuelled by the worst possible combination of human cruelty, poor judgement and a catalogue of missed opportunities. For teachers on the run, their existence and their continuing commitment are testament to the potential for a positive future in the north-east of Nigeria.

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2

Developing resilience through English language teaching in youth centres across Iraq

Fiona Robertson

In October 2016, the English for Resilience project was launched with our partners Mercy Corps, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.¹ In this chapter I describe how Marie Delaney and I took on this challenge and more importantly how learning a language helps students and teachers who have experienced loss and hardship to build up resilience.

The situation was extraordinarily challenging: young local teachers with little or no experience and a low level of English, teaching with no coursebooks or syllabus. The students were adolescents from displaced minority ethnic groups mixed with host community youth from challenging environments. Some of the students had dropped out of formal schooling and some had learning difficulties or behavioural disorders. Some of the teachers were themselves refugees or displaced persons.

Setting the scene

Mercy Corps manages youth centres across Iraq, offering courses in life skills for young people, male and female in equal numbers between the ages of 12 and 18.² The beneficiaries are from the host community as well as the IDP³ and refugee communities, but the demographic of each youth centre varies by location. Beneficiaries might be enrolled in school, but many have dropped out.

In 2016 a pilot project was launched in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in eight youth centres in urban and rural areas where Mercy Corps believed that the community needed most support. The beneficiaries were local Kurds, displaced Arabic speakers from central Iraq and Syrian Kurdish refugees. The coaches and mentors⁴ came from the same ethnic groups as the beneficiaries. Subsequently the project expanded to other parts of Iraq and to Jordan.

Depending on the ethnic combination in class there might be little or no common language of communication as none of the IDPs speak Kurdish and not all Kurds speak Arabic. Furthermore, the Kurdish dialects differ greatly from each other and the Syrian Kurds have difficulty understanding the Iraqi Kurds. Although there are many camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for IDPs and refugees, the English for Resilience project is better suited for IDP and refugee beneficiaries who are past the emergency stage and living in communities where there is more stability.

This also means that social cohesion becomes an integral part of the project, as different ethnic groups from the host and displaced communities teach and learn together.

The English for Resilience training course consists of either six or ten days of intensive face-to-face training followed up by mentorship, observation and feedback. The Mercy Corps mentors are trained at the same time as the coaches, so they can work closely with the British Council trainers and share experiences with the coaches. Mentors are encouraged to teach some activities during the training course and receive feedback, even though they will not need to teach in the youth centres; their main role is supporting and supervising the coaches. Consequently, they need first-hand experience of giving a lesson, being observed and receiving feedback. The course design is loosely based on the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), with input sessions in the morning and teaching practice with volunteer youth in the afternoon. Teaching practice is followed by classroom observation feedback on the lessons where trainers, mentors and coaches all participate.

How learning (and teaching) English builds up resilience

The humanitarian aid definition of resilience is the ability to ‘anticipate, withstand, recover and transform from shocks and crises’.⁵ The Language for Resilience programme aims to provide people with tools that will help them return to a normal life after experiences of severe hardship. This aim is particularly relevant in Iraq.

In June 2018 the UNHCR reported that ‘More than 3 million Iraqis have been displaced across the country since the start of 2014 and over 260,000 are refugees in other countries. Mass executions, systematic rape and horrendous acts of violence are widespread, and human rights and rule of law are under constant attack. It is estimated that over 11 million Iraqis are currently in need of humanitarian assistance.’⁶ This is in addition to previous conflicts that have been going on for decades in Iraq, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which affect every Iraqi in some way. Furthermore, the beneficiaries from the host community who attend the Mercy Corps courses are struggling with issues that arise in the lives of many young people globally, including poverty, substandard education and poor employment prospects. Their communities lack the infrastructure to support the needs of young people, despite nearly 56 per cent of Iraqis being under the age of 24.⁷

The British Council *Language for Resilience* report,⁸ based on extensive research in four countries, identifies five themes which are fundamental to developing resilience:

1. Developing home language and literacy: creating the foundations for shared identity, belonging and future study.
2. Providing access to education, training and employment.
3. Learning together for social cohesion: language-learning activities as a basis for developing individual resilience, ensuring dignity, self-sufficiency and life skills.

4. Addressing the effects of trauma on learning: language programmes as support and as a means to address loss, displacement and trauma.
5. Building the capacity of teachers and strengthening educational systems: building institutional resilience through professional training for language teachers.

Here I discuss four of these five themes which are clearly addressed in the English for Resilience project in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Providing access to education

Although the 12-week Mercy Corps English programme is not long enough for young people to improve their English in a way measurable on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), youth in Iraq are very aware that being able to speak English greatly enhances their access to education and request that English courses are available in the centres. Much of the feedback in the Mercy Corps report on the pilot course shows that the beneficiaries perceive these English courses as different to English they learned at school and that they are learning to speak English in an effective way. At the beginning of the first lesson of the three-month course a 17-year-old boy announced in Arabic that he ‘wanted to learn English but was rubbish at it’ and he emphasised this by acting the fool and getting his friends to laugh at his terrible pronunciation. However, during the next lesson he sat right at the front with his pen and notebook, totally engaged, trying to take in as much as he could. His attitude changed once he realised that this class was very different to his experience at school, and he was willing to try to learn.

The students’ attitude to education may vary within a class. In one youth centre in a remote and economically depressed area it was clearly the host community who were disadvantaged regarding accessing education, while the Syrians in the class were from a much better-educated social group. One of the aims of the course is to create the belief among the beneficiaries that they *can* learn English, enhancing their feeling of self-worth and the likelihood that they will pursue their education.

Learning together and social cohesion

In a communicative learner-centred lesson, the teacher sets up activities which encourage students to work together in pairs and groups, and listen to each other, for example in communication gap activities. Consequently, a community builds up within the class. This might extend outside the classroom through project work, social media groups and real friendships. In a traditional communicative English language lesson this is a by-product of language learning, whereas in the Language for Resilience classroom it becomes one of the main aims of the course. Language learning is thus the vehicle for developing social skills and cohesion.

The coaches are trained by Mercy Corps to encourage the students to interact with everyone, overcoming barriers that may exist between the host community and the other ethnic groups. Any tensions arising are discussed and explored. This was verified in a lesson I observed where students watched an inspirational video about disability, which led to discussion on prejudice and expectations and how we are more like others than we might think.

Social cohesion during the training was achieved by setting up multi-layered training, with coaches developing their teaching skills and mentors developing their observation, feedback and planning skills at the same time. Coaches and mentors were on the same footing, reducing any tendency towards hierarchy.

Addressing the effects of trauma on learning by creating a safe space

Mercy Corps trains the coaches to understand the impact of trauma on learning. Evidence of trauma might be challenging behaviour, difficulty in trusting a teacher or problems caused by changes in routine. Language classrooms can provide opportunities to address such behaviour through activities. These can be classic 'getting to know you' activities, mingling and group work, or the coach can set up more specific trust-building and creative activities through drama, art and music.

In a context where coaches and mentors were clearly expert in creating a sense of trust within the groups, Marie and I became very interested in observing the effect of risk-taking in language learning, which applied to the beneficiaries but also the coaches and mentors. Very early on in all the training courses we encountered discussion around the concept of using English in the classroom as the coaches and mentors were worried that vulnerable beneficiaries would be over-stressed by trying to understand teachers speaking only English.

Mercy Corps focuses very much on creating a safe space for learners, but we had to introduce the idea that we could allow risks to be taken within that safe space. In fact, the beneficiaries needed to reach the edge of their comfort zone, to feel that they had learned something completely new and made real achievements. The students arrived curious but unsure of what was going to happen, and because the situation was so unlike their previous English classes at school, they were challenged. But being suspended in uncertainty in a place which feels safe, where curiosity is stimulated in an enjoyable way, can encourage healing – the stress in that situation is recognised by the brain as something positive rather than negative.

During the training the work of psychologist Kelly McGonigal was introduced. McGonigal explores how changing attitudes to stress can change bodily responses to it. Stress triggers increased production of the neurohormone oxytocin which, counter-intuitively, can be used to improve empathy and support.

Creating a safe space for coaches and mentors

The coaches and mentors were also continuously facing and overcoming challenges.

Because encouraging the coaches to use English as much as possible in their lessons obviously motivated the students, Marie included a demonstration lesson in Polish, a foreign language unknown to the participants, early on in each course to get across the idea that teachers can make themselves understood in a new language if they use the right strategies. After the short language lesson participants analysed in detail how they felt during the experience and the responses included *curious*, *interested*, *focused* and *satisfied*. We would remind the coaches of this experience later, when they wanted to revert to using home languages.

This developed the participants' understanding that facing challenges like learning another language develops resilience if this happens in a safe space, and over-protecting students from all anxiety is not always beneficial to their healing and development.

At the same time, we had to remind coaches that although they should use English as much as possible, it was important for the students to be able to use their home languages in class as they went through the learning process. Some coaches were nervous about not being able to understand all their students as they worked together, but this is, in fact, what happens in multilingual English language classrooms around the world when students learn from each other.

We observed the participants spontaneously creating a safe space. Standing in front of a class for the first time is daunting for anyone, but one coach from Fallujah was particularly unsure about giving his first lesson. With the help of his colleagues, however, he was able to prepare and deliver the activity well. Later we discovered that he had witnessed one of his family members being killed by Daesh⁹ before he and his parents managed to flee to Erbil. The fact that this young man successfully finished the course with the support of his peers was incredibly empowering for him in the light of what he had experienced. In most cases we don't know what the coaches and beneficiaries have been through, and in fact it is not necessary to know. Whatever their story, we are creating a safe and supportive environment where new positive experiences take place.

Building the capacity of teachers

There are some components of the English for Resilience course that are crucial to its success. In many teacher-training courses, the participants deliver 'micro-teaching' sessions, where they practise on their colleagues. In this programme the mentors and coaches were able to practise on the beneficiaries in the youth centres, trying out activities immediately after the input sessions, in real conditions and getting feedback and support. This gave Marie and I insight into the reality of the environment, and we were able to modify the training accordingly.

The experiential learning model allowed activities to be tried out and experienced rather than simply talked about. This was particularly important in teaching practice when lessons did not go well. Rather than viewing lessons as successful or not, it was important for all participants to view 'mistakes' in teaching practice as learning opportunities. Discussions about challenging behaviour from students led to a noticeable positive change in the coaches' teaching and mentors' awareness of what makes effective feedback.

Marie developed simple, practical handbooks for coaches and mentors specifically for the course, which had a suitable language level and embraced the idea of resilience and language teaching. She also created ready-made lesson plans, specifically for the participants to use during teaching practice, as they were not experienced in producing quality activities. In this way we were able to concentrate on the delivery of the lessons, reducing stress on the participants and allowing them to engage fully with the students.

Feedback from the participants showed that they felt they were acquiring practical teaching skills which enhanced the training they received from Mercy Corps. This illustrates how the British Council Language for Resilience programme works well in partnership with existing international and local NGO programmes.

Language for Resilience was created for the informal education sector but could be adapted for state schools. Teachers in Iraq (and other countries) are not only dealing with vulnerable learners in many cases, but have themselves experienced the same terrible situations and are often IDPs or returnees. The next step could be to adapt the programme for the state sector and give teachers who are working in extremely challenging environments the tools to create safe spaces where young students not only learn English but also develop the resilience needed to grow into citizens able to deal with life in a disrupted and challenging environment. This started to happen naturally, as some IDP coaches left Mercy Corps to return to their cities that had been liberated from Daesh. Hala, for example, who was a qualified teacher, returned to Fallujah as the schools started up again and she was able to invest her new skills back into the state education system.

Why English for Resilience?

The Language for Resilience concept does, of course, work with any language, and the choice of language or languages depends entirely on the context. Refugees arriving in Europe, for example, need to learn the language of the country they reside in, and English might not be a priority. I am anxious to stress that in Iraq we are specifically using English for a variety of reasons.

Most importantly, young people are requesting English. The youth centres offer a variety of courses, including music, IT skills and professional skills such as hairdressing, but English remains one of the most popular. During our training course more and more students turned up as volunteers for the daily teaching practice, and as word spread the room got increasingly crowded. Several years ago, I worked in a 'Skills for Employability' programme for young people with special needs in Italy. After the programme, which included English and IT, many of the students were able to get jobs in local shops or offices. English was popular because the young people felt as if they were studying something 'proper', something which adults without special needs did, and apart from giving them a qualification that granted them access to an income and consequently a degree of autonomy, the experience boosted their self-esteem. The beneficiaries of the Iraqi youth centres respond positively to the reality of learning English, and it is this positive response that starts to build up resilience.

In Erbil the boys' class grew from eight to 26 students during the four days. The number of girls increased but less dramatically. The situation is more complex for girls, who travel to the centres by bus because most families do not want them to travel unaccompanied. As a result, girls are unlikely to turn up spontaneously, as the boys do.

Remote training

A few months later we trained Mercy Corps coaches in another Kurdish city, Sulimaneya. This provided an excellent opportunity for the mentors to participate more actively in the training sessions, observing and giving feedback to the coaches while I monitored them. Marie was not able to travel on that occasion, so she offered to do the input sessions through Skype. Unfortunately, as often happens in challenging environments we encountered problems with the electricity supply and online connectivity, and participants could only hear Marie, not see her on the screen.

I was surprised how quickly the participants accepted her as their trainer even though they couldn't see her. In fact, they seemed to forget that she wasn't in the room. Marie said that once she had learned their names, it was relatively easy to conduct the session, even though it was the first time she had trained remotely. Organisations and ministries tend to be sceptical of remote teaching and training, and I was able to use this example as a success story and subsequently set up two remote Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) training courses for the Iraqi Ministry of Education maths and science teachers.

Remote mentoring

English language teachers from the University of Reading, led by Clare Furneaux and Tony Capstick, set up a voluntary mentoring support programme, 'Colleagues across Borders', offering weekly Skype sessions to the Mercy Corps coaches. Each coach in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was paired with a mentor in Reading and had the opportunity to use the session for support on methodology and English language. This component was very valuable and contributed considerably to the project.

Interviews with the UK mentors after the three-month programme ended show that most of their time was spent discussing English language teaching (ELT). Younger, less experienced coaches asked about activities they could use in class, and classroom management, especially how to deal with unruly adolescent boys. More experienced coaches enjoyed speaking to the UK mentors as equals about the teaching profession. Part of the time was also dedicated to informal English language improvement. The UK mentors expressed their surprise at the normality of the environment in Kurdistan, which belied their expectations, particularly when they watched videos of the classes. One mentor talked about the older teacher she was working with, who had recently had to flee from his home with his family, because of Daesh, but who had experienced conflict all his life, due to his ethnicity. His work as a teacher was his lifeline, as it represented some stability in a situation of constant disruption, and his sessions with her where he was able to speak as one professional to another validated him in some way. The fact that he never missed a session, he was never late and always stayed online for the full hour showed the importance of these meetings. The UK mentors repeatedly mentioned how much they got out of the sessions as they discovered a reality very different from that portrayed in the news. The coaches and mentors were very much focused on their work, on trying to teach English to the beneficiaries as best they could, just like the UK mentors when they were teaching in Reading, and this created a relationship between fellow educators rather than one helping the other.

As we had predicted, some mentees failed to show up for their meetings and a couple of pairings did not work out in terms of empathy. Keeping the meetings open to individual needs meant that each pair could explore together how best to use the time, according to the needs and requests of the mentee and the expertise of the mentor. However, now that we understand the pitfalls better, in a future programme more time would be spent preparing both mentors and mentees to manage expectations and set clearer guidelines before the meetings. In future I would prepare workshops on how the remote mentoring programme would work for both parties and the Mercy Corps managers, although I think it's important to keep the model flexible enough for the parties to explore what best suits their needs. Overall the feedback from this short pilot programme showed that remote mentoring is a very effective tool for reaching teachers in remote, inaccessible, conflict-affected areas which should be explored in more depth in future Language for Resilience programmes.

Working with a suitable partner

The key to the success of the Language for Resilience training is building up the coach's awareness of what is happening with the students during each moment of the lesson. Every utterance from the teacher and every task has an effect on the students, and the teacher should constantly be able to monitor the reaction of the students and respond accordingly. The Mercy Corps English courses, or 'cycles', last three months. English language is embedded in a programme which on a larger scale aims to reduce profound stress. Coaches receive six weeks of intense psychosocial training and during the three-month cycle they also have a network of support, including regular sessions with the mentors, in addition, staff who are highly experienced in dealing with young people are always present in the youth centres. Working within the Mercy Corps programme facilitates the Language for Resilience training, as the coaches are already familiar with the kind of environment that cultivates resilience.

I would like to see the British Council continue to work closely with Mercy Corps and similar NGOs, embedding the Language for Resilience training within an existing psychosocial training structure. The skills developed by the British Council in the Language for Resilience programme together with Mercy Corps' expertise in the psychosocial field produce an enhanced outcome which neither group would achieve alone. The result is an example of 'one plus one is greater than two' and demonstrates the potential for building social capital, an important component of social cohesion.

It is crucial that the partner selects suitable coaches and mentors who are committed to the organisation's values of inclusion and lifelong learning, and are flexible and open to feedback, as is the case with Mercy Corps. On a practical level, in order to develop social cohesion, the youth centres need to be able to recruit both host community and refugee/IDP students and create classes with a mix of ethnicities.

The way forward

CPD which focuses specifically on English is crucial for the coaches. Because of the inaccessibility of Iraq this should be a combination of digital resources – such as the British Council's online teacher-training materials in Teaching for Success¹⁰ – with material specifically developed for teachers working with forcibly displaced students, and remote mentoring programmes like the University of Reading pilot, where there is contact with a real person.

I have described working in the informal education sector, but the programme could be adapted for teachers working in state schools. Iraqis are returning to areas such as Mosul and Anbar, which have been liberated from Daesh, and schools are starting up again. Many of the children in these state schools have been out of any kind of education for several years, while their teachers have also suffered the ravages of conflict.

Currently, 25 Mercy Corps coaches are delivering English language courses in ten youth centres, one school in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and one school in central Iraq. In addition, the project has expanded to Jordan, where five coaches and mentors trained by the British Council are operating in three youth centres. As a result, by the end of 2018 more than 1,500 young people will have benefited from the programme.

The project is a journey into a new area of teaching and training in a very challenging part of the world, but helping young people build up the resilience to grow into empowered citizens in Iraq and elsewhere is a worthwhile goal.

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 2. During the teaching practice the youth were divided into two groups, 12–15 years and 16–17 years. Youth over 18 were not able to attend the lessons to comply with the British Council child protection policy.
 3. Internally displaced people, or IDPs, are among the world's most vulnerable people. Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find sanctuary but have remained inside their home countries.
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3

Capacity building for inclusive classrooms: the Living Together training

Eirini Adamopoulou

Introduction

In the period 2015–16, more than one million refugees and migrants passed through Greece having fled violence and persecution in their home countries.¹ According to this data, refugees and migrants entering Greece mostly came from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan, and 62 per cent were women and children. They were largely heterogeneous in terms of language, religion, nationality, culture, socio-economic status and legal status, and moved from the Greek islands to the mainland and then onwards to other European transit countries. Since the implementation of the EU–Turkey agreement in March 2016, however, most refugees and migrants arriving in Greece were prevented from moving on, leaving almost 60,000 people based in Greece, including more than 23,000 children.² The demands on humanitarian aid for refugee and migrant populations increased hugely, with families in need of adequate shelter, food, basic support and health services.

Refugee and migrant children and adolescents face unique challenges, including separation from their parents and other family members, varying levels of familiarity with, and adjustment to, a new culture, lack of access to education and healthcare services, language barriers, uncertain legal status, prejudice and social exclusion, multiple moves, and trauma exposure that can increase the risk of psychological, behavioural or emotional problems and school failure.³

Specifically, unaccompanied and separated children are at increased risk of being exploited or becoming victims of violence and discrimination,⁴ and face a number of psychosocial challenges upon resettlement.⁵ With regards to education, many refugee and migrant children of diverse ethnic backgrounds have only limited or interrupted schooling or have never been to school. They experience language barriers for years while trying to learn, and are exposed to diverse curricula and teaching methodologies in a variety of refugee settings often with few resources.⁶

In order to address the educational needs of refugee and migrant children, non-formal educational programmes were organised in official refugee accommodation sites as well as in urban community and educational centres. These educational programmes were externally funded and implemented by international and local NGOs. The NGO workers in these settings included Greek and international teachers and practitioners (for example, psychologists and social workers) as well as refugees and migrants (for example, interpreters and mother tongue teachers).

In March 2016, the Greek Ministry of Education set up reception and preparatory classes in certain public schools (during afternoon hours) for refugee and migrant children aged six to 15 who lived at official refugee sites. The aim of this transitional programme was to facilitate the gradual integration of refugee and migrant children into the Greek mainstream educational system. In the school year 2016–17 it is estimated that 2,643 children joined 145 afternoon classes in 111 public schools.⁷

The following year, as refugee and migrant children and their families started moving out of official refugee accommodation sites into urban apartments, the Ministry of Education placed more emphasis on organising morning reception classes for children and adolescents aged six to 18. These classes were part of the Greek formal education system and were aimed at students with limited knowledge of the Greek language. According to the Ministry of Education, approximately 2,000 refugee and migrant children attended such morning reception classes in the school year 2016–17.

It is important to note that the integration of refugee and migrant students into state schools has been implemented in an environment that is itself in a constant state of flux. This is because the refugee and migrant population is constantly changing as people's accommodation arrangements alter, and they are involved in the ongoing family reunification and resettlement process in Greece and other European countries.

Training needs

The sudden and heterogeneous linguistic, cultural and learning needs of a diverse refugee and migrant community has created a challenge, not only for new, untrained and inexperienced teachers hired for the reception classes, but also for seasoned teachers who were accustomed to teaching in mostly homogeneous mainstream Greek classrooms. Both groups lacked training in multicultural and multilingual pedagogies, crisis intervention strategies, psychosocial empowering, and skills to manage diversified classrooms and cope with the influx of refugee and migrant students.⁸

The *Language for Resilience* report, published by the British Council, highlights the barriers education providers and teachers face when attempting to implement innovation both in the classroom and in the school system as a whole.⁹ These were identified as a lack of space in the curriculum; a lack of teacher capacity to deal with the complex additional needs of the new school population; the inflexibility of large education systems; and the impossibility of certifying learners who do not conform to local assessment requirements.

Professional development for teachers and trainers in both formal and non-formal education settings was seen as vital for developing their ability to cater for the needs of a large number of students with different academic competencies and cultural backgrounds. At an institutional level, teacher training was considered essential to building the ability of a country's education system with the aim of leaving no one behind.

The British Council's response for promoting inclusive learning environments

In May 2017, the British Council, in partnership with UNICEF and funded through the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, launched Living Together, a series of capacity-building training seminars across Greece for primary and secondary teachers and trainers in formal and non-formal settings.

The capacity-building training seminars were part of a wider programme that aimed to support the integration of refugee and migrant students into educational systems in Greece and potentially elsewhere in Europe. The programme included the provision of English language classes and life skills activities for adolescents aged 12 to 17 living at Skaramagas Refugee Accommodation Site outside Athens, community engagement, raising awareness, and sharing best practices through the publication of a non-formal education toolkit for use in refugee and migrant settings.

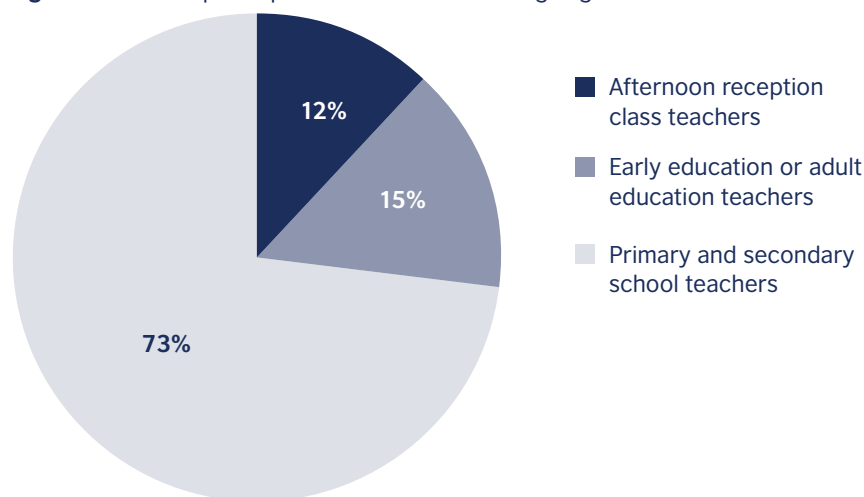
Training seminars and participants

Between May 2017 and May 2018, around 800 teachers took part in 27 training seminars which addressed different contexts and needs, in northern Greece (Kilkis, Serres, Katerini, Thessaloniki, Drama, Kavala, Veroia and Lesvos), the mainland (Ioannina and Larissa) and in Athens. These areas were selected due to their high numbers of refugee and migrant students ready to move into formal school settings. The training seminar participants were a diverse group of Greek and international teachers and educational professionals. Each training seminar was eight hours long, with four hours for the inputs and four hours for the experiential activities, conducted on a Saturday or split over two afternoons.

Almost 85 per cent of the participants were primary and secondary state schoolteachers; 16 per cent came from Athens, 52 per cent from provincial cities, 17 per cent from Thessaloniki (the second biggest city in Greece, after Athens) and the remaining 15 per cent were NGO workers from the non-formal education sector. The majority of the educators who attended the Living Together training seminars were women (83.24 per cent), more than three-quarters of the participants were over 40, and most had been teaching for over 20 years. Most of the attendees (72 per cent) held higher postgraduate qualifications – either a master's degree or a PhD – despite the fact that a bachelor's degree is sufficient to qualify as a primary or secondary schoolteacher in Greece. More than half of the educators who participated in the seminars (53 per cent) had refugee or migrant students in their classrooms.

Figure 1 shows that the greatest uptake for the training was from teachers who had to teach regular morning classes in Greek in the primary and secondary school curriculum.

Figure 1: Teacher participants who attended Living Together seminars



Source: Papadatou-Pastou, M, Konstantinidi, G and Adamopoulou, E (2018) *Final report: Non-formal Educational Programme at Skaramagas Refugee Accommodation Site and Capacity Building for Teachers, November 2017 – May 2018*. Athens: British Council and UNICEF, 86.

It is evident that the change in environment from monolingual to multilingual is quite challenging for people who have been trained to teach Greek lessons in the Greek language. Therefore, these educators sought opportunities – such as the Living Together seminars – to obtain new teaching skills that would enable learning for both Greek mother tongue and Greek second language speaking students.

Organisational collaboration

The British Council developed the capacity-building training sessions for formal education system teachers in co-operation with several Ministry of Education public entities such as the Primary and Secondary Educational Directorates (which are divided by administrative areas), the Offices for Co-ordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education, the Institute of Educational Policy, the Open School Project of the Municipality of Athens, and the Athens Municipality Co-ordination Centre for Immigrants and Refugees.

The role of those responsible for environmental education, health education, cultural affairs and school activities in each educational directorate, and the respective school principals, was also significant, not only at an administrative level but also through their participation in the training activities. The training sessions for NGO workers and trainers working in refugee and migrant education were organised through UNICEF and British Council networks, and strengthened co-operation with the organisations, institutes and actors involved.

With the aim of contributing to social cohesion and building on British Council life skills expertise, the training seminars familiarised teachers and trainers with trauma-informed practices, resilience building and intercultural learning through non-formal education methodology. Key elements included:

- interactive presentations
- experiential structured classroom activities
- educational material
- evaluation of the training seminars' effectiveness.

The training seminars' effectiveness was evaluated not only for accountability purposes but also for adapting training material accordingly throughout the implementation of the Living Together initiative. The aims of the training sessions were to raise awareness about the integration of refugees in society, provide participants with tools to creatively engage refugee children in the learning process, and empower participants through inclusive methodologies.

Specifically, they sought to provide information and skills to Greek primary and secondary formal education teachers on how to:

- include refugee children in Greek morning classes
- manage multilingual, multigrade classrooms through diversified teaching
- set up inclusive, intercultural, resilient classrooms.

At the same time, for the NGO workers the aim was to learn how to:

- protect students in vulnerable on-site or off-site contexts
- cope with communication in the context of diverse cultural backgrounds
- manage multilingual, ethnically and gender-mixed classrooms.

Thus, the capacity-building training seminars sought to bridge non-formal to formal education in order to create inclusive educational environments and facilitate refugee and migrant students' social integration.

Content and methodology

The content and methodology of the Living Together training seminars are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Content and methodology of the Living Together training seminars

Content	
Seminar 1: Building resilient educational environments and life skills activities	Seminar 2: Developing skills for effective learning and reflective teaching and life skills activities
Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raise awareness of child protection, trauma-informed practices and building resilient classrooms ■ Promote effective communication, critical thinking and dispel stereotypes about forcibly displaced people Dates: May 2017 – May 2018 Participants: State schoolteachers and NGO workers	Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support practical classroom challenges through inclusive practices ■ Promote effective communication, critical thinking and dispel stereotypes about forcibly displaced people Dates: February 2018 – May 2018 Participants: State schoolteachers
Part 1: Building resilient educational environments 1. Content 1.1 Child protection principles and practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child abuse, risk scenarios, tips for handling disclosure and a child protection code of conduct ■ Legal and policy frameworks, pathways for local referrals 1.2 Trauma-informed practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Impact of trauma on the functioning of displaced children and adolescents in school ■ Key practices in a trauma-sensitive response at schools 1.3 Resilient classrooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Autonomous learning, behavioural self-control ■ Positive teacher–student, peer, and home–school relationships 1.4 Best practices from the UNICEF/British Council Skaramagas Learning Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ English/Greek language, life skills (drama, arts, photography, sports and music) and STEM activities 2. Material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ British Council child protection policy and training material, pictures, video and bibliography¹⁰ 	Part 1: Developing skills for effective learning and reflective teaching 1. Content 1.1 Building a mindset for inclusive education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Challenges in schools today as they increasingly host diverse student population ■ Addressing diversity through inclusive pedagogy 1.2 Educational tools for reflective teaching and effective learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Differentiated and multisensory instruction ■ Visualisation ■ Project work ■ Practical examples 1.3 Lesson-planning workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Transforming traditional activities from various subjects in the Greek school system into more inclusive models of teaching and learning 2. Material Scenarios, lesson plans, assignment sheets, pictures and bibliography ¹¹

Table 1: Content and methodology of the Living Together training seminars
(continued)

<p>Part 2: Life skills activities</p> <p>1. Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Refugee crisis, co-existence, the role of the media in portraying ‘others’ ■ Responsibilities of global citizens towards social justice, protection of human rights worldwide ■ Human rights, co-operation, teamwork and active citizenship <p>2. Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ‘Should I stay or should I go?’ and ‘What would you take with you?’ ■ ‘List of tenants’ <p>3. Material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ British Council (2013) <i>Living Together Refugee Education Resource</i> ■ Parry, C and Nomikou, M (2012) <i>Life Skills – Developing Active Citizens</i>¹²
<p>Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lectures and interactive presentations ■ Experiential and participatory learning activities ■ Case studies and role-playing ■ Group assignments, brainstorming and discussion ■ Active and differentiated learning

Having taken into consideration the evaluation feedback from the first training sessions, a second module was developed in the middle of the year. This module mainly addressed practical classroom issues faced by teachers in formal education settings. This component was offered parallel to the ‘Building resilient educational environments’ (Seminar 1, Part 1).

Evaluation

The evaluation of the Living Together training was carried out by an external expert and professor at the Education Department of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. A mixed-method research approach was applied; both qualitative and quantitative data was collected by means of questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered immediately after the training seminars to the participants to evaluate what they had just been through. A series of closed questions asked participants to evaluate the Living Together training seminar on a five-point Likert scale from ‘completely agree’ to ‘completely disagree’. An analysis of participant responses using SPSS¹³ showed that participants evaluated the Living Together training seminars very positively. Specifically, 90 per cent of the participants agreed or agreed completely that the training seminar had met their expectations, it was a high-quality event, and they had acquired new knowledge and/or skills from their participation.

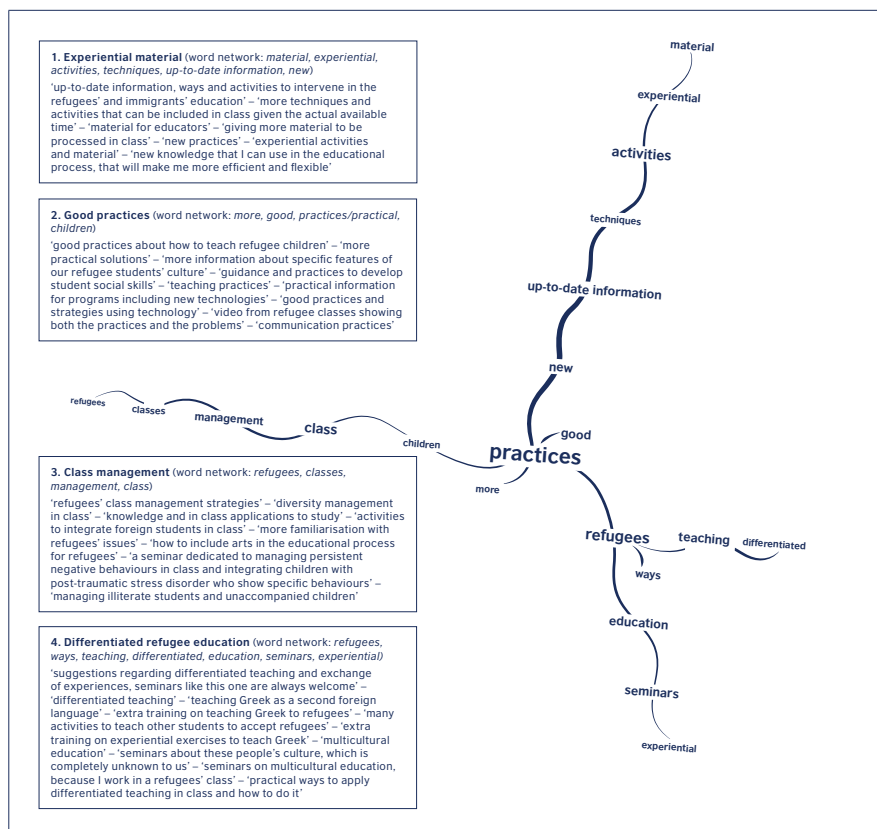
Following this, a series of open questions asked participants to elaborate on the seminar experience, psychosocial and behavioural challenges in their daily practice, good practices and perceived needs. In order to analyse this data, qualitative techniques, namely text segments and word networks based on similarity analysis, were used.

Word networks are used to identify relations between words. The association of words to each other is represented by interconnecting lines, just as in a network. The analysis focused on four themes: (a) needs for future training, (b) benefits from the Living Together seminar, (c) good practices, and (d) challenges.

Needs for future training

Figure 2 shows the word network that emerged under the theme ‘Needs for future training’ and its characteristic phrases and segments. The participants indicated the need for approaches and experimentation in refugee education, documentation of good practices as well as teaching techniques and activities for differentiated learning.

Figure 2: ‘Needs for future training’ word network

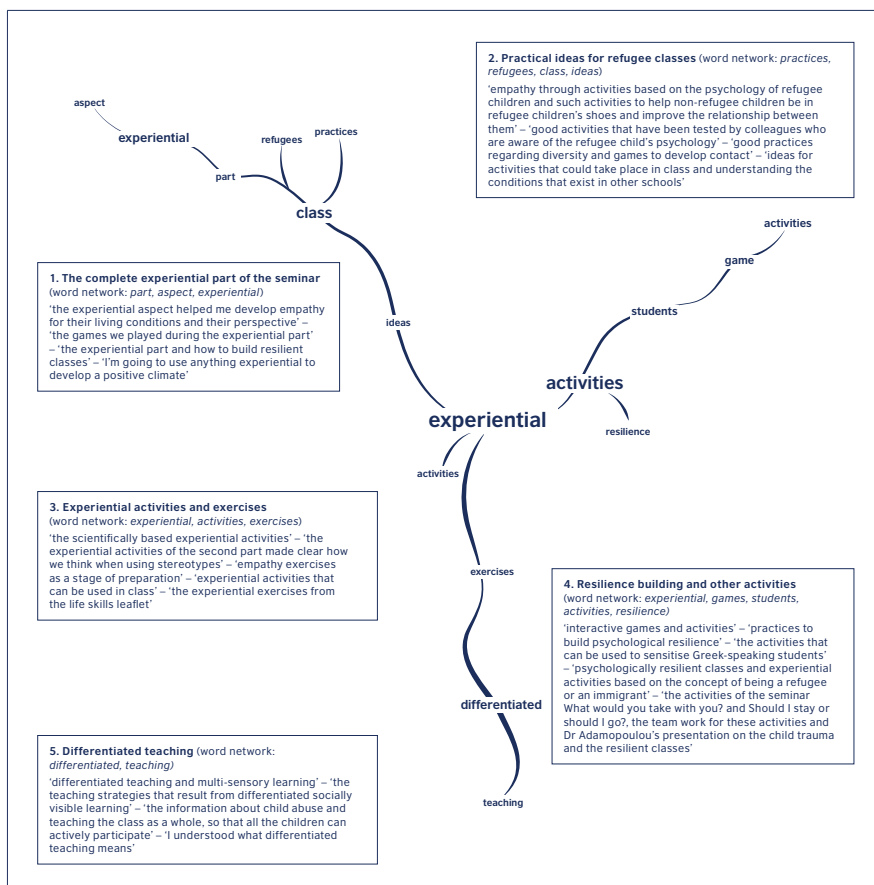


Source: Adapted from Papadatou-Pastou, M, Konstantinidi, G and Adamopoulou, E (2018) *Final report: Non-formal Educational Programme at Skaramagas Refugee Accommodation Site and Capacity Building for Teachers, November 2017–May 2018*. Athens: British Council and UNICEF, 90.

Benefits

Figure 3 shows the word network that emerged under the theme ‘Benefits’ and its characteristic phrases. The participants reported that they benefited especially from the experiential activities and exercises, the differentiated learning strategies and practical ideas for refugee classes, and the resilience building and other interactive activities of the Living Together training seminar.

Figure 3: ‘Benefits’ word network

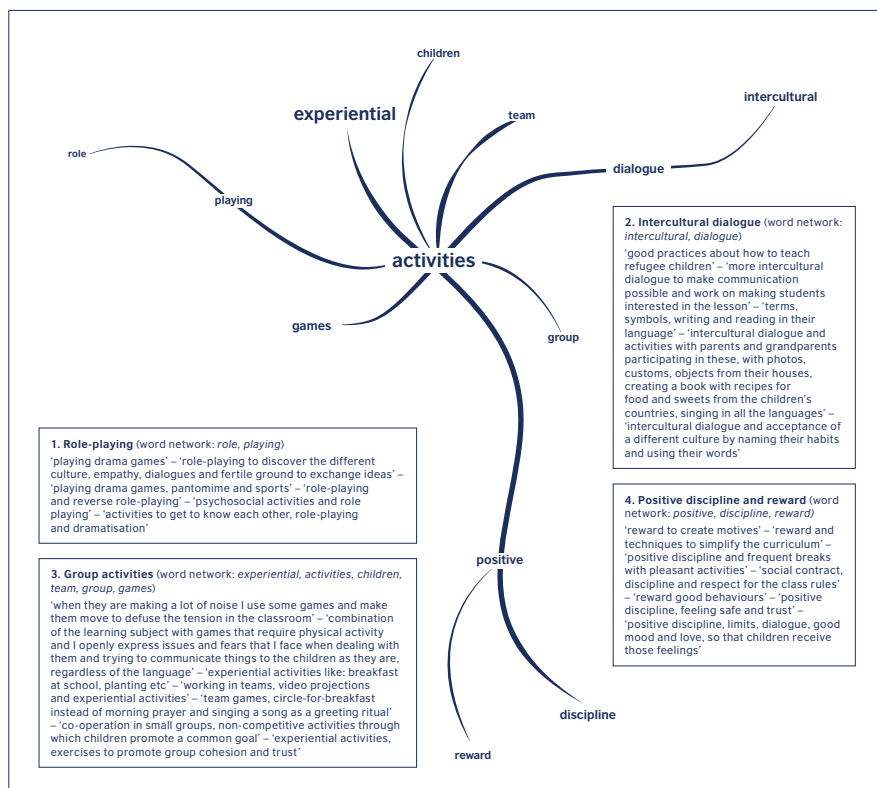


Source: Adapted from Papadatou-Pastou, M, Konstantinidi, G and Adamopoulou, E (2018) *Final report: Non-formal Educational Programme at Skaramagas Refugee Accommodation Site and Capacity Building for Teachers, November 2017–May 2018*. Athens: British Council and UNICEF, 92.

Good practices

Figure 4 shows the word network that emerged under the theme ‘Good practices’ and its characteristic phrases. The participants noted that some of the good practices they had implemented included role-playing, inclusive groupwork and teamwork activities that encouraged peer learning across cultural differences, and positive discipline.

Figure 4: ‘Good practices’ word network



Source: Adapted from Papadatou-Pastou, M, Konstantinidi, G and Adamopoulou, E (2018) *Final report: Non-formal Educational Programme at Skaramagas Refugee Accommodation Site and Capacity Building for Teachers, November 2017–May 2018*. Athens: British Council and UNICEF, 94.

Figure 5 shows the word network that emerged under the theme ‘Challenges’ and the characteristic phrases that participants themselves as teachers used to describe daily practice. The participants referred to classroom management and discipline challenges, dealing with students’ language barriers, communication, refugee and migrant students’ diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, and integration of newcomers into school life.

3. Integration into school life (word network: *integration, students, school, life*)

'integration of refugee students into the child population that lives here' – 'social integration' – 'regular school attendance and both children and parents should accept that attending the Greek school is necessary' – 'having a feeling of safety and trust in the school environment and smooth integration of the refugee students into school life' – 'children's integration in the Greek society, children's socialisation and acquiring basic knowledge that is useful in everyday life'

1. Children management and discipline (word network: *children, management, discipline*)

'class and behaviour management, lack of class organisation, the classroom is just the place we sit instead of being a learning environment due to lack of rules about behaviour' – 'children's discipline on a daily basis and keeping a good relationship among children from different countries and cultures so far' – 'managing a lot of children with different ages and different educational level per class' – 'relationships among children from different countries, conflicts and aggressive behaviour, when things go differently than they expect'

2. Language, communication and acceptance (word network: *language, acceptance, communication*)

'language and communication, behavioural problems because of their bad experiences, learning disabilities that are difficult to diagnose due to the language difficulties, reluctant to learn the Greek language because they await relocation' – 'smooth students' integration and acceptance by the Greek students and parents' – 'acceptance of diversity and acknowledgement of the rich stimuli it brings together' – 'the fact that they don't know our language and we don't know theirs' – 'communication, mutual acceptance and understanding'

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Core factors in transforming attitudes and building an inclusive pedagogy

The Living Together seminars provided awareness-raising and context-specific assistance for the teaching and support of refugees and migrants for teachers and trainers in both formal and non-formal education settings. The seminars were recognised as relevant to the very challenging context that teachers and trainers found themselves in and helped them deal with the diverse cultural, linguistic, socioemotional and learning needs of refugee and migrant children and the need to integrate such diversity into regular classrooms. Contributing factors to the success of the training seminars can be summarised as follows:

- Collaboration with formal education entities and non-formal education actors was essential for organising the training seminars across different cities in Greece.
- The training seminars combined a scientific evidence-based understanding of the psychosocial issues that beset forcibly displaced students, with British Council expertise in teaching life skills through experiential activities and interactive methodology. There was a fair balance between theoretical knowledge and practical examples.
- The content and methodology of the seminars were continuously assessed and adjusted according to the needs and context of the participants.
- All Living Together training seminars dedicated time and space for teachers and trainers to express their needs and communicate the challenges that they might be facing in their relevant contexts. This group sharing and building of a learning community empowered teachers and strengthened their professional development.
- The Living Together training was an opportunity for primary and secondary teachers from state schools to discuss challenging issues of child protection related to refugee and migrant students as well as the mainstream student population.
- Professional development training in trauma-informed practices, resilient classrooms and differentiated learning equipped non-formal education teachers with the knowledge and skills to address the socioemotional, behavioural and academic needs not only of refugee and migrant students but also of other vulnerable groups within the student population who were at risk of being socially excluded.
- The differentiated learning and the participatory and inclusive methodology became the vehicle for connecting formal and non-formal education, and created a continuum of support and services for refugee and migrant students to access and continue their education.
- The training seminars promoted institutional resilience by providing professional development to school leaders and other education professionals working in non-formal refugee and formal host government systems as highlighted in the British Council's *Language for Resilience* report.

- The training seminars were delivered by expert professionals with backgrounds in educational/school psychology and teaching as well as experienced British Council trainers.

Conclusion

The complex environment of refugee and migrant education calls for constant and substantial training and professional development in order to strengthen the ability of a country's education system to leave no one behind.

The Living Together training seminars provided a valuable platform for teachers and professionals to share insights and experiences about the integration of refugee and migrant students in state schools. The way the seminars used experiential, inclusive methodology, underpinned by evidence-based psychosocial theory, was key to helping formal and non-formal education actors foster resilience, promote inclusion and facilitate the transition of displaced students into European school systems and societies. In addition, the Living Together seminars were seen as a chance for capacity building at institutional, classroom and individual level, opening the door to CPD for many of the teachers.

In terms of bringing a real change to teachers' applied behavioural patterns in the classroom, the seminars were fairly short. However, those who attended the training were already searching for answers and ways of working inclusively with their new multilingual, different-ability classroom populations. Thus, the real impact of the seminars was to raise awareness that a whole methodology, pursuable through a psychosocial approach, to address the issues teachers were facing, already existed. The training seminars helped participants access professional development resources and expertise in the field of inclusive education for displaced students.

The evaluation was based on self-reported improvement, which is usually strongly positive after an engaging programme. However, it cannot be used as a true indicator of impact in the classroom. Therefore, once participants have had a chance to try out multilingual approaches, inclusive group work, differentiated learning tasks and so on in their real classrooms, a more objective evaluation could be conducted using a standardised classroom observation tool, adapted to focus on the teachers' use of inclusive pedagogy.

In conclusion, through the Living Together training seminars the British Council established itself as a leader in the field of capacity building for refugee education. The British Council was also recognised as an innovative partner among various international organisations and the Ministry of Education in Greece, collaborating with public institutions and partnering with school leaders. Moreover, the British Council responded directly to requirements for education access, inclusion and training, and developed a professional training framework which linked formal and non-formal education activities aimed at integrating refugee and migrant children into the host community's education system.

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13. SPSS is a software package widely used for statistical analysis.

4

Integrating Syrian refugee children and their parents into Lebanese early education systems

Isabelle Grappe and Claire Ross

Context

The Syrian conflict prompted a huge flow of refugees into neighbouring Lebanon, which has accepted around 1.5 million displaced people since 2011 – the highest per capita number of refugees in the world.¹ The policy of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) is to integrate these children into state schools. When classes became full, a second shift was opened, and NGOs started to offer non-formal education to children who could not access public school classes, or who had dropped out of formal schooling.

Syrian refugee children in Lebanon face challenges because they are expected to interact in an unfamiliar school culture and learn English or French to enter formal schooling. These languages are introduced from the age of three in public schools in Lebanon, whereas in Syria children start learning them at middle school.

The British Council began conducting research in 2013 in order to advise the MEHE on the best ways to integrate children from Syria into the state school system. The research identified that refugee parents had unrealistic expectations about how much and how quickly their children could learn a foreign language. In addition, there were issues of conflict and exclusion in schools because of the negative stereotypes held by some Lebanese teachers and children about minority languages and cultures, and the assumption that the Syrian children were somehow less able. Teachers needed to recognise and value the existing cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills of refugee children, and be willing and able to integrate them into the classroom. Parents needed to know what and how their children were learning, and how to support this learning at home.

In 2015, the British Council was commissioned to develop a training pack to enable parents to better support the foreign language learning of their three-to-five-year-olds at home, so these children could integrate more easily into the formal Lebanese school system. The training pack was therefore created based on plurilingual approaches that linked the language and culture Syrian refugee children experienced at home with what they were learning and experiencing in informal schooling run by NGOs. The project was funded by UNICEF as part of their early childhood education work in informal education.

Plurilingual approaches to languages and cultures

Sociolinguistic research shows that successful foreign language learning is holistic, involving not only language but also culture. Pluralistic approaches² are ‘didactic approaches that use teaching and learning activities involving several varieties of languages or cultures’³ and were developed to help immigrants to integrate into a new society through learning new language(s) and culture without losing their own. Pluralistic approaches are described in the CEFR as developing learners’ ‘plurilingual and pluricultural competence encompassing the full range of the languages available to him/her’,⁴ although the term ‘intercultural competence’ is perhaps more widely used now. These approaches were created as part of a paradigm shift in language learning, moving away from singular approaches to language education (such as the communicative approach, which first advocated all instruction be done in the target language only) to more inclusive approaches which recognise and value the plurilingual nature of people and the communities they live in.

Plurilingual approaches aim to give legitimacy to all languages and cultures, minority and dominant. Learners see they already possess linguistic and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes which they have developed by themselves in their home life. This provides motivation to learn a new foreign language and culture at school by mobilising and building on the resources they already have.

Awakening to languages

This is a key plurilingual approach aimed at motivating learners to learn other languages and value linguistic diversity, and includes a focus not only on the language of education and foreign languages being learned, but also on home languages and other global languages. It ‘integrates all sorts of other linguistic varieties – from their homes, from the environment and from all over the world, without exclusion of any kind’.⁵ Adopting the awakening to languages approach in the Lebanese context was appropriate in order to valorise the home languages of Syrian refugee children and their parents who spoke varieties of Arabic not found in Lebanon, or other languages such as Kurdish or Turkmen, for which they had suffered discrimination. In this way they could develop their linguistic security and motivation to learn other languages. Below is a description of how the awakening to languages activities in this project work in the classroom and at home.


- In class, the teacher introduces different ways to say the same thing in different languages, according to the country, culture or community. This creates distance from the parents’ and children’s own situation and makes the children curious about comparing their languages and accents, instead of being afraid of and making fun of different accents or languages.
- At home, parents compare with their children how they say the same things in their home languages. This prevents parents or children from feeling ashamed of their own language and accent and gives them more confidence.

- In class the next day, the children share these ways of saying the words or phrases in their home languages with their classmates and teacher. The home languages are given legitimacy, and the children are given the right to have their own languages respected at school. This gives them more confidence to communicate in class in general, and makes them more accepting of other languages and accents, including the foreign languages that children are learning at school.

The awakening to languages approach creates distance from the parents' and children's own situation by first considering unfamiliar languages. It allows parents to identify that moving between different countries and communities requires them to learn new words and customs in order to integrate. For example, a Syrian moving to Lebanon would need to learn new accents and words in Arabic, not just so they could function in the new host country environment, but also to enable them to communicate with people from other communities. In addition, their children would need to learn English or French as a foreign language in order to integrate into the education system in Lebanon.

Figure 1 shows an example of an awakening to languages activity from the teachers' pack. This activity was adapted by Syrian mothers during the action research phase of the project and is based on *La Fleur des Langues* in *Activités Préscolaire*.⁶ Instructions are shown here in English, although they appear in Arabic in the training packs.



Figure 1: An awakening to languages activity



BRITISH COUNCIL

1

HAND OF LANGUAGES™ - TEACHER

Before class

Using different coloured paper, cut out hand shapes (one for each child). Use the template on page 13.
Get glue sticks.

In class – with you

Children choose one hand shape and glue it in the parent's pack.

Tell children to ask their parents about languages they speak and understand (even if they cannot speak them) and languages they see or hear around them.

At home – with their parents

Parents discuss with their children languages they speak, understand and see and hear around them.

In class – the next day - with you

Ask the children to show the cut out hands and tell each other the languages they and their parents speak and understand.

You can use these questions to help the children remember:

- What languages do you speak?
- What languages do you understand?
- What other languages did your parents tell you about last night?

*Adapted from: *La Fleur des Langues* in *Activités Préscolaire*. ELOD, 2006.

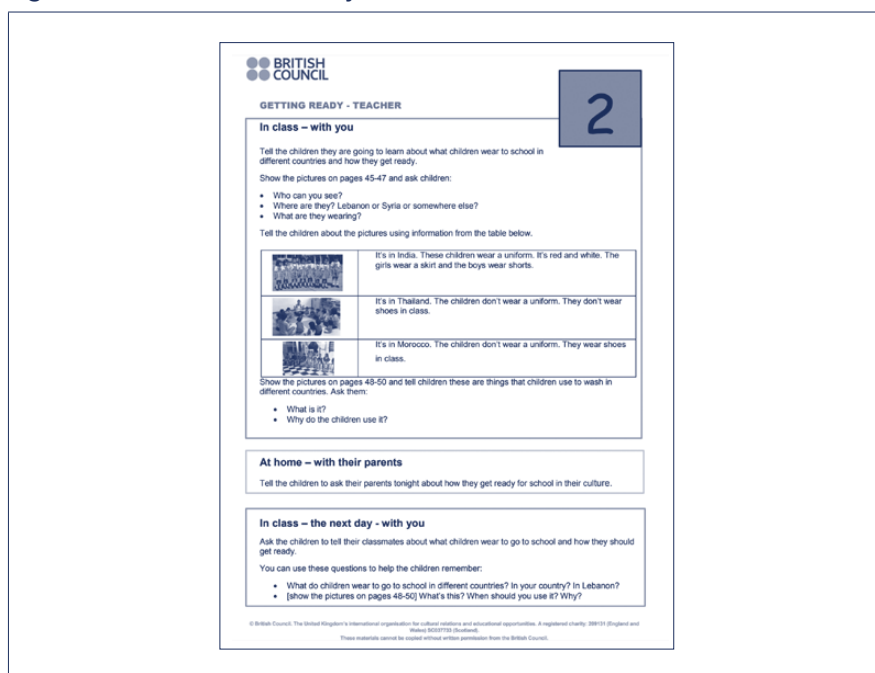
Source: British Council (2016) *CBECE Foreign Languages Component Teacher's Pack*.

Intercultural approaches are a part of plurilingual approaches, which help learners to be curious and non-judgemental about cultures different from their own, and are based on the idea that we can learn about new cultures and cultural practices by comparing them to practices that are both familiar and unfamiliar. Again, this was appropriate to the Lebanese context as Syrian refugees from different communities were arriving in Lebanon with cultural practices that sometimes differed from what was expected in society in general, and in formal schooling in particular. Below is an example of how activities following intercultural approaches were implemented.

- In class, the teacher introduces different habits and aspects of culture (such as homes, getting ready for special occasions, and taking care of a baby) and how these are different in different countries, cultures, communities and ways of life. Again, this creates distance from the children's and parents' situation, and makes children curious about comparing the way they do these things to the way other people do them.
- At home, parents have the opportunity to share their values and way of life, at the same time comparing them to the values and ways of life that the children have learned about at school. This gives value to their home culture and creates in children the desire to share it with other students in class.
- In class the next day, as with the awakening to languages activities, children then take the knowledge that their parents shared with them to school and tell their teacher and classmates about how they do things at home. This gives legitimacy to their parents' culture and way of life.

Figure 2 shows an example of an intercultural activity from the teachers' pack. The activity was designed specifically for the project.

Figure 2: An intercultural activity



Source: British Council (2016) *CBECE Foreign Languages Component Teacher's Pack*.

Action research findings to support the use of these approaches

The aims of the parent/teacher training pack were:

- to raise awareness of how children can use their knowledge of the world to learn a foreign language, the foreign language skills the children are learning at school, and how parents can support their children's learning at home. This is connected to cognitive strategies for foreign language learning
- to develop language security in parents, so that their children are motivated to learn a foreign language without being afraid of losing their identity. This follows the awakening to languages approach
- to raise parents' awareness of their ability to adapt to new cultural codes, so they and their children are motivated to integrate into new social contexts such as school, home, community and Lebanese society in general. This follows the intercultural approach.

These aims were developed in response to the results of the action research described below.

The need for foreign language learning cognitive strategies

Action research conducted in Lebanon with Syrian refugee parents between 2013 and 2015 for the British Council/EU-funded Access to Education project informed the creation of the parent/teacher training pack. Through focus groups and interviews, mothers revealed unrealistic expectations of their children's ability to learn foreign languages. For example, some thought that children ought to be able to learn a foreign language very quickly:

Smart students can do their homework and understand quickly and stupid students can't do their homework.

Syrian mother

Another misconception was that children who had difficulty in understanding or learning a foreign language had a hearing impairment or psychological difficulties. This was fuelled by teacher perceptions:

In the beginning, we thought that our kids were deaf or they had psychological problems because they were afraid. They didn't want to speak. The teacher said this to us.

Syrian mother

The research highlighted the fact that parents needed to be aware of the challenges children face when learning a foreign language, and how long it takes, so that they could encourage and help their children to have positive self-perceptions as learners. They also needed to recognise that they, as parents, could support their children's foreign language learning at home, without needing to be fluent in English or French. Specifically, parents needed to be more aware of *what* their children were learning in the classroom (topics, skills), *how* they were learning (sequencing, activities), and *how* they could follow up and support this learning at home.

The need for awakening to languages

Research showed that parents coming from rural areas and minority cultures (such as Bedouin or Kurdish) were ashamed of their accents. Some teachers had stereotyped perceptions of the parents of refugee children from minority languages and communities (nomads, and people from border communities and other rural areas), in particular illiterate parents, which worsened parents' insecurity about language:

Before, I thought that Bedouins and Kurdish were stupid and limited. It's because of their neighbourhood. They are dirty and violent. They don't know anything.

Lebanese teacher

This was affecting their children's own view of their home languages and accents, which had negative results. Children were afraid to speak up in class or ask questions if they did not understand:

This fear deep inside of him stopped him from speaking and asking questions in class.

Syrian mother

Furthermore, children made fun of each other in school because of the way they spoke. This resulted in some violent confrontations at times, as this woman explained, talking about her son:

He was with a Syrian student from Dara'a [a different part of Syria from where the mother and her son are from]. They insulted each other because of their accents with aggressive words and songs.

Syrian mother

Children also faced discrimination from teachers because of their accents:

I was at school. We had a maths class to learn how to calculate hours. The teacher asked who wants to go to the board. I raised my hand and she asked me how we convert hours. I answered 'in minutes' with my Hourani accent. From this moment, she didn't stop mocking my guttural accent and all my classmates did too.

Syrian boy

By giving the same value to all languages – languages spoken at home, languages of instruction (English and French), and other world and minority languages – parents, children and their teachers can change their perceptions. There is no such thing as a desirable or undesirable accent or language; all languages are equal. If parents accept this, they will then begin to understand that children never start learning a language 'from zero'; children can use everything they have learned about one language to help them to learn another language, without being afraid of losing their identity.

The need for intercultural understanding

A key issue raised by the Ministry of Education was that of different cultural standards surrounding hygiene, which was making it difficult for children to integrate in school. They identified issues of socialisation between teachers and students. For example, some preschool children did not know how to use the bathroom, or parents did not know how to administer head lice treatment. There were also issues of miscommunication between teachers and parents. Teachers were sending written behaviour reports or grades home with children, and parents who were illiterate did not realise what they were and used them to wrap sandwiches.

Culture is linked to everyday lives, habits and behaviours, and each community shares this.⁷ The intercultural approach helps parents and children to accept their own culture by comparing it to unfamiliar cultures, and noticing and accepting differences, for example by looking at how children get ready for school and what they wear to school in different countries. Once parents value their own cultural identity, they will accept and be able to learn new behaviours that will help them and their children integrate into schools, the host community and Lebanese society. A child with an understanding of different cultures has the advantage of being able to choose appropriate behaviours and adapt to different social situations.

Course overview

The training pack for parents, developed to address these issues, includes 13 activities for parents to do at home with their children, and a simple introduction for parents in Arabic. The intensive non-formal NGO-implemented system to prepare Syrian preschool children for Lebanese schools is divided into three levels for ages three to four, four to five, and five to six. Each preparatory course lasts four weeks, so the activities in the training pack include four activities for each of these age-group levels, one per week for four weeks. The final ‘everyday activity’ is used for all levels on a daily basis.

These activities are related to the foreign language oral, written and social/emotional domains of the Lebanese preschool curriculum, and follow the plurilingual approaches and methodology outlined above. All the activities are introduced in class by the teacher in Arabic, to support learning in English or French, and are then continued by parents at home with their children in their home languages. Even if the parents don’t speak a single word of English or French, they can still follow what their children are learning in class and provide follow-up support at home. In addition, the activities for the parents’ pack make extensive use of images and examples to show parents who have low literacy levels what to do, and simple instructions are included in Arabic.

To support the parents’ pack, a pack for teachers of English and French has also been devised, showing teachers how and when to introduce the activities in class with children, what children will be doing at home, and explaining how to follow up in class after the children complete the activities at home with their parents.

Learning domains

Social/emotional domain

The parents’ pack supports the social/emotional domain for all levels as listed in the Lebanese national curriculum overview:

- children’s experience, expression and management of emotions
- pro-social and classroom behaviours
- self-confidence
- establishing positive and rewarding relationships with others
- developing a better understanding of themselves.

Foreign languages domain (oral and written)

The activities directly link the learning that children are doing in class to their homes. Parents feel involved, they have a role in their child’s language learning and they see that foreign language learning is related to the children’s lives. Activities are either based on topics from the curriculum – family, senses, colours, shapes, animals – or complementary to what the teacher is doing in class. They also directly link to specific foreign language skills the children learn at each level.

Activities and implementation

Everyday activity: ‘What did you do today?’

This activity is based on a worksheet that parents can use to ask their children about what they learned at school and how they learned it. This helps parents understand how children aged three to five develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in a foreign language, and in so doing makes their expectations of what their children can achieve more realistic. It relates to cognitive strategies about learning and the project aim: ‘To raise awareness of how children can use their knowledge of the world to learn a foreign language, the foreign language skills the children are learning at school, and how parents can support their children’s learning at home.’

The same worksheet is used every day. It has pictures and minimal text, in order to be as accessible as possible for parents (including those with low literacy levels). It is written in three languages: Arabic, English and French. The Arabic translation ensures parents are comfortable using the sheet – it is their familiar language, and they will see it first because it is included in the top right-hand corner of the page and Arabic is written from right to left. The words are written in English and French as a link to what children are learning at school. All three languages are written following the plurilingual approach of giving all languages equal value.

Figure 3: ‘What did you do today?’ worksheet, page 1

What did you do today? Qu est-ce que tu as fait aujourd'hui? ماذا فعلت اليوم?

كلمات جديدة new words mots nouveaux		
اسمع listen écouter	اسمع أغنية I listen to a song. J'écoute une chanson.	اسمع قصة I listen to a story. J'écoute une histoire.
انطق speak parler	أغني I sing. Je chante.	انطق مع صديق I speak with my friend. Je parle avec mon ami.

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Source: British Council (2016) CBECE Foreign Languages Component Teacher's Pack.

The first section is called New Words and shows pictures of topics from the foreign languages curriculum that will be covered in each of the three levels. Parents can use the pictures to ask their children ‘What new words did you learn today? Did you learn about families? Shapes?’ This helps children to recall and internalise the new words in French or English. The rest of the sheet is devoted to skills, and illustrates the different ways children practise foreign language strategies in class, by listening, speaking, reading (seeing) and writing. These ways relate to how children aged three to five develop the four skills in a foreign language, and help parents to ask their child appropriate questions about what they learned in a foreign language that day at school.

- The listening skill shows the different ways of listening in class: listening to a song, or a teacher telling a story. These listening skills help children to be aware of phonics, which prepares them to read, and the story helps children to know that we speak in different ways for different reasons.
- For speaking, the pictures are of singing and talking to a classmate. This helps parents and children to understand that speaking involves the production of sounds as well as conversation.
- For the reading skill, the sheet helps to raise awareness that reading at this age means differentiating between things that we read (such as a picture dictionary, an agenda or a story) and recognising letters and the child’s own name, rather than being able to read stories. So for the reading skill the term ‘see’ rather than ‘read’ is used.
- The pre-writing and writing skills that are illustrated on the sheet show parents how children progress from drawing different types of lines, to drawing shapes, and finally letters. The letters section includes the Arabic alphabet for parents and children to compare how we write in Arabic and English/French.

Figure 4: ‘What did you do today?’ worksheet, page 2

أرى see voir	أرى الأشياء التي نقرأها I see things that we read. Je vois ce qu'on lit.	أرى الحروف I see letters. Je vois des lettres.	أرى الأسماء I see names. Je vois des prénoms.
أكتب write écrire	أرسم الخطوط I draw lines. Je dessine des lignes.	أرسم الأشكال I draw shapes. Je dessine des formes.	أكتب الحروف I write letters. J'écris des lettres.

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Source: British Council (2016) *CBECE Foreign Languages Component Teacher's Pack*.

The same sheet is used by parents, whether their children are at Level 1 (ages three to four), Level 2 (ages four to five) or Level 3 (ages five to six), but the conversations will be different according to what the children have been learning at school. Parents point to the pictures and ask their child questions about what they learned and how they learned it, such as ‘What new words did you learn today in English/French? Did you listen to a story today? Tell me about it. Did you sing a song today? What about? Did you draw anything today? What did you draw?’

The sheet has been devised to stimulate conversation and sharing between parent and child about what children are learning at school in English or French, but it is likely children will talk about what they learned in other subjects too. At the bottom of the sheet are four coloured boxes which relate to the four weekly activities.

Weekly activities

Weekly activities help parents to share their knowledge about home languages and culture to complement what children have learned in class. There are four activities for each age group level, and each activity is labelled with a coloured box to facilitate communication between teacher, child and parents. The red and yellow activities focus on awakening to languages, and the blue and green activities on intercultural approaches. The ‘What did you do today?’ sheet has four coloured boxes at the bottom to indicate these four activities. Each activity begins by looking at different world languages or cultures in class. Then, at home parents and children discuss how they say or do this in the home language or culture and children bring this knowledge back into the classroom to share with other children.

In class

Teacher to children: the teacher starts one activity from the teacher’s pack in class each week, following the step-by-step instructions. They indicate that they have started the activity by circling or asking the child to circle the corresponding coloured box on the ‘What did you do today?’ sheet. For example, if they started an awakening to languages activity with a red box, they will circle the red box on the sheet.

At home – that night


Child to parent: the parent, who is using the sheet as usual on a daily basis with their child, will see that the teacher has circled one of the activities. This is their signal to do part two of the activity with the corresponding colour in the parents’ pack at home with their child, so if the red square has been circled, they will do part two of the activity with the red square. After they have done it, the parents put a mark in the red box to show the teacher it has been completed.

In class – the next day

Child to classmates and teacher: the teacher knows the parents have done the activity with their child when they see part two has been marked. The link between home and school is completed when the teacher reviews part one of the activity they did in class and asks the child about what they discussed with their parents at home in part two. Questions are provided in the teacher’s pack to help them prompt children at this stage.

Figure 5 shows the activities for Level 1 (ages three to four), detailing the roles of parent and teacher.

Figure 5: Table of contents for parent/teacher training pack Level 1 (ages three to four)



Level	Activity	Aim*	Description	Curriculum link (oral/written domain)	Implementation /timing**
Level 1	What did you do today?	1	Teacher teaches the children, following the curriculum as usual. Parents look at the pictures of different topics and foreign language skills and ask children what they learnt at school, and how they learnt it.	Family, shapes, colours, animals, five senses Foreign language learning skills: listening, speaking, reading (seeing), writing (drawing)	Every day that the child attends English/French class
	Hand of languages	2	Teacher introduces the task children do at home. Parents discuss with children the languages that they speak at home, the languages they understand and the languages they see and hear around them, and write them on the hand.	Family: children do a family tree in French or English	During week 1
	Helio rhyme		Teacher plays an audio with greetings in different languages; children choose some and together they make a rhyme. Parents discuss with children different ways to say 'hello' in their home languages.	Phonics: awareness of different sounds in different languages	During week 2
	Magic words	3	Teacher shows children pictures and describes how people say sorry and thank you in different countries. Parents tell their children how they say sorry and thank you in their culture.	Politeness (e.g. role play buying vegetables, saying 'thank you', 'sorry')	During week 3
	At the table		Teacher shows children pictures and describes what the people need to do to be polite when they eat in different countries. Parents discuss with the children what they should or shouldn't do when they eat in their culture or in other cultures that they know.	Fruit and vegetables, preparing soup and eating	During week 4

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Source: British Council (2016) *CBECE Foreign Languages Component Teacher's Pack*.

Training

NGO teachers working with Syrian refugee children in schools and non-formal education were trained in these approaches through national cascade programmes, which started in 2013. Training was delivered in French or English, with support in Arabic to assist teachers in dealing with often very new concepts (and because the teachers' language levels meant they could not always access the training content in a foreign language). Many NGOs also trained head teachers, supervisors and NGO administrative staff to support teachers.

Training covered the theory behind the plurilingual approaches to help teachers understand the aims of the activities, as well as how to implement them practically in the classroom. It helped to raise awareness of the linguistic and cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes that children and their parents already had, and emphasised the importance of valuing all languages and cultures equally, for example by accepting contributions at times in the children's home languages, rather than insisting on the use of English or French in a foreign language class. Teachers were able to experience and reflect on the activities themselves first, before considering how they would implement them with their learners. Training was followed up through school visits, classroom observations and coaching with individual teachers. Master trainers from the Ministry of Education and NGOs followed similar training that was specific to the content of the parent/teacher pack in order to cascade this training to teachers and facilitators throughout the country.

The following needs and recommendations that evolved from the programme were fed back into the training:

Teachers needed further training in the basics of foreign language skills teaching, awakening to languages and intercultural approaches. They needed to understand how the activities they introduce in class link to the curriculum. Importantly, they needed to understand their role in the process of starting an activity with children in class that would be continued by parents at home, and then brought by children back to the class the following day.

Parents also needed to understand the attitudes and approaches behind the parents' pack. For illiterate parents, training in the approach and the instructions, even though these were already simplified and written in Arabic, was essential to ensure they could do the activities independently with their children without needing support from the teacher. They needed to know they should do the 'What did you do today?' activity every day their child had class and how to carry out the activity. Parents also needed to know they would do a weekly additional activity with their child and that this activity would also be started by the teacher in class.

Both parents and teachers needed to know how the activities done in class and at home were linked. They needed to be informed of the communication method between school and home, with the teacher circling a coloured box on the 'What did you do today?' sheet to show parents which weekly activity to do at home, and the parents marking the same box to show that it had been done.

Further activities

The number of activities in the parents' pack was limited only by the strict time limit imposed on the project. Many more activities could be added, linked to the foreign languages and socioemotional domains of the curriculum, and this would further benefit both children and parents.

Impact

Through follow-up observations, focus groups and one-to-one interviews, the impact of the approaches in the parent/teacher training pack became apparent by a marked shift in attitude among teachers, children and their parents.

Teacher attitude

Teachers found their own stereotypes about children and parents were challenged:

Awakening to languages made me change my opinion about Syrians not being good. Now I think that – no, we can be equal. Somehow, I make mistakes and they make mistakes.

Lebanese teacher

A Bedouin teacher (from a minority community herself) developed a feeling of language security and began to give value to varieties of Bedouin Arabic in class:

After the training, I felt it's a two-way teacher–student effect: I transform the student, but also I am transformed by him (...) Two students were arguing. One says 'it's a mum'. The other says 'no, it's a 'hourma' in Syrian Arabic. But in Lebanese Arabic we say 'mara' or 'femme' in French. I learned that I can tell them that all of these are correct.

Lebanese Bedouin teacher

Teachers also realised the importance of relating their classes to the culture of the children they were teaching:

I learned that by choosing a context close to the culture of the students I can use it to help students to share their experiences with their classmates.

Lebanese teacher

The impact on parents and their children

Parents had a new awareness of linguistic variety and variation in their children's and their own use of language, and of their evolving plurilingualism:⁸

We thought before that the children were stupid, but we learned that there is no stupid student.

Syrian mother

This parent reported the impact of the training on her child's own linguistic awareness, which helped her to give equal value to different languages and cultures and motivated her to learn a foreign language at school:

After Kila [an awakening to languages activity⁹], my daughter designed a dictionary of all the accents in the different parts of Syria. She told us about how she escaped from Syria to a refugee camp and learned the Palestinian accent. Then in Mount Lebanon she learned Lebanese. Then she went to school and learned English and the other Syrian accents of her classmates from other parts of Syria.

Syrian mother

Finally, the boy with the Hourani accent, quoted earlier, illustrates the positive impact of awakening to languages activities on his self-esteem and participation in class:

Before, I asked questions in Hourani, but they didn't understand me. Now when I speak to them, they understand me. I speak with them a little in Lebanese and a little in English, and they also learn a bit of Hourani. We adapt one to the other to understand each other.

Syrian boy

Conclusion

As the words of parents, children and teachers in the previous section demonstrate, training on plurilingual approaches has led to a real change of attitude, a greater acceptance of other languages and cultures, and consequently better integration of Syrian refugee children.

Co-construction of materials was a key success factor, ensuring that parents and teachers were consulted and had agency in the process of producing contextually relevant and workable activities to use with children. The activities were adapted to be culturally relevant, simple enough to use with very young children, and scaffolded with Arabic support for teachers and parents with low second language literacy. In addition, the way the activities were constructed and interconnected ensured that teachers, parents and children went on a learning journey together.

With the world refugee crisis at unprecedented levels, there is both a great need and a great opportunity to integrate migrants and refugees into host countries for better social cohesion. The approaches used to create the teachers' and parents' packs are not limited to preschool children, nor to the Arab world, nor indeed to the Syrian refugee crisis. They have already been used in many countries to assist with the integration of minority languages and cultures, and can be applied to any age group, culture and linguistic context provided there is careful contextualisation and adaptation. In Lebanon alone, awakening to languages and intercultural approaches have been used to better integrate Syrian refugee children into formal schooling at preschool, primary and middle school, and these approaches now form part of the national Teacher Competency Framework, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and funded by the EU and UNICEF.

In order to apply the programme described in this chapter to a new context, the following process should be followed:

1. Conduct a needs analysis, working with parents, teachers and children in order to better understand the socio-economic, cultural and linguistic contexts of both the host country and the displaced community. This should include classroom observations to analyse interaction between teachers and children, and between children themselves.
2. Co-construct materials with teachers and parents, adapting existing materials, for example from the online CARAP/FREPA teaching and learning materials database.¹⁰
3. Pilot these materials by training a small cohort of parents and teachers and evaluating the impact on them and on their children through follow-up classroom and home visits, focus groups and one-to-one interviews.
4. Integrate qualitative data from the pilot to fine-tune the materials before scaling up the training intervention. Involve local trainer-trainers for efficient dissemination of training at state or national level. The scale-up should also be followed up and evaluated for continuous improvement and sustainability.

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Gender and inclusion in the classroom



Gender and inclusion in the classroom

Rebecca Ingram

We are still a very long way from ensuring that all children, wherever they live, are enrolled in school and receiving a decent, relevant education that equips them for life beyond the classroom. Currently 61 million primary-aged children are out of school. We *are*, however, moving in the right direction: between 2000 and 2015, the share of countries that achieved gender parity in primary education increased by eight percentage points, and in upper secondary by 15 percentage points.¹

What happens in the classroom is just as important as what happens outside. Current definitions of education ‘quality’ tend to focus on literacy and numeracy, and while this is important – both in itself and as a way to access other learning – it is a narrow definition of quality and fails to look at what education is *for* in a broader sense. If education is also about social justice and citizenship, a classroom practice that promotes gender equality is also critical, not least because the messages communicated in the classroom about what girls and boys can do and be is likely to have an impact on subject choice, progression and life chances.

The capability approach, as defined by Nussbaum,² takes as its central question ‘what is each person to do or to be?’, and the idea of capabilities runs through all the papers in this section. Conceptualising the school as a place where capabilities can be explored or realised, and specifically how the role of teachers and a more progressive approach to pedagogy can be supportive in this, is a theme for all the authors.

In Emily Boost and Sally Rosscornes’ paper ‘A gender equality and social inclusion approach to teaching and learning: Lessons from the Girls’ Education Challenge’ they look at three projects funded by DFID under the Girls’ Education Challenge, which seek to raise girls’ achievement and attainment in school by challenging restrictive gender norms. The projects found that building girls’ self-esteem and agency was also important in improving learning outcomes, and that when coupled with a rigorous use of classroom assessment and a focus on learning needs, outcomes improved.

Amy North and Elaine Unterhalter look at a collaboration with the British Council in Nigeria that studied teachers benefiting from pre-service teacher training on gender and pedagogy (following a new government policy) and followed up with those teachers to see if it had an impact on teaching and learning. The study found that the pre-service teacher training did not significantly challenge or change teachers’ own views around gender and social norms, and that teachers also found the training very challenging to apply in the classroom without support from school leaders and with very limited CPD.

Rebecca Ingram looks at a pilot project in Turkey that put in place a structure for formal assessment and action around schools' 'gender friendliness' through the development of a gender equality assessment tool for schools (GEATS). The project did not seek to improve learning outcomes but did find that concerted actions by schools in concert with students and parents shifted ideas on social norms and increased aspirations for girls, while close work with school leaders and professional accreditation for teachers helped formalise the schools' approach.

Finally, Anu Upadhaya and Pramod K Sah look at the English classroom in Nepal and the potential for English to support career and life transitions for girls. They particularly focus on the external constraints on girls in Nepalese society that prevent them from realising the benefits of stronger English skills, even when there is concerted action at school level.

All the authors make a set of recommendations for both policymakers and programmers. Throughout the papers, the need for high-quality, in-depth inputs on gender, social justice and pedagogy are clear, while the rigorous use of classroom assessment and data is also shown to be important. In addition, it is vital to pay attention to self-esteem, agency and confidence for girls, which can be improved by taking positive action both within the classroom and outside it, through clubs, extracurricular activities and conversations with parents.

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A gender equality and social inclusion approach to teaching and learning: lessons from the Girls' Education Challenge

Emily Boost and Sally Rosscornes

Introduction and overview

Inequalities between girls and boys affect their educational opportunities and outcomes at every level. While some issues such as lack of schools or poorly skilled teachers affect all children's learning in a given context, other barriers to education apply specifically to girls. Traditional expectations around girls' choices and behaviour can determine whether they get access to the classroom in the first place, limit the time they have available for learning, and undermine the confidence they have in certain subjects and the degree to which they participate in lessons. Discriminatory gender norms also influence the perceived value of girls' education in those around them. This can ultimately shape and determine their future aspirations and opportunities.

As girls get older and pass through adolescence, gendered norms become more pronounced and their opportunities to learn contract. Girls may be expected to get married, have children, take on greater domestic responsibilities and contribute to family income. Expectations of girls who have disabilities are additionally prejudiced and in some contexts they have no opportunity to fulfil their right to education. Without a clear approach to strategically address these issues, attendance and learning outcomes for girls inevitably decline through lower and upper secondary phases and dropout rates increase.

The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) was launched by the UK government in 2012 as a 12-year commitment to reach the most marginalised girls in the world, and is the largest global fund dedicated to girls' education. The UK is committed to ensuring over a million girls in some of the poorest countries, including girls who have disabilities or are at risk of being left behind, receive a quality education. The GEC operates in 15 countries, supporting 27 projects across Africa and Asia with a wide range of non-state organisations.

The GEC has a robust and thorough approach to project-level evaluations, with independently commissioned evaluations to measure the additional effect of the work on the girls' learning, transition and sustainability outcomes.¹ The project-level evaluations collect baseline, midline and endline data using a mixed-methods research approach. Projects are required to set up robust, quasi-experimental evaluations, with treatment and comparison groups to demonstrate the additional impact of GEC-funded interventions over and above what would have otherwise occurred, thus making a significant contribution to the global evidence about girls' education. This evaluation approach reinforces and emphasises the overall importance on progress at the outcome level. Findings and conclusions in this chapter are drawn mainly from GEC project-level endline evaluations and as such may not be generalisable to different contexts.

A gender equality and social inclusion approach to teaching and learning



Teaching and learning, and gender equality and social inclusion processes and approaches, are at the core of the GEC. Once marginalised girls have overcome the barriers they face in getting to school, their quality of learning depends largely on their teachers and on the classroom environment they experience. Analysis of results from the GEC1 endline evaluation reports² showed a correlation between projects that delivered the greatest gains in girls' learning and those that included a strong and direct gendered focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, often combined with the delivery of extracurricular academic activities, and the use of mentors and role models. These three elements provide a platform from which to examine successful projects more closely.

Gender-responsive pedagogy as a component of good-quality teaching can provide opportunities to shift the – often unconscious – negative attitudes and behaviours of teachers and school staff towards girls. This is critical in improving girls' self-confidence and self-efficacy in the class and broader school environment. A lack of awareness of girls' specific learning needs among teachers is often born out of weak assessment practices, and of entrenched classroom practices, be they conscious, unconscious or benign, that discriminate against girls, especially in mathematics teaching. In GEC projects training, reinforced with in-class support and mentoring to understand and influence teachers' practice, has led to changes in the classroom resulting in increased confidence among both teachers and students.³ Gender-responsive pedagogy has to be integrated into developing teachers' subject knowledge along with an understanding of how to teach key principles in literacy and numeracy.

Extra- and co-curricular interventions provide good opportunities for promoting more gender-equitable attitudes among a range of school stakeholders. These types of interventions are often the only opportunity for projects to introduce new teaching methods, including more student-centred approaches, and supplementary curricula focusing on literacy, numeracy and life skills. There is evidence that extracurricular learning opportunities are pivotal in facilitating girls' educational progress, particularly for those who have missed out on formal schooling.⁴

Activities often include tailored, even individual, support for girls based on their actual rather than assumed learning levels. The safe environment created for girls in these settings can give them the confidence to ask questions and seek support with their learning.

Mentors and role models can play an important part in supporting girls and teachers in school, increasing self-efficacy, triggering improved performance in class and improving attendance. They can take the form of peer mentors (child-to-child and teacher-to-teacher), community mentors and teacher mentors. As well as acting as role models for girls and showing the benefits of continuing in education, they are often key champions for promoting the protection and safety of girls at school, exposing abuse, promoting behaviour management strategies that do not include corporal punishment and highlighting the need for action plans to address early pregnancy and marriage.

This paper will explore three case studies that demonstrate effective approaches to improving the quality of teaching in a gendered learning environment by delivering a combination of der-sensitive pedagogy, extracurricular activities and the use of mentors. The se studies are illustrative of the range of projects and contexts within the GEC portfolio. The insights are based on correlations between learning outcomes and the type of interventions used by projects. Causal analysis has not been carried out.

Case study: addressing discriminatory gender norms in the classroom

Key finding: synchronising gender-focused teacher training and agency-building activities with girls has potential to maximise their impact on learning. Fostering equal treatment in class is a good start, but efforts must also be made to support girls in developing their self-confidence and voice in order for them to fully engage in learning processes.

This case study analyses the effect of such combined interventions on girls' learning outcomes, considering evidence emerging from three GEC projects delivering similar approaches: IGATE in Zimbabwe, STAGES in Afghanistan and SOMGEP in Somalia. Across the three contexts, heavily marginalised girls have been historically excluded from education. In Afghanistan and Somalia, the majority of the girls participating in these projects are the first in their families to attend school, at 56 per cent and 70 per cent respectively; in Zimbabwe, this proportion falls to ten per cent of the targeted population (16 per cent among girls from female-headed households). Educational marginalisation takes many forms across the three geographies: in Afghanistan, 31 per cent of project participants are girls being educated in a language different to their home language; in Somalia, 56 per cent of the participants are girls from pastoralist communities; in Zimbabwe, 29 per cent of the girls belong to Apostolic households.

Marginalised girls who are entering school for the first time in adolescence are particularly restricted by rigid gender norms. Data from marginalised⁵ rural and remote areas in Somalia indicates that up to 73 per cent of the out-of-school adolescent girls surveyed felt nervous when speaking in front of an adult, and 43 per cent of the in-school girls surveyed were nervous when reading or doing mathematics in front of others. Girls' limited voice also affects their ability to engage with others, with 41 per cent of girls feeling lonely at school.⁶

Across all three contexts, learning outcomes for girls in primary school are poor. In terms of numeracy, over 60 per cent of the girls in primary classes in Afghanistan and Somalia have not mastered subtraction, multiplication or division. In Zimbabwe, 51 per cent of the girls are not able to perform multiplication or division. Looking at literacy, only 23 per cent of the girls in Zimbabwe are able to understand simple texts, compared to 43 per cent in community schools in Afghanistan (33 per cent in government schools) and 69 per cent in Somalia.⁷ The use of a second language as the language of instruction in Zimbabwe and in parts of Afghanistan remains a major barrier for reading comprehension, particularly for girls, for whom – more so than for boys – limited mobility restricts their exposure to any language not spoken at home. The use of a second language is particularly challenging for girls whose parents did not attend formal school and for girls from female-headed households, as their parents and siblings are extremely unlikely to speak any language other than their mother tongue.

We are taught to be confident and are free to ask the teacher some questions.

Girl, Zimbabwe

Previously girls used to be shy, especially in our rural communities, but they are now confident to say out what they want and their rights to their parents ... [for instance] in one of the IGATE schools, a male teacher abused a girl child and she reported the case resulting in the dismissal of the teacher.

District official, Zimbabwe

These three projects all combine similar approaches to:

- a teacher-training component that includes a focus on gender-transformative approaches
- girl-focused components to develop leadership skills (self-confidence, voice, vision, decision-making and organisation)
- academic skills development supported by local teacher mentors.

IGATE – Zimbabwe

The combination of these components has a powerful effect on learning outcomes. In Zimbabwe, the evaluation of the first three years of intervention indicated that girls who joined leadership clubs in IGATE's schools had a significantly higher average reading fluency 77 words per minute (wpm) compared to 61 wpm for the control group. They had a higher average attendance and their average mathematics score was five percentage points higher than the control group. Girls who participated in leadership clubs received support from teacher mentors, who not only helped them to develop their agency, but also worked jointly with school development committees and mothers' groups to address gender-based violence and harmful gendered practices in the school.

STAGES – Afghanistan

When the teacher teaches us, she asks us to listen to her. Then, we are asked to teach other students. This helps us with increasing our self-confidence.

Girl, Afghanistan

My parents and classmates make me feel more comfortable to share my opinions, but some bad cultures make me feel less comfortable to communicate my ideas.

Girl, Afghanistan

Results from the first three years of intervention in Afghanistan's STAGES project⁸ highlight the importance of addressing gendered practices in classrooms, both between teachers and students, and between girls and boys. In community-based education classes, teachers received training to prevent discriminatory gendered practices and girls were mentored to develop leadership skills. Subsequently, girls in Grade 4 in these classes showed a higher increase in reading fluency scores (from 39 wpm to 64 wpm in the space of 12 months) compared to government school students in the same grade (from 42 wpm to 59 wpm). Numeracy gains were also more pronounced among those in community-based education; their average mathematics scores increased from 45 per cent to 58 per cent, compared to an increase from 50 per cent to 56 per cent among students attending the same grade in government schools. A very high proportion of STAGES teachers – 97 per cent of male and 99 per cent of female – are using gender-fair practices, such as asking questions equally, and of equal difficulty, of girls and boys, equal praise for students of both sexes, and providing examples of different educational and career pathway options for girls. These behaviours allow girls to experience, often for the first time, different gender roles, in an environment where their voices, ideas and skills are valued.

Girls' learning outcomes tend to decline in mixed classes, due to a combination of girls' lack of confidence to ask questions in the presence of boys, possible disruptive behaviour among boys and preferential treatment of boys. Deeply rooted traditional perceptions of masculinity can result in fights between boys and the use of corporal punishment against them. Qualitative data demonstrates this results in a dislike of school for boys and quantitative data shows this has a detrimental effect on boys' learning outcomes in Afghanistan.⁹ Girls' literacy and numeracy scores are now higher than boys in these mixed-sex classrooms. Strategies are being embedded to develop constructive, respectful relationships between boys and girls and to improve the confidence of all students. The establishment of peer groups creates a platform for girls and boys to do joint activities, particularly reading. This activity is conducted with students who are undergoing the critical transition into adolescence (Grades 4–6), when rigid gender roles begin to be strictly enforced. Facilitating boys and girls to work together on academic activities is intended to develop mutual respect that will challenge gendered hierarchies in adolescence.

SOMGEP – Somalia

I had difficulty in dealing with female students, how to integrate with them. I had an idea that if I work with female students in the course of a group discussion it would be a bad thing against the culture and education, but when I have received the training, I have gotten advantage that it is different from my previous thought, to integrate with students or encourage them in education...

Teacher, Somalia

After three years of intervention in Somalia, literacy scores¹⁰ for girls increased from 56 per cent to 69 per cent and reading comprehension scores increased from 37 per cent to 56 per cent. Gains in numeracy were more limited and occurred particularly in tasks with lower cognitive demands such as addition (from 53 per cent to 70 per cent) and subtraction (from 44 per cent to 56 per cent), reflecting both the gender bias and teachers' limited mastery of the subject. In mathematics lessons, girls are still called upon less often than boys, showing a persistent (and common) gender bias in perceptions of who is good in this subject. Subsequent analysis, comparing SOMGEP's schools with comparison schools,¹¹ indicated that teachers trained by SOMGEP are now calling on girls more often than their counterparts in comparison schools. Fewer girls in SOMGEP schools felt that their teachers treat them differently from boys in class in relation to comparison schools (a difference of four percentage points). SOMGEP's focus on developing girls' confidence and social skills resulted in an increase in girls' ability to ask questions in class and engage with teachers and peers – a key building block for learning. In addition, their higher leadership scores¹² are a good predictor of better reading and numeracy scores, mirroring the results observed in Zimbabwe.

While gender gaps are closing in primary enrolment, girls from the most disadvantaged groups are still lagging behind, particularly girls from historically discriminated-against groups, which includes girls with disabilities, so there is more work to do. The present findings clearly highlight the value of investing not only in fostering equal treatment in class, but also in supporting girls to develop their self-confidence and voice to fully engage in learning processes. Synchronising gender-focused teacher-training and agency-building activities with students maximises their impact on learning, and it is likely that this combined approach will create a strong foundation to enable girls to apply their skills in the future, and to open up wider choices for them in their societies, including roles they and their families had not previously considered.

Case study: co-curricular learning spaces for girls

Key finding: inclusion of a gender focus in teacher training not only builds teachers' understanding of discriminatory gender norms and their skills in gender-sensitive pedagogy, it can also improve their confidence to provide pastoral support to girls experiencing challenges such as early and forced marriage.

Link Community Development's (LCD) GEC project *Improved Girls' Learning in Rural Wolaita* aims to improve girls' enrolment, retention, learning and school performance in 123 rural elementary schools in four marginalised, densely populated *woredas* (districts) in Wolaita, Ethiopia. The theory of change proposed that a holistic package of activities involving a wide range of stakeholders – girls, parents, teachers, school directors, woreda officials and community members – will contribute to stakeholders taking action to support girls' education. The goal is to raise awareness, change attitudes and build capacity to mobilise the various stakeholders in developing sustainable systems for the improvement of girls' education.¹³

LCD in Ethiopia found that a third of girls in their target schools had a perception that teachers regarded education for boys as more important, and that boys received more attention in class than girls. An even larger proportion of girls (77 per cent) thought that they learned less than boys, suggesting the absence of gender-sensitive pedagogy. In addition, low parental expectations of girls' success in school seemed associated with their performance, as the more negative the caregiver's attitude towards girls' education, the lower the girls' average reading fluency scores.

Realising that if girls lack self-worth, their school performance and potential to access further educational opportunities will remain limited, LCD designed interventions to increase girls' self-esteem, focused on building positive relationships between girls and their teachers, which would result in more effective teaching and learning.

Teacher counsellors

A national consultant developed a model of counselling to address girls' self-esteem and develop their life skills. Core CASEL¹⁴ and cognitive behaviour therapy methods, aligned with the Ministry of Education's Guidance and Counselling guidelines, were adapted for adolescent girls in the upper primary school context. LCD reached 4,046 girls aged ten to 14. A ten-hour counselling programme split between individual and small group sessions focused on topics including developing self-esteem and life skills, study methods, managing menstruation, understanding forms of violence and how to report it, and how to delay early marriage. The counselling was delivered by trained female teachers using planned writing, drawing and talking exercises.

Teacher tutors

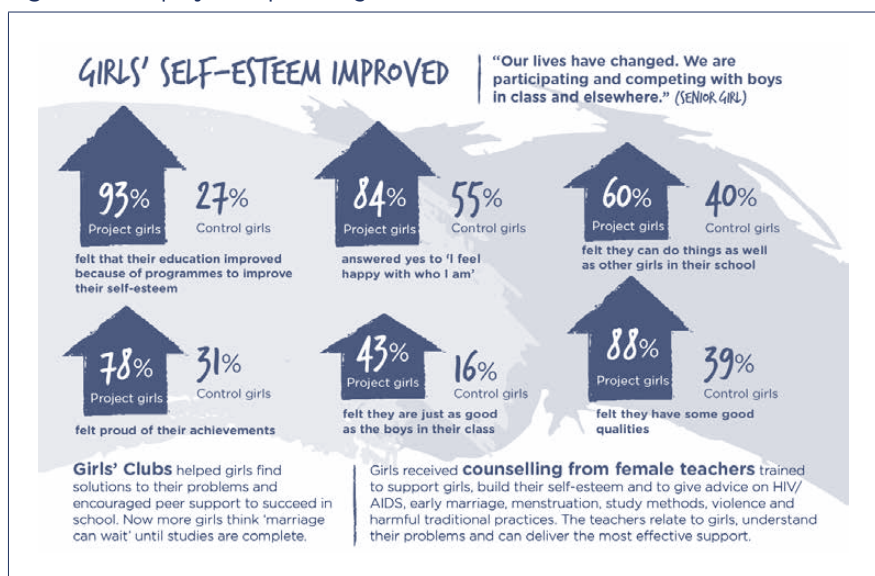
LCD also trained male and female tutors to respond to individual students' needs rather than providing generic support, reiterating the importance of assessment for learning techniques. These tutors supported over 12,000 girls with extra tutorial classes and reported an increase in girls' subject knowledge following the tutorial classes and higher test scores. Girls valued the classes because they were smaller than standard classes (which were up to 60–70 students per teacher) enabling girls to get more individual help with material they did not understand. Another factor that likely contributed to the effectiveness of the tutorial classes was that they were for girls only, and were considered to be a safe learning space by them. In the classes, girls were given the opportunity to ask questions, seek support and do additional work without boys present. The tutors had received specific training in conducting the classes and in teaching in a participatory way. Having this supportive space reportedly contributed to girls' improved performance and the development of their self-esteem.

The successful female models they met helped them to improve their self-esteem. Now that they see their own value, they are more open towards their teachers and others. They are aware they are equal to males and developed self-confidence.

Teacher, Ethiopia

Findings from this case study demonstrate that the additional training for teachers and tutors not only built their understanding of gender equality and their skills in gender-sensitive pedagogy, it also improved their confidence to provide pastoral support. Girls who took part in the project, in particular younger girls, reported experiencing a change in teachers' skills and rated teachers as 'more gender-sensitive' over the time of the project. This rating differed significantly from the control group.¹⁵ The effects of improved teaching and learning processes seem to be enhanced through developing gender-responsive pedagogy, and are further accentuated when used in extracurricular settings. This may be due to the absence of curriculum restriction, allowing more time on specific literacy and numeracy catch-up.

Figure 1: GEC project impact on girls' self-esteem



Source: GEC1 Endline Evaluation Report, © Link Community Development International

Many gains were seen in girls' attendance rates, enrolment and learning outcomes. Project girls' attendance improved (from 80 per cent at baseline to 92 per cent), while the control group's attendance dropped over time (from 91 per cent at baseline to 75 per cent). Retention also increased: of girls in the project schools that started Grade 1, 59.6 per cent reached Grade 8 (compared to 29.7 per cent at baseline). By the end of the project, the numeracy scores of the project girls were three times higher than the control girls, and in literacy, the improvement doubled in comparison with control group girls, from baseline to endline. The disparity between boys' and girls' performance in core subject tests decreased from 5.3 per cent to two per cent for Grade 7 and from 4.8 per cent to 3.4 per cent for Grade 4. There were girls who performed very well and were able to compete with boys for ranking positions, which had not been seen before. This indicates that a significant change took place in the school system where the project was implemented.

Girls' grades improved because of tutorial classes. We used to beg male students to help us. Now we learn freely in tutorial classes and our teachers assist us.

Senior girl, Ethiopia

The results endorsed the theory of change that accurate data and policies, educational change, support systems in schools and families, and interventions directly aimed to improve girls' self-esteem and enhance their learning will keep girls in school and improve their learning. Parental support and girls' self-esteem, gender-sensitive teaching and perceptions of equality in community gender norms were key predictors of gains in literacy and numeracy. Numeracy gains were also predicted by attitudes towards school and girls' aspirations.

However, the project found it was the direct interventions with girls which seemed to have an immediate impact on their performance.¹⁶

Now the community believes that the female students' problem is not lack of capacity, but opportunity.

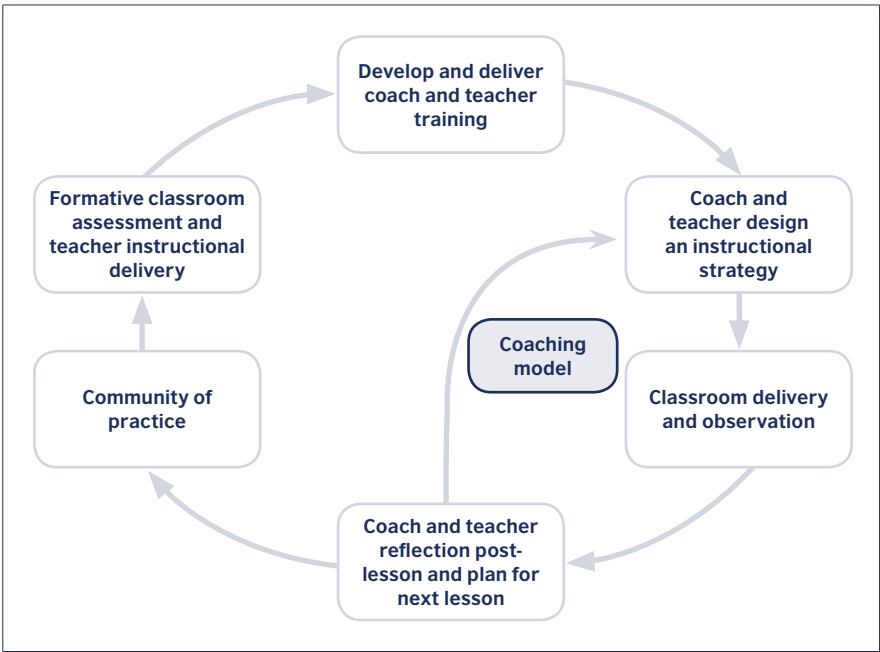
Teacher, Ethiopia

Case study: teacher peer mentoring and coaching

Key finding: the inclusion of modules on gender roles, norms and equality in pre-service and ongoing teacher training builds teachers' capacity to effectively deliver pedagogy which is both gender-responsive and of high quality. The method of training and supporting teachers should be carefully considered and should include well-designed follow-up, practical sessions and fostering of peer-to-peer support.

Education Development Trust (EDT) in Kenya works in eight counties, spanning rural semi-arid areas as well as urban slums, reaching 89,000 girls in 500 schools. Its Let Girls Learn project aims to build capacity within schools to provide a safe and supportive environment for girls to learn and thrive in, and to support the Ministry of Education to deliver equitable and effective education. As such, EDT designed interventions to influence classroom practice, build girls' self-esteem and increase community support for girls' continued learning. This case study will feature EDT's comprehensive coaching programme for teachers, which involves peer mentoring, tailored skills development and gender-responsive pedagogy.

Figure 2: Teacher peer mentoring and coaching model



Source: Education Development Trust (EDT)

Research carried out by EDT at the end of the project¹⁷ highlighted three promising aspects that the endline evaluation showed to have improved marginalised girls' access to education and the quality of that education. One of these focused on the importance of the teacher–learner relationship in the classroom. Conversely, two key prevailing barriers were weak teacher professionalism, and the limited number and quality of learning opportunities, which was found to be particularly acute for girls.

Like many GEC projects, EDT worked specifically with teachers on subject-specific pedagogy to assist them in gaining skills for teaching basic literacy and numeracy, taking into account the relatively low learning levels of marginalised girls and designing training to help teachers address this. Over 90 teacher coaches were trained in improving learning outcomes, child protection, inclusive education and gender-responsive pedagogy. The coaches in turn trained teachers and followed up through visits to assess how the principles were being applied to ensure quality instruction was being delivered and the learning environment was safe and inclusive for girls.

By introducing elements of direct instructional methodology to teach reading in a very structured way at upper primary, it extended work that had already been rolled out across the whole country in the early grades through TUSOME,¹⁸ a Ministry of Education-led reform. In order to address gender inequality in the classroom, teachers were supported to develop gender-inclusive lesson plans and to review and adapt lesson content and learning materials so they were gender-sensitive.

First, the teaching materials have completely been engendered. It is not like it was Kamau the shopkeeper and Aisha washing utensils and all that has really changed. There is also infusion of gender issues in drama, music and teachers are behind all this. Teachers have also been trained on being gender-responsive and are now in the curriculum. The gospel about gender has gone whether in election of student leadership and nomination of Board of Management.

Teacher, Kenya

Reinforcement of these new classroom and teaching techniques through frequent in-school training and support from peer teachers was important in identifying and supporting improvements in girls' learning. EDT saw the potential for encouraging a community of practice among teachers in the same school and across a group of schools, where teachers could reflect together on how practice was changing and how results for girls could be improved. It introduced cluster meetings, which brought teachers to an experience sharing forum and enabled discussion around the challenges of delivering the curriculum effectively and equitably. An important aspect of this was in raising teachers' expectations of girls' ability, particularly in mathematics. Some teachers reflected that they previously refrained from asking girls difficult questions for fear of embarrassing them, but following the training were conscious of the importance of stretching and challenging all pupils. Cluster meetings are conducted once every term for the 'focus teachers' from all schools within the cluster. They play a major role in helping teachers find solutions to some of the problems they encounter as they carry out their work.

It was important to reinforce and support the government's own initiatives and add the additional focus on gender inclusiveness, rather than set up parallel systems. EDT worked with the Teachers Service Commission at county and sub-county level, training them in effective methodologies from the outset, rather than relying on project employees to deliver training at the school level, and so developed a network of trained, experienced teachers and trainers. For the changes and improved quality to be sustained, continued engagement is crucial, as is involvement of all the relevant bodies, including the Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education. In the future EDT plans to work further on sustainable teacher-training approaches, through a technical working group that will include the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, Kenya Education Management Institute and the Kenya National Examinations Council.

Following success in GEC1 (the project exceeded its literacy targets by 44 per cent and met 78 per cent of its numeracy targets), EDT has now broadened its coaching programme to incorporate school leadership and has adapted its after-school tuition methodology for use within regular classrooms as well as extracurricular activities.

Alongside their work with teachers, EDT implements a number of additional activities that are proving effective in supporting girls at school. Child-to-child clubs were set up to provide a platform for girls to express themselves and their aspirations, acquire new knowledge, share their problems and find common solutions with their peers. Additionally, EDT used community conversations – facilitating dialogues with community gatekeepers on issues of gender discrimination, girls' rights and how these play out in girls' experiences of education. The conversations are intended to raise awareness and galvanise the community into recognising their role in the education of girls and taking action. EDT is continuing to embed and integrate its interventions both in and out of school to support girls to learn.

Conclusions

Findings from these case studies and overall reflection on common aspects of successful GEC projects have led us to the following broad conclusions:

- Discriminatory gender norms play a critical role in classroom dynamics, affecting teacher–student and peer interactions. Gender norms affect how girls and boys participate in the learning process and influence perceptions (including their own) about their ability to learn. Traditional female roles practised at the household replicate themselves in the classroom environment. Asking questions to an adult – the teacher – is often seen as violating traditional gender norms (which limit female voice) and power relationships (which restrict children and adolescents from speaking in the presence of an adult or elder). Shifting unequal gender roles in schools requires synchronised interventions with teachers and students, addressing gender bias in classroom practices while developing new perceptions of self-value, voice and aspirations among students.

- Introducing systems in schools that both promote gender equality and change the school environment requires school-wide support to improve classroom dynamics and enables girls to build greater confidence to achieve. This starts with buy-in from head teachers and cascades down to introducing gender-responsive teaching methods in the classroom, and assessment of pupils that includes non-cognitive skills as well as cognitive learning.
- A transformative approach to education programming involves improving marginalised girls' access to quality education and quality learning experiences. It also means supporting girls, their families, schools and communities to understand and challenge discriminatory social and gender norms. This ambition of progress towards gender equality moves beyond access to school and requires that girls and boys experience the same levels of quality, opportunity and outcomes of education.

Key recommendations

- Invest in girls by providing extracurricular classes and girls' clubs that form a safe space for them to build their social capital, catch up on subject areas, learn life skills and form friendships. These spaces are effective ways to support girls in developing the self-confidence to fully engage in learning processes.
- Invest in teachers so they are better equipped to deliver gender-responsive pedagogy and model more gender-equitable behaviour in the classroom. Gender-responsive pedagogy has to be integrated into developing teachers' subject knowledge along with an understanding of how to teach key principles in literacy and numeracy.
- Invest in school-wide support to improve classroom dynamics and enable girls to build greater confidence to achieve.

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1. Learning outcomes in the GEC are measured using adapted versions of numeracy and literacy tests such as the Early Grade Reading Assessments and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment.
 2. GEC1 is the first phase of the GEC, which ran from 2012 to 2017. Evaluation data is collected by project-appointed external evaluators and verified by the Fund Manager.
 3. Based on evidence presented in GEC project endline evaluation reports.
 4. GEC (2018) *Extra and Co-Curricular Interventions*. Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730863/TR-Extra-Cocurricular-Interventions.pdf
 5. The study assessed girls aged ten to 19 living in rural and remote areas of Somalia that were heavily affected by the severe drought of 2016–17. These girls face multiple dimensions of marginalisation: out of school (50 per cent); pastoralism (56 per cent); female-headed households (48 per cent); illiterate parents (81 per cent); dependent on charity (35 per cent); facing hunger (37 per cent); physical/cognitive disability (seven per cent); anxiety (16 per cent); and depression (13 per cent).
 6. Ha, S and Forney, J (2018) *Somali Girls' Education Promotion Project – Transition: Baseline Study Report*.
 7. Different texts were applied in the three country samples, therefore the results are not directly comparable. All three texts are short, using simple sentence structures; comprehension questions are directly related to text content, not requiring inferential understanding.

8. Corboz, J (2016) *Endline GEC Report – Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Educational Success*.
9. Corboz, J (2018) *Baseline GEC-II Report – Steps Towards Afghan Girls' Educational Success II*.
10. Measured through Uwezo.
11. Ha and Forney, *op. cit*.
12. Measured through CARE's Youth Leadership Index.
13. Link Community Development International (2017) GEC-1 Endline Report.
14. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning.
15. GEC, *op. cit*.
16. Link Community Development International, *op. cit*.
17. EDT (2016) *Disadvantaged girls in Kenyan Schools*. Available online at: <https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/our-research-and-insights/research/disadvantaged-girls-in-kenyan-schools>
18. Tusome ('Let's read' in Kiswahili) is a flagship partnership between USAID and the Kenyan Ministry of Education, designed to dramatically improve literacy outcomes for primary school children in Grades 1–3.

2

Teacher development and gender equality in five Nigerian states

Amy North and Elaine Unterhalter

This chapter discusses findings from the research project *Teacher education, Teacher practice, Gender and Girls' Schooling Outcomes*,¹ which investigated whether teachers interviewed in five Nigerian states were able to put insights gained through pre-service training (PRESET) and CPD regarding gender equality into practice in schools. The project was funded by the MacArthur Foundation through the British Council in Nigeria, and ran from 2014 to 2016. The relationships between training, school conditions and girls' education outcomes were considered through interviews with student teachers, newly qualified and experienced teachers, head teachers, and both male and female pupils. Analysis explored the ways in which these different groups engaged with gender equality and inclusion, which exposed some marked disconnections between policy and classroom practice.

Setting the scene: education and gender equality in Nigeria

In the last two decades Nigeria has made key policy commitments to advancing education and gender equality. The 1999 Constitution, adopted at the end of military rule, acknowledged the importance of free, compulsory primary education for every Nigerian child, and this was reinforced with the development of the National Policy on Education and the Nigerian Universal Basic Education Act.² A wide range of Universal Basic Education programmes were developed, many with an explicit focus on girls and gender equality. In 2007 a Gender in Basic Education policy³ set out an explicit commitment to advancing gender equality in and through schooling. In a context of widespread gender inequalities, translating policy aspiration into practice is a huge task. A 2012 British Council report concluded that Nigeria's 80.2 million girls and women had significantly worse life chances than not only Nigerian men, but also women in comparable African countries.⁴ It noted that gender was a feature of inequalities in wealth, income and educational opportunities. Gender discrimination existed in access to land, in pay and in support for education, with some very marked regional differences. Nearly three-quarters of young adult women in the north-west states cannot read, compared to only eight per cent in the south-east, and girls from the poorest wealth quintile in all regions are most likely to be out of school. Parents say that cost is a major reason for withdrawing girls from formal education.⁵

Teachers are a key resource for effecting gender equality in education. Their knowledge and attitudes are important for building and sustaining ideas and institutions oriented to gender equality. Studies of interventions to support gender equality in education in other African countries identify the salience of teacher education, both PRESET and CPD.⁶ However, to date only a few studies have considered what teachers' views are on gender and equalities.⁷

In Nigeria, Ayodeji Ifegbesan's 2010 study of 250 secondary schoolteachers indicated that most of the surveyed teachers promoted gender stereotypes (either directly or indirectly), and recommended that 'teacher education curricula for both pre-service and in-service must be permeated with opportunities to acquire gender sensitivity knowledge, skills and develop attitudes in classroom layout, use of resources, responsibilities for activities, discipline, classroom language and teacher-students interaction'.⁸ These results echoed the findings of a 2009 study of 296 secondary schoolteachers in Enugu, which concluded that most teachers believed gender stereotypes to be true.⁹ A recent study in Lagos schools showed how teachers in public schools discussed gender largely in terms of equal opportunities and concerns with violence, while there was no acknowledgement of even these limited engagements by teachers in private schools.¹⁰

At a policy level, there has been recognition of the need to support teachers to engage with gender equality. The teacher education curriculum was revised in 2012 and emphasised working with student teachers to understand and address gender issues. This research project set out to examine how and whether these changes were reflected in training and teachers' practice.

The research

The mixed-methods research study was conducted over four phases between August 2014 and December 2015 in five Nigerian states, two (Lagos and Rivers) located in the south, and three (Kano, Jigawa and Sokoto) in the north. In the initial phase (August–November 2014), 4,494 respondents were surveyed in 11 colleges of education and university faculties of education across the five states (see Table 1). The smaller number of students surveyed in Kano State was due to a violent explosion that took place on a Kano campus at the time of the study. Survey questions focused on participants' backgrounds, what they felt they had learned during their teacher training, and their views and attitudes towards aspects of gender equality and inclusion.

Table 1: Number of students surveyed in 2014, by state and type of institution

State	University	College of education	Total
Lagos	228	765	993
Rivers	502	441	943
Sokoto	208	819	1,027
Kano	-	629	629
Jigawa	-	902	902
Total	938 (21%)	3,556 (79%)	4,494

In the sample there were more men (57 per cent) than women (43 per cent). However, this varied by state, with women outnumbering men in the southern states, while in the northern states the reverse was true, with women making up only 13 per cent of the sample in Jigawa. This demographic distribution reflected gender and employment patterns in all five states.¹¹

In the second phase a follow-up survey was conducted with the same sample group six months after their planned end of study (January–March 2015), which investigated their employment. In the third phase (November–December 2015), a second follow-up survey was conducted, and face-to-face data collection took place in six schools in each state where a subsample of those initially interviewed in 2014 were now working as newly qualified teachers. In each school interviews were conducted with the principal, one newly qualified teacher, five other teachers, and ten male and ten female learners. In the final phase (2016), focus group discussions in each state to examine emerging findings from the study were convened with one group of participants currently working as teachers, and one group of participants who, although trained, were not currently employed as teachers.

Student teacher engagements with gender

The survey data collected with student teachers in their final year of training indicated there was a considerable disjunction between the aims of the revised curriculum, and what student teachers were learning in practice. In the 11 institutions where key informants provided information on the courses offered, most said there was either a lot or at least some attention given to lesson planning, assessment methods and making lessons interesting for children. They were less likely to mention learning around gender, inclusion or poverty. When students were asked about the elements of the courses they were studying that they found most and least interesting, the majority positively identified with elements that dealt with the concrete practice of teaching (such as planning lessons for teaching practice) and understanding teaching as a profession. Those aspects of courses that dealt with gender and learning needs, puberty, and issues around sexual and reproductive health were mentioned only by a minority as being particularly interesting, suggesting student teachers found these issues more difficult to engage with.

A series of statements designed to elicit participants' views and attitudes on different aspects of gender equality revealed significant differences between men and women, and between student teachers located in different states. For example, as can be seen in Table 2, it was found that significantly larger proportions of women, compared to men, strongly agreed that women have the right to hold leadership positions at community and national level, and that girls should be allowed to play sport. Male trainee teachers were much more likely to blame female students for sexual harassment or pregnancy, and only two-thirds of male students surveyed thought girls who had an early pregnancy should be allowed to return to school, compared to 81 per cent of women.

Table 2: Survey participants by sex and views on girls’ education and women in leadership

Views about women in leadership and girls’ education	Men	Women	Total responses (% all surveyed)
Strongly agree that women have the right to hold leadership positions in the community	21%	59%	1,700 (36%)
Strongly agree that a female president can be as effective as a male president	16%	57%	1,543 (33%)
Strongly agree that girls have the same right to go to school as boys	53%	85%	3,070 (66%)
Strongly agree that girls should be allowed to play sports	38%	68%	2,336 (50%)
Strongly agree that boys should be allowed to play sports	72%	89%	3,966 (79%)

Based on responses to the full range of statements, the project developed a gender equity index that captured participants’ views across three different dimensions of gender equality. Table 3 shows the proportion of participants by sex and state who were found to display positive gender attitudes in relation to each dimension of the index.

Table 3: Percentage of participants with positive attitudes on gender by sex and state

Percentage of teacher trainees with positive attitudes on:				
	Gender and education (overall index)	Gender equality in education, public life and the home (subindex)	Challenging conventional masculinities (subindex)	Teacher professional conduct and inclusive practice (subindex)
Sex				
Male	9.8%	31.7%	81.8%	0.9%
Female	30.0%	77.4%	68.7%	1.0%
State				
Sokoto	7.9%	27.3%	80.1%	0.1%
Jigawa	3.7%	17.4%	86.0%	1.5%
Kano	11.4%	37.1%	84.7%	1.7%
Rivers	29.1%	81.0%	70.1%	0.9%
Lagos	37.4%	88.3%	62.3%	0.9%
ALL	18.2%	50.7%	76.1%	0.9%

This data indicates that female students were more likely than male students to have positive attitudes overall, and more women than men were found to be in support of gender equality in public life and the home. However, more men than women responded that they were concerned to challenge conventional masculinities. Strikingly, only very small proportions of both women and men appear engaged with teacher professional conduct and inclusive practice. The north–south divide in attitudes on gender was evident, and Jigawa, the state where the largest proportion of students expressed motivation to develop a career in teaching, had the smallest proportion with positive views towards gender equality. It was also found that a larger proportion of university students, compared to college of education students, held more positive views about gender equality, but in this group, a smaller proportion expressed a desire to develop a future career in teaching. Students whose parents, in particular their mothers, were in occupations classified as representing higher socio-economic status, were more likely to hold positive views, suggesting that mothers' socio-economic status may have an important influence on attitudes to gender equality.

The survey data collected with student teachers thus suggests a significant disconnection between efforts at policy level to promote concern with gender and inclusion through the teacher-training curriculum and how student teachers are engaging with ideas around gender equality. While many initiatives around improving teacher quality in Nigeria have focused on aspects of CPD, the data raises significant issues of concern about whether PRESET builds adequate levels of understanding to support the inclusion and gender-equality aspects of Nigeria's vision for Education For All. Many trainee teachers appear to have ideas about gender and professional practice that are out of step with inclusion strategies, and current intervention strategies may not be well focused or adequate enough to engage with them. This has implications for classroom practice and the learning experiences of all children, not just girls.

Gender attitudes and experiences of inclusion in schools

In each school where data was collected, teachers and learners were asked to respond to the same set of statements on gender equality that had been put to the original survey participants. When gender attitude scores were calculated for different groups of teachers, it was found that, on average, female teachers had higher scores than male teachers. In all states except for Sokoto newly qualified teachers had lower average scores than their more experienced colleagues, and head teachers had the highest average scores. However, despite these relatively high mean scores the proportion of individual head teachers reaching the threshold required to be considered to have positive gender attitudes was low (see Table 4).

Table 4: Proportion of participants in schools with a positive gender score

	Percentage of participants with a positive gender attitude score						
		Sokoto	Jigawa	Kano	Rivers	Lagos	All states
Newly qualified teachers	Male	33	0	0	0	0	7
	Female	33	-	0	20	67	31
	Total	33	0	0	14	50	18
Teacher colleagues	Male	19	10	7	64	27	21
	Female	7	33	0	56	28	30
	Total	13	15	7	60	28	25
Principals	Male	25	25	17	0	33	19
	Female	50	0	-	0	67	38
	Total	33	20	17	0	50	24

Gender attitude scores were also calculated for learners. When the mean gender attitude index of learners is looked at across all states we see a pattern where girls in junior secondary schools have more gender-equitable attitudes than boys. In Jigawa and Kano, girls' mean gender attitude index is higher than newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers. In Rivers and Lagos, girls' mean gender index looks more like that of experienced teacher colleagues or principals. There is thus a disjunction regarding attitudes to gender between the views of female learners and some of the teachers who work with them.

The study suggests that the gender attitudes of learners require much more investigation and attention. In correlating the data on learners' gender attitudes and family socio-economic background we saw a negative correlation for girls: girls with fathers and mothers in higher socio-economic categories do not appear to express more gender-equitable views. However, there is a weak positive correlation for boys, according to fathers' socio-economic status: where boys' fathers have more secure employment, they appear more comfortable in expressing more gender-equitable views. There is not seen among learners the clear correlation found with student teachers that mothers' level of employment appeared to affect views about gender.

To understand learners' experiences of inclusion in school they were asked several questions relating to how confident they felt about their studies, whether they were able to follow the lessons and how much they thought the teachers responded to their needs. The data was then compiled into a set of inclusion learning scores. Table 5 presents the mean scores by state for male and female learners, where 1 indicates very high levels of inclusion and 0 no inclusion at all.

Table 5: Learners’ mean inclusion score by state

	Boys’ mean inclusion in learning score	Girls’ mean inclusion in learning score
Lagos	.9119	.7630
Rivers	.7022	.6092
Sokoto	.8500	.7778
Kano	.6317	.7533
Jigawa	.8694	.6650
All	.7902	.7126

It can be seen across all states that boys feel more included in learning than girls, with the exception of Kano, where most girls surveyed were in private girls-only schools. The gap between the mean inclusion score for boys and girls in most states is considerable. It was investigated whether there was any relationship between the extent to which girls and boys felt included in learning and teaching (the inclusion index), the amount of CPD teachers had had, their enjoyment of their work in teaching, and girls’ and boys’ confidence in articulating views in the direction of gender equality. The findings highlight the complexity of this area.

For both boys and girls there is a weak but statistically significant positive correlation between their gender attitudes score and how included they feel in the classroom. This suggested that experiences of good and inclusive teaching may foster more equitable views. However, there is no statistically significant relationship between girls’ or boys’ gender attitude scores and teachers’ experience of CPD, suggesting the views that drive children’s views about gender equality are deep-seated and require more attention than the limited CPD available.

When teachers in focus groups were asked to discuss these findings, and comment in particular on the relationship between boys and girls who feel more included in the classroom and boys and girls having more gender-equitable views and attitudes, they often related girls’ lack of inclusion with cultural norms, expectations and perceptions of appropriate female behaviour, which they suggested affected girls’ participation in the classroom:

Females are always shy to ask questions in the class. Females don’t feel like challenging or confronting males openly. This is often carried to the class.

Jigawa State

Girls are more occupied with domestic chores than boys. Most times when they come to school, they begin to sleep during lessons, because they had insufficient rest at home. If the teachers try to caution them, they may become withdrawn, looking at the teachers as enemies and seeing the school as an unsafe place to be.

Rivers State

Although there was acknowledgment of the problem of sexual harassment (both by boys and teachers), the behaviour and attitudes of boys in the classroom was less discussed. In one instance differences between boys' and girls' behaviour appeared to be blamed on girls who were described as 'easily distracted':

While teachers do not discriminate among genders in the classroom in this part of the country, the boys may be more active in the classroom because girls are easily distracted. Girls in the junior secondary school are at their developmental stage (puberty) and this makes them very attractive to the opposite sex who do not hesitate to go after them and this serves as a distraction to them.

Rivers State

There was little discussion of the role that teachers might play in affecting the engagement of girls and boys in learning. One participant suggested that teachers might give less attention to girls than boys, explaining this in terms of wider societal expectations of the roles of men and women:

The level of motivation varies between males and females. Boys are more motivated to read at home because females are considered as other men's properties later. Teachers also give more motivation to males because they sometimes feel they waste their efforts by concentrating on females.

Jigawa State

Participants thus tended to link girls' lack of inclusion to the behaviour of the girls themselves, and the ways in which this was in turn affected by wider gender norms, rather than considering how this might also be affected by teaching practice, or the dynamics of the classroom. The focus group discussions suggested little awareness among teachers of what they might do to change gender dynamics within the classroom, develop girls' and boys' understanding of gender issues or ensure that both girls and boys are included in learning.

The survey data appears to point to an extensive unmet need for support on building insight into gender equality and working with children on these issues. Few teachers had received more than minimal amounts of CPD, although when teachers' mean gender attitude index scores were correlated with their experience of CPD there was found to be a weak but statistically significant relationship, suggesting that CPD may play a role in helping to shift views and attitudes in relation to gender equality among teachers, even if these views are not always successfully passed on to learners.

The data also uncovered some troubling relationships that appear to indicate how challenging it can be in schools for teachers to put work on inclusion into practice, particularly in contexts with high poverty levels. A series of correlations was run to try to explore the relationship between teachers' working conditions and enjoyment of teaching, their attitudes towards gender and how much they said they do to develop inclusive practice in the classroom. The patterns that emerged were complex. While not all the correlations were statistically significant, where there was a strong – and statistically significant – negative correlation was between how much teachers said they did to include children with particular needs in learning and how much they indicated that they enjoyed their work as teachers.

This seems to suggest that those teachers who do recognise and take steps to try to address the multiple learning needs of the children they work with feel overwhelmed by this task and unsupported in their efforts to try to develop inclusive practice in contexts of poverty, often under very poor working conditions.

Conclusions and recommendations

The findings reveal a considerable disjunction between policy aspirations and practice, both within teacher-training institutions and schools. Despite policy commitments in relation to minimum standards on gender equality in teacher education, it is clear that many teacher trainees do not consider they have been given substantial background on these issues in their training. Generally, their views about gender equality do not suggest they have been given critical insights to challenge some of the existing norms in society. While female teacher trainees were more responsive to what training is given about gender and inclusion issues than men, neither group reported extensive engagement with these issues in PRESET. Meanwhile, the limited CPD reported on by teachers working in schools shows how little support there is for teachers to work with learners to take forward ideas about gender and connected equalities. Where teachers do try to develop more inclusive forms of practice, they appear to feel under-supported and therefore unhappy in their roles. The views of learners in schools show how difficult it is for them to challenge existing gender stereotypes and structures. The lower gender equality attitude scores of boys compared to girls suggests that supporting boys to develop more equitable views represents a particular challenge.

The research points to several actions that are important in order to support work on gender equality at national and school level. These include:

- embedding gender analysis much more fully into teacher development programmes in all teacher education institutions, to enable students to learn about processes that underpin gender inequality in society
- developing CPD programmes concerned with building teacher understandings of gender and equality
- supporting leadership on gender equality within schools, and developing policy that focuses on teacher retention
- developing and supporting school-level policy on gender-based violence.

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3

Creating gender-inclusive schools in Turkey: the ETCEP project in action

Rebecca Ingram

Introduction

This paper examines an attempt to develop schools' capacity to challenge gender norms via the ETCEP (Technical Assistance for Promoting Gender Equality in Education¹) project, a pilot which ran from 2014 to 2016 in ten provinces of Turkey, funded by the EU. ETCEP piloted an approach that adopted a capability-based framework at multiple levels to tackle girls' marginalisation, with a focus on gender justice. This included:

- work at national and policy level via analysis and planning of curricula and textbooks
- work within schools through a bespoke gender equality assessment tool for schools (GEATS), which was intended to enable school leaders to analyse how well their schools were promoting gender equality and to develop corresponding strategies
- a public campaign on television and social media.

The pilot also supported teachers to identify and challenge gender norms directly through a certification programme for teachers, school leaders and the inspectorate.

This paper shares lessons, challenges and media content from the pilot and makes recommendations for policymakers wishing to enact a similar programme of transformation, focusing particularly on how tools and processes can support a systemic change in regional and national education planning.

Gender and education in Turkey

No attention (in Turkey) has been attached to girls' schooling experiences within and outside the schools, gender and social relations within and around the school, the quality of education girls receive, or how market and family relations impact on girls' schooling.²

Turkey has a particular set of education challenges for girls. On the surface, gender parity has been achieved:³ in 2014 the percentage of girls enrolled in primary school was 97.10 per cent compared to 97.12 per cent for boys. This figure reflects previous attempts to rapidly expand schooling for girls, especially in eastern Turkey, where a number of factors combine to make consistent girls' schooling a challenge. Eastern Turkey is socially and economically distinct from the rest of Turkey, with higher poverty and unemployment, and higher levels of child marriage; adult female illiteracy in these areas was 39 per cent in 2003.⁴

As is often the case, however, these strong headline figures mask a more complex picture. They do not demonstrate which children may be in and out of school, and do not measure ongoing attendance or challenges that affect both boys and girls, such as availability for seasonal work. Turkey has made significant efforts to expand girls' schooling following the approval of a new Basic Education Law in 2007. This sought to expand the education system and increase its quality, and had a rapid effect on girls' enrolment; in the first year of extended schooling girls' enrolment increased by 162 per cent in Grade 6 and continued to improve.⁵

Much of the focus of the government has been on inputs: new classrooms, 11 boarding schools exclusively for girls and an increase in dormitory provision, which provided over three million additional places in basic education. Free textbooks, school meals and transport to school have also helped, and a stipend programme was introduced for the poorest six per cent of families. This range of support helped reduce some of the financial pressures that were leading families to prioritise boys over girls for school enrolment, but many social factors in and outside the classroom that impact on both boys' and girls' learning remain. Attempts to tackle these through public information campaigns such as 'Haydi Kızlar Okula' (*Girls, Let's Go to School*) in the mid-2000s have also been made, although with varying success.⁶

Gender in the classroom and the curriculum

The ETCEP project under discussion in this paper was designed to respond to a set of factors that remained unaddressed after the not inconsiderable actions by the government to improve both access and outcomes. As UNICEF points out in its 2003 assessment of the Turkish education system, gender discrimination is entrenched in Turkish schools, reproduced through teaching, learning, school management and textbooks, and frequently compounded by life at home. Examples include:

- frequent gender bias in textbooks, with men playing dominant, active roles and women playing passive, or home-making roles
- a severe lack of women in education management – only nine per cent of primary head teachers are women⁷ – as well as low participation by female teachers in 'high-status' STEM subjects

- family-level decision-making: income per capita has been shown to be important for girls' schooling in Turkey due to its interaction with son preference; girls are more likely to work than gain an education, especially at tertiary level⁸
- limited consideration of gender bias in school management processes and internalised gender roles by teachers, parents and students. This includes excessive policing of girls' dress and behaviour, and more frequent volunteering by girls for cleaning, social support and other non-curriculum tasks.

These assertions, over ten years old by the time ETCEP began, were found to be still true in the baseline study the team undertook at the start of the project.

The project baseline

The baseline study took both qualitative and quantitative data from 40 pilot schools in ten provinces. This was collected through a students' and teachers' questionnaire that looked at attitudes towards gender on a 'gender attitude scale' using a cluster sampling technique, while younger students were surveyed through focus groups. In addition, interviews were carried out with education officials, school administrators and school inspectors.

Students: parental education level was found to have a relationship to how egalitarian students' views on gender were, with higher levels of parental education correlating to more progressive attitudes. School type also made a difference, with high school and İmam Hatip students having more egalitarian views on gender than those attending vocational schools. Even very young students from kindergarten upwards were able to detail how gender roles were reproduced in their games. By Grades 5–6 this had developed into an understanding of a set of qualities and roles that the children attributed to men and women, including strong views about 'appropriate' jobs. Older students were very aware that these distinctions had been made but were not always able to clearly articulate an understanding of equality.

Because women are elegant, clean and meticulous, they cannot work in construction. Men can do it because of their strength, but it is hard work and easier for men. But men cannot do the jobs that women to; they cannot be so meticulous.

Female student, Grade 3–4, Samsun

Sample question for Grades 1–2 and responses.

'Merve hears that her friends play football. She runs to join the game. However, her friends do not let her play. Why do you think they don't include Merve in their game?'

Male student: *'They don't know anything about football.'*

Female student: *'Some girls do.'*

Male student: *'But they are not as good as boys.'*

Female student: *'Maybe their teams are complete; that's why, they don't let her play.'*

Source: Focus Group Discussion, 9 May 2015

Figure 1: Pictures drawn by a six-year-old to show adults at work, heavily delineated on gender lines ('öğretmen' translates as 'teacher')



Source: British Council/TR Ministry of National Education

Teachers: while teachers generally scored as more egalitarian on the scale than students (with female teachers scoring more highly than men), they also showed a strong tendency to attribute different qualities and roles to boys and girls; girls as emotional, easily offended, sensitive, domestic, hardworking, responsible, successful, timid, conformist, passive, innocent and ready to cry, while boys are self-confident, free, self-ordained, bold, aggressive, academically unsuccessful and not as emotional. In their personal lives, while some teachers showed that they challenged gender norms at home, overall both men and women showed a tendency to uphold the status quo, with unequal divisions of labour at home and at school, whatever their personal views. Most teachers said they had never received any training on gender equality.

Parents: during the focus group discussions with parents most gender differences were described based on traditional roles, although some parents did underline the necessity of promoting gender equality. Other research in Turkey shows a relationship between maintenance of traditional views in terms of gender roles and the degree to which parents support the education of their daughters.⁹

Administrators and officials: teachers reported they were not always treated equally by educational administrators, with more important prestige tasks often being assigned to men rather than women, along with lower than desired levels of involvement with decision-making. Female teachers also spoke about not wanting promotion to these senior positions, in part because of an unequal division of labour at home and in part due to the dominance of what was seen as male culture in administrative offices. The low number of female inspectors was also highlighted as problematic, as it made accountability on gender equality issues more challenging.

Textbooks: a key source of bias

The baseline also took care to review textbook content in Turkey in an attempt to understand to what extent the core materials for transmission of the curriculum contributed to discussions of gender equality. A total of 14 curricula and 82 textbooks were reviewed by a specially convened commission using structured content analysis.

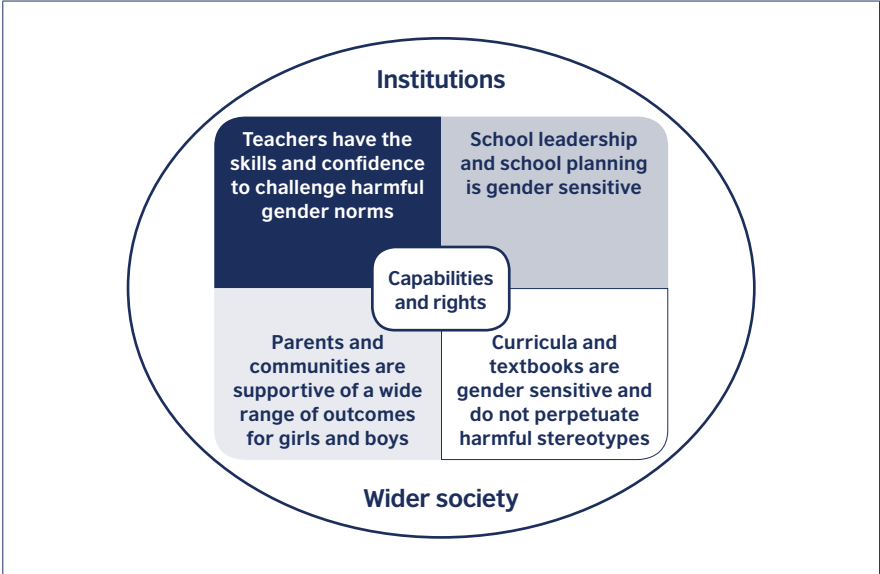
As anticipated from others' work, there was a gender bias observed in all textbooks and this was particularly intense in imagery, with men shown in more active roles and a poor representation of women in public spaces. Science and mathematics textbooks were the most problematic, particularly reinforcing gender stereotypes. A few textbooks did use images promoting gender equality within the family or used gender-neutral terms ('scientist' as opposed to 'man of science', which is the usual Turkish for 'scientist').

The project intervention: a theory of change

The project's theory of change grew alongside the interventions in the pilot and was finalised at the project's end. The team drew heavily from capability theory,¹⁰ which looks at the extent to which people are able to achieve 'valued beings and doings' through positive freedoms and opportunities. While the concern of the Turkish government remains largely in the domain of enrolment, and while international education reform efforts are very often focused on literacy and numeracy outcomes, the team understood from the baseline research that the entry point for the project would be around transforming gender attitudes in and around the school to create conditions in which both boys and girls could flourish.

This builds on the work of Elaine Unterhalter, who highlights the importance of understanding structural problems around how girls engage with school and learning and how they are treated once they are there.¹¹ Walker and Unterhalter point at the importance of challenging the reproduction of stereotypes and discrimination between women and men in textbooks and in pedagogy,¹² and this, the project team assumed, would eventually have a knock-on effect on the aspirations and achievements of girls and their potential engagement in the labour market (although as a pilot, they did not necessarily expect to see a transformation within this short project cycle, instead hoping for some positive shifts that would point to further action). The theory of change is summarised below and works in four specific domains: with parents, with teachers, with school leaders and in seeking to challenge textbook policy. A national-level campaign also intended to influence institutions and wider society.

Figure 2: A summary of the project domains of change



Source: Rebecca Ingram/British Council

Project location

The project took place across 40 pilot schools: 13 high schools, 14 secondary, ten primary and three preschools. The variety of school types and locations was a deliberate strategy to test the intervention in a range of environments and school levels, supporting further development of the project and tools for different school types in the future.

Figure 3: Turkey project location map



Source: Rebecca Ingram/British Council

Interventions

The work of the project can be broadly divided into the following:

- policy-level interventions with the Ministry of National Education (MONE) and other key decision makers
- work with school management to assess gender and inclusion in their schools
- training and support for teachers to implement more gender-friendly pedagogies in the classroom
- a public information campaign to develop a more supportive environment.

This section will look at each of these sets of activities in turn.

1. Policy-level interventions

As laid out in the introduction to this paper, much of Turkey's work on gender and education has focused on positive action to increase girls' enrolment, with far less attention paid to the dynamics of the classroom or the policy framing for these activities.

With the support of MONE, a working group was established to review education legislation and key policy documents from a gender perspective. The aim of this process was to examine and make recommendations around an overarching gender framework for Turkey that could support all policy legislation. The support of academic experts was enlisted, and study visits were paid to Sweden and Finland to monitor the experiences of different countries. The review process resulted in the preparation of the report *Gender in National Education Policy Papers and Legislation: Analysis and Recommendations*.

The working group made a series of recommendations to MONE, including the development of a policy framework that covered the whole of the education system, and moving gender to a specific area of policy focus.

As ever, challenges remain in moving policy recommendations of this kind into practice, and this was not possible during the life of the project.

The policy-level interventions also took a structured look at textbooks and curricula. A total of 14 curricula and 82 textbooks were reviewed by a commission made up of representatives of various units of 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 experience the commission members gained during a study visit to the UK, where they were able to monitor how curricula and textbooks had been developed and used. A report containing the findings of the analysis was shared with the relevant units of the ministry, teachers, private publishing houses and textbook authors. The findings of the report will be taken into consideration during the development of curricula and textbooks in the future.

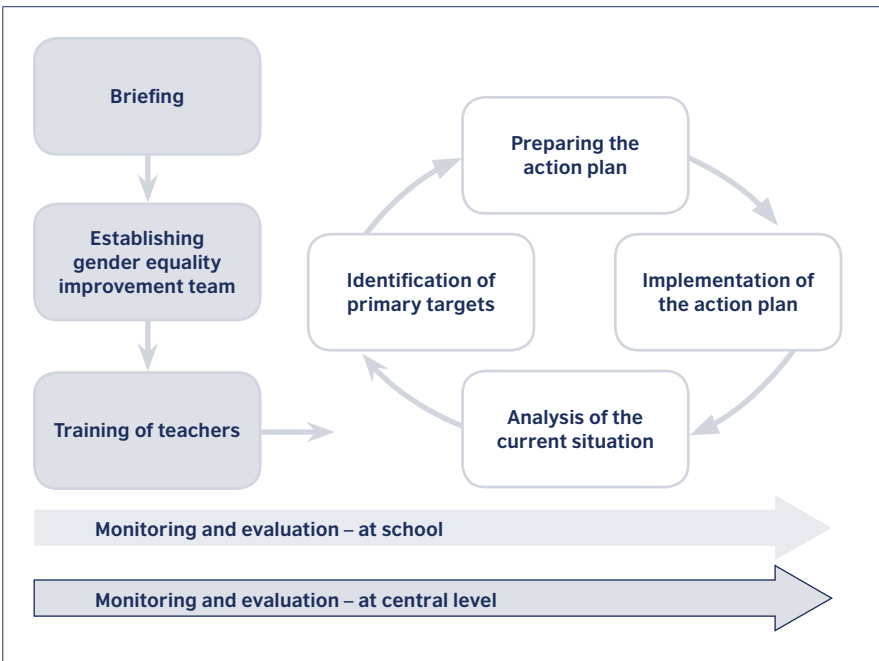
As mentioned previously, the findings of the commission were quite striking: there was no equality in either representation or action between boys and girls, and both were presented in heavily stereotyped roles. In science and mathematics, the questions used reinforced gender stereotypes.

Some textbook authors and publishers had made clear efforts, however, with textbooks containing images emphasising gender equality in the division of labour within the family, and some textbooks also use gender-neutral terms. It is clear there is some incipient good practice, and sharing this among publishers and authors, as well as education officials who purchase textbooks, would be a strong next step.

2. Working with school leadership and management to implement gender standards

The project was keen to work in a structured way to create a framework for schools to support the implementation of improved gender sensitivity. Building on the team’s experience of other frameworks, such as school improvement plans and UNICEF’s Rights Respecting Schools framework, gender-sensitive school standards were developed that described what schools should be like in terms of gender equality. The standards were developed in the light of a series of activities conducted under the supervision of the Gender Equality Working Group, formed within MONE. They took the form of a systematic, user-friendly tool to help promote and mainstream gender equality throughout the education system. Explanatory guides were produced on how to make use of the gender-sensitive school standards, and trainers were educated to support schools in implementing them.

Figure 4: The gender-sensitive school process



Source: British Council/TR Ministry of National Education

Figure 4 sets out the process undertaken by the pilot schools as they made progress towards the full implementation of the standards. A lead from each school took part in the training and then worked within the school to establish a gender-equality improvement team. This team pulled together senior leaders and key teachers who sponsored and drove through change, and took responsibility for communicating the project to parents.

A gender-equality assessment tool for schools (GEATS) was designed for use by the school, enabling them to analyse the extent to which teaching, learning, school management and parental engagement were gender sensitive, and to identify which areas were a priority for action. For example, the tool looks at materials and test design, the distribution of boys and girls in extracurricular activities, student voice and school governance, as well as tackling bullying and sexual assault. The guide also supports school leaders to develop an ongoing monitoring programme to assess change.

Schools then prepared an action plan to support the implementation of changes, which was overseen by senior leadership. Lead teachers were able to introduce training to others in their schools; in total 8,000 teachers were trained directly and 60,000 indirectly, creating a skilled cadre of trained teachers.

Having a structured tool was extremely useful to the project. It provided a defined set of parameters for school leaders, provided transparency and clarity when communicating with a wide range of stakeholders, and complemented other tools used for school development. The development of the tool was collaborative with teachers, MONE and other key stakeholders, to ensure ownership, and had a strong focus on language around ‘fairness’ in each of the measures. This was important in terms of framing the school development process in a way a broad range of stakeholders could support.

3. Formalising teachers’ learning

A gender-equality certificate programme was developed for teachers, which gained formal accreditation as part of MONE’s CPD programme. The certificate programme and the related materials were developed with contributions and feedback from a working group made up of representatives of various units of MONE, other related ministries and NGOs. A total of 189 trainers were trained, and because of their efforts the awareness and knowledge of approximately 6,000 educators in the project provinces was raised. Applications were open to all, ensuring participants were highly motivated, and increased the geographical reach of the project. Skills were developed in the following areas:

- taking care to avoid using gender-biased language
- reviewing textbooks from a gender perspective and conducting activities about this in class
- treating girls and boys equally and giving them equal opportunities during activities in class and within the school
- encouraging girls and boys to engage in joint activities

- ensuring that girls and boys make equal use of spaces in the school and playground
- supporting girls' participation in sports.

A total of 542 female teachers took part in a leadership development programme to support them in moving into senior or administrative positions. Participants overwhelmingly reported they had grown in confidence and skill because of the training.

4. Campaigning and outreach activities

In addition to the teacher and school support work, the project intended to create a more supportive environment in which to talk about gender and education and gain parents' support, as well as the support of students in their schools. The campaign aimed to work at national and local level, with school-based activities.

Campaign activities were implemented that consisted of:

- public information broadcasts for television, using familiar characters ('Ali and Ayşe') from Turkish reading books
- a linked Facebook page which was accessed nearly 23 million times
- a school-based poster campaign.

In addition, schools were supported to implement a week of in-school campaigning activity. This was initially piloted in one province, to assess the suitability of activities, and was supported by the development of a guidebook with activities and materials.

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, which were documented using videos and photographs. Examples of unique activities were recorded in a good practices report, and during the campaign week, informative meetings were held for parents, NGOs, local media and administrators. A video lasting approximately five minutes was produced for each school, and these were shown at the closing ceremonies held on the final day of each campaign. The campaigns have 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, activities were carried out with excitement and enthusiasm, and the messages delivered were memorable.

Figure 5: Local school campaign activities



Source: British Council/TR Ministry of National Education

Figure 6: Still from the video campaign



Source: British Council/TR Ministry of National Education

Figure 7: Sample press coverage from the campaign week



Source: © Daily Sabah

Project learning and recommendations

As a pilot, the ETCEP project captured plenty of learning. Unfortunately, it did not receive specific funding to scale up its activities further after the pilot stage so some of this learning remains uncatalysed on. However, the systemic changes supported in the project will remain in schools, with the tools and materials freely available.

Some of the recommendations are as follows:

Ensuring collaborative work with the government is critical: a strong partnership with MONE helped steer the project through some initially tricky conversations, and ensured support was gained from key officials. With a centralised school system like Turkey's, ministry permissions are vital to getting things done, so collaborative work at an early stage is necessary.

Ensure pilot sites cover a range of contexts: the pilot sites in the project were all urban, for reasons not completely within the team's control. As laid out in this chapter, the biggest challenges for girls' education are in rural and more remote regions, and the materials and approach should be tested in these regions to ensure their effectiveness. Likewise, to reach the most marginalised communities, campaign materials should be produced in the mother languages of these communities, and efforts made to reach parents, particularly mothers, with poor literacy.

Use a structured tool: teachers and school leaders were overwhelmingly positive about the GEATS school assessment tool, saying it provided them with a clear starting point for conversations, was transparent and manageable, and was easily aligned with other school improvement processes. For time-poor teachers, having a 'pick up and go' pack is critical. There was co-creation with a small group of teachers, so the tool felt owned, but this was accomplished without input-heavy work to redesign the activities for each site.

Make better links with learning outcomes: while this project was not designed to work on improving learning outcomes, most education systems are seeking to improve literacy and numeracy. Take-up may be improved, and other education systems may seek to replicate the project if more distinct links could be made.

Ultimately, the British Council's experience at brokering and building relationships with stakeholders helped achieve the project outcomes. The international visits built trust and co-operation, increased engagement and support, and developed an international team who supported the project. The flexibility of the EU, as the funding agency, was also crucial: the project met with some initial challenges from the external political environment, and the EU's willingness to delay the start and advocate for the project was essential.

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Education, English language, and girls' development: exploring gender-responsive policies and practices in Nepal

Anu Upadhaya and Pramod K Sah

Introduction

This chapter attempts to understand if, and in what ways, gender equity has been addressed in educational policies in and through English literacy skills in Nepal, one of the least developed countries in the world.

Along with skills such as digital literacy, English literacy skills are able to enhance girls' employability and aid transition to higher education. With the increasing influence of the global economy, the English language has been widely recognised as a tool for national as well as individual development. For citizens in non-anglophone countries, learning English is seen as being very important, with fluency providing opportunities for integration into the global economy.¹ Many countries have recognised the importance of English and adopted it as a compulsory subject in the K–12 school system, with some countries (Rwanda being a recent example) changing their medium of instruction policy so as to prepare their students for joining the global economy.²

This chapter examines notions of English linguistic capital and seeks to understand these in relation to the policy environment and social status of women and girls in Nepal. It particularly focuses on the interaction of policy and practice, and the social restrictions placed on girls that mean the benefits of English skills accrue unevenly. It makes a number of recommendations for both Nepal and elsewhere on what policymakers and practitioners can do to create a classroom where English teaching is improved and where harmful gender stereotypes are challenged.

Education, English, linguistic capital and development for girls in South Asia

Good progress has been made in South Asia to support girls' access to education; net enrolment for boys and girls is now almost equal,³ and according to the World Bank the youth female literacy rate (age 15–24) increased from 63 per cent in 2000 to 86 per cent in 2016.⁴ Reasons for this include global investment in primary education, governments being more supportive of gender equity and a stronger global advocacy movement.⁵

While there is a strong link between girls' education and development in general, access to the working literacy and communicative skills in English is often recognised as a tool for socio-economic development in South Asia, with more and more employers using school results in English as an indicator of employability for high-level careers. In 2014 Elizabeth Erling examined the relationship between education, English language skills, skills development and economic development in the South Asian context, which suggested the provision of English skills and quality education has a positive effect on economic development, and that for disadvantaged groups such skills are rewarded in the labour market. However, she also noted that the benefits of education, and English skills in particular, align with the benefits of other socio-economic variables, such as gender, ethnicity, class and region.⁶ In other words, the benefits of English language skills are heterogeneous and, like education in general, they accrue along with gender, ethnicity and class and are therefore not uniform.

For example, in a comparative study of India and Pakistan that evaluated the relationship between English skills, occupational gains and economic achievement, it was found that, although a knowledge of English is highly rewarded in both countries, men and women receive different returns on the investment required to learn it. These returns are much greater for men, with a higher likelihood of employment, especially in Pakistan.⁷ The same research also concluded that low proficiency in English was the result of poor educational quality. Similarly, in 2010 the effects of English skills on earnings, based on the Indian Human Development Survey of 2005, were quantified, which showed that English-speaking people received 34 per cent higher wages than non-English speakers.⁸ This study also found considerable heterogeneity with regards to the benefits gained from the ability to speak English, which were less noticeable for women and lower-caste groups, particularly in rural areas of India. Such findings are in line with those from Euromonitor's 2010 study of Bangladesh and Pakistan, which reported a salary gap between people who have English-speaking skills and those who do not, and like the other studies, that returns gained from English skills differed based on gender, class and ethnicity.⁹

Nevertheless, minority communities or disadvantaged social groups in many developing countries consider English literacy skills critical for providing access to the global economy.¹⁰ For example, socio-economically marginalised high school girls from Delhi perceived English as a tool to be used for becoming richer through higher education and getting well-paid jobs. These girls also saw English as a way to have access to information and knowledge.¹¹ In this sense, the girls perceived English as linguistic capital, defined as a lingual capability that receives higher value or power than others.¹²

It can be seen that upward socio-economic mobility does not automatically follow from English abilities in India, where deep-rooted social structures of discrimination against women and lower castes act as barriers to progression, and where their skills are often valued unequally.¹³ It can also be argued that the enhancement of 'English proficiency without accumulation of physical capital, technology, and social capital will not add significantly to the economic development of a country.'¹⁴ For further female empowerment there is a clear need for girls to acquire English skills through quality education alongside other soft skills such as communication and technology.

Issues of gender equity in education in Nepal

In recent years, the Nepalese government has made huge progress in gender equity in education, with net enrolment rates at primary and secondary levels at 0.99 and 1.00 respectively.¹⁵ However, concerns remain around the quality of education, literacy and numeracy outcomes, social status and job opportunities, and it has been argued that the retention and success of girls in terms of opportunities for higher education – a determinant of job opportunities – are still prominent issues.

The social status of girls

Nepalese society is patriarchal, and a girl's life is strongly influenced by her male counterparts at home, at school and in society. The social ideology that girls are subordinate to boys determines their access to education, information, health and the labour market. Daughters are often perceived as people who will eventually belong to another family after their marriage, which significantly affects parents' interest in investing in their daughters' development. Some 37 per cent of girls in Nepal marry before the age of 18 and ten per cent are married by 15, despite the minimum age of marriage under Nepalese law being 20. Food insecurity plays a key role too. Nepalese families without enough food to eat are more likely to marry their daughters at a young age to ensure their security and decrease the financial burden. One study shows that 91 per cent of people who were food secure married over the age of 19.

The payment of a dowry is also a common practice in many communities and is particularly strong in the Terai region, with parents marrying their daughters off at a young age to avoid a higher dowry price.

The interaction between education and the social situation of girls is further complicated by Nepal's complexity in terms of class, ethnicity, castes and region. While Brahmin, Chhetri and Newari girls figure at the top, Dalit, Muslim, Madheshi and poor girls are at the lowest end of all access indicators.¹⁶

It is widely believed in Nepal that English-medium private schools (locally called boarding schools) provide a much better quality of education than community schools with a local language of instruction, and are often regarded as a passport to higher education in disciplines like engineering and medical sciences, which is partly the consequence of the ideology of English linguistic capital.¹⁷ In the meantime, community schools (often Nepali-medium) are known for poor-quality education.

Table 1: Gender-based enrolment rate in public and private schools
(Nepal Education Figures, 2017)

Grades	1–5		6–8		9–10		11–12	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Enrolment rate in public schools (%)	48.53	51.5	48.03	51.96	46.3	53.69	42.19	57.8
Enrolment rate in private schools (%)	53.69	46.3	56.32	43.68	56.63	43.36	56.60	43.39

This divide of the public and private schooling system in Nepal shows a clear gender disparity in family-level decision-making; there is a trend among Nepalese parents to send their sons to private schools that are generally English medium. Daughters are more likely to be sent to public schools. This is particularly marked among poorer families, where parents cannot afford private school fees for all their children and investment in girls’ education is considered a waste of resources as they will get married and leave the family.¹⁸ In fact, a 2018 longitudinal study of Nepal living standards surveys revealed that parents spend as much as 20 per cent more on boys than girls in both rural and urban areas.¹⁹ Gender equality will only be achieved when both girls and boys receive equal-quality education. This does not mean we should promote private schooling, but should re-envision an equitable schooling system, providing equal opportunities for both boys and girls to learn the literacy skills that are essential in a competitive job market.




Moreover, the gender disparity is also evident in educational achievements. Girls consistently perform less well in comparison to boys and are more likely to drop out and repeat across grades. For example, on average in 2013–14, 48 per cent of female students (51 per cent in Grade 5 and 52 per cent in Grade 8) did not pass the grade level in core subjects like science, mathematics and English.²⁰ Similarly, the pass rate in the Secondary Education Examination or School Level Certificate examination varies considerably, being much lower for girls than boys, particularly in core subjects like English. More significantly, this achievement gap has a long-term influence on girls’ opportunities for higher education and job offers as their performance in the School Level Certificate determines whether they can enter higher education and even the disciplines they can choose.

Pedagogies, classroom practices and gender differences

Nepalese schools are seldom ‘girl-friendly’; resources, teaching and infrastructure at schools are not developed with consideration of girls. In 2015 Panthhe and McCutcheon specifically looked at the accommodation of girls in the classroom and found gender segregation to be a common situation, with boys and girls routinely having separate seating arrangements.²¹ This does not promote the interaction and dialogue that is crucial in English language lessons and could provide opportunities to challenge gender stereotypes as part of teaching practice.

The lack of female teachers (particularly at secondary schools) further marginalises girls in terms of their opportunities to share and discuss with role models. As it is evident that boys interact more with male teachers than girls do, teachers pay very little attention to girls' performance.²² Similarly, girls do not normally take part in extracurricular or outdoor activities, and this further deprives them of opportunities for interaction to enhance their language skills.

There is also evidence of discrimination against girls through educational materials, with textbooks and teaching materials that do not include topics or lessons which draw students' attention to bringing about gender balance in the family, society and nation.  Males are often presented as role models, while females are shown as having a lower social profile or being subordinate to male counterparts. This exists largely because of the dominance of male curriculum and textbook writers who are not sensitive to gender issues.

Gender responsiveness in English language education: policies and practices

As in many other South Asian countries, the rise of English as a prerequisite for social and economic inclusion in the global economy is a major phenomenon in Nepal. Due to the prevalence of international aid, English is often a qualification required by government and many international and local NGOs.²⁴ While private schools provide English-medium education and perform best in School Level Certificate examinations, public schools have been left behind, and this divide in the schooling system is yet another – although relatively new – source of inequality for girls. Looking deeper, private schools often favour those who already have practice in English, putting girls at an even greater disadvantage in their struggle to advance to higher education.²⁵ Recently, a large number of public schools have adopted English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in their efforts to compete with private schools, but as research on EMI at a public school in Kathmandu revealed, these schools do not really help students develop English skills. Most EMI-based public schools do not have teachers qualified to teach both curriculum content and English, with many of them lacking a basic knowledge of English.²⁶

Gender-responsiveness in educational policies

The Nepalese government does not have a specific policy on English language education, but the provision of language teaching and gendered issues are referred to in some broader educational policy documents. Current educational policies do attempt to address gender equality, although with few strong links to practice. The policy of the School Sector Development Program recognises that:

Many differences remain with children receiving inequitable access to quality education due to gender, socio-economic status, language, ethnicity, caste, geographical location, and differing abilities.²⁷

The policy further considers education as ‘a tool to change perceptions and address inequities ... to bring about transformative change in classrooms, in schools and in society at large,’ which includes an emphasis on English in education for disadvantaged groups.²⁸ As one of the accentuations of the School Sector Development Program is equity and inclusion for minority ethnic groups in literacy learning, the focus is on a multilingual education policy, inclusive of English, but there is an extra emphasis on English, making reference to globalisation.²⁹ The policy states:

*The goal is for all students to develop their linguistic skills over time in their mother tongue, as well as in Nepali and in English and to use these skills for their academic, social and economic advancement and for building a socially and economically vibrant society. At the same time, children will be assisted to acquire Nepali if it is not their mother tongue so that they can fully engage in the national education system. English is to be added as a second or third language to prepare students to use an international language for their future economic advancement.*³⁰

In addition to recognising English skills as a rudiment for socio-economically marginalised groups, including girls, the policy makes provision for literacy and lifelong learning to enhance functional literacy that ‘comprises programs for basic, post-literacy and income generating activities, with a focus on women’.³¹ Within the model of functional literacy, English, as the language of globalisation (in addition to local and national languages) and digital literacy are also recognised for girls’ empowerment.

There has also been a positive move in terms of strengthening teacher quality in science, mathematics and English in public schools, which responds to researchers’ criticism of public schoolteachers for lacking English communication skills and subject knowledge.³² The policy states that:

*Many community school teachers do not have the requisite capabilities for teaching English as a subject, and very few schools, including even those with English as the medium of instruction, have teachers who can effectively teach in English.*³³

With the training of these teachers, girls and other disadvantaged students who attend public schools will benefit, there are also aims for female teachers to be provided with training opportunities so they can serve as professional role models for girls. In the meantime, the government is committed to increasing the number of female teachers, aiming for at least one per school. In the late 1990s the government set out to recruit more female teachers, particularly those from the Dalit and Janjati ethnic groups. As a consequence, the proportion of female teachers has increased, but is not yet sufficient.

Initiatives for girls' English development

Education is considered an agent of mobility as well as an instrument of equity in most societies, encouraging local, national and international agencies to promote girls' literacy and numeracy skills in order to minimise gender-based gaps. In conjunction with the Nepalese government, there are local as well as international organisations that are facilitating a number of English language education programmes. The British Council launched English and Digital for Girls' Education (EDGE) Nepal in 2015 with the collaboration of the US Embassy and Equal Access Nepal, to pilot a project in socio-economically marginalised communities for disadvantaged Nepalese girls (aged 14–19) to help them improve their life prospects by building English and digital literacy skills, confidence and community support in informal after-school safe spaces. The British Council suggests that participants developed English and digital skills using self-access learning resources installed on electronic devices such as laptops and tablets, and that graduates have been able to employ their personal agency to change their lives by seeking jobs and continuing education.

The British Council's approach is based on a social justice imperative and the collective right to quality education. Girls from South Asian countries, particularly in Nepal, Bangladesh and India, have lower access to quality education and digital skills than boys, which will result in a future skills imbalance and unequal life chances. Working specifically on digital skills is a way of providing a practical focus on the use of English language skills and showing girls and their families the value of these skills to the labour market.

There are also local organisations like Volunteer Society Nepal, which aim to empower girls and women through English language skills. It is a volunteer organisation that invites English language teachers – mainly from abroad – to teach English skills and computer knowledge to urban disadvantaged girls and women from Pepsicola Town Planning and its community in Kathmandu. As Volunteer Society Nepal holds, it does not only help women and girls learn how to read, write and speak in English, but also helps them develop confidence and ambition to transform their lives.


Conclusions

The Nepalese government has clearly realised the importance of English for improving access to global markets, digital literacy and better economic performance. Access to English is a strong indicator of socio-economic success for girls and there is a strong narrative in Nepalese society of the importance of English. However, while there is policy rhetoric, this is not currently translating into successful implementation in the classroom for a variety of reasons. Most important among these is that gender discrimination in Nepalese society plays out in the school itself and in family-level decision-making. Son preference, early marriage and unequal distribution of household labour mean that girls are less likely to have consistent access to school in the first place, and even when they are there, their learning opportunities and access to resources is poorer.

Furthermore, evidence shows that the benefits of English do not affect women in the same way as they do men, with gender, social status and other factors interacting to ensure that women do not make the same financial and social gains from English skills. While this could be partially tackled by more explicit links to the labour market and more concentrated efforts to move low-status women into paid employment that uses their skills, in the longer term this will only be addressed by overall societal improvements in the status of women.

The overall low quality of the public education system means that learning outcomes for all children are poor. It is imperative that there is serious focus on rapidly improving the overall quality of education in Nepal, including English teaching. At the same time, a focus on a more inclusive environment within the school would not only improve learning, but also tackle some of the gender discrimination that adversely affects girls' outcomes.

Recommendations

- A rigorous focus on improvement in the public education system, including a focus on training English teachers and English-medium instruction. Removing the disparities in quality would favourably impact on girls' learning, and ultimately reduce the need for difficult economic decisions at family level.
- The British Council's EDGE project worked closely with parents to help them understand the importance of English in the employment market and for their daughters' future economic prospects. Enlisting the support of parents would improve enrolment and retention, especially among more marginalised groups.
- Schools should adopt a more active approach to challenging gender discrimination when thinking about pedagogy and school management. For example, seating arrangements, access to extracurricular clubs and the pedagogical techniques used by teachers could all challenge gender stereotypes and offer opportunities for improving English language skills through the techniques and materials used (this is one of the government  policy aims).
- Linking English to digital literacy in both policy and practice. This means improving the way digital skills are taught and using them to build English skills. Practical, linked application of English skills to digital literacy was shown by the EDGE project to build girls' confidence and improve their learning outcomes.

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Special educational needs and disability



Special educational needs and disability

Phil Dexter

April 2019 is the 25th anniversary of the Salamanca Statement on Special Educational Needs Education published by UNESCO. Signed by 92 countries, the Salamanca Statement was recognised as a significant milestone in moving towards more inclusive education, providing a framework for how to make progress in terms of policy and practice. The statement advocated that mainstream schools which adopt an inclusive approach are ‘the most effective means of combatting discriminating attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all’. Inclusive education, the idea of *all* children being educated together in a unified educational system regardless of any differences between them, was originally concerned with the inclusion of learners with disabilities, many of whom had historically been excluded from mainstream schools. It is widely understood and acknowledged that progress has been made since 1994, but many children remain excluded. With this in mind the 2015 sustainable development goals sought to promote further global action to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The British Council takes a broad approach to special educational needs and disability focused on communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health, sensory and/or physical needs and other societal factors that have an impact on learning and may create barriers to learning and a gap between performance and potential 

In the four chapters in this section we explore these issues with a specific focus on CPD and whole-school approaches aimed at creating more inclusive learning environments in South Africa, Mexico and East Asia, and through a transglobal project involving Russia, Macedonia, India and West Africa.

In ‘Teaching for All: mainstreaming inclusive education in South Africa’, Caroline Grant and Joanne Newton describe the multidimensional, evidence-informed approach that will make a significant contribution to providing equitable and inclusive quality education in South Africa. Despite great progress in addressing the huge inequalities of the apartheid regime and extensive action on policy, the benefits of approaches to inclusive education have not matched expectations, with attendance issues and underachievement across the primary and secondary system. This innovative project, based on extensive research and collaborative approaches with partners, is aimed at embedding inclusive education in pre-service initial teacher-training programmes across university programmes in South Africa. This is described in detail together with further development within existing in-service programmes. This is not without challenges in terms of working with partners, development of materials, impact on approaches to initial and CPD for teachers, and changing concepts of school experience.

In 'Successful inclusive education starts with teachers: What have we learned? A multi-country case study', Els Heijnen-Maathuis looks at a multi-country programme across Indonesia, Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), the Philippines and Cambodia. This programme is based on an approach where all children, regardless of their differences, are educated together so everyone can benefit. At the heart of this is an intersectional understanding that children may not be able to fully benefit from school if they live in poverty, have a disability, speak a different language or are otherwise marginalised. Yet teachers who have been effectively trained and continue to receive professional support can make a huge difference in the educational outcomes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This study showcases how teachers can become more inclusive practitioners. The focus is on understanding and responding to the individual (rather than 'special') needs of learners and creating quality learning environments that go beyond just academic achievement. Heijnen-Maathuis explains how the project has encouraged teachers to reflect on both their classroom practice and its impact on different learners as well as their willingness to adjust their approaches to the different learning needs of students.

The study outlines the most important forms of support that are available to every school: children supporting children, teachers supporting teachers, parents becoming partners in the education of their children and communities supporting their local schools. Key aspects of this support are described further: school leadership (supporting teachers to apply new knowledge and skills), continued professional learning for teachers (peer-to-peer learning), effective practice (differentiated teaching and learning) and developing an inclusive school culture (actively engaging children, parents and communities).

In 'Teaching English as a second language to the visually impaired in disadvantaged contexts: a case study from Chiapas, Mexico' Ana María Elisa Díaz de la Garza, María de Lourdes Gutiérrez Aceves and María Eugenia Serrano Vila discuss their research conducted at a public university in the State of Chiapas, Mexico. The specific focus is on supporting and including learners with visual impairment although the context is much broader, with a lack of services and resources and negative attitudes to inclusive practices. The study discusses the importance of preparing teachers to address the needs of all students in the classroom – including students with disabilities – through teacher education based on effective inclusive pedagogy. Their findings illustrate that empowering teachers to take control of their own development can enrich teacher learning particularly in cases where teachers collaborate to overcome common challenges.

In 'The theatre of the classroom', David Crabtree discusses his experience supporting teachers in their efforts to implement more inclusive learning in Macedonia, India, West Africa and Russia. The case study aims to identify key steps that teachers, school managers and policymakers need to take to create more inclusive classrooms and some of the challenges they may face in doing this. The concept of the theatre of the classroom shows how teaching and learning are enacted in a structured environment with everyone having a part to play. The case study explores the notion of this 'script writing', the actions of the 'players' and the importance of being inclusive so everyone can realise their potential.

1

Teaching for All: mainstreaming inclusive education in South Africa

A multi-dimensional, evidence-informed approach to effect systemic change and education inclusion

Caroline Grant and Joanne Newton

Teaching for All is a curriculum and teacher development project that takes an innovative approach to mainstreaming inclusive education in South Africa. Funded by the EU and developed in partnership with the British Council, the University of South Africa (UNISA), MIET AFRICA and the departments of Basic Education (DBE) and Higher Education and Training (DHET), Teaching for All is a concrete response to the pressing need to put into operation South Africa's inclusive education policy. The long-term aim of the programme is to reduce education exclusion by working in collaborative partnerships with universities, government and civil society to develop responsive quality teacher development programmes in inclusive teaching and learning with a range of materials being developed and offered as open educational resources (OERs). These materials will be broadly embedded across initial teacher education and CPD programmes to support the implementation and mainstreaming of inclusive education, and to ensure that all learners in South Africa exercise their right to access quality education.

While the DBE has developed a laudable policy on inclusion, it has not been fully implemented. Indeed, the EU noted that, 'The education system is insufficiently equipped to address linguistic diversity, and the education needs of persons with disabilities. There is an inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geography.'¹ In response to this need, in 2015 the EU in collaboration with the DHET launched a call for proposals to address the gap between policy and implementation. Teaching for All is one of a number of projects funded by the EU to address this gap.

The complex context of exclusion in the South African education system

While in the past inclusive education policy focused primarily on the rights of children with disabilities, it is now understood more broadly: inclusive education responds to learners' diversity and addresses the multiple barriers that prevent children from accessing and engaging with quality education. It supports an approach that emphasises the need for all schools to be inclusive in terms of culture, values, ethos, policy and practice. In a number of respects the curriculum itself is a barrier to learning achievement, and as Florian and Walton have noted 'The focus of inclusive education (today) is on ensuring that everyone has access to a good quality education in systems that do not marginalise some through organisational and curricular structures that sift and sort learners on the basis of pre-determined judgements about what they can and should learn'.²

In the Teaching for All project we take an intersectional approach that promotes an understanding that there are a range of physical, social, psychological and systemic barriers which have an impact on learning, including disability, gender, language and socio-economic factors. While we take note of, and encourage understanding of, special educational needs, we follow a social model of inclusion with an approach to educational solutions which responds to learning needs in the following five areas:

- cognition and learning
- communication and interaction
- social emotional and mental health needs
- sensory and/or physical
- societal factors that have an impact on learning.

The overall approach is aimed at conforming to good practice to create more inclusive schools and classrooms that address issues of access and engagement, thus enabling and empowering whole-school systems.

Our approach is also human rights driven, emphasises strengths and values, and is relevant to the South African context in its Afrocentricity. At the heart of South Africa's inclusive education policy – and of this project – lies the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, which holds unity, 'bringing together' and communalism at its core. A commonly used definition of Ubuntu comes from the Zulu phrase, 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu', which translates as 'A person is a person through other people.' Ubuntu is further described by a South African academic as, 'The capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring.'³

Since 1994, South Africa has, through its constitution, legislation, policies, guidelines, international declarations and frameworks, committed to building an inclusive education and training system that ensures full access, presence, acceptance, participation and achievement for every child, to aid in the development of a just, equitable, safe and productive society for the benefit of all.

It is commonly acknowledged, however, that while significant gains have been made in addressing the legacies of apartheid and inequitable underdevelopment, many children and youth remain marginalised and vulnerable to education exclusion, unable to exercise their educational rights due to forms of marginalisation arising from intersecting factors.

Many children face more than one obstacle, usually contending with a web of intersecting barriers at intrinsic, interpersonal, pedagogic, systemic and societal levels. The resulting exclusion manifests in poor access for learners experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and disabilities, high dropout rates and low educational outcomes. This contravenes these children's constitutional rights and prevents access to services that advance their development and well-being. It also serves to further perpetuate intergenerational cycles of exclusion and poverty among marginalised groups, and increases inequality. Education exclusion reinforces structural inequities excluding marginalised groups from full participation in social, economic and political life as adults, keeping them and their children trapped in poverty. This situation is diametrically opposed to South Africa's key development challenge of redressing high levels of poverty and inequality.

Central to the government's strategy with regards to building an inclusive education system is the understanding that educators in general and teachers in particular hold the key to this transformation and should be supported by all stakeholders. The strategic idea of teachers as change agents in reducing educational inequalities is linked to research showing teachers are the most significant in-school factor influencing student achievement.⁴ Education acts and policies consistently acknowledge the role of teachers in building an inclusive education system and call for teachers to advocate for social justice, human rights and inclusivity. As a result, educators are increasingly expected to address forms of social justice education by focusing on learner well-being, classroom pedagogies and educational practices to combat exclusion and different forms of oppression and discrimination.

'Teacher training needs to equip student teachers with the know-how to gauge the effectiveness of their teaching for the range of their learners and to support them to know what they need to do to enable each learner to learn as well as possible and to build on each learner's abilities and strengths.'⁵ As discussed in *Education White Paper 6*,⁶ addressing the risks of exclusion and marginalisation in education requires the collaboration of many actors⁷ and the capacity of various professionals to develop working relationships to bring together different kinds of expertise to address specific situations. It is important for pre-service teachers to understand the importance of collaboration as part of a concerted effort to reduce disparities in educational outcomes. Their capacity for working with others, including learners themselves and their caregivers, is essential for dismantling overlapping and complex barriers to learning and participation in schools. These capacities need to be developed as part of teacher preparation and professional development.

Inclusive curriculum development to mainstream inclusive education in South Africa

Background policies and research

The Teaching for All project is informed by three major pieces of work:

- the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (2015): exit-level competencies for year 2 of the Bachelor of Education degree
- the dimensions of inclusive teaching in the DHET *Standards for Inclusive Teaching for Beginning Teachers* (September 2017)
- findings from the UNISA research report *The State of Inclusive Education in South African and Implications for the Design of Teacher Development Programmes* (March 2018).

For the purpose of this chapter, we will describe the third piece of work in detail as it was designed, delivered and funded within the Teaching for All project framework.

This country-wide UNISA-led research project drew together collaborators from UNISA, the University of Fort Hare, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the University of Johannesburg to identify the successes and gaps in the delivery of mainstream inclusive education in South Africa via the main research question: What is the state of inclusive education in South Africa and its implications for teacher-training programmes? To answer this, the following sub-questions were posed:

- What are the current statistics on learners who are excluded from the education system?
- What are the current policies and teacher-training programmes on inclusive education?
- What are the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers towards inclusive education?
- What are the implications of the current state of inclusive education on teacher-training programmes?
- What is inclusive teaching and what do teachers need to know/do/understand to teach all learners?

The research and analysis examined the capacity of the system to provide inclusive education and to inform the design of teacher education projects at pre-service and CPD levels. Following a mixed-method approach, data was collected using document analysis, self-administered questionnaires, focus groups and individual interviews with pre-service teachers at five higher education institutions (HEIs) representing both previously advantaged and previously disadvantaged populations. Further data was collected from in-service teachers and district officials where the HEIs were located, as well as officials from the DBE. Final data was obtained from the output of a colloquium which brought in the broader voices of HEIs, government, district officials, unions, parents, principals and NGOs to answer the fifth question.

Examination of the available HEI teacher-training programmes revealed an active emphasis on a siloed, non-integrative approach to providing training in inclusive education. Analysis revealed that fewer than 20 per cent of trainee teachers maintain positive attitudes towards providing inclusive classrooms. These attitudes stemmed from complex sources but included cultural barriers, attitudes towards the importance of educating children with disabilities, attitudes towards being proactive about their care, and demotivation linked to a perceived lack of support and resources in school communities to enable inclusive teaching and learning.

The report further revealed significant exclusion within the classroom arising from a lack of literacy. Current estimates suggest that of the general school population 60 per cent of Grade 4 learners are unable to read with comprehension and 87 per cent of learners in Grade 4 face challenges in reading. With more than 40 per cent of students who do enrol in Grade 10 not achieving the Grade 12 matriculation and with 70 per cent of learners with disabilities not in school, there is a clear need for systemic improvements to rectify the issues of exclusion from school and exclusion from learning. In concert with this, the literature revealed that a significant number of teachers may not be confident in their own subject knowledge.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were put forward by UNISA to inform the development of the Teaching for All curriculum and materials to be used by HEIs:

- infuse inclusive education into all modules of teacher-training programmes
- integrate theory and practice of inclusive education into teacher-training programmes
- provide knowledge and skills on the selection and use of technology in teacher-training programmes
- provide PRESET teachers with the fundamental skills for effective lesson planning
- provide opportunities for teaching practice at mainstream schools which accommodate the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities and/or special needs
- infuse inclusive education methodologies into all school curriculum subjects
- provide a comprehensive, integrative foundation on curriculum differentiation
- recognise inclusive education as going beyond just the provision of physical access
- ensure that policy mandates inclusive education as a compulsory component of all teaching courses
- provide staff development on inclusive education to teacher educators (lecturers)
- formulate clear and specific policies on inclusive education
- spell out explicitly the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education
- familiarise teachers with national and international policies, legislation and guidelines on inclusive education.

Developing curriculum and materials

Using the background research and policies described above, the curriculum development team, led by MIET AFRICA, undertook to develop three core modules with materials for universities to implement within their initial teacher education programmes, as well as a complementary training package for provincial education offices to support teachers working in schools. The process was broadly collaborative and modelled equity, inclusivity and diversity at all stages using input and expertise of government departments, 20 universities, and South African, UK and international education and development organisations. Writers included practitioners, policymakers and academics with comprehensive knowledge of inclusive education. Materials were appraised by peers in academia, civil society and government, and piloted with lecturers and students in tertiary teacher-training institutions.

The central document informing curriculum development was a curriculum framework for the flagship tertiary module, which evolved through eight iterations between 2016 and 2018 when approval and acceptance were achieved from all stakeholders. As adopting a collaborative approach is core to Teaching for All as an intervention, building momentum across different sectors in respect to inclusion was seen as an important lever for change. The process of working collaboratively to embed agreements and ownership required a broad base of champions across specific issues (such as human rights, indigenous knowledge, the effects of violence on learners, and social cohesion) within education. As such, processes for constructing alignment and convergence around materials (such as the development of the module curriculum framework) took precedence in the early phase of the project.

The curriculum framework aimed to equip Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) student teachers with the skills, knowledge, values, attitudes and related competencies to teach inclusively. A need was identified for 240 hours of content to be created for BEd and PGCE students in their second or third year in these four areas. The four units written for the university course module are described below.

Unit 1: Inclusive policies and theories in education

The module begins with an exploration of the complex context of exclusion in South Africa and the development of policies of inclusion both nationally and internationally. The writers outline the overarching principles and values of inclusion in South Africa with a specific focus on Ubuntu and the Bill of Rights. Academic rigour is provided by an analysis of theories and models of inclusive education and evaluation of the effectiveness of these in the South African classroom.

Unit 2: Intersectional diversity and learners in the classroom

In this unit, students will undertake to explain the concepts of learner diversity, intersectionality and equity for different relevant school contexts with specific reference to disability, language, race, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and non-visible differences (including cognitive, sensory and psychosocial differences), with a focus on demonstrating how these concepts will enable quality teaching and learning for all in their own teaching context.

Students will then look in depth at two areas of diversity, 'language and cultural diversity' and 'non-visible cognitive, sensory and psychosocial differences', which are fundamental challenges in South African classrooms. Students will demonstrate how understanding these aspects of diversity contributes to access, acceptance and participation in inclusive classrooms and then apply strategies that create an inclusive learning environment in their own teaching context to facilitate learning.

Unit 3: Teachers in inclusive school communities

This unit begins with a focus on how societal attitudes and positions, such as those of privilege and oppression, can be reproduced in the classroom, and a critical analysis of key inclusive teacher attributes that promote teacher agency and social justice in the development of inclusive school communities. Students then move on to focus on two South African mandates, the CSTL framework and the SIAS policy, which are fundamental in promoting inclusive classrooms. Using specific examples, students will identify how to develop school-based, district-based and community-based collaborative partnerships to support inclusion in their context.

Unit 4: Inclusive teaching and learning in the classroom

In the final unit, students will explain why all learners are capable of learning and how difficulties in learning are a dilemma in teaching rather than a problem with learners, and demonstrate how replacing deterministic views of ability with transformative views enables quality teaching and learning for all. The bulk of the unit is then spent in the flexible application of a range of inclusive teaching and learning strategies in lesson planning and delivery in their own context, followed by reflection on the use of these and similar strategies in their own and a range of other relevant school contexts.

While the module is framed in terms of global scholarship and practice, it is grounded in local African and South African contexts, and this is evident in the examples and theory used throughout. It highlights the issues around teacher agency, so dialogue is a core focus, giving teachers the opportunity to form and voice opinions on the content, including proposing a range of possible actions, strategies and solutions. In becoming a reflective teacher, it is important to develop the professional habit of self-reflection. Student teachers are required to develop these skills by keeping a regular journal of their ideas, thoughts and experiences of the module, including ongoing reflection on what the process of learning means for them as teachers. They are expected to engage in higher-order thinking processes, including but not limited to analysing, critiquing, contrasting and comparing. A key focus is the practical application of theory and concepts into practice. As a result, each unit will have a theoretical focus as well as strategies for practical ways to translate this into school-based practice, and the units all stress the importance of integrating the use of technology wherever possible.

Teaching for All materials will be freely available as OERs hosted on an online platform. The units are flexible and adaptable to a range of methods, including distance and face-to-face learning, digital and paper-based, and they model the inclusive practices they teach. This ensures they accommodate the diversity of pre- and in-service teacher needs across the country. The following items are being produced and disseminated to all HEIs: Study Guide for Students, Lecture Guide for Lecturers, Accompanying Materials, DVDs and PowerPoints. Three versions of the module will be produced with materials designed specifically for the target age group: Grades R–3 (ECD/Foundation), Grades 4–6 (Intermediate) and Grades 7–12 (Senior/FET). The CPD materials will be repackaged as South African Council for Educators-endorsed short courses and support materials for teacher-led professional learning communities.

Implementation and monitoring and evaluation of modules and materials across the system

Ensuring an effective strategy for implementation is key to the success of Teaching for All, as is a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy which ensures the modules and materials are used effectively and to the benefit of South African children. As well as offering the complete curriculum and materials package as an OER across the system, grants up to the value of €10,000 per university support the module's integration into these institutions' curricula, so that inclusivity is mainstreamed as a fundamental approach for all graduating teachers. The implementation grant is intended to promote adoption and adaptation of the materials in relevant and effective ways, and to monitor their use and uptake. As the materials were developed as OERs, institutions can adapt and implement them in the way which is most relevant for their own context, for example creating a new module within their BED or PGCE programme, complementing an existing offer or refreshing existing content. The changes are guided by institutional procedures with the support of introduction and follow-up workshops with the Teaching for All team.

The grants have clear terms for implementation that HEIs are encouraged to abide by:

- preference will be given to HEIs who plan to make the modules and study units part of student teachers' core curriculum
- preference will be given to HEIs who plan to maintain the integrity of the study units when integrating the content into their curricula
- HEIs will be required to present a budget and implementation plan
- ten per cent of the budget will be directed to support research to monitor impact.

The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation is a fundamental part of the project and is led by the Centre for International Teacher Education. The monitoring and evaluation framework for this work uses Ray Pawson's approach to realist evaluation, which seeks to understand the context, mechanism and outcomes (intended and unintended) of the interventions, examining not just what has or hasn't worked, but also looking at for whom, why and in what circumstances.⁸ Within this approach:

- evaluation is seen as a process that both identifies how the evaluated programme works and how it expects to achieve its objectives by reconstructing the theory of change behind the programme
- evaluating the efficacy of interventions is seen as a way of drawing lessons that will contribute to improving future interventions
- understanding 'how' the project has worked, and 'why' it has done so, alongside both the intended and unintended outcomes.

In order to ensure long-term change is tracked in a coherent way, the evaluation instruments are being made into open resources which can provide coherence to support efforts by departments such as the DHET with ways to continue to help steer efforts to monitor more sustained impact and uptake with HEIs or provincial education departments over the longer term.

Lessons learned from the intervention

There are notable successes and strengths of the intervention, as well as challenges and lessons we can share with other countries that are planning to undertake similar work in the field of inclusive education.

Turning to the successes and strengths of the project, there are four that stand out. The first is the transformational design of the intervention, which included both PRESET and in-service teacher training. By targeting both simultaneously, the likelihood of bringing about sustainable change in the way teachers approach inclusive education in South African schools is greatly increased as teachers – the key change agents in education – will have received training in the social model of inclusive education and strategies for making their classrooms inclusive.

The second success has been the collaboration with the key government ministries responsible for policy setting and implementation: the DHET, DBE and the Department of Social Development. The deep involvement of these departments has been crucial in ensuring there is a shared understanding of the social model of inclusion and that they play an active role in embedding the intervention within the education system. Practically, their approval of the project has been secured through having the DBE as a named project partner, allocating roles to each department on the Project Advisory Committee and having regular meetings with stakeholders from all three departments. In addition, the British Council has been able to draw on the strength of its longstanding partnership with the DBE.

The third strength has been to identify the role of language as a barrier to inclusion and provide teachers with the skills and knowledge to address this key issue.

In South Africa, there are 11 official languages, including English. English is the mother tongue of only 9.6 per cent⁹ of the population yet it becomes the medium of instruction from Grade 4 until the end of tertiary education. This abrupt switch to English from children's mother tongues has serious negative consequences for the learning outcomes of the majority of South African children. Teaching for All seeks to address this issue and for the first time, practical strategies to address language barriers now have a place in the PRESET curriculum.

The fourth strength is the use of the knowledge and experience of experts and practitioners from South Africa, other African countries and the UK in the development of the materials. This mix of talent and diverse approaches within the material development team has contributed to a fresh and innovative approach resulting in materials that are rooted in the South African context but that also draw on international best practice



Despite the successes, there have inevitably been some challenges too. The three key challenges the project has faced are discussed below.

The main challenge has been the complexities surrounding management of the many partnerships making up this project. The management of the consortium partners was challenging in terms of ensuring that each partner met their required deadlines. Another set of partnerships that has been challenging to manage were those with the 24 universities in South Africa who will be the end users of the materials. It has taken considerable effort to ensure approval from them in terms of embedding the materials into teacher-training courses and ensuring they are accredited through formal university systems. The project has three mechanisms to secure their commitment: advocacy through the Education Deans' Forum, the involvement of university lecturers in the design and development of the materials, and the allocation of grants to universities to facilitate the uptake of the programme.

The second challenge relates to the uneven quality of implementation plans proposed by universities for embedding the materials into their university courses. Some universities required significant support to design and implement effective plans. For example, some plans proposed using the project grant to further lecturers' own research that was unrelated to the project. Ensuring that the implementation grants are appropriately used will require additional resources within an already tight budget and timetable. The lesson from this challenge is that it is essential to plan for the university implementation plans at the design stage of the project.

The third challenge is one of timing regarding university schedules. The project duration does not correspond neatly with these and as a result the monitoring and evaluation timetable has had to be adjusted. While this has meant an extension to the project to accommodate the universities, as a result of this the project will at least be in a position to evaluate the uptake of the materials. The lesson therefore from this challenge is that it is important to take into account universities' timetables at the design phase of the project and to ensure that the project duration is sufficient to enable a meaningful final impact evaluation.

To conclude, inclusive education is a process of developing a unified education system that realises the education rights of every child: 'Every learner matters and matters equally'.¹⁰ In the South African context this is of particular importance given the historically divided nature of the education system caused by the policies of apartheid, with more than eight education departments that offered different standards of learning quality depending on the race of the child and which systematically denied the majority of South African learners the opportunity to realise their potential. In the 23 years since the fall of apartheid, the South African government has made great strides towards unifying the education system by creating one education department for basic education and one for higher education, and by promoting inclusive education policies. In spite of these important gains, inequality persists, but the Teaching for All project is making a contribution to ensuring there is a national recognition that every learner in South Africa matters.

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2

Successful inclusive education starts with teachers: what have we learned? A multi-country case study

Els Heijnen-Maathuis

Across South and East Asia, children are excluded from public government schools due to disability, language, ethnicity, religion, gender, poverty or other dimensions of diversity. Girls with disabilities or children with disabilities from minority ethnic populations are often even more marginalised, lagging behind not just in mainstream society, but also their own communities. Education that excludes perpetuates discrimination, and separate or ‘special’ education – if available at all – provides no guarantee of success for children who need additional support and doesn’t prepare them for becoming members of mainstream society on a footing of equality.¹

The definition of inclusive education used here is inclusive education as a process of system change that involves responding better to the needs of all learners in one education system and thus has implications for teaching, the curriculum, learning assessment and relations between schools and communities.

Effective CPD requires a long-term focus of at least two terms a year and usually longer. The needs of participating teachers should be carefully considered (not ‘one size fits all’), embedding CPD within teachers’ own working experience. Effective CPD recognises the equal importance of pedagogic and subject knowledge and provides clarity on how students learn and progress, while also putting forward alternative pedagogies for children with different needs and a focus on formative assessment to allow teachers to see the impact of their learning and work on their students. Effective CPD allows for the consideration of participants’ existing theories, beliefs and practice, and for opportunities to challenge these in a non-threatening way. It is important that participants actively engage with the CPD course content and are provided with repeated opportunities to encounter, understand, respond to and reflect on new approaches and related practices.²

Children may not be able to fully benefit from education if they live in poverty, are malnourished, have a disability or live in a conflict zone. Yet teachers who have the required pedagogical skills and content knowledge and continue to receive professional support can make a huge difference to the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children. Teachers in many countries would also benefit from national standards and curricula for pre-service teacher-training and CPD programmes that reflect research findings on what works in inclusive education, take into consideration national and local contexts, and enhance personal and professional reflection and practice.

The inclusive education projects described in this multi-country case study developed and shared models of teaching and learning to support inclusive classroom practices, targeting teachers and going beyond the scope of ad hoc workshops for just one or two teachers per school. The projects created a system of regular peer-to-peer classroom visits to create learning opportunities with modelling, coaching, observations and feedback to build and nurture effective and active teacher learning communities.

Including previously excluded children

Based on a 'child rights situation analysis'³ incorporating the voices of different children, project teams and their government partners identified education barriers and target groups that needed extra support to access and benefit from education. Key project performance indicators were agreed in order to show and understand how situations might be changed due to project activities. In all countries, disability was identified as a key education barrier.⁴ Additional challenges related to gender (Bangladesh, Indonesia), ethnicity and language (Myanmar, Cambodia) and poverty (all countries). All projects were founded on CRC⁵ and CRPD⁶ principles, operationalising the right to non-discrimination, education, protection and participation, while designing disability-specific support if required.

Teacher needs assessments were undertaken to identify professional development priorities, also identifying strengths in order to link schools and teachers. In most countries a cluster school⁷ approach was initially introduced, but in many cases – especially in rural and remote areas – the system did not work well due to distances, costs and lack of professional support. Teacher meetings in Cambodia, for example, used to focus more on administrative issues and teacher complaints than on pedagogical improvements or teacher collaboration and support. In Indonesia, mainstream teachers did not work together with 'special school' teachers even if such schools were relatively near, and in Myanmar, township education officers and school leaders were not themselves sufficiently trained to provide inclusive capacity building to teachers.

A young girl with Down's syndrome was playing with a little boy on the beach. 'Are you disabled?' the boy asked. 'No, I am Daisy' she replied, and they went on playing.⁸

Teacher education and CPD have been critical for the projects, aiming to increase knowledge and pedagogical skills that enable practitioners to better respond to learning diversity and tackle stigmatising language. Labels such as ‘slow learner’, ‘special needs child’, or ‘dropout’ negatively affect a pupil’s self-esteem, but the most serious consequences come when they are linked to school placement or exclusion. Labels then function as the dominant descriptor of a child’s learning potential, they describe just limitations and we stop looking at the whole child with their own characteristics and talents beyond the disability.

Especially in rural areas, teachers often lack even basic pedagogical skills, and the Save the Children *Foundation for Teaching* course developed together with the Enabling Education Network (EENET)⁹ has been used in all the projects. In collaboration with colleagues from the teacher education colleges, phased training programmes were designed, with each module building on the previous one and providing time in between for teachers to apply new knowledge and skills while being mentored by more experienced colleagues. A ‘disability cheat sheet’ was developed for teachers and local government education officials to refer to when in doubt and to prevent unnecessary labelling. In all countries the cheat sheet was translated into local languages and continues to be used for in-service teacher education programmes.

The ‘disability cheat sheet’ is a brief on common impairments, health conditions and the related use of respectful language and terminology. It describes impairment categories and provides examples and clarifying comments. It covers physical and sensory impairments, socioemotional and developmental impairments, learning disabilities and health conditions such as epilepsy.

Project teams and their government counterparts started to recognise how factors such as the classroom’s physical environment and the child’s level of psychological comfort in a classroom affect whether a child will be able to learn and to what extent. They also noticed how the quality of teacher–student interaction and relationships is a keystone for all other aspects of effective teaching and classroom management. Teachers and school leaders need to start focusing on what children *can* do and on their potential for further learning, rather than on failings and shortcomings. This means that teachers need to learn how to create classroom environments where all children are *encouraged* and *enabled* to reach their potential and feel comfortable about who they are and where they come from. In the Philippines, for example, children with disabilities were doing well academically in public schools, but socially they continued to experience exclusion and bullying, while in Indonesia children living in poverty (often coming to school wearing the same poor clothes) were teased because they ‘smelled’. These are circumstances where school leaders and teachers can model understanding and respect for diversity and work with the school community towards inclusion.

Teachers in Bangladesh tackled some of the issues of acceptance, often due to lack of understanding, by experimenting with weekly *circle time* sessions, both as an approach to create diversity-inclusive learning environments and as socioemotional modelling and practice moments. Children enjoyed the circle time sessions. As a follow-up teachers started to incorporate socioemotional learning in the curriculum in subjects like social studies, geography, history and literacy hour. Discussions, open questions, group assignments, drawings and role-plays were some of the ways in which children could express themselves about diversity within and outside Bangladesh and the meaning of equal rights and opportunities. Learning about diversity in this manner clearly offered positive new experiences for children and teachers alike.

Curriculum and teacher needs

In the process of moving towards more inclusive teaching, the curriculum may seem to be a major obstacle, but it can be an important tool for change. Key components of the curriculum include the style and tempo of teaching and learning, the relevance of what is being taught, the way the classroom is managed and organised, and materials and equipment used in the teaching and learning process. The inclusive education project in Myanmar started to collaborate with the Japan International Cooperation Agency to influence and support a review of the primary education curriculum. Developing a curriculum that is inclusive of all learners involves broadening traditional definitions of learning. Though there is a need for a basic standard curriculum, it must be made flexible to allow for school-level adaptations and for modifications to meet the individual needs of different children. Teachers were trained to adjust the basic standard curriculum in such a way that it became relevant and learning-friendly for different children by, for example, learning about differentiated¹⁰ teaching, Universal Design for Learning, and various grouping strategies.

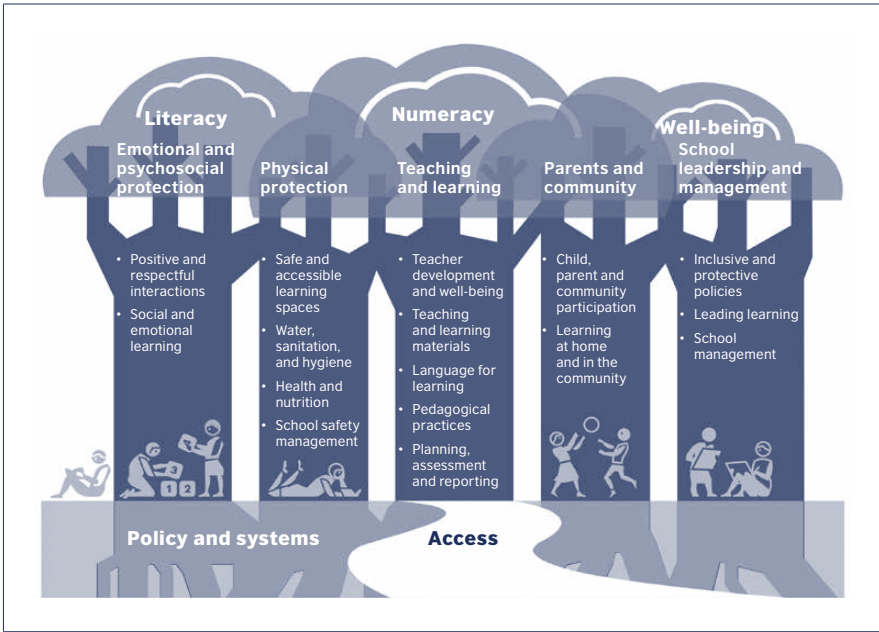
In the Philippines, teachers demonstrated differentiated instruction to colleagues from other schools. In one such demonstration lesson they used storybooks in which a child with a disability was the hero. Students worked in groups with story-related assignments ranging from ‘match vocabulary words to definitions’, ‘read a passage of text from the story and answer related questions’, ‘think of what happened to the main character and create a different outcome’, and ‘think of a similar situation in your own life and role-play that story’. All children were actively and meaningfully engaged and at the end of the lesson they shared what they liked, disliked and learned.

It became clear from the baseline and teacher needs assessment that every teacher needs to learn about various disabilities and how to best teach and support children with different disabilities with a positive approach. This can be achieved by embedding disability-inclusive pedagogy, child rights, equity and equality throughout all pre-service and in-service modules rather than simply covering these issues as standalone courses, while also establishing partnerships with community-based rehabilitation initiatives and disabled persons’ organisations, as happened in Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Inclusive education still needs to be mainstreamed in all five project countries, but progress is being made. In Cambodia the project developed in-service diploma courses, such as how to teach children with intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings, which were approved by the Ministry of Education. The project in Bangladesh incorporated a comprehensive review of the pre-service and in-service teacher education programme. This review showed that the process of *how* knowledge, skills and values are transmitted is as important a part of the curriculum as *what* is learned. Key elements for more inclusive curricula – apart from flexibility for contextual and individual adaptations – include learning assessments based on individual progress rather than on peer comparison and competition. Such curricula should not only value academic learning, but also teach and model understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Save the Children in Myanmar developed a holistic quality learning framework (QLF) based on a whole-school approach. Such an approach considers all the different aspects of the school such as the curriculum, teaching style, classroom climate, school culture and values, participation of all members of the school community, the physical environment, partnership with families and the community, and the well-being of teachers and learners. The child is central in the framework that guides schools and enables them to recognise achievements and identify barriers to becoming inclusive quality schools.

Figure 1: The quality learning framework



Source: © Save the Children 2017

The framework (see Figure 1) outlines 16 items across five guiding principles that Save the Children believes should be present in a school or learning environment in order to support children's learning and well-being. The five guiding principles or pillars are:

1. emotional and psychosocial protection
2. physical protection
3. teaching and learning
4. parents and communities
5. school leadership and management.

These principles are underpinned and supported by effective policy, systems and strategies to enable children's school access. The QLF is not only used in Myanmar, but in all other inclusive education project countries. In several countries, it is also now being used for school improvement planning.

Guiding principle 3 in particular – *teaching and learning* – analyses inclusive and effective classroom practices using the following five indicators:

1. teacher development and well-being
2. teaching and learning materials
3. language for learning
4. pedagogical practices
5. planning, assessment and reporting.

As shown in the QLF, the aims of education go beyond academic learning and passing tests and exams. Socioemotional learning and well-being are equally important. When children know that teachers and other children care about them and respect their differences, everyone benefits. Although teachers are not expected to act as psychologists or mental health workers, they can still take responsibility for the social and emotional well-being of their students. In all project countries, teacher training incorporated socioemotional learning and the importance of teachers consciously creating a welcoming, respectful and emotionally safe learning environment for every child. To become more inclusive, teachers learned to make it a goal to start each day with a personal connection. In Myanmar, for example, when teachers began greeting their students at the door before each class period, they noticed it made a difference as children felt acknowledged and valued. In Indonesia, story-time activities around diversity and discrimination supported a positive change in perceptions and attitudes among learners without disabilities towards their peers with disabilities. Teachers learned how to create and nurture a culture of kindness by developing and using stories about the power of kind words. Such stories were read and discussed with all children, leading to them talking about their own feelings and recognising and respecting the feelings of others.

The training of teachers about the importance of emotionally safe learning environments was in some of the project countries a real eye-opener. Discussing the socioemotional environment from the perspective of their own well-being and competency revealed that teachers may not be able to do a good job for their students if they do not feel recognised and supported themselves.

In the Philippines the project made ‘good practice’ common practice by video-recording classroom practices in different schools to identify and acknowledge the efforts of teachers (who volunteered to be filmed) to improve their inclusive teaching. These videos were watched and discussed during school cluster meetings with colleagues, local education officials and teacher educators. The use of prompt questions at these review sessions was invaluable, for instance ‘What do we see this teacher already doing well in terms of inclusive teaching and learning?’ For example, classroom setup or seating arrangement, behaviour management, engaging different learners or the use of teaching and learning materials. And ‘What additional suggestions would we be able to provide this teacher with to help them become an even better inclusive teacher?’ Individual teachers then developed action plans to further improve their classroom practices, and were recorded on video again after six months. It was clear that many positive changes had occurred, which was also acknowledged by parents and children. For teachers too, seeing is believing and teachers showed how they are the best placed to inspire each other. One teacher for example, did not engage children at the back of the classroom, but by changing the seating arrangement, she could now reach those children and actively involve them. Another teacher started to use space outside for group work and several teachers replaced some lecturing time for project-based learning.

Research and reflection

Classroom action research and reflective practice proved useful in the Philippines and Myanmar. Teachers learned to think about what they do as teachers, and what happens when they teach, and became better aware of different learners’ reactions and thus could see what to do differently next time.

Simple student-centred teaching checklist used by reflective teachers in the inclusive education projects:

1. All children ask questions.
2. All children answer questions.
3. All children follow instructions.
4. All children look interested.
5. All children write on the blackboard.
6. All children use teaching and learning aids.
7. All children present their work.

Successful reflective teachers who became supporters to their colleagues in the same school demonstrated how they consciously framed and re-framed problems, opportunities, challenges and issues through engagement with the context in which they worked. These teachers also started to make use of pupils to support other pupils and encouraged parents to get more engaged in the education of their children by, for example, helping to make low-cost teaching and learning materials or to create classroom interest corners, all of which has been critical for the development of more inclusive schools.

Inclusive teachers are observant teachers; they watch their students and respond when children exhibit behaviour or body language that indicates they may not have understood part of the lesson. Classroom observation in Indonesia and the Philippines showed how, with just a few minutes devoted to individual ‘student-watching’, teachers were rewarded with ‘keys to unlock the learning potential in students’. Observations, formative assessment and student interest inventories have become growth opportunities for teachers and students alike. Collaboratively the project countries developed inclusive teaching and learning strategies, classroom observation and teacher self-assessment tools, which were contextualised in each country.¹¹

The key to a supportive classroom environment is a teacher who is willing to establish a caring relationship with every child, learn about their individual needs and strengths, and provide support and encouragement to help them become a successful learner. Project teachers in Cambodia learned about and demonstrated to colleagues how to be organised with children with intellectual disabilities in their classrooms, plan for challenges ahead, and establish predictable and effective classroom routines. Because students with intellectual disabilities can have difficulty in remaining motivated and focused, they need teachers who are enthusiastic and who actively engage them in the learning process. They also need teachers who are flexible and willing to try new ways to teach and assess. Teachers used strategies such as seating these children near to the front of the class, surrounding the child with other children who were good role models, avoiding distracting stimuli, using visuals to support understanding, and providing immediate and specific feedback on positive behaviours.

In Myanmar, teachers who changed classroom seating arrangements based on observations, assessment and children’s interests stated they were better able to help children with higher support needs. This included the use of a variety of team and group work that enabled children to draw on each other’s strengths and skills. Reading groups, where the same books were provided in Braille or as audiobooks as well as in standard text format, became a regular activity in project schools in Indonesia (in partnership with Room to Read). In Bangladesh secondary school students were encouraged to help younger children with extra support needs such as those with physical disabilities, by assisting with transportation to school, and those from minority language groups or with intellectual disabilities, by using a buddy-reading system.

The most successful inclusive initiatives were found to be those that focused on restructuring teacher-centred practices to enable schools to become more responsive to individual learners. For example, in Cambodia there are only specialised schools for learners with special education needs and disabilities in urban areas, and the focus is mainly on children with physical, visual and hearing disabilities. Among children with disabilities, those with intellectual disabilities are clearly the most marginalised and excluded.¹² Project schoolteachers have learned how to identify and address the learning needs of children with different intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings, and many of them have become mentors for other teachers. This development also reflects a shift in thinking based on the belief that organisational and teaching changes made to address the needs of learners experiencing difficulties often benefit all children and respecting the uniqueness of every individual creates a more enriching learning environment for all.

An effective support system is essential if schools are to become inclusive and give every child the opportunity to become a successful learner. The most important forms of support are available to every school: children supporting children, teachers supporting teachers, parents becoming partners in the education of their children and communities supporting their local schools.

In Bangladesh community-based rehabilitation was established with local government support. Its workers also worked with schools to continue to provide therapy for school-aged children with disabilities and to support teachers with specific disability knowledge and skills.

Conclusion

Inclusive education project experiences have shown that problems of non-enrolment, non-attendance, high repetition and high dropout rates cannot be solved simply with separate policies, sub-systems or special schools. Instead, an approach is needed which views difference as normal. Most children who experience barriers to learning such as those from linguistic minorities, from poor families, those who work or children with disabilities or learning difficulties do not need different or special education, but they do need more flexible and responsive education.

Reasons for being out of school or for poor learning outcomes differ by country and context, but education systems need to move from seeing learners as either having 'special' or 'ordinary' needs towards seeing learners on a continuum. There is no *special* education – just *education*. Mainstream schools need to take responsibility for all children in their administrative catchment areas and should be supported to do so. Schools need to change into more flexible and resourceful learning environments.

Inclusive schools are *child-seeking* schools. Such schools and teachers seek out, find and include children that have been previously under-served and invest in building capacity to better support such disadvantaged learners.

When seeking explanations for a lack of learning achievement, teachers and school leaders must be prepared to consider inadequacies in the teaching and learning conditions rather than inadequacies in children. Flexibility, reflective practice and creativity have proven to be critical in becoming more inclusive and effective as teachers. This implies considering more than only a child's cognitive skills and summative tests. Social, physical and creative abilities are just as important, as are different ways to demonstrate learning. Teachers in the five countries have learned about many ways of teaching to enrich the learning of all children by engaging multiple intelligences, the arts, emotions and interdisciplinary connections.

School leadership, CPD for teachers, good teaching practice and developing an inclusive school culture were all shown to be significant factors that contributed to better learning outcomes in the five project countries, including outcomes for those with disabilities. Projects were phased out in late 2018 and early 2019, and exit strategies were developed in partnership with ministries of education, teacher education colleges and school clusters to continue to implement inclusive policies and practices in mainstream settings.

Efforts of teachers and parents to support children are more effective in partnership. Inclusive schools in Myanmar pro-actively welcomed parents of children with disabilities to come to school and talk about their child. Parents were invited to meet the child's teacher regularly, and not only when problems occurred. Teachers also made home visits to better understand the family situation and encouraged parents to volunteer as classroom assistants. Not all parents were initially willing to participate, but once the project began, they found themselves recruited by the more enthusiastic volunteers.

Making education inclusive is not entirely cost-neutral; to facilitate and sustain progress towards inclusive education, additional financing may be needed. But such resources are already required to improve the quality of general education in both East and South Asia. Poor education is costly as it often results in high repetition and dropout rates and poor learning achievements. Governments must be prepared to invest additional resources from the outset on system reforms such as teacher capacity-building, improving infrastructure, and diversifying learning materials. They need to create more scope for flexibility to provide meaningful and equitable learning opportunities for all children.

Inclusive teachers are effective teachers for all children because they look for children's strengths and weaknesses, they can identify their individual learning needs and address them effectively. Good inclusive teachers constantly test small changes to class activities, routines and workflow, they observe how different learners interact with the material and adjust accordingly, and they celebrate success, however small.

At first I did not know what to do with Cessar (6), who has cerebral palsy. He just sat in my class. After the inclusive education teacher training and with the support from my principal, I see how Cessar benefits from my new classroom practices. His favourite activity is writing letters on his own and listening to stories. I have found that storytelling is really an effective way of teaching. Through the stories my students learn many new things, also about how to treat each other in school.

Maricel, teacher

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 3. Dixon, P (2013) *Save the Children's Child Rights Situation Analysis Guidelines*. Save the Children. Available online at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/save-childrens-child-rights-situation-analysis-guidelines>
 4. Disability can be visible or invisible, and persons with a disability are defined in the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis to others.
 5. CRC: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the most ratified international human rights convention.
 6. CRPD: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), ratified by 177 out of 195 nations.
 7. A cluster or group of schools is established to bring teachers from individual schools together in a 'core' school for peer-to-peer learning, discussing (positive and negative) teaching experiences and sharing (human and material) resources. Identified teachers with special knowledge or skills can provide support to other teachers for improved practices. The number of schools in a cluster depends on distance between schools and the ease of transportation. Donor agencies often support a cluster approach, which may lead to sustainability issues. Small, remote schools in Myanmar that would benefit most from the cluster approach could not participate due to an insufficient number of teachers and the need for multi-grade teaching. Without adequate leadership and co-ordination by the 'core' school, cluster meetings may become administrative rather than pedagogical events or complaining sessions about workload and poor salaries, as happened in a cluster in Bangladesh.
 8. Lansdown, G (2001) *It is our world too! A Report on the Lives of Disabled Children for the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children*. New York: UN.
 9. Save the Children and EENET (2018): *The Foundations of Teaching: Training for Educators in Core Teaching Competencies*. Available online at: https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/The_Foundations_of_Teaching.pdf
 10. Differentiation can be defined as factoring students' individual learning styles and needs as well as levels of readiness before designing a lesson plan. It may mean teaching the same material to all students, using a variety of instructional strategies or delivering lessons at varying levels of difficulty based on the ability of each student.
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 12. An intellectual disability is characterised by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. Children with an intellectual disability are slower to develop physically, acquire language, learn to look after themselves and master academic skills.

3

Teaching English as a second language to the visually impaired in disadvantaged contexts: a case study from Chiapas, Mexico

Ana María Elisa Díaz de la Garza, María de Lourdes Gutiérrez Aceves and María Eugenia Serrano Vila

Introduction

This chapter highlights the importance of professional development in the formation of positive attitudes towards teaching students with special educational needs. In our experience in Mexico a great number of teachers are insufficiently prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities and face a great number of challenges as they seek to do the best for their learners, often in difficult circumstances, which include dealing with a lack of adequate resources and specialised teacher preparation.¹ Many teachers want to learn and think about how they might change and adapt their teaching practice to help their students engage in the learning process. They want to ensure students with additional needs are no longer marginalised and excluded, given that the social stigma they confront in many countries limits their access to education, employment and relationships. For some inclusion 'is essentially about belonging, participating, and reaching one's full potential in a diverse society'.² This requires attitudinal, institutional and structural change in order to improve the quality of life and well-being of all members of society.

In conducting this study it was necessary to bear in mind that 'Inclusive pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that supports teachers to respond to individual differences between learners but avoids the marginalisation that can occur when some students are treated differently'.³ Given that there is a lack of services and resources for students who require extra support in Mexico, it is necessary to reflect upon how we can best address the education of learners who are marginalised or excluded from learning, and who may encounter barriers to learning which create a gap between performance and potential. To achieve this, teacher education programmes must use effective pedagogy. As Florian contends, it is through an examination of 'the things that teachers can do' that teachers will be able to become change agents.⁴

This exploratory, qualitative study investigated the developing perceptions of pre-service teachers following service-learning field experiences teaching English to visually impaired learners at a cultural centre in the capital of the state of Chiapas, conducted in the spring of 2018.

The perceived differences associated with visual impairment are not as difficult to address as are the stigma and outdated ideas about what is perceived to be 'possible'. In Mexico there is an underestimation of individuals' capabilities as well as a belief that if a child has a disability, they will not have many opportunities to receive a good education or have life-fulfilling opportunities due to the lack of available ongoing support. Many parents in Mexico are embarrassed to have a blind child and often hide them away, so given such societal attitudes it is perhaps understandable that teachers believe that differences among learners necessitate different pedagogy.

Teachers in Mexico require professional development opportunities to reflect upon their practice in relation to theory and policy. They need to develop their knowledge, awareness and skills, and think about how they might change and adapt what they do so learners are not marginalised or excluded. However, providing special and inclusive education training and CPD opportunities for teachers is especially challenging due to a lack of resources, a lack of training, limited opportunities to innovate and reflect, and a lack of support from school leadership. The Programme for the Development of Persons with Disabilities was initiated in 2009 and has been a change agent for modifications in legislation and educational policies to foster autonomy and independence for disabled individuals.⁵

The Mexican curriculum designed for sighted learners is largely appropriate for a range of learners across the spectrum of visual impairment. However, some adaptations must be made to teaching approaches and educational resources to meet visually impaired learners' needs. These include providing resources in a larger font, the use of magnifying devices and using high-contrast materials such as black print on yellow paper. In the context of this study four of the students required the use of these adaptations.

However, for learners with more significant visual needs and blind learners, it is necessary to provide additional resources (which in the Mexican context is usually Braille) and provide specialised teacher training.⁶ Given that there is a shortage of material in Braille to teach English as a foreign language, it is often necessary to prepare specialised educational resources as well as use learners' other senses, such as hearing, touch and smell. In this investigation six of the learners required the use of Braille and tactile materials to develop their proficiency in English as a foreign language.

Context of the study in Chiapas, Mexico

According to the Mexican National Survey of Demographic Dynamics, conducted by the Mexican National Institute of Statistics and Geography, six per cent of the Mexican population is disabled, which is considerably lower than the global estimate.⁷ However, despite Mexico's commitment to ensure inclusive education for all, a great number of learners remain marginalised, are excluded from school and experience barriers to learning. The study was conducted at the Tuxtla Faculty of the Autonomous University of Chiapas as an outreach programme with the Braille department of the local cultural centre, the aim was to investigate and reflect on how to create a more inclusive learning environment for learners with visual impairments.

Chiapas is Mexico's southernmost state and is considered one of the poorest. It is significantly underdeveloped in comparison to the rest of the country and at least 25 per cent of the population live in extreme poverty.⁸ The region, along with most of the country, has been greatly affected by the global economic crisis, an educational crisis, drug-related violence and high unemployment levels. The OECD declared that Chiapas is the second most marginalised state in Mexico with a significant link between poverty and degree of marginalisation and educational exclusion.⁹ Poverty, malnutrition, health issues, poor study habits, high dropout rates, low motivation, limited specialised training for disabled learners, limited infrastructure and limited resources take a toll on the quality of education. Socio-economic and structural factors in Chiapas greatly influence the reality in public schools. The social situation is difficult for most of the population, for whom ongoing economic and social concerns include low wages, high levels of unemployment and underemployment, inequitable income distribution, and few advancement opportunities. Teaching underprivileged students presents teachers with unique challenges that ultimately affect their professional development.

Mexico needs to address contextual factors in practice, policy and research as a means of moving towards greater social justice in education. There is a lack of quality educational research, especially in rural areas, and particularly in the state of Chiapas. The little research which has been conducted is mostly inadequate in terms of providing a clear picture of how working with disabled learners shapes teaching practices.



Teaching learners and inspiring them to learn and to want to continue learning is the main aim of all teachers. To do this successfully it is necessary to recognise the importance of providing student teachers with an opportunity to bridge the current gaps between theory and practice, and between their initial teacher education and the reality they face when they enter the ELT classroom to complete their 480-hour social service component. Follow-up studies conducted with cohorts in 2010, 2011 and 2012 identified a number of issues which pre-service teachers must confront once they enter schools and transition from being a teacher-in-training to the teacher-in-charge.

Despite having successfully completed 77 per cent of the teacher education programme, many pre-service teachers admit to facing challenges as they enter their first classrooms and struggle to manage working life, school life and classroom life within diverse educational settings.

In preparation for the study a range of topics were identified that are necessary to address when teaching learners with learning needs associated with visual impairments.

Social justice

Using a social justice lens in the study meant being mindful to examine what was currently happening in the visually impaired community as well as what could be done to provide additional support to address the barriers and lack of resources that prevent learners from achieving their full potential. By providing opportunities to raise awareness among educators, it may be possible to reduce the stigma and misconceptions associated with inclusive practices.

A great number of barriers exist regarding the educational needs of the visually impaired. They generally intersect with social justice as described below.

Attitudinal barriers

It was found that attitudinal barriers to accessibility are the most common type of barrier encountered by individuals with disabilities. They include attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviours, perceptions and assumptions that discriminate against the visually impaired (in terms of this study). They are often the result of a lack of understanding, which can lead people to ignore, judge, stereotype or have misconceptions about the visually impaired. These social prejudices shape educational opportunities and often marginalise learners. An example of attitudinal barriers in Mexican education includes lowered expectations, demonstrated by a teacher ignoring a student because they assume someone with a visual impairment cannot understand or participate.

Often, visually impaired learners are placed in mainstream classrooms where the teacher makes limited effort to adapt either the curriculum or their own pedagogy to suit their needs. When questioned about these practices they often reply that they are overworked and overwhelmed by catering to the needs of very large multi-skilled groups (in Mexico it is the norm for public schools to have 35 to 45 students per class) and have no special training in how to address the needs of disabled learners. In addition, there is often a lack of support staff in schools, leaving teachers isolated in dealing with barriers to successful learning outcomes.

Physical barriers

Also identified were physical barriers to accessibility, which prevent or make access challenging. These include school and classroom design as well as the transport that learners need to get to school. Poor signage and lighting that make it unsafe for a person with a visual impairment to navigate are a significant barrier, and make mobility especially challenging for learners with sensory needs. Visually impaired students may find schools confusing, noisy and intimidating, and a great number of educational institutions, especially in remote rural areas in Mexico, are physically inaccessible for disabled children. If confronted with difficulties in reaching schools, many Mexican parents opt for not sending their children at all.

Informational barriers

Another significant barrier identified was informational, meaning that individuals' impairment needs have not been considered. Approaches to accommodation and adjustments are rarely considered in the design of learning materials and examinations, and most teachers in Mexico have no training in how to address the needs of disabled learners unless they have studied 'special education'.

Overworked and underpaid, they have little time to attend training, which limits what they can do to provide support for their visually impaired students.

Sometimes they provide oral exams for their learners, but do not focus on taking time out of their busy schedules to cater to the needs of the visually impaired.

The following fragment from a face-to-face interview with 12-year-old Alejandro (not his real name) illustrates this point:

My sixth-grade teacher usually ignores me and sits me in a corner. When exam time rolls by she finally remembers that I exist and gives me an oral exam to not exclude me since that's the law, but I don't really think she cares how well I do.

As can be observed, Alejandro does not seem to be a priority for his elementary schoolteacher, and perhaps more importantly, does not feel he is a priority for her. Mexican schools do provide additional support for students who require it, but few are qualified in teaching the visually impaired. However, students sometimes make their own adjustments, for instance, once a child has bonded with a nurturing teacher who provides them with the support they require, they will often follow them to a different school if they get a new job.

Communication barriers

Communication barriers to accessibility are often experienced by the visually impaired. Carlos, a blind 12-year-old student, explains it well:

Teachers usually don't care about me and consider me a problem which they would prefer not to deal with. I must focus on what is said in class and see what I can pick up from the class. No one, other than my parents, makes the effort to learn Braille or provides any other supportive techniques.

In this excerpt from a face-to-face interview, Carlos recognises that the environment is constraining and that not all educators go out of their way to prepare specific resources for him.

Financial barriers

Financial barriers to accessibility include the high cost of resources and support services. There is generally a great shortage of trained teachers in Mexico, and in most schools, there is no budget for specialised training or educational resources. As a result, teachers must pay for their own professional development opportunities and create educational resources from recycled materials.

Organisational barriers

Despite a commitment to ensuring inclusive education, a great number of visually impaired individuals receive limited or no support services due to a lack of resources. In many large urban areas such as Mexico City, Guadalajara or Puebla, special support services and intervention programmes are more readily available than in more disadvantaged areas. As in other parts of the world, many services for the disabled in Mexico are chronically underfunded and often lack the skilled teaching staff or updated equipment and resources needed to deliver appropriate education.

Social barriers

All these barriers lead to reduced social participation and social exclusion. In education it is possible to address these barriers by providing disability awareness training for teachers and support staff to sensitise them to the needs of people with disabilities. In 2011 the Mexican National Council for the Development and Inclusion of the Disabled was created. Its mission is to co-ordinate state governments to foster public policy with regards to human rights, social justice, health, education, employment, recreation, sports and accessibility services for the disabled. However, in resource-poor areas, instruction in Braille and the use of Braille is not a common occurrence. Parents must often pay for a *sombra* (shadow) to accompany their child in school and provide additional support for their learning. Most parents cannot afford this, so their child is left to figure out things for themselves, which in a class of up to 45 learners can be very challenging and prohibits effective socialisation.

Teaching English to speakers of other languages for the visually impaired in Chiapas

The context of this study was the BA in English Language Teaching (*Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés*) programme in the Tuxtla Faculty of the Autonomous University of Chiapas, Mexico. This is a nine-semester study programme which includes an eighth-semester social service component, where undergraduate student teachers must provide 480 hours of community service.

In order to effectively prepare teachers to address the needs of all students in the classroom, including students with disabilities, teacher education programmes must include the use of effective pedagogy.

Examples of this for practitioners teaching the visually impaired include:

- facing the class when speaking
- speaking clearly at a normal volume
- identifying yourself before each interaction
- verbally indicating when you initiate and end an interaction with an individual
- providing reading tasks in advance so that individuals may have time to convert them into Braille or audio versions
- allowing students to record lessons
- verbally explaining what is written on the blackboard or in images, diagrams or charts
- seating the learner to their best advantage according to their preference, which is usually near the head of the classroom
- eliminating background noises as much as possible
- adjusting lighting for photosensitive learners
- employing alternative assessment
- providing additional time to complete tasks.

All of these can easily be applied in resource-poor contexts such as Mexico and can form the basis of professional development programmes where teachers are encouraged to collaborate and discuss different strategies, and share experiences and best practices with each other.

Most significant is the importance of developing positive attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities. The goal of this project is to increase access to English classes for visually impaired or blind learners. The hope is to inculcate pre-service teachers with a commitment to creating classrooms focused on equity, diversity and social justice. In attempting to achieve this, the importance of providing CPD opportunities in all we do cannot be overestimated. In the context of the study, we have been working in our community to raise awareness among second language teachers on how to work with individuals who require additional support.

In Mexico, many parents, health professionals and educators assume that milestones and goals for a blind child are different from those for sighted children, leading to phrases such as, 'She's doing really well – for a blind child'. These low expectations create a gap between performance and potential; addressing and changing these attitudes is a key part of professional development programmes.

One specific outcome of the investigation was the decision to provide free English classes for visually impaired learners at the local cultural centre. Table 1 summarises the courses that have been offered to visually impaired learners in Chiapas thus far:

Table 1: TESOL for the visually impaired projects

Year	Ages	Class
Spring 2018	9–14	Two visually impaired learners Four blind learners
	15–21	Two blind learners One visually impaired learner
Autumn 2018	9–14	One visually impaired learner Two blind learners
	15–21	One visually impaired learner Two blind learners

The aim of this study was to provide teachers with opportunities to reflect upon and discuss barriers and issues that hinder the provision of inclusive classrooms, so they could become more empowered, confront inequalities and develop pedagogical practices to support all students.

Research questions and methodology

The larger qualitative investigation this chapter draws from was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: What barriers exist in teaching visually impaired students in Chiapas?
- RQ2: What resources are most successful in TESOL for the visually impaired?

Narratives were selected as the means to explore pre-service teachers’ learning. The framework for this study is interpretative research given that it examines participants’ culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world.

Participants

Four volunteer pre-service teachers took part in this study teaching English as a foreign language at the local cultural centre; two in the spring term of 2018 and two in the autumn term of 2018 as part of the social service component of their nine-semester study programme. All pre-service teachers were responsible for organising instruction and creating didactic resources.

Findings

By using narratives and employing an interpretative approach to research we were able to examine the factors that influence the challenges associated with teaching English as a foreign language to visually impaired learners. Data collection techniques included the use of:

- teaching logs
- individual semi-structured interviews
- observation.

Data analysis was an ongoing process, employing an interpretative case-study focus using narrative discourse analysis. An interpretative approach to research allows us to explore participants' socio-cognitive interpretations of the social world, and involved asking participants about their experiences in the research context.

In response to RQ1: What barriers exist in teaching visually impaired students in Chiapas?

Before the project began the pre-service teachers had high expectations of what teaching visually impaired learners would be like. They had taught isolated classes throughout their teacher education programme but had never taught disabled learners. On completing this project, they remarked that they felt they had gained valuable teaching experience, and, despite occasional setbacks, that teaching visually impaired learners had been rewarding. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from a face-to-face interview with Carlos:

At first, I was excited about this project – I wanted to make a difference. Then, I felt uncomfortable teaching blind learners. Whenever I used the words blind, look or see I felt that I was insulting them. It took me a while to realise that they were just like any other students, only that they learn in different ways. This helped me to become a better teacher and made me proud of my accomplishments.

This sentiment was not unusual; it was evident that most novice teachers experience a conflict between expectations and reality. Uncomfortable using words that might upset his learners, it took Carlos a while to realise that words like *blind*, *look* and *see* do not offend visually impaired learners. This demonstrates that Carlos has undergone a change in the way he understands his students' situation and is developing coping strategies, which is itself evidence of addressing attitudinal barriers.

The findings provide evidence that the experience of working with visually impaired learners has empowered pre-service teachers in their own professional development. The opportunity to make sense of new knowledge and practices enriched teacher learning as pre-service teachers in Chiapas discovered how to navigate the challenges they faced. They found opportunities to link theory and practice, they designed appropriate educational resources and developed practical strategies for modifying and adapting learning environments for learners with disabilities as well as developing coping strategies for working in disadvantaged environments.

Use of ‘individual interventions’ or ‘accommodations’

The work was based on the social model of disability; if a child with a visual impairment wants to read the latest bestselling book or experience the latest movie and be able to discuss and engage with sighted friends, they should have the tools to do just that. For example, making full-text audio recordings available when a book is first published or a movie is released. This enables individuals to join in sociocultural activities with their peers.

Andrea, one of the teenage students in the project, was very happy to be doing listening activities with some of the latest pop songs. Her teacher prepared songs in Braille so she could sing along.

I really enjoyed that my teacher took the time to prepare the songs that are on the radio for me in Braille so that I would be able to sing along. This makes the class more fun. My teachers in high school don't prepare special materials for me. They give me a photocopy which I can't read.

Here Andrea provides evidence of being motivated by the teacher, who is finding ways to make the class more stimulating for her. This contrasts with what happens at her high school where she is provided with materials that are not appropriate for a blind learner.

In response to RQ2: What resources are most successful in TESOL for the visually impaired?

PSTs acknowledged that it was necessary to design special didactic resources for visually impaired learners. Given the lack of teaching resources for the visually impaired – most schools in Chiapas are poorly equipped in terms of equipment and didactic resources in Braille – it was necessary for all pre-service teachers who participated in this study to take Braille lessons prior to initiating classes. They recognised they had to address how to reduce barriers to access for learners with disabilities, which involved adapting instruction to allow students to participate and learn in a variety of ways. Manuel acknowledged this in his teacher's log:

It took me a while to understand Braille, where some people see dots, blind learners communicate. I must be careful to not make mistakes since these students are more familiar with Braille than I am.

The reality of adapting resources is challenging and helped pre-service teachers to develop their creativity, as shown by the experiences of Elisa:

Before my social service began, I just used a textbook, made photocopies of resources and checked homework. Now I know that I can learn Braille and must prepare activities for each learner by hand. I prepare resources to teach English in different ways. I care more about using different textures. I've become more flexible and am more willing to try new things. Now I want to learn sign language to help deaf students too.

As can be seen in this excerpt, PSTs became aware that it is possible to teach in non-traditional ways as they questioned and reflected upon teaching practices and developed personal teaching philosophies regarding what to teach and how to teach it. This meant developing coping strategies as they navigated the complexities of how to teach visually impaired learners. It is particularly significant that Elisa is exploring working with deaf learners in the future.

Teachers commented that they had not been prepared in their second language teacher education programme to teach disabled learners. It was necessary for them to confront the theory–practice gap to address the complexities of teaching blind students. Reflections from teachers' logs provided evidence that pre-service teachers sometimes admitted to often feeling anxious and overwhelmed as they struggled to design appropriate resources to meet their learners' needs. However, they consulted the internet, the authors of this chapter, and the Braille instructor at the cultural centre for ideas and support.

Karla, a pre-service teacher working during the autumn 2018 term, commented that it is important to create a nurturing environment with suitable didactic materials:

Creating a good learning environment is crucial. It is important in this project to be very patient and plan well. It is necessary to prepare didactic resources in advance and utilise learners' other senses, such as listening, touch and smell. Braille texts are prepared for blind learners by hand one by one with a slate and stylus while printed texts in size 20 font on yellow paper are created for the visually impaired.

Karla demonstrates an awareness of the need to plan ahead to have resources ready and how this influences her classroom planning decisions, while Elisa highlights the need to be flexible and creative:

Despite what others may think, blind students like to make crafts so I'm always looking for ideas. I have developed my skills at preparing tactile resources using cardboard cut-outs, sandpaper, yarn, foamy, felt, glitter, glue, pipe cleaners and silicone (to draw outlines for blind learners). Learners enjoyed making Valentine's Day cards for their mothers.

This awareness about how teaching requires a flexible approach demonstrates that Elisa is positioning herself as a teacher who is capable of developing her practical knowledge.

There are many political, societal and socio-economic forces and factors that are beyond the control of teachers, but what goes on in the classroom is something they can influence. What is taught, how it is taught, and what is valued in school and society will ultimately have an impact on a learner's ability to learn. Pre-service teachers must be provided with opportunities to expand their teacher repertoire to address the needs of all students. Working with disabled learners has the potential to foster inclusion, participation and socialisation in the classroom.

Implications for the future

Participants in the case study reported a growing awareness of their professional development as they constructed their own understanding of issues related to their personal experiences of teaching English as a second language to visually impaired learners. They became aware that it is possible to present information in many different ways. As in research conducted by Robert J Lowe,¹⁰ teachers became aware that blind students required more oral reinforcement of instructions through repetition and found it beneficial to use students' names in their instructions to enable them to socialise and engage in classroom tasks. They also recognised that learners had issues producing written texts and required more time to produce written work than sighted learners. In disadvantaged contexts the conclusion was reached that simple strategies are often the best.

Though grounded in the particular context of the state of Chiapas, it is hoped that the findings will be of relevance for other contexts, as this research provides situated accounts of teacher learning in resource-poor environments



Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted the barriers that exist for the visually impaired in the context of Chiapas, which limit opportunities and perpetuate marginalisation. It is necessary to address issues with the visually impaired, specifically to ensure their active participation and empowerment within both the school environment and wider society. The pre-service teachers who participated in this study reported that through reflection on their practice they felt they became better prepared to identify their teaching strengths and areas which required improvement, which enabled them to modify their practices. This was transformational as they developed their personal teaching philosophies regarding good teaching through critical reflection, which further enabled them to examine the moral, social and political issues that shape teaching practices.

These issues all relate to the different types of discrimination that visually impaired learners may experience. It is necessary for educators to receive opportunities for CPD with effective training and support which focus on creating learning environments that include all learners. Opportunities for disability-specific skills training must be available due to the changing nature of learning and teaching and will ultimately result in improved student achievement for all learners.

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4

The Theatre of the Classroom

David Crabtree

The Theatre of the Classroom began as a CPD activity for school leaders to identify critical features for inclusive learning. First in Moscow in Russia and then Skopje in Macedonia, Gujarat in India, and The Gambia and Senegal in West Africa, the activity grew into a case study. The CPD activity looks at the classroom as the place where education is 'played out' and where each child experiences what their country's education system has to offer. It focuses on teaching and learning as they are enacted, with the notion that everyone has their part, but it recognises that what takes place often involves unseen forces, at work off-stage, outside the classroom but affecting what happens within it.

The Theatre of the Classroom is a reflective exercise. It draws upon a Tavistock Institute approach called a works group conference, which uses real case studies to look more closely at the different levels of complexity that exist in workplace interactions. Comprising three stages, it begins with a short story being recounted of an event from a classroom. The second part is questioning to explore meanings and gain a further understanding to more fully understand what happened and why. The final stage considers how the situation could be made more the way we would like it to be.

The approach enables practitioners to notice and observe the drama taking place in classrooms, with the facilitation designed to allow everybody in the group to see and reflect on the unseen forces that create events and meanings. During the workshop, participants put together hypotheses and work through them to recreate the scenario in a more inclusive way. The idea is that following the CPD activity, participants go back into school and do something to create a more inclusive learning environment. As a CPD activity it is designed to enable participants to understand in greater depth what is required to transform schools and classrooms into places of inclusive learning.

The process is guided by a facilitator. Questions addressed along the way are, 'What am I doing that shows I am actively responding to student needs?' and, 'What adjustments am I making in how I teach to ensure that all pupils participate, learn and reach their potential?'

Classrooms and teachers will simply adapt...

During these sessions, teachers often respond by saying that ‘being inclusive’ is extremely challenging. Sometimes, inclusion itself may be considered the ‘problem’. For example, one teacher in Skopje said, ‘such children should be in our classrooms only after we have had the necessary training!’ The lack of the necessary skills, knowledge or training is often cited as the main challenge to the success of an inclusive environment. In discussion with practitioners, inclusive learning is raised as something adopted at ministry level, with seemingly little thought for the support required at classroom level. One teacher from The Gambia said, ‘There seems to be an expectation on the part of policymakers that teachers have “Gri” like Camara and will use magic to make their classrooms inclusive.’ (Before his country’s Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Algeria in 2012, Musa Camara, the Gambian goalkeeper, was seen sprinkling white powder across his goal line as a magic potion to stop stitched leather crossing white paint.)

The three-stage process for the CPD session

The notion of the Theatre of the Classroom is that it is a device to help educators notice, observe and understand the drama taking place in classrooms. Such a theatre can be described as the place where parts are played, roles are developed, heroes and villains appear, stars are born, lives are shaped and stories written. Within the classroom, there is one person who has the biggest impact – the teacher – and in the school, leaders can make their schools different. Everybody has their part to play, and actions they can take.

In the workshop, the role of the facilitator is to ensure the discussion runs smoothly and move participants through the stages when appropriate. The workshop begins with one participant recounting something from their work setting. It is important to use a real example, it works best when the story is of an actual interaction and the dialogue is printed and available to participants. A short, written piece is often much better than something long and complex. It is amazing how much can be revealed in one short example, especially if the dialogue is well captured.

Once the story of the classroom interaction has been told, members of the workshop are free to ask questions.

The second stage is questioning and discussion to explore meanings. Because participants have a shared experience, the discussion inevitably begins to connect to ideas and beliefs within professional practice. It is important in stage two that the discussion sufficiently examines the story so that each member of the group is allowed space to explore it and develop an understanding of the events and the underlying processes. When everyone feels that they have fully grasped what happened, it is time to explore in greater depth. This deeper exploration often reveals unseen forces or motives.

Only after such discussion should participants look to see how the situation could be reconstructed to be more inclusive. This then evolves to become a search for resolution and development.

Inclusion requires changes

During the questioning phase after the story has been recounted it is possible to explore things like: Who is the 'star'? Where does the 'spotlight' play? Where is the focus of attention? Which actor or actors get most attention? How is the lesson played out? Is everyone engaged? What do the participants take away? Who has the longest speech? Is this 'drama' inclusive or not? Do all the 'actors' in the classroom feel equally valued? Is everybody a 'star'?

For instance, where a lesson is set or 'staged' has an impact on what happens during it. Most classrooms can be laid out in several different ways, and as part of the craft of teaching, teachers often change the layout of their class to alter the interaction between the 'players'. Altering the way the room is set out may be sufficient to enable all students to participate more equally. A change to seating plans, incorporating group work arrangements or asking certain pupils to work or sit together may be the small change that addresses barriers to learning and provides for a more inclusive classroom.

Barriers

During the exploration stage of the workshop, as the questions probe deeper, participants begin also to explore unseen forces outside the classroom that have an impact upon events inside. What happens within the classroom is affected by what has gone before or what is going on at present in society. Various forms of oppression, discrimination, domination and other social processes intersect in the classroom and influence each other.

For example, a teacher presented a dialogue from a conversation with pupils who she thought were gay. The teacher was thinking to suggest that they might both require the same support. Following the story, the questioning picked up that the classroom contained more than one marginalised group. From the dialogue, it was evident that one of the two pupils identified as being culturally different from his or her classmates as well as belonging to a different socio-economic group. This pupil's experience was different to that of the other pupil, who was of a similar cultural and socio-economic group as much of the class.

The questioning of the case study and resulting discussion led to a realisation that, although these two students may have an identity in common, their experiences in and around the classroom would likely be quite different because of their unique outlooks, as well as their unique social and cultural circumstances. Furthermore, in the context that the teacher was working in, the teacher needed to ensure that she did not inadvertently place both pupils at risk.

By applying an intersectional lens, participants are encouraged to take notice of the various social, historical and political processes that operate in the Theatre of the Classroom as unseen forces. The result is that while reflecting upon what is going on in the classroom and what is impacting upon the players, we also begin to recognise things that, at first, are not apparent.

It is also possible to explore boundaries. For instance, some circumstances require a whole-school approach, and some instances would likely need educators and administration in schools to support and nurture needs differently.

The Gambia

A teacher from a community school in the north of The Gambia recounted their experience of trying to encourage the parents of a visually impaired child to consider specialist provision. In The Gambia the general view is that physically disabled children's particular needs cannot be accommodated in their local schools. The teacher felt the lack of specialist support in the school was a barrier to the child's full participation. The Gambian Organisation for the Visually Impaired Resource Centre is in Kanifing South. It is the only school with specialists offering support for visually impaired children in the country; it has very few places and is a long distance from the teacher's school.

During the questioning stage following the recounting of the work-based story, participants asked about the pupils' visual impairment, about the teacher's fears and concerns, about any feelings the child expressed about being educated out of the immediate community and what efforts the teacher had made to discuss the situation more fully with the pupil and members of the family. As the teacher responded to the questions, the general feeling was that they had far more understanding of the pupil than they had at first recognised. There was also a feeling that the teacher had significant professional competence and they recommended that the teacher should possibly try something in their own school rather than increase their own frustration waiting for specialist support that was unlikely to materialise.

To explore more with the child and the child's parents for inclusion

The result was that the teacher left the session with a resolve to do things themselves rather than wait for specialist support. They decided to ask the child more about their needs during the school day while also setting up a calendar of meetings with the parents. Immediate actions included discussions about where the pupil preferred to sit in the classroom and with whom they felt most comfortable to work. Also, the teacher planned more group work, accommodated more peer discussion in class and constructed differentiation activities.

Macedonia – how can I make my classroom more inclusive?

Reflective practice requires us to review our own teaching, to be our own best critics and constantly look for improvements in our professional abilities. Educators in Macedonia reflected upon their context against the background of low levels of achievement and high dropout rates, particularly in secondary vocational education, which was placed towards the bottom of international performance tables. Large numbers of pupils in Macedonia do not complete their full secondary vocational education and there are high rates of exclusion.

Macedonia has a national policy for inclusive learning, and one school leader cited this as the reason for poor performance. The suggestion was that the ‘inclusion’ of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools lay behind poor classroom behaviour. The concern raised was of high levels of unidentified and unacknowledged attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: ‘What can you do with a “disorder” that you have received little training to respond to?’

Another question was, ‘What can a teacher do when poor parenting by a marginalised community undermines authority?’ The feeling was expressed that in some communities within Macedonian society, a lack of good role models and poor parenting from those in marginalised communities did not adequately prepare pupils for school.

School leaders and teachers felt that both situations were entrenched and, until there was a fundamental change, there was little they could do. Schools needed to separate such children out, ‘so the others can learn’.

What is ‘the problem?’

Educators shared their experiences and, as they compared, began to explore what the ‘theatre’ might reveal. One school leader enacted a scene from their school when a child, who was known to be noisy, came through the school door in the morning. To deal with what he perceived as regular poor behaviour, he said, ‘Leonnatos, don’t run! Walk to your classroom quietly. I’m watching you!’

In our words, we convey our assumptions and expectations about children

Following the initial telling of the workplace story, there was an acknowledgement that the dialogue could have gone in several different ways. In this enactment, the school leader said that their short ‘speech’ was a valid attempt to stop bad behaviour before it started. Dialogue is a key feature in behavioural issues in school, just as dialogue between actors is a key part of theatre – it is how the narrative is played out.

As the facilitated discussion continued, educators began to explore how changing the dialogue might be useful when addressing behavioural issues. Some felt that by speaking to pupils differently, it might be the step change required to make the school more inclusive. An alternative ‘speech’ was proposed, with the revised ‘script’ reading, ‘Good morning, Leonnatos! I’m so glad you’re here today. I see you’re remembering to walk safely. Well done.’

Simple steps, big changes

In the discussion, educators recognised the impact of the way they spoke, and the unintended consequence of how speaking to a child in a negative manner over time undermines a trusting relationship. The conclusion was reached that to be more inclusive, speech must try to communicate faith in the pupil's ability to follow the rules.

Differing ways to speak to pupils

Workshop participants began to explore alternative dialogues with a more positive tenor. There was a recognition that, 'Good morning, Leonnatos! I'm so glad you're here today...' conveyed good intentions and responsible behaviour. The feeling was that this format was potentially more inclusive because it contained an idea that the child can succeed in being good. It did not build a barrier between the actions of child and the norms of the school.

The conclusion was a general recognition that using positive language to convey a belief in children's abilities and intentions may help a child internalise a positive identity as well as develop more awareness of their 'good self'. It was felt that there might also be a bonus in that such language may also help others in the theatre to form a positive perception of the child. There was general consent that such dialogue enhances the child's self-perception, helps to promote positive behaviour and creates positive peer role models.

School leaders began to consider a whole-school approach to pupil–teacher dialogue as a way of addressing behaviour. As a simple step, the decision was taken to try to not use negative terms such as, 'don't'.

The child becomes more a part of the school rather than 'rejected'

The impact of this soon became apparent. Teachers from one school noticed on their return to school that by adopting different ways of addressing pupils there was usually a more positive outcome. The teachers suggested this was because they had both made their expectations clear as well as offering the reasoning behind the request. It was a change from pupils solely being told what not to do.

Reframing 'don't' statements is an example of positive language and allows students to reflect on their actions and make more positive choices in the classroom. In such a way, the child is enabled to feel more a part of their school, and less someone who is rejected.

Russia – using the concept of the Theatre of the Classroom to explore a dilemma for inclusive classrooms

Much classroom dialogue is constructed, and looking at it explores the notion of scriptwriting and actions of the players. Developing a more inclusive way of speaking may well be a methodology that, once employed, becomes a step change to improving behaviour in schools.

Alongside looking at language, another approach is coaching. In the theatre coaching is a way to turn average contributors into star performers. Coaches inspire and motivate others to believe in the possibility of their success. They create the confidence and capability in those with whom they work to enable them to move into unknown territory. Coaching pupils to model positive behaviour in the classroom alongside developing teacher-led dialogue is an approach to behaviour management that can help create a more inclusive classroom.

In Moscow, where the Academy of Theatre Arts uses coaching as a highly developed approach to shape some of the country's most versatile artists, teachers used the idea of the Theatre of the Classroom to look at what an inclusive classroom would mean for them.

In secondary schools in Moscow, non-teaching professionals have an important role with pupils. Educational psychologists, located in schools but generally working independently from teachers, engage with pupils who are considered to be within their specialist role. The educational psychologist's domain is outside the classroom; their role tends towards diagnosis, working closely with pupils and parents and completing the necessary paperwork.

What to do with a child who simply does not learn

In the workshop, participants explored a real-life case study with an example from a teacher of a child who 'simply did not learn'. After this input, there was a general feeling that educators do not have the necessary specialist knowledge required to include disabled children in their classes. Both teachers and psychologists agreed on the view that the psychologists in the schools had this necessary specialist knowledge about 'such children'. This discussion links to the wider debate about how to use specialist knowledge, how to effectively respond to pupil needs through pedagogy and how to include wide ranges of ability.

Inclusive classrooms – are they an impossible ideal?

The debate fell roughly into two groups. One group felt that because psychologists had such knowledge of the medical causes of impairments and of identification and special adjustments that this could be best used to identify what a child could reasonably be expected to do, and what might be beyond the ability of the child. They felt that such information, provided by the specialist, enabled the teacher to be aware of what was beyond the child. Then, if a child only learned half of what was taught, this was only to be expected.

The other group felt that such insights into the child would help if psychologists recommended appropriate methods to teach 'such children'.

With these two approaches in mind, the group explored how the situation could be reconstructed to be more inclusive. Those who supported the idea of using the diagnostic assessment to identify what might be beyond the ability of the child began to recognise that some of the children who had been diagnosed were not included and, therefore, their needs were not being met.

Those who wanted ideas for appropriate teaching methods for ‘such children’ also recognised that, if applied as whole-class teaching, there would be ‘other children’, with higher ability, whose learning needs were not being met.

At this point, they threw up their hands and exclaimed, ‘inclusive classrooms are an impossible ideal’.

Assumptions

The facilitator then asked the group to explore what, if any, assumptions had been made and not challenged in the case study. The real-life case study was about having a child in the class who ‘simply did not learn’.

This assumption about ‘simply did not learn’ had led some to focus on what the child could not do. This assumption, reinforced by the diagnostic assessment, had resulted in exclusion for part of the action in the theatre of the classroom. They were excluded from part of the ‘drama’ because it was ‘beyond them’.

This same acceptance of the assumption that the child ‘simply did not learn’ caused the other group to expend much of their effort on this one part of the ‘audience’ and thereby not fully engage those with higher ability.

Furthermore, teachers agreed in both situations that the resulting unmet learning needs would result in bad behaviour in the classroom. ‘Children who are not engaged misbehave’.

Returning to the case study of the child who ‘simply did not learn’, both teachers and psychologists recognised that their professional practice tended towards a focus on the child as the problem. The fact that the assumption about a child who ‘simply did not learn’ had gone unchallenged by either teacher or educational psychologist, demonstrated educational practice akin to the medical model.

Recognising that the assumptions they held were consistent with a medical model had led them to a dead end, the group then discussed the possibilities for future actions towards a more inclusive approach.

The mindset of the medical model

Within this framework, educational psychologists tend to focus only on what a child cannot do while teachers feel their pedagogical expertise does not extend to learning needs that require specialist diagnostic assessment.

An educational psychologist summed up this part of the workshop with the phrase, ‘It is this way of thinking that makes inclusion a problem. We must now learn to focus on what the child can do, not what they cannot do’.

What were the outcomes and what are the lessons?

Teachers and educational psychologists worked together on a set of proposals. They suggested there should be a greater focus on how children learn and how to identify and address barriers to learning using the social model approach. Other ideas included closer joint working, including coaching, as a way of addressing negative mindsets, and moving away from ‘one approach for all’ teaching, to pedagogy that meets the needs of all the children in the class.

The Gambia – the griot and inclusive learning

A theatrical presence in many West African communities is the *griot*. This traditional and culturally significant profession is hereditary and has long been a part of West African culture. The griots' role has traditionally been to preserve the genealogies, historical narratives and oral traditions of their people. They tend to be a historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet or musician. Praise songs are an important part of a griot's repertoire.

It was the praise element that interested a group of science teachers at an NGO training session in Banjul. They recognised that praise might be an important element in creating classrooms where all feel equally valued. They felt that the methodology of the griot, when applied to their teaching, could offer a positive step towards inclusive teaching and learning experiences.

A particular issue in The Gambia is one of returning families who previously migrated out of the country to avoid political persecution. The children of these families are generally behind in their studies compared to their peers and tend to find re-assimilation into society and the school difficult.

Teachers wanted to explore how praise might be used to recognise the extra efforts these children were making but felt this had to be managed in a whole-class situation. They felt that to praise children who were viewed as not so advanced as others, even though they may be making great efforts, could have the unintended consequence of being more divisive. They were also concerned that such an approach could be demotivating if they were perceived to have given false praise.

Teachers came up with a set of praise guidelines to share with colleagues:

1. Make it private. Even though the role of the griot is to provide public recognition for things someone has done or achieved, in general, praise that is delivered in private is more effective. It also allows you to be partial and give praise for effort as well as outcome.
2. Make it subtle. The most powerful gestures of the griot are the small ones, like eye contact, gentle words of praise said directly to the person, or a smile from across the room.
3. Make it worthy. Offer praise only when it's deserved or when efforts go beyond expectations.
4. Make it sincere. Praise students for something you're genuinely proud of. If you're not feeling it, the odds are they won't either.
5. Be fair with praise. Some students will have made a greater effort even though the end product may be not as good as others'. They still require their effort to be noticed.

India – higher education and medicine

India has large structural differences in society that extend throughout the education system. To help address this, the state of Gujarat has a quota system whereby entry to sought-after courses at higher levels of education is awarded to a certain number of those who would traditionally have been excluded. Because of this well-intentioned intervention the resulting classrooms – for instance in medicine – are made up of those with prior schooling taught in English at prestigious schools and those who, before university, were taught mainly in the local language. In university classrooms, with often more than 150 students, medicine is taught entirely in English. The difference in prior education presents a barrier to achievement due to the differing levels of ability in the language of instruction. This issue is traditionally left for students to deal with themselves. It should not come as a surprise therefore, to find that dropout rates are high, as are those of student suicides in medical schools.

Where some have an advantage over others, is inclusion possible?

In a higher education workshop in Gujarat, the analogy of the theatre was interesting because much of the instruction was in a setting very similar to that of a theatre: massed rows of students in large lecture halls with one focal point were very common.

The question that was considered in this context was how could the barrier to instruction experienced by those with less access to the language of instruction be overcome?

All students had to study anatomy, presented as a practical subject especially when it came to dissection of human cadavers, and one teacher saw in this a perfect theatre in which to develop language skills. The first step was to use labels in both languages on key objects; the teacher's classroom resembled a primary school classroom, with key word lists, the use of flash cards, and small group working. In this situation, students were encouraged to work in groups of mixed English competency, where support could be given.

The teacher modelled carefully structured dialogues and enactments. These became templates, with common phrases being repeated, and anatomy became a topic that drew links with and developed competence in English language skills.

Going further, the teacher recognised that an important skill for medical practice in the community is the ability to speak the language of the patients. They encouraged those proficient in the community language (Gujarati) to share their language skills with those proficient in the language of instruction (English), which produced a situation where students felt equally valued. Everyone had something to offer, everyone had something to learn, and the anatomy classes were enriched through inclusive teaching.

How might you use the idea of the Theatre of the Classroom?

The Theatre of the Classroom is a tool that can be used to begin to identify the small actions that can lead to the big changes. It is also a way of identifying unseen forces that shape action in the classroom.

It begins with a small case study. It is important to capture the dialogue of the main players, so it reads as a short scripted piece with the spoken words of the key players.

Share a written version of this short real-life case-study dialogue with colleagues, telling them the story and giving them the written script. Try to present only a description of what actually happened rather than what you consider to be a full explanation. Invite questions about the drama. Allow everyone plenty of opportunity to explore all the elements that have an impact upon what was played out.

During this stage, also explore how inclusive the interaction is.

There is a critical perspective that needs to be included by the facilitator at this point: that of reviewing the interaction and asking participants about how the drama might be experienced by the child or children.

Finally, consider how it could have been played out differently and how the drama could be more inclusive.

- What is the action?
- Who is involved?
- When will you do it by?
- How will you measure the impact?
- Why do you think the outcome will result in a more inclusive classroom?

The longer term

The process of creating inclusive classrooms is always ongoing. It involves developing one's own capacities and the potential of others. School leaders transform schools by generating management goodwill and employee buy-in, and this requires understanding and patience while working through one's own and other's resistance to change. Although inclusive classrooms are the goal for everyone, challenges will vary according to individual starting points and contexts.

In the longer term, the aim of the Theatre of the Classroom is to grow an inclusive methodology for institutional change and development through the creation of collaborative networks to continually improve the learning experience of all pupils.

Minority ethnic groups in the classroom



Minority ethnic groups in the classroom

Yvette Hutchinson

Marginalization in education is a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities. It represents a stark example of 'clearly remediable injustice'.

UNESCO¹

The term *minority ethnic* is often used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent. However, as this chapter demonstrates, issues of minority access and engagement are consistent across countries, economies and cultures. In these essays the authors explore the heterogeneity within the groups they study and how identity and heritage affect how learners experience the systems in which inclusive education operates.

In the first chapter, Nupur Samuel tells the story of a series of interventions at the Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) that, over the last seven years, have responded to the needs of students from marginalised communities whose schooling has not prepared them fully for the rigours of academic life. While much of the focus is on language acquisition and development, Dr Samuel makes recommendations for transition programmes and teacher professional development in schools and in universities.

In a focus on practitioners, David Heathfield and Alla Göksu writing mainly in the first person, narrate their own tale of how they deliver storytelling workshops. They discuss the importance of embedding such practice into the curriculum and the impact of personal narration and validation on young migrant learners. Göksu, who has seen the impact of this student-centred approach, succinctly concludes:

Speaking is an art. Storytelling is, without a doubt, the oldest of all arts. It can create imaginary worlds like music or painting art do. What makes storytelling special for me is, that it has enormous potential to fully develop the learner from the inside out.

Finally, Kenneth Matengu and his colleagues from the University of Namibia bring together research initiatives and data to provide an overview of some of the issues arising for the San and Ovahimbo peoples who, as hunter-gatherers and cattle specialists respectively, hold dearly to indigenous learning as the most suitable preparation for young people from their communities. Like all the essays in this section, language use and cultural identity are key themes and in this final essay, reference to Geneva Gay's 2010 *Culturally Responsive Teaching* provides a rubric with six approaches that acknowledge language, heritage, pedagogy, cultural norms and meaningfulness which suggest a positive way forward for supporting marginalised groups in contemporary learning settings.

1. UNESCO (2010) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010*. Available online at: www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/GMR/html/dme-1.html

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Social inclusion and the role of English language education: making a transition from school to higher education in India

Nupur Samuel

Introduction

India is a country of diversity, which, unsurprisingly, also makes it a land of disparity and discrimination. For centuries, certain social groups such as the untouchables, commonly known as the Dalits, have faced ostracism and exclusion from basic rights and resources. Despite various government policies, students belonging to these groups face social discrimination at educational institutes and suffer from low self-esteem,¹ often with no recourse to counselling and support. For the 170 million Dalits that constitute 15 per cent of the population of India, caste continues to be a determining factor that adversely influences how, and to what extent, they have access to political, educational, health, economic and cultural rights. The Dalit community is further divided into sub-castes, which themselves have their own ranking. These groups do not share a common language, which may be one of the issues preventing them from unifying against the upper classes and challenging caste discrimination. Education is considered one of the key factors in improving their status, and there have been consistent policy directives and incentives aimed at providing free, quality education to marginalised groups. Questions remain however, around how much English language education is helping alleviate the social and economic conditions and what more is required to enable these marginalised sections to access quality education. This paper will discuss the process of getting members of less privileged groups into an institute of higher education in Delhi, India's capital city, and will describe the support they receive, before looking at interventions at the school and tertiary levels.

Defining the context

India has a population of 1.3 billion which, although predominantly Hindu, is made up of people from different religious, cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds. It is governed by a caste system that is defined at birth and is intrinsic to Hinduism. It constitutes four principal caste categories: the Brahmins (priests and teachers), the Kshatriyas (rulers and soldiers), the Vaishyas (merchants and traders) and the Shudras (labourers). A fifth category, which falls outside this categorisation because it was considered too impure or unclean to be counted, is the untouchables or Dalits. For centuries this group was involved in manual scavenging and had no recourse to education or basic human rights. According to Sadanand Paswan, 'caste has become coterminous with race in the definition and exclusion of distinct population groups on the basis of their descent'.² These caste groupings are determined by birth, and even though some have converted to different religions such as Sikhism, Christianity or Jainism, the stigma does not go away as these religious groups also treat them with disdain.³ Since India gained independence in 1947 the practice of untouchability has been illegal, but in many places, especially in rural India, not only are these practices prevalent, they also receive the sanction of the state.⁴ Despite this, there are provisions such as reserving seats in educational institutes and employment for people belonging to these 'Scheduled Castes and Tribes' and making elementary education a right for every child. The constitution has assumed responsibility for making provisions to uplift these disadvantaged groups by guaranteeing them direct support and providing institutional incentives for their social, economic and political development.

The term Dalit became popular in the 1970s after the rise of the Dalit Panther movement and is usually accepted to denote the so-called untouchables; the word – which has roots in the Marathi language and means 'people who have been suppressed and exploited' – is used to refer to Scheduled Castes across India. For many Dalits, also referred to as 'half-citizens', years of discrimination and exploitation makes sure they are always on the outside looking in, even when constitutional provisions ensure them a place within society. For Dalits engaging in higher education, similar experiences of discrimination and differential treatment mirror those they receive outside the campus; sadly, higher education institutes are not places of social inclusion based on camaraderie and mutual respect. Vivek Kumar argues that in addition to age-old forms of discrimination such as not sharing a room or a table, new, more sophisticated and subtle forms are emerging which are difficult to address but still leave scars on the victims' emotional and mental health. For instance, he lists, 'upper caste hostel mates not allowing Dalit students to put up posters of their icons in the hostel rooms, discrepancies in grades of Dalit students when graded by upper caste teachers, [sic] professors and university employees not signing scholarship forms of Dalit students' as indirect types of exploitation and discrimination.⁵

Other than caste, English language use and students' proficiency in the language determine how they are perceived by their peers and teachers. Often, good proficiency in English is considered synonymous with knowledge, intelligence and economic background. This has created a new social order, where those who speak English enjoy various advantages, including access to better services and jobs,⁶ and receive deferential treatment from those who cannot speak the language. English is the new currency of economic mobility, opening doors to success and social emancipation and helping people quickly make social and economic transitions.⁷ Paradoxically, while English alienates some groups, it also compensates by being a language of global dissemination of ideas and global inclusion. It has the power to transform lives as it appears to give agency, voice and a global platform that local languages have been unable to provide.⁸ It is no wonder then that there have been calls by several Dalit activists and scholars to adopt English as a common language⁹ that would give a pan-Indian identity to a community that shares a common history of discrimination and abuse but not a common language. Many scholars' advocacy for English is primarily because they believe it does not have any association with caste or a history of social discrimination.¹⁰ However, this somewhat naive suggestion ignores the ways in which the English language has itself been a vehicle for social hierarchy and discrimination. For the purposes of this discussion, Neerav Patel, a well-known Dalit poet and critic, represents an important perspective when he argues that if Dalit children have to learn the language of power, it should not be the language of the Indian upper castes, but English, which he calls the 'foster mother' language.¹¹

Observing the power and hegemony of English across domains, parents representing the range of India's socio-economic groups are demanding English-medium education for their children. This has often led to a mushrooming of low-cost private schools where the quality of teaching is substandard as teachers themselves are not proficient in the language.¹² In such cases the only beneficiaries of this have been various private schools and institutes that promise English-medium education, when poor, aspirational parents spend a major portion of their income hoping their children may learn English because they think it will lead to better job prospects.¹³ Clearly, this is not enough; speaking a few words of English might enable these children to find low-grade jobs in multinational companies and the rapidly growing city malls, but will not help them move beyond these to more professional opportunities.¹⁴ The reality is that only the privileged can afford quality education in English, furthering the divide between users and non-users of the language. One of the most immediate interventions could be to provide quality English-medium education with emphasis on mother tongue or vernacular-medium instruction at the pre-primary and primary stages.¹⁵ While government schools have now introduced English from Class 1 in 27 out of the 35 states in India, there is a huge shortage of English language teachers, and teacher education programmes have little pedagogical orientation that shares the latest ELT practices and theories with trainees. The educational scenario presents a dismal picture, where teachers with little proficiency and training in English or

ELT orientation place a heavy over-reliance on rote learning in the classroom.¹⁶ Since many students of government-funded schools are first-generation learners, they do not receive any support from home, in effect producing student graduates who may claim to have studied through the English medium but actually find themselves ill-equipped to express themselves in the language.

Many such students enter university with limited means to critically engage with classroom discourse and reading materials: they do not have a suitable command of English – the medium of instruction – and they do not have the requisite training in thinking and critiquing because they have only been taught to memorise and reproduce what passes for knowledge in their classrooms. Since most HEIs are English medium, students belonging to marginalised groups once again find themselves at a disadvantage because of their poor proficiency in English. In the following section, a university's attempt at providing access to a more enabling environment is discussed, along with ways of exploring and extending this at school level.

Ambedkar University Delhi: a case study

AUD, a state-funded university in Delhi is named after Dr BR Ambedkar, himself a Dalit and a social reformer and activist who worked relentlessly for the upliftment of socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Inspired by Dr Ambedkar's thoughts and works, AUD is making concerted efforts to create a just and equitable society, providing good-quality, accessible education and an enabling environment for students who come from varied sections of the state.

Language support

Language is becoming increasingly important for social justice because traditionally those who did not speak the language of power remained outside the mainstream social and economic sphere. To provide equal access to all, in 2016 AUD waived the entire tuition fee for students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, economically disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities. It also provides scholarships, financial assistance, grants and campus jobs to students, which has made the university more inclusive by allowing persons from deprived backgrounds to have access to higher education. This commendable approach brings its own challenges, as students from marginalised groups who now have the opportunity of entering the university have very limited means of sustaining themselves intellectually and socially. English is the medium of instruction, but it must be remembered that language is a complex social reality in India and favouring one language over another has various ramifications in a linguistically diverse country where issues of caste, class, hegemony, politics, power and gender are intricately intertwined. Given the dismal quality of ELT for disadvantaged communities, this has significant implications for Dalits and others from poorer socio-economic groups who have not benefited from good-quality ELT and therefore enter AUD at a disadvantage.

Mindful of these challenges, AUD is proactively trying to institutionalise measures of intervention and support to address the learning challenges, as the teaching and learning experience is not limited to just comprehending texts and concepts but also means being able to make valid arguments, engage with texts and carry out research, all in English.

Recently, the university launched the Centre for English Language Education (CELE) to address the increasing English language education needs of its own students as well as offering ELT training to pre-service and in-service teachers of English. While the centre was officially launched in July 2018, its members, including the author, have been offering English proficiency courses to undergraduates since 2010. The faculty has offered multi-level English language courses, out-of-class support in terms of tutorials and mentorship, workshops and summer classes to students who are not proficient in English. Some of these practices will be discussed in more detail below. While only English language teachers offer proficiency courses to students, faculty members from all disciplines contribute in other ways such as being involved in language support initiatives and discussions on language policy.

Details of the language courses and initiatives

Along with the requirement to be proficient in English there is also a shift in curricular expectations that students face when making the transition from school to the university. Unlike school-leaving examinations, the university emphasises original and critical thinking, examining multiple points of view and developing and defending one's opinions. Recognising the struggles that students face at this transitional point, over the last seven years AUD has started six initiatives to support English language learning. Four of these initiatives have been specifically tailored for the AUD student community while one targets potential English language teachers, and another offers proficiency courses to public school students. Each has informed the other, and a strong programme of support for English language learning and proficiency is being developed.

AUD has a compulsory English for Academic Purposes course for all students who enter undergraduate programmes. This course aims to improve students' English language proficiency in academic reading and writing so they can engage fruitfully in academic discourse. It is hoped that by the end of this one-semester course, students will have acquired the proficiency to think critically, analyse texts, and develop arguments and defend their point of view in academic contexts. This is a tall order and the one-semester duration seems inadequate for developing such skills even though the effort is commendable. Moreover, some students are unable to benefit from this as soon as they enter the university because they lack basic English proficiency. These are usually students who are first-generation learners or come from either regional language-medium schools or schools that claim to teach in the English medium but do so inadequately; most of these students belong to disadvantaged groups such as low-income families and low castes. Thus, a bridge programme, the English Proficiency Course (EPC), is offered to these students. Marking the transition from school to university, it helps develop learner confidence and familiarity with the language in social contexts.

These students are identified through a language proficiency test that all undergraduate students take when they enrol on courses in the first year and are offered the EPC in the first semester and English for Academic Purposes in the next.

In some cases, the faculty members teaching these courses, including the author, have observed that one semester is not enough, since students can still be below A1 level (CEFR) of proficiency and require more support. The university is trying to explore ways of helping them, and the next section describes some of those efforts.

Support outside the classroom

One of the ways in which the University provides support to its students is through the mentorship programme, where each faculty is assigned four or five students from their discipline each semester. It was felt students may need some assistance in coping with the university structure and other social challenges and such an avenue would provide the space to hold dialogues that would inform their changing and evolving social and academic lives. Over the years, this system has been successful in cases where students and faculty have found the time to continue to hold interactive sessions outside of regular class hours depending on the needs of individual students, and unsuccessful in others, owing to multiple issues of workload, time and other daily constraints that faculty and students face. While this mentorship programme is generic in nature, it created a specific forum where students could seek academic-specific help related to English language.

This initiative, called the Language Cell, started in about 2010, with a few teachers coming together in a semi-formal manner to extend support to AUD students struggling with English. Faculty members from different disciplines offered to hold a student–teacher conference for any student who needed assistance and made themselves available for an hour or two each week. This initiative, though well intentioned, surprisingly did not find many takers. Staff members would wait to meet students who might need support but found they did not attend, even when their teachers suggested they should seek some help from the enterprise. On being asked why they did not take this opportunity, students reported feeling stigmatised by going to the designated conference rooms because it indicated to others that they did not know English. The dilemma for the faculty was how to provide informal or out-of-class support for English language needs when students expressed embarrassment at accepting such help.

Acknowledging student concerns and recognising the need for out-of-class support, the CELE faculty started an informal group of postgraduates and Semester 5 students who acted as mentors to Semester 1 EPC students. The group met once a week to discuss English language-related issues, though the discussions did not always remain confined to this as students found their mentors to be a source of important information about various aspects of university life. Both the mentors and the mentees shared positive feedback, and an important insight was that learning from peers was less intimidating for students.

One of the reasons suggested was that in the Indian school system, due to large class sizes, students seldom have personal interactions with teachers, hence when they reach university, they feel diffident and embarrassed to share their ideas and seek help from teachers. The success of the less formal, voluntary mentorship initiative paved the way for more sustained and institutionalised support systems.

In 2017, the mentor–mentee programme, known as the Buddy Scheme – so named to hint at the mutual learning that takes happens when mentors and mentees interact – was formalised by inviting student interest. It was activated under the university's 'Earn while you learn' programme, which allows students to receive a stipend for campus-related work. Students who volunteered to be buddies and mentors were selected through an application and interview process which sought to identify those who not only had adequate proficiency in English but also an aptitude to learn and support peer learning without condescension. A week-long workshop that covered basic ideas of how to teach the four language skills, how to give feedback, reflect and scaffold learning without being prescriptive or judgmental was conducted by the CELE faculty. Since all the undergraduate student volunteers had been part of English language courses, they were already aware of many concepts and approaches to language learning. Teachers running the EPC course worked in close contact with the mentors throughout the semester so that classroom teaching and learning processes were complemented by out-of-class support. Besides remuneration, students also received certificates of participation for the workshop and for mentoring students through the semester. It was hoped that such incentives would motivate the mentors to engage enthusiastically in the programme.

This initiative has completed two cycles, and the initial conclusions suggest that its reasonable success is based on how the EPC teachers make connections between tasks and activities and how mentors support students to improve their draft assignments. Regular follow-up with mentors is important to make connections between classroom activities and mentorship interactions. This support is unique because it is primarily peer support with little intervention from teachers, allowing students the space to come up with their own set of rules and assistance patterns. Moreover, students work on drafts and go through the process of writing and seeking help to improve them. Mentees have reported that the informal, interactive nature of these sessions has built their confidence, especially by providing them a platform to clarify 'simple items in English' which they would hesitate to bring to a teacher's attention. Similarly, mentors share how they have felt enriched by this experience and have themselves learned many things, including how to work on their own writing. Some of the challenges faced were the inability to find a quiet space for the mentors and mentees to interact, finding common available time slots for both the mentor and mentees, managing mentee expectations when they sometimes expected the mentors to write their essay for them instead of going through multiple drafts, and for mentors, the ability to offer suggestions without being didactic.

Despite these challenges the mentorship scheme seems to be working well thanks to the efforts of the CELE team and the volunteers from undergraduate studies, but similar results were not seen when it was implemented at postgraduate level. Informal discussion with students suggests that while the English language issues faced by postgraduates are similar to those that undergraduate students grapple with, many of the postgraduate students come from other universities and colleges and have had no exposure to language learning and the approaches to critical thinking that AUD expects and nurtures in its undergraduate learners. There is an urgent need to address the English language needs of these students at school or undergraduate level if we expect to produce thinking postgraduate students who hold opinions that are informed and can be argued in an academic manner. The university's subject specialist teachers, though proficient in English, find themselves ill-trained to address English language issues or provide pedagogical support in this area.

In the next section, we look at the experiences of some students who were part of my own EPC class in the monsoon semester of 2017 and who articulate the kind of support and intervention that is helping them successfully engage with university life. These students belong to socio-economically disadvantaged communities and are first-generation university students.

Student voices

Nafisa is a first-generation learner from an economically weak, religious minority community, who went to a public school and was the first girl from her family to graduate from school and gain admission to a university. Her poor proficiency in English proved to be a hurdle in the initial days of university life, but soon the out-of-class support she received from her mentors and teachers helped her cope with academic requirements. She says, 'It was not easy (to) catch everything inside the classroom' but commented on the support given by mentors: 'They helped me in doing assignments, projects and presentations too. They really listen to our queries and sorted that out and helped me to understand.' Drawing a comparison between school and university life, Nafisa says her school did not provide any opportunities to use or speak English as Hindi (the mother tongue) was the primary medium of teaching. Since the first semester she has found various opportunities to 'make conversation and discussion in English', which though challenging at the beginning were also important in pushing her to try harder. Now, after two semesters, Nafisa is a more confident, articulate and successful learner. She feels she has a long way to go and that each day brings her closer to her dreams.

Another student, Uday, echoed Nafisa's thoughts when he stated that although he studied in a private English-medium school, teachers used Hindi in the classroom, so he never got a chance to speak English.

When I came to this university it seems everyone is speaking in English not even one uses Hindi language, firstly I was afraid, but I thought this environment could be an opportunity for me to learn English. I started learning English, but my single effort was not enough. I got EPC in first semester, this course helps me a lot to improve my English, by daily reflection, writing and assignment. I also got a mentor for my help. They all help me a lot, made me capable.

Uday admits that one year has not made him a proficient speaker but he has got confidence that he can learn and improve. Reflecting on his journey as a student, he wishes that schools could adopt the practices of the university, allowing students ample opportunities to speak in English and producing an environment that is learning-rich.

Bhawna, a Dalit student, reflected that her public school did not have a proper building so students sat in makeshift tents, sometimes with no fans in the scorching heat. Her teachers asked her to memorise answers to questions, highlighting texts that were expected to appear in exams. She made a crucial point when she said that all teaching was exam-oriented and teachers had no interest in helping students learn concepts. She also talked of the discrimination students like her faced from upper-class teachers who refused to acknowledge the presence of those from disadvantaged communities. Bhawna felt lost in the first semester at AUD since she could neither comprehend the reading texts or class lectures delivered in English or make sense of the teachers' expectations when they asked students to write original essays. She expressed her anguish by saying it seemed impossible for her since throughout her school life no one had made any such demands on her. Bhawna reports that it is through sustained support from her mentors over two semesters that she is now enjoying her classes and feeling confident about herself.

Anshu, another Dalit student, talked of the 'subtle discrimination' from both students and faculty towards those who are not proficient in English. Like others, he also vouches for the effectiveness of the mentorship programme, which helped him stay motivated and gain some proficiency in English, enabling him to engage more effectively with classroom discourse. He asked for continuing support, saying that two semesters are not enough for him and others like him to become proficient. He also hoped that schools would move away from rote-based learning and allow possibilities for students to engage in the learning process.

Student responses show that teacher and peer support and empathy can go a long way in encouraging and sustaining the English language learning endeavours of students for whom English is not just a language but a means of achieving access to better opportunities and a way out of years or even centuries of discrimination and denial. While government policies and curriculum design may try to empower individuals and communities, it is the teacher who is the key to making dreams a reality and helping students achieve their potential, and it would be a good idea to learn from student and teacher experiences of what the most effective practices are.

Some lessons: the way ahead

In September 2018, recognising the need to provide sustained support to students and provide quality teacher education programmes, CELE launched a certificate programme in teacher education called Certificate of Teaching English to Speakers of Indian Languages. This is one of the many initiatives that CELE plans to offer as part of its commitment to improving ELT in the country. Drawing on the years of experience of its members as well as interactions with students, this programme aims to create a cadre of English language teachers that are aware of the latest theories in language learning and employ effective strategies to address the specific needs of Indian students. As part of this programme participants are expected to visit public schools and teach a proficiency course. It is hoped that this will serve various purposes: the programme participants will have actual experience of teaching, school students will become more proficient in English and in the long term, teachers in these schools may improve their own pedagogy. This endeavour will provide access to higher education and improve the quality of education, thus extending AUD's vision of equal opportunities to the city's populace irrespective of their social or economic status.

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2

Storytelling for diverse voices

David Heathfield and Alla Göksu

Storytelling: definitions and its role in language learning

Stories and the connected activities exercise an irresistible power – ideas and emotions come out and mix up with other people's. As adults, we sometimes undervalue the richness of stories. I think it's important to use this power to give my students the chance to know stories from all over the world: it's also a natural way to connect children from different countries and cultures.

Monica Bertasi, Italian teacher of English¹

Humans are primed for telling and being told stories. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio writes, 'Storytelling is something brains do, naturally and implicitly ... it pervades the entire fabric of human societies and cultures.'² We filter the information we are bombarded with every day and make sense of what we retain in the form of narrative. This is true not only of personal stories, but also of stories from the world's oral cultures; folk tales, myths and legends have been honed by communities over generations and draw on collective experience to convey universal truths. These stories tell us about who we are, our values and our aspirations. Since the exchange of knowledge began, being passed on by our earliest ancestors, storytelling has been an effective educational tool. It takes us beyond boundaries of ethnicity, language, culture and gender so we can imagine being anyone and anywhere while we are engrossed in a tale.

English language teachers are ideal classroom storytellers, well placed to select and modify the story as they tell it. Nick Bilbrough, who works as a teacher trainer and online teacher of young refugees in Gaza and other crisis areas of the Middle East, makes a similar point in his book *Stories Alive*: 'There are many advantages in putting storytelling at the centre of what we do and in organising our teaching around it'.³ Indeed, the sharing of stories from regional oral cultures not only promotes a sense of belonging for students with roots in that culture, but can also open a window so students from other heritages can get an insight into the richness within it.

Divided into two sections, this chapter will begin with a storyteller's reflection on the value and importance of storytelling followed by a teacher's perspective, including a case study of work jointly conducted in Hanover in 2017.

Part one: telling stories

In 2004 I started working as an ELT storyteller with state schoolteachers and students in the UK, across Europe and in countries as far apart as Brazil and Nepal. I have become increasingly aware of the power of sharing stories orally as a way of overcoming prejudice and opening people's hearts and minds to the richness of diverse cultures. Typically, my visit to a school is short. It is usually one day in which I share stories in a performance and then involve students more deeply and actively in the follow-up workshop.

For five-year-old children from Ghanaian or Jamaican heritage, I will include 'Anansi and the Stories', a tale with repeated actions and refrains for the children to join in with.⁴ If there are teenage students of Tamil heritage, I will certainly tell 'The Three Diamonds', a wisdom tale with a lot of opportunity for interactive debate within the storytelling.⁵ If there are students from families of Turkish heritage, I often teach the class 'Borrowing the Pan', the tale I am most often told by Turkish students. Comedic tales featuring the 'wise fool', commonly called Joha in Arabic-speaking countries or Nasrudin Hodja where Turkic languages are spoken, are also wonderfully popular.

In Appendix 2 there is an outline structure for a storytelling session, which includes basic and creative tasks followed by the final activity, which is to tell your own story. It is by going through this process that learners listen to stories, repeat ideas, hear about different and similar cultural practices, and through that process celebrate identity and heritage and learn about each other. Retelling a story is one of several creative tasks students might be invited to do in a storytelling workshop.

Storytelling for new arrivals

It often happens that, because of a different language background or recently arriving in a new community, a minority ethnic student has a different level of English from their classmates.

Where their use of English is strong, they themselves could be encouraged to share a story from their heritage with their classmates. In doing so they are giving something of great value that is likely to be remembered.

Where the student's classmates are stronger in English, the teacher can co-construct an activity with the student: identifying a local heritage tale, agreeing how it should be told and then sharing the story with their classmates. Alternatively, stories can be translated into the mother tongue, rehearsed in advance and then told in English either using online translation or preferably with the support of someone from that community who speaks the mother tongue. Such approaches involve the child, teacher and community and engage the learners in linguistic, cultural and social activities.

Minority ethnic students retrieve their cultural knowledge and have a too rare opportunity of contributing their valuable knowledge in the classroom. Thus, they gain motivation and confidence.

Multicultural storytelling has a great impact on their multi-lingualism as well as family literacy. For example, when The Sleeve, a Turkish tale about Nasrudin is told, students of Turkish heritage remember other Nasrudin stories. They talk to their parents about it. Thus, they listen to longer chunks of the Turkish language. Being asked to tell other stories in the classroom, they practice the English language again.

Students benefit widely as storytelling is refreshingly different from the usual text-based approach. Thus, storytelling appeals to all the different learner intelligences. Especially, the post-story activities support their creativity.

Irmgard Kreienkamp, Senior teacher trainer at the Landesinstitut in Hamburg

The great advantage of sharing a story from a student's heritage is the extent to which that student is likely to feel included. I had an experience recently where a nine-year-old student, who had started school in the UK three weeks earlier and had not yet spoken in her class, beamed with joy as I was telling her class a story in English that she had read in her mother tongue just beforehand. Some of her classmates occasionally looked from me to her while I was telling the story, to show her how much they were enjoying sharing a story from her culture.

When telling a story from a minority ethnic student's heritage, I find out the traditional opening of a folk tale in that language, the equivalent of *Once upon a time*, and begin the storytelling by teaching it to all the students so we can all repeat it three times together. This immediately helps them step into the culture and gives them a sense of what it might be like to be finding their way in a new language, thus strengthening relationships between class members.

What students experience internally and what happens back in the family home or in the community may not be easily visible or measurable. However, we can be certain that the extent of the impact of a storytelling visit will in part be determined by the degree to which it is integrated into students' learning and followed up by the school.

In the case of St Sidwell's Church of England Primary School in the centre of Exeter in the UK, the annual day of 'Telling Tales from Around the World' has become established as a feature of the school calendar. Minority ethnic children make up 40 per cent of the school population and 20 different languages are spoken by students at home. Exploring and celebrating cultural diversity is at the heart of both the school ethos and curriculum. The day's storytelling performances and workshops are indeed a celebration of the diversity of the people in the school and the local community and act as a reference point during the rest of the school year.

One of the ways in which storytelling can be embedded in the school's curriculum is by making sure that teachers are enabled to use storytelling in their own professional practice. A significant part of my work is teacher training. I encourage teachers to observe their students' learning during storytelling workshops with me and to consider how they can use similar creative storytelling techniques and activities as an ongoing part of learning in the school community.

Where possible, I combine storytelling in schools with teacher-training workshops so teachers can develop tools that enable them to integrate creative multicultural storytelling into the curriculum as well as into the local community.

Part two: storytelling in action

In November 2017 I was invited by Alla Göksu to work on storytelling performances and workshops at IGS Kronsberg secondary school in Hanover – a school with a high proportion of minority ethnic students. In the following section Alla outlines the role of language and the way in which the plurilingual classroom can develop learners' self-confidence, their agency and, through storytelling, their appreciation of their cultural identity.

Storytelling in a plurilingual classroom

Speaking is an art. Storytelling is, without a doubt, the oldest of all arts. It can create imaginary worlds like music or painting art do. What makes storytelling special for me is that it has enormous potential to fully develop the learner from the inside out.

Alla Göksu

The comprehensive school in Kronsberg, Hanover has an extremely diverse range of pupils coming from many different cultural and social backgrounds with various initial dispositions in and to learning. This multicultural environment contributes in a profound way to the complexity of the process of language acquisition.

Like the UK, Germany has three approaches to the development of immigrant and minority ethnic students' proficiency in the language of instruction, which is usually the official or national language:⁶

- minority ethnic students should be educated separately until they are proficient in the language of instruction
- they should be assigned to a mainstream class but withdrawn regularly for special language lessons
- minority ethnic students should be provided with language support in the mainstream class.

In his research into second language education, David Little argues that these approaches reflect an integrationist ideology, which requires immigrant learners to adapt to the system.⁷ This goes against the spirit of inclusion in that it demands that the learner adapts rather than the system adapting to accommodate the learners' needs. Among migrant pupils, such an approach can cause pupils to lose confidence in their abilities, or their 'agency' as Little calls it. A good deal of their energy, which is normally needed for learning, is spent on adapting or even assimilating into their surroundings, the students try to be 'normal', the same as the local German pupils. They are partially hiding their real selves and the original identities formed by their cultural heritage.

I discovered that if I helped my learners to accept themselves as they are, to realise that they are an important part of the community and to be proud of their cultural background, then they would be able to change their attitude towards themselves, which would make a difference in the way they learn.

So, I started to look at ways of organising my lessons in such a way that I could offer every student in my learning group enough support and an equal chance to get the best qualifications possible. I was inspired by the idea of learner autonomy, introduced to me by Leni Dam. Dam specifically refers to her own practice in Denmark and her work on the concept of learner autonomy with Henri Holec, the 'father' of learner autonomy and his colleagues at CRAPEL (Centre de recherches et d'applications pédagogiques en langues, University of Nancy, France).

The core idea of learner autonomy is to give learners individual access to the language-learning process and to maximise the use of all the linguistic resources available to them. Moving the focus from teaching to learning, it places the learner at the centre of the language-acquisition process. For example, in one of the lessons we started the discussion within the class about the different cultural backgrounds of the pupils. This discussion ended up with the production of videos where each learner used their first or native language in a specific situation, such as 'meeting friends' or 'in a restaurant'. This provided introductions to different languages for the learners. I observed the growing interaction and collaboration between the pupils and noticed a high range of acceptance toward the 'otherness' of the others.

An inevitable component of learner autonomy is a safe learning environment. In a culturally diverse classroom, pupils need an environment that enables them to do things with words, develop their receptive skills first and then start producing language. They must feel free and safe to take a risk and to experiment with language.

After the storytelling workshop

All learners are different according to their origin, their family background and the culture they grew up in, but one thing they all have in common is that each of them has a story to tell. This story is as individual as they are. Our task as teachers is to make them eager, to encourage them to tell their own story in a powerful way so that it raises their self-efficacy. This is the best possible outcome, where learners can better identify with others, develop empathy with them and gain another perspective.

By their very nature, stories encourage emotional investment. While listening to stories or retelling stories themselves, learners get the opportunity to naturally express different feelings. Through these stories, a certain kind of safe space is created, where learners engage with the story as observers and experience feelings like anger, frustration and rage as well as joy and happiness, and reflect on these emotions rather than react to them.

The storytelling workshop with David Heathfield in November 2017 was very important. It helped to create a safe learning environment in which one could open a discussion within the class about the different cultural backgrounds of the pupils. This was done through the stories that our learners and their parents brought from their home countries. The group consisted of 25 learners, 14 of whom had a migration background: five Polish, a Russian, a Turkish child, two Tunisians, a Kurd, a Macedonian, one boy of dual heritage, and one Iraqi and one Yazidi who were both refugees. Most of the pupils did not use the language of instruction at home.

These pupils got an opportunity to present their stories to their classmates, who were open and curious after hearing them. Following the session, pupils watched the stories on YouTube. Fellow teachers who participated commented on the impact this would have on their teaching as they observed how well pupils responded to hearing stories from their own and other cultures.

To make David's work more sustainable, teachers developed a set of creative tasks as a follow-up activity for the learners. The storytelling project therefore ended up producing videos, shoeboxes and comics, where learners used both mother tongue and English. In this way it became a very natural process of second language acquisition, where learners individually acquired those language structures which were necessary to tell their own story and the language itself became meaningful for them. Each learner could work according to their own level, expanding their vocabulary and improving their communicative, listening and writing skills. In turn, it was found that improving their competence had a notable impact on their self-esteem.

After this project my learners were much more eager to talk about themselves and listen to others. I was impressed as the refugee teenagers spoke about their journeys to Europe. A 15-year-old girl from Africa spoke about being born in a refugee camp without knowing who her father was. As she spoke, my concern about her vulnerability considering the potential reaction of other students was quickly assuaged. All her fellow students showed a great deal of empathy and interest and were inspired to present their own stories.

Reflecting on this project, learners said they got a better understanding of each other. The activities around storytelling provided our learners with more information and depth of understanding in relation to the diversity they observed and experienced, and as a result of the storytelling approaches, teachers observed increased interaction and collaboration between pupils. It was an important trigger in the learning process of students who, in reflecting on their past, began to consider actions for the future, which for them meant learning with increased self-esteem and a positive attitude. While finishing the project I used some free time to reflect on the work and progress of the students in my English lessons. A migrant student commented on my teaching approaches with the following words: 'You clearly see something in us, what we have not been able to see ourselves and even couldn't imagine is in there. And this motivates us to give more, and suddenly everything is possible!'

Teachers must support their learners and enable them to tell their own stories. They should empower young people by making them aware of the importance of their stories.

Using storytelling, teachers can:

- acknowledge the unique identity of each (immigrant) pupil and thereby enhance their self-esteem
- enable pupils to contribute spontaneously from a store of knowledge and experience that is uniquely their own
- encourage pupils to unleash their creativity and their desire for discovery and to initiate their own learning process
- create a safe learning environment that benefits all pupils, including those whose home language differs from the language of instruction.

Teachers at my school were very sceptical in the beginning, but after the project they admitted the huge impact this project had on the way they teach. Storytelling changed the learning process from the linear to the highly complex where many layers were integrated: speaking in colours (see Appendix 2) and images, in a tone, in a rhythm and using body language. At the end of the year the teaching staff reflected on the results of the storytelling project and acknowledged that it was an innovative method of teaching which met the needs of the school's learners. The school will continue with this work and will introduce the storytelling method to the foreign language teachers on the staff.

Closing thoughts

Storytelling is ideal for promoting inclusivity among different groups. It offers opportunities to increase students' respect for their own as well as other cultures. In schools and communities where there are students from minority ethnic groups, the teacher can find, learn and share well-known stories from those cultures. This is of great value in cases where students are aware that their heritage is not the same as that of their peers, but simultaneously feel out of touch with their own history. The fact that their teacher has taken the time to learn a story and share it with the class can give students from that cultural background a sense of their own heritage being included and respected by the group. Where students have a closer connection to their own cultural heritage, they can be invited to share it through storytelling in class. As this interaction takes account of their existing knowledge and interests, learners tend to be fully engaged in the learning process. This could involve them or their family members telling another story and introducing other aspects of their heritage such as food, customs, festivals and music.

Storytelling helps the teacher to create a collaborative learning space. The narrative of the story allows students to hear others and to understand their perspectives. This intercultural sharing brings the classroom community and consequently the wider community closer together.

Appendix 1

Some effective creative tasks to follow storytelling:

- Mental imagery – students describe and compare what they imagined while listening.
- Freeze – students choose three powerful images from the story and make a still and silent image of a character at each of those moments.
- Improvised role-play – students in pairs choose and act out a key scene from the story.
- The gift – students choose a gift of any kind for a character in the story.
- Poem, song or message – students write and perform a poem, song or message inspired by a character or moment from the story.
- Artwork – students make a piece of art, for example a picture or sculpture inspired by the story.
- Movement or dance – students create and perform a short piece of movement or dance to represent a character or moment from the story.

Appendix 2

Storytelling project at the IGS Kronsberg, Hanover

Storytelling tasks for 13- to 14-year-olds

	Warm-up	
	Think about your favourite scene in the story. Imagine it clearly: What colours do you see? What sounds do you hear? What emotions do you feel?	Activation (no talking or writing)

	Basic tasks	Points	Done
1	Make a list of new words and expressions you remember from the story (with the translation for these words): 5 nouns, 5 adjectives, 5 verbs at least. Can you name these words in other languages, too? Write them down as well.	10	
2	Write the story in your own words.	15	
3	Draw and describe your favourite character(s). Label the drawing.	15	

	Creative tasks	Points	Done
4	<p>Choose one of the tasks:</p> <p>A. Find a song for the story. Explain why you have chosen this song.</p> <p>B. Make a trailer to the story (film yourself/use Playmobil figures/create it with help of GoAnimate program, etc.).</p> <p>C. Make a poster to make an advertisement for your story. Use a DIN A3 format, pictures, drawings and headlines.</p>	10	
5	<p>Choose one of the tasks:</p> <p>A. Suggest a fantasy ending to the story (80 words). It can be funny, crazy or sad. You can invent new characters too.</p> <p>B. Design a comic with the content of the story. Draw 5/6 pictures.</p>	15	

	Tell your own story	Points	Done
6	<p>Choose one of the tasks:</p> <p>A. Prepare a shoebox presentation: Choose the three most important things from your book and design a shoebox with them. Present your book with the shoebox and explain your choice (10–15 minutes).</p> <p>B. Create an audiobook out of your story. Support your story with visual pictures. Think about the possibility of giving it to younger pupils at school or children in hospital who are not able to read (2 pages).</p>	15	

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3

Inclusive education in marginalised contexts: the San and Ovahimba learners in Namibia

Kenneth Matengu, Gilbert Likando and Cynthy Haihambo

Introduction

One of Namibia's outstanding sociocultural characteristics is the ethnic heterogeneity of its inhabitants, which stands at 25 distinct groups. The indigenous minority groups include the Kwe, Hai-dom, Joehansi and Khu groups, who are informally known as San communities, and the Himba, Zemba, and Ovahimba, who among others¹ are part of the Ovahimba communities, which predominantly practice hunter-gathering and pastoral livestock farming. Historically, Namibia's education system was divided along racial lines, with Blacks classified in an order of importance where the San and Ovahimba people were in the lowest categories. In this apartheid system Whites and Coloureds received unending privileges at the expense of the indigenous Namibians, of which the Ovahimba and the San communities were the worst affected.² When independence dawned in 1990, it signified political freedom long awaited by many. Since then the government has been dedicated to the process of educational transformation to bring about equitable access to quality education for all Namibians. This process included significant initiatives such as recognition of the San as an 'educationally marginalised group', emphasis on mother tongue education, use of satellite and mobile schools for Ovahimba learners, and Namibia's *Sector Policy on Inclusive Education*. This chapter will examine the policy measures that the Namibian government has put in place to create an inclusive education environment.

By using a qualitative design, we take a multifaceted approach to examining and analysing social patterns and culture, reasons for low education outcomes, practices in schools to enhance inclusivity, educators' perspectives on the San and Ovahimba children's participation in education, strategies to secure inclusive, equitable and quality education, and policy implementation perspectives. Table 1 shows that latest data on the Namibian languages and percentage of distribution.

Table 1: Namibian Language and percentage distribution, 2001–11

Main language	2001	2011
Oshiwambo	48.5	48.9
Nama/Damara	11.5	11.3
Afrikaans	11.4	10.4
Otjiherero (includes Himba, Zemba, etc.)	7.9	8.6
Kavango	9.7	8.5
Lozi	5.0	4.8
English	1.9	3.4
German	1.1	0.9
San	1.2	0.8
Other	1.8	2.4

Source: 2001 and 2011 Population and Housing Census³

Inclusive education: context, contextual framework and values

Namibia is committed to the achievement of inclusive education through the implementation of international and national directives and policy instruments that guide education provisions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2015). Notably, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) reinforced that schools must accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This included children who were gifted and talented, those with disabilities, those with other difficulties such as street children and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups. These provisions, alongside the *Sector Policy on Inclusive Education*, ensure the education system is inclusive, sensitive and responsive to the needs of all children and that all children receive the same education irrespective of where they are in the country.

The inclusive education philosophy is premised on the expectation that schools should become centres in which diversity is viewed positively and not as a challenge and where all learners can develop and thrive.

Rather than being a marginal issue on how some learners can be integrated in mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems and other learning environments in order to respond to the diversity of learners.

UNESCO⁴

Characteristics of inclusive education

According to the Ministry of Education's *Sector Policy on Inclusive Education*,⁵ inclusive education can be achieved by focusing on capacitation and mainstreaming. It states that 'Inclusive education can be seen as a process of strengthening the capacity of an education system to reach out to all learners'. In other words, if more and more learners from marginalised groups have access to education, the ministry can argue that they are achieving their aim. However, such an approach does not consider the many issues relating to the provision of inclusive education for marginalised groups.

This marginalisation is clearly visible in the education of the San and Ovahimba learners as can be seen from retention rates, which have remained low at upper primary and higher levels.⁶ A 2011 UNICEF study that assessed trends in quality and equity in education confirmed that primary school enrolment for the general population was relatively high at 90.9 per cent (90.5 per cent of males, and 91.3 per cent of females). However, attendance rates were lowest in Kunene (56.2 per cent), Otjozondjupa (82.1 per cent), Omaheke (83.9 per cent) and Kavango (86.8 per cent).⁷ These figures show that attendance rates were low in areas inhabited by San and Ovahimba communities. Another study by Maarit Thiem and Jennifer Hays revealed that of the San people who attended school and participated in the study, about 90 per cent dropped out before receiving a certificate.⁸ Furthermore, Education Management Information System statistics showed a worrisome decline in San enrolment in upper primary and higher grades.⁹ The Thiem and Hays study found that 36 per cent of the children in their focus group had dropped out by Grade 4, and over half (55.2 per cent) by Grade 6.

The evidence confirms that early drop-out and low education achievement was prevalent with both San and Ovahimba learners, despite an enabling legislative framework. The enactment of Article 20 in the Namibian Constitution stating that 'all persons shall have the right to education'¹⁰ laid the foundation on which all future policy frameworks were to be anchored. In line with this constitutional provision the following were achieved:

- a policy framework that articulated four major goals of education: access, democracy, equality and quality¹¹
- the identification of the educationally marginalised, including San and Ovahimba children, for whom expanded support should be given to enable them to access equitable, quality education¹²
- the establishment of a Department for Marginalised Communities in the Office of the Vice President specifically to target San and Ovahimba inclusion in mainstream society through various primary, secondary and tertiary services.

These policies led to several interventions that underscore the importance of inclusive education for the San and Ovahimba peoples. These included provision for food rations and exemptions of San and Ovahimba learners from paying school-related fees. Furthermore, the implementation of universal free primary education in 2012, followed by free secondary education in 2014, was geared towards total inclusion for all. However, the retention rate for the San and Ovahimba in secondary and post-secondary programmes remains a matter of concern.

Previous research findings

The University of Namibia prioritised knowledge systems as one of the key research areas for the period 2011–16, and various research work focused on the education of the San and Ovahimba communities, such as *Issues facing Ethnic Minority Groups in Namibia: case Studies of the San and Ovahimba in Namibia* and *An Exploration of Quality Inclusive Education in the Pre- and Lower Primary Education Phase in Namibia: the case of one school in the Omaheke region*.¹³ In all schools visited for these research projects, when asked what their understanding of inclusive education was, the majority of teachers responded that it was about 'teaching learners with disabilities in mainstream schools'. The majority also indicated they had no skills to support learners with disabilities.¹⁴ Although listed as a key population of educationally marginalised children, at school level, children from indigenous communities were not recognised by teachers as a special group that called for a different approach. As a result, marginalisation and exclusion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds mirrors the sociopolitical context of the schools themselves and the society in which those schools are located. The intersection between race, ethnicity and power impedes the successful implementation of inclusive education for learners from a minority ethnic background.

Some schools use subtle forms of rejection hidden in low expectations, jokes, language and 'othering' towards children from marginalised communities, and these forms of symbolic stigma hamper the development of inclusive schools. Therefore, there is a need to reassess pedagogy and socialisation if we are to succeed in creating schools where learners from indigenous communities experience belonging. We argue for post-conflict pedagogy¹⁵ in which those teaching indigenous communities approach their learners with compassion and empathy as opposed to constantly comparing them with others from dominant groups. This pedagogy advocates for continual social engagement¹⁶ between teachers and learners to seek pedagogical interventions that take into consideration different learners and their contexts. This is vital if learners from marginalised communities are to feel accepted and, by implication, find school meaningful.

During our work with the San and Ovahimba, we identified several barriers that hinder success in implementing inclusive education in Namibia. Inclusive policies notwithstanding, Namibian society has not yet undergone transformation towards inclusive cultures, and as a result, learners from minority ethnic backgrounds experience exclusion and stigmatisation throughout their lives. Where the school is supposed to offer a creative space for learning, most schools stick to conventional teaching styles, which do not focus on individual needs but instead view children as a homogeneous group. This hinders Ovahimba and San learners' full participation in education and poses a threat to their inclusion in schools.

Both the Ovahimba and San ethnic groups maintain an oral culture where skills, values, language and folklore are transferred orally from generation to generation and rarely written down. As a result, learners come to school with limited pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills, and when they arrive they are confronted with books, which creates an immediate culture shock. Similarly, for many learners the culture in both boarding and day schools is very different from that at home and they have to learn to live in two different worlds with different world views. Teachers need to adapt their pedagogical approaches and try to build bridges between these two worlds. Another cultural difference is that the Ovahimba and San cultures are based on the *Ubuntu* philosophy (I am because we are). In this world view, there is no space for individualism; community and families' co-operative work is encouraged, and independent work is discouraged. This group identity also informs how critical thinking is applied where problems are solved as a group, whereas in school, individuals are expected to solve a problem and individual achievement rather than group achievements are rewarded.

There continue to be disparities in terms of school attendance by these two indigenous communities, and the Office of the Vice President has launched a Back to School and Stay in School campaign, which provides transport to and from school for San learners in remote rural communities. The intervention strategies put in place by the government aim to address gaps between the sociohistorical realities of the San and Ovahimba communities and expectations from the schools. This decision was taken because the school as a sociopolitical institution is often perceived by indigenous communities as alien and colonising. Government, on the other hand, sees formal education as an equaliser.

The San and Ovahimba practise indigenous knowledge or traditional education. We know from oral history that indigenous communities such as the Ovahimba and Ovazemba had, before the arrival of Europeans, a highly developed system of education. In their culture, parents, elders and members of the community as a whole taught younger people their skills, norms and values to ensure their education led to a good life. Learning was for living and survival. With the introduction of formal education, there has not been a smooth transition, nor has there been a good strategy of acculturation as opposed to assimilation. Subsequently, what we see today with indigenous communities is a system – the school – at loggerheads with culture.

The Ovahimba¹⁷

The Ovahimba is the largest of several small ethnic groups having more or less the same cultural values and language. They live in the Kunene Region along the far north-western part of Namibia. To improve their school attendance the government, in collaboration with the Namibia Association of Norway, has established mobile school units with food as part of the school feeding programme. The food, which currently consists of porridge, is prepared by the teacher with the support of learners and some parents.

The Ondao Mobile School consists of about 35 mobile units (tents) that move with communities as part of their semi-nomadic lifestyles. More often, migration is prompted by the need to find grazing for their cattle. Each tent has adequate teaching and learning materials. Each school has one or two teachers (mostly from the Himba culture or in a position to understand such culture) and multigrade teaching is common, especially where there is only one teacher for learners who are at different levels both in terms of chronological and developmental age.

Learners live with their parents in their community, and the schedule of the Ondao Mobile School attempts to strike a balance between the curriculum goals as presented in regular schools and the accommodation of local cultural practices (norms and values). One such cultural value is that children attend primary school in their traditional attire. A second aspect that is central among the Ovahimba culture is the emphasis placed on the value of cattle as a source of livelihoods. The Ovahimba therefore often rotate their children's attendance in order to ensure that there is always someone available to take care of the livestock. In one incidence at Ondao Mobile School we observed that a parent came to the school to ask his child to go and find lost cattle. Given the complex nature of extended family structures and the Ubuntu norm, several other children also went to find the cattle. The class size was drastically reduced and much of the lesson had to be repeated the next day – a situation that would amount to misconduct in a regular school.

While mobile school strategies are used at primary level, progression to secondary level is marked with some challenges. Some respondents in our previous research said, 'when learners have to go to secondary schools in towns, away from their parents, many Ovahimba children do not cope and return to the village'. Secondary school is thus viewed as alien by the local communities as one parent recounted: 'They take that road you came with and go to schools far away, and when they are finished with school, they have lost interest in the important things we taught them. They want to remain in towns'.¹⁸ To further demonstrate how a school as an institution is at odds with Ovahimba practices, we can look at one of our field experiences in the Kaokoland, the Ovahimba area of the Kunene Region. In the general education system in Namibia, children start formal schooling aged seven and are thus ten years old in Grade 4. It is however common among indigenous communities for people to start school, drop out to take care of cattle and other traditional chores and then re-enter school. In this case, a 16-year-old boy in Grade 4 narrated how he ran away from home to seek an education and was repeatedly fetched by his parents to go back home to herd cattle. He always escaped and found his way back to school: 'They kept finding out where I am [sic] and my grandfather would send people to fetch me. But I persisted and now he is happy that I can read the prices of goods for him; I can write letters for him!'¹⁹ In this case it can be deduced that when a child is determined to attend school, they can persevere despite family disapproval. Throughout the fieldwork in the two research projects, the researchers observed children of school age who were clearly not in school. When asked why these children were not in school, the parental response was often, 'they herd cattle!' Many other Namibian ethnic groups have adapted to school demands and their culture has adjusted to school calendars, but things are different for indigenous communities (Ovahimba and San) where formal education is still viewed as an obstacle to their natural lifestyles.

According to Jesaja N Ndimwedi the resistance to embrace education may be because traditional education and culture are ignored when planning and designing the formal school curriculum, which leads to learners from indigenous communities regarding schooling as traumatic.²⁰ Juan Bornman and Jill Rose argue that disregarding cultures and structures in communities and not valuing their prior knowledge does not support their inclusion.²¹ The example below illustrates this point by showing a case we encountered with the San people in Bwabwata National Park, north-east Namibia.

The implication of formal education on indigenous knowledge

At independence, the San people (the Khwe) in Bwabwata National Park (then Caprivi Game Park) were strongly encouraged to embrace formal education. The incentive was the provision of food at schools; the 'school feeding programme'. Indeed, many parents sent their children to school and enrolment in primary school increased tremendously. I wanted my students to understand the basic techniques the San people use to identify animal tracks, using time and space. To achieve this objective, on arrival I asked the local headman to lead. He asked the following questions to my students:

1. Which animal is this (pointing at the footprint)?
2. Was it running or walking?
3. If it is running, was it fleeing from a predator or not?
4. Which predator could it be?
5. Is it injured or not?
6. If you were to track it, how long would it take you to find it?
7. When did it pass here?

None of my students could provide correct answers. Then he turned to the young men who had dropped out of school in his village and asked the same questions. None of the young men could answer the questions correctly. Then he turned to me:

You see what formal education has done to us. You told us we must take our children to school. We sent them but the system could not keep them. They then dropped out. They are here and unemployed. Now they have lost on the knowledge from formal education and they have lost the traditional knowledge. What will become of us the San, if this formal education ejects our children?

Khwe elder, Bwabwata²²

The San

Unlike the Ovahimba, the San live in pockets of villages and around more urban areas, often serving as cheap labourers for families on commercial or communal farms and in towns. Mostly, they depend on government rations and grants or on the meagre salaries they receive for their services. They are very vulnerable, to the extent that they sometimes lose their unique identity – particularly during registration for social grants, when they do not have identity documents – as they are often registered with the surnames of the non-San families that accommodate or employ them. This could be a choice, linked to a desire to assimilate with those who are treated with respect.

The San do send their children to school, but with reservations. They do not seem to see the relevance of schooling although they are gradually buying into the idea, and there have been a few success stories. However, the underperformance and dropout rate of San learners remain high. Even in the village school in Tsumkwe, which was specifically created to meet the needs of the San people, it has been observed that there is a general exodus from school when children have reached puberty and their attendance declines with every subsequent grade into secondary school.²³ Full inclusion is based on four pillars: acceptance, presence, participation and achievement.²⁴ Part of the research upon which this chapter is based was conducted at a primary school in the Omaheke Region in Namibia, where San children appeared to be included in the mainstream school we visited. Notwithstanding the obvious pockets of acceptance, many learners indicated that they could not learn in their mother tongue and had to choose one of the languages of the dominant group in their area. We also noted that San learners were not keen to speak their language, even when playing with their peers who spoke the same language or dialect, and they stood out from others as their clothes were either old or too big in size.

The research identified that there are several deep-rooted barriers to education for the San, the first of which is bullying; it was observed that when San learners are bullied by their fellow learners, no appropriate action is taken by teachers and school management. The second is corporal punishment. While this was abolished in Namibia after independence, most of the San learners reported to having been chastised or mistreated by teachers. Third, the lack of mother-tongue orthography raises issues. Not a lot of educational literature is available and unlike their counterparts the Ovahimba, San children have been forced to learn in languages that are not their mother tongue. This is despite Namibia's language policy, which emphasises mother tongue as the language of instruction from Grades 1–3. Linked to this, the lack of trained teachers who are fluent in the San languages remains one of the biggest barriers to inclusivity. There is still a possibility for San learners to be taught by teachers that are conversant in the San language at primary level, but as they progress into secondary education mother tongue teaching starts to disappear and so do teachers with whom they share cultural values. These and many other challenges that are socio-economic, historical and political in nature have served as barriers to education for the majority of San children, forcing them out of school.



At schools where San learners do attend it was observed that their basic physical needs were prioritised when they received donations in the form of food and clothing. However, like the Ovahimba, the San live as a clan, related to each other and sharing everything, so donations of food and clothing are shared among the community. Schools have complained about clothes and blankets donated to boarding school children being left at home when the school resumes after an 'out-weekend' or holiday. Learners return to school without the clothes that would allow them to fit in, thus opening them up to criticism and ridicule from their more affluent counterparts. Such material poverty alongside their language access difficulties and inconsistent attendance patterns mean that these San children are stigmatised not only by other learners, but also by some of the teachers. What then should be considered for the basic education system to be inclusive?

Pedagogical considerations

While inclusive education is taught as a core module in teacher training and also as an optional career specialisation, the focus has been largely on learners with disabilities while the teaching and learning of children from minority ethnic groups rarely features as a component.

Universities could consider establishing centres where the issue of indigenous communities' marginalisation is addressed through research and advocacy. We saw earlier how marginalised communities see the current curriculum as something similar to cultural imperialism because they do not find anything culturally familiar within it. The results from our findings suggest the need for a policy shift in curriculum design toward culturally responsive curriculum development and pedagogy in education. From the perspective of indigenous communities, culturally responsive pedagogy has great potential to decolonise schooling and education.

Culturally responsive teaching

Given what we have described so far, it is imperative that culturally responsive teaching and management approaches be explored if we intend to truly make schools inclusive for marginalised communities. Knowing that responsive teaching can mean anything, we adopt the definition of Geneva Gay, who describes it as 'a way of using cultural knowledge and prior experiences of diverse learner populations in making learning more useful and understandable'.²⁵ Culturally responsive teaching thus uses cultural knowledge to inform school and classroom practices instead of requiring learners from diverse cultural backgrounds to adapt to 'school culture'. In the case of San and Ovahimba children, schools should consider these principles suggested by Gay:

- *The facilitator of knowledge acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of learners from indigenous communities.* In this case the San and Ovahimba groups.

- *The school should build bridges of meaningfulness through home–school–community partnerships to understand both worlds of the learner and the expectations of parents and communities of the school.* Currently, communities participate in education through formal structures such as the school board. Parents in indigenous communities are elected to serve on the school board, but due to sociohistoric factors, and often their inability to read and write, their contributions are often minimal and they tend to rubber-stamp decisions taken by the school management.
- *The school should consider the ways in which it encourages parental and community engagement with the school.* Schools should consider culturally responsive ways of engaging communities.
- *The school utilises a variety of instructional strategies.* Instructional strategies should enable learners to identify their knowledge in the curriculum. For example, both the San and Ovahimba have interesting ways of counting and these can be used in schools.
- *The school encourages learners to take pride in their cultural heritage including language, norms and values.* One way of doing so is to allow learners to speak their language at school, which is generally restricted, particularly as children progress.
- *The school makes use of multicultural information and resources to help learners make connections between school knowledge and home knowledge.* It has been observed that locally produced materials are minimal and there are barely any books available in the San languages. The University of Namibia did try to find potential teachers in the rare language areas including the San, Khoe-khogowab (a Khoi language of the Damara and Nama people) and Setswana. The plan was to bring them into teacher education by waiving the normal entry requirements for languages, but this process still did not attract enough teachers.

It is suggested that teachers of Ovahimba and San learners should first understand the cultures of the children and treat them and their culture with respect. Although inclusive education has been adopted in principle, there are serious gaps in its implementation, especially for learners from indigenous communities.

Conclusions and recommendations

The authors of this chapter are not arguing for segregation of systems whereby ethnic group-specific schools are created. Ours is a call for the development of culturally responsive pedagogies in which schools adopt cultural sensitivity and avoid having low expectations of learners from indigenous communities. Teacher education should shift its emphasis from a deficit paradigm to one in which all learners are valued and enabled to succeed without having to give up their cultural value systems. There is need for in-depth community-based participatory research with these two communities to inform stakeholders in developing culturally sensitive schools. There is also a need for re-thinking inclusive education by bringing to the forefront the advanced needs of indigenous communities and bridging the gaps between formal and traditional education.

In addition to the above, it is our view that the following steps should be taken to ensure a culturally responsive pedagogy, some of which has been highlighted by the Women's Leadership Centre in Namibia:²⁶

- review of the school curriculum to respond to the needs of the Ovahimba and San children with respect to their culture, norms and values, and the promotion of indigenous knowledge systems
- provide adequate training for teachers, support, content and resources for culturally sensitive teaching methods (this may include cultural and traditional practices, and resources) to strengthen San and Ovahimba children's cultural identities as well as their confidence to learn. This will enable them to progress in line with their peers
- provide adequate materials in the mother tongue for Ovahimba and San learners to enhance inclusivity in teaching and learning, and promote mother tongue as a language of instruction at primary level as required by the national language policy. This will also enhance participation of the indigenous groups in education and promote indigenous Namibian languages
- create safe schools, classrooms and hostels where San and Ovahimba learners feel culturally safe, respected and recognised.

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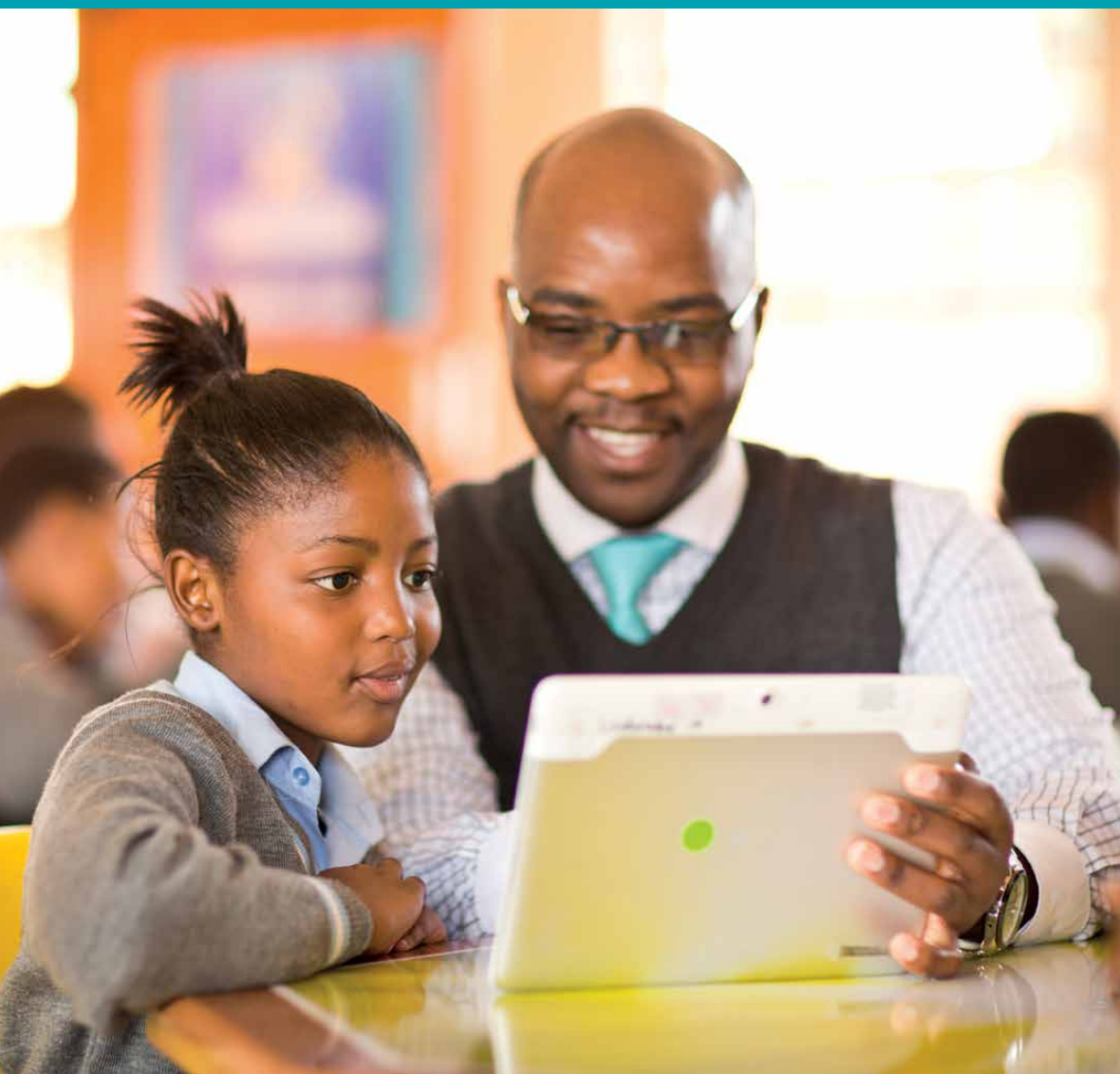
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David Crabtree is dyslexic. He has three dyslexic children, one of whom is also dyspraxic. He has a brother who is on the autistic spectrum and is also dyspraxic. One niece is dyslexic, and a nephew suffers anxiety attacks. David could not read until the age of nine, and the head teacher of his primary school predicted he would 'end up in prison'. He has been a teacher trainer for 30 years and has an MA in education. The theme of much of his work has been that we all learn differently. He has been to prison a number of times, although, in all deference to his first head teacher, it was to train staff and work with young offenders.

Nupur Samuel teaches English language proficiency and teacher education courses at AUD, India. She is interested in English language assessment, critical thinking, writing pedagogy and teacher education. She develops teaching and learning materials and tests for students of English as a second language. Nupur's doctoral work on dynamic assessment of writing focused on examining if assessment and teaching could be seen as unified activities, and was aimed at assisting students to develop their writing abilities while they were in the process of being assessed. Nupur is an alumna of the International Visitor Leadership Program (2013), the US Department of State's premier professional exchange programme, and has presented at various national and international conferences.

David Heathfield combines teaching English in Exeter, UK with being an international storyteller and teacher trainer in ELT. He tells stories with adults, teenagers and children at festivals, museums, forests, care homes and all kinds of educational institutions in places as far apart as Kathmandu and São Paulo. His resource books *Storytelling With Our Students* and *Spontaneous Speaking* offer teachers practical ways of putting creativity at the heart of language learning. He is energised by collaborating with open-minded and innovative trendsetters such as Alla Göksu. His work revolves around celebrating cultural diversity, and he learns by listening to people and their stories.

After **Alla Göksu** finished her teacher education in Ukraine, she emigrated to Germany and continued studying. For ten years she has been teaching English and mathematics at a comprehensive school in Hanover and is the co-ordinator of Migrantetz, a network in Lower Saxony for teachers with migration backgrounds. Working with diverse students with different cultural backgrounds and different dispositions in learning inspires her to be open to new ways of teaching in order to meet the needs of all students. Alla constantly experiments in her lessons, trying to create the most appropriate learning environment for every student. Fruitful and creative collaboration with David Heathfield has opened up possibilities for implementing trendsetting concepts at school.

Kenneth Matengu holds a PhD in human geography from the University of Eastern Finland. He is currently a research professor and vice chancellor at the University of Namibia. His research interests include access and equity in education, and higher education governance and management. He has published articles, books and book chapters on the co-ordination of higher education, access with equity in education and higher education governance. He has also published work on tourism, community-based management, decentralisation of rural water supplies, local government and community health.

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Cynthy Haihambo holds a PhD in education (inclusive education) from the University of South Africa and a postgraduate diploma in disability studies from the University of Cape Town. She is currently a senior lecturer, head of department and researcher in the Faculty of Education. Her research and publication areas include indigenous knowledge systems, disability studies, inclusive education, comprehensive sexuality education, early childhood and special-needs education.

About the editor

Since leaving headship in 2006, **Susan Douglas** has held key roles with a variety of national and international organisations including the British Council, the National College for Teaching and Leadership, and Teaching Leaders. Since 2012, she has also been the chief executive officer of the Eden Academy Trust in West London and North East England, which she was instrumental in founding. The trust comprises seven schools that cater for pupils with a range of special needs.

In her position as senior adviser at the British Council, Susan provides sector expertise and advice to a number of educational programmes involving ministries of education, school leaders, teachers and young people across approximately 50 countries worldwide. She currently has responsibility for teacher development and leadership programmes in Asia, South America, the Middle East and Africa, and works with head teachers and ministry officials throughout these regions.

About the sub-editors

Psyche Kennett has worked for 30 years on education, governance and development at national and sub-national level around the world. She specialises in learner-centred, task-based, inclusive methodology which empowers educators, learners, public servants and citizens to exercise critical thinking and good governance skills. Her work on equity and social inclusion includes language as a tool for conflict transformation, guidelines for stopping school-related gender-based violence, materials development policy for Language for Resilience for displaced people, girls' education for maths and science, and addressing female genital mutilation. Psyche is a trustee of the Language & Development Conference Series.

Rebecca Ingram was senior schools adviser at the British Council between 2012 and 2018, designing and assisting projects supporting education reform, inclusion, pedagogical improvement and school leadership across Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East. She has a particular interest in girls' education, having led an international initiative with ActionAid International supporting educational improvement for girls. She is the former chair of the Gender and Development Network's Girls' Education Working Group, and has worked with governments and civil society to develop programmes and policy supporting girls and young women. Rebecca is currently director of programmes at Causeway Education, a charity supporting inclusive educational transitions.

Phil Dexter has worked in English language and education for over 30 years and is currently a senior consultant for the British Council in the UK. He supports British Council teams globally on courses, resources and approaches to effective teacher development. He has managed and produced the British Council Teaching for Success Special Educational Needs modules, and his most recent consultancy advice in inclusive education involves working with governments in South Africa, Tanzania, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Spain and Germany. Phil has a master's in English language studies from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and a diploma in special educational needs. He was awarded an MBE in 2017 for his work on special educational needs, equality, diversity and inclusion.

Yvette Hutchinson has lectured in English, humanities and teacher education. She has worked for local authorities as a schools officer, widening participation adviser and as an adviser for newly qualified teacher induction and early career leadership. She is the quality assurance and teacher training adviser for the British Council, arranging policy dialogues with education ministries and leading on study visits for overseas policymakers. Yvette has worked in over 20 countries and is a grant assessment panel member for the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK. Yvette has most recently presented at the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and the Comparative and International Education Society Conference, and is an executive member of UKFIET, the education and development forum.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of what we do at the British Council and are directly linked to our values. They are vital for the progress and success not just of our own organisation, but of society as a whole. In this publication we have drawn together the research and learning of educationalists and academics from around the world, in papers which highlight the need for inclusive education, and some of the steps being taken to implement it. The settings brought to life here are both geographically and culturally diverse but identify teachers, leaders and policymakers who are facing similar challenges and making significant efforts to ensure access to, and engagement with, a quality education for all children, whatever their situation.



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