



GUIDANCE

Disability Inclusion Responsive Practice: A guide for implementing disability inclusion responsive approaches in the teaching practice and school management in Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools in Sierra Leone.



Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

BoG	Board of Governors
CTA	Community Teachers Association
DIRP	Disability Inclusion Responsive Practice
DO	District Officer
GRP	Gender Responsive Practice
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
RVS	Reducing Violence in School
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TLC	Teacher Learning Circle
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Unit 1: About this guide on Disability Inclusion Responsive Practices

Aims of this Guide

This guide aims to equip principals and teachers with the knowledge and skills to ensure that their day-to-day practice is responsive to disability inclusion to provide quality education to all pupils, irrespective of their abilities.

Who is this Guide for?

This guide should be read by all principals, vice principals and teachers working in junior and senior secondary schools. The chairperson and members of the school's Board of Governors (BoG), the Community Teachers Association and any other education personnel should also be familiar with this guide.

How to use this Guide?

This guide has been designed to be clear, concise, and informative, and does not require training. Principals, vice principals and teachers should be able to read this guide and feel more confident in their practice afterwards. However, the *best* way to read this guide is in a Teacher Learning Circle (TLC) where principals, vice principals and teachers read together so that they can discuss, share ideas and get clarifications. Most schools have already used the TLCs to read the Reducing Violence in School (RVS) guide. Ideally, each year principals, vice principals and teachers should use the TLCs to discuss the RVS guide, the Gender Responsive Practices (GRP) guide and the Disability Inclusion Responsive Practices (DIRP) guide.

Every teacher should be trained on this guide; ideally, **principals should ensure that this guide is read by all teachers** in the TLC at least once every school year.

Certification for completing this Guide

Once principals, vice principals and teachers have successfully completed all the guide units, they will be eligible to do an assessment for certification. This will contribute to Professional Standards for Teachers, particularly Standard 9: Deliver lessons and Standard 14: Engage professionally with learners.

The assessment for certification will consist of:

- 1) One to two questions on key themes from each of the units in this guide.
- 2) One to two questions on the "Table for Pupil Observation".
- 3) A review of the participant's attendance record (if their attendance has been below 80%, they must provide an explanation as to why and how they have made up for missed sessions).

Participants who achieve a satisfactory score on the assessment will receive a 'Certificate in Disability Inclusion Responsive Practice'. If staff members are unsuccessful in their assessment, they can re-apply for assessment the following year. Successful teachers will only be able to receive a certificate once.

Thank you for your participation and hope you enjoy this Disability Inclusion Responsive Practice guide

Unit 2: What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education means that all children can learn together in the same school irrespective of their race, tribe, religion, gender, ability or disability, with support for their individual needs. It means welcoming all pupils and ensure that they are not discriminated against by teachers or other pupils. Inclusive education values diversity and the unique contributions each student can bring to the classroom for the benefit of the entire school community. It is the most effective way to give all children a fair chance to learn and develop the skill they need to become active citizens.

So, it means:

❖ Equality	❖ Education for all
❖ Accepting and respecting differences	❖ Recognising different abilities
❖ Involving marginalised children (pregnant girls, children with disabilities, children from rural areas, etc.)	
❖ Making buildings accessible (building ramps, etc.)	❖ Being child/learner friendly

Inclusive education involves providing children with disabilities with good quality education. It also involves providing a good quality education for other pupils who are struggling in school. These children may be at risk of dropping out because they are sick, hungry, married early, pregnant, parent learners, from poor families, living in rural areas far from schools and/or not able to learn and progress in school.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss together the statements below and decide whether they are true or false. Then check the answers on the next page.

- All children have the right to an education. *True or False?*
- Children with disabilities can succeed in school. *True or False?*
- Children with disabilities are safer at home, without going to school. *True or False?*
- It is good to have different groups of children in a school (for example: children with disabilities, children who speak different languages, children from different backgrounds). *True or False?*
- Inclusive education means more work for teachers. *True or False?*
- Inclusive education is always expensive. *True or False?*

ACTIVITY - ANSWERS

- All children have the right to an education. **Answer: True.**
In Sierra Leone, all children have the right to education by law.
- Children with disabilities can succeed in schools. **Answer: True.**
If the right support is in place, children with disabilities can succeed in schools.
- Children with disabilities are safer at home, without going to school. **Answer: False.**
Children with disabilities will be safe in school if principals, teachers and all the education personnel make sure they are protected.
- It is good to have different groups of children in a school (for example: children with disabilities, children who speak different languages, children from different backgrounds). **Answer: True.**
It is good for children to meet children from other backgrounds and learn from them.
- Inclusive education means more work for teachers. **Answer: True and False.**
This is probably true in the short term. However, it becomes easier over time as teachers gain new skills and put them into practice.
- Inclusive education is always expensive. **Answer: False.**
Inclusive education is not always expensive. There are cost-effective ways of promoting inclusive education in your schools.

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with, or find unclear?
- 2) How might you explain to your pupils what inclusive education is?

Unit 3: Why should we focus on Inclusion?

Inclusion refers to behaviours we can adopt to ensure that people feel welcome, irrespective of their race, religion, gender, ability or disability. It is about removing barriers to access, giving equal opportunities to all and fighting discrimination and intolerance.

The unfair treatment of people with disabilities

People with disabilities are often subject to **unfair treatment**¹ based on false assumptions about what they can or cannot do. They are often perceived as dependent and unable to fully participate in society. This can happen to children and adults with disabilities, and children and adults can be responsible for the unfair treatment. People with disabilities can be discriminated at different levels: within their family when parents do not prioritise their education and well-being; at school when teachers do not adapt their teaching practice to their special needs; in their community when public spaces are not accessible; at work when they are refused employment because of their disability; in society when they are not represented in politics. People with disabilities can also suffer from **teasing, bullying** or **avoidance**, when people deliberately chose not to interact with them because of the stigma on disability. Women and girls with disabilities experience unique forms of discrimination; they may be singled out as targets for **sexual harassment** and many forms of **gender-based violence** (GBV) due to a perception that they are more vulnerable and unable to protect themselves.

ACTIVITY: Think about a time when you have witnessed discrimination against a person with disabilities. It can be in school but also in your community. Fill out the table below and if you are working in your TLC, discuss it with the others after you're finished.

Describe a situation where a person with disabilities was victim of discrimination. Was the discrimination like any of the examples above? Which one?	How did this unfair treatment make you feel?

¹ Gender Responsive Practice, Unit 2

What is social exclusion?

Discrimination affects the right of people with disabilities to full community participation and leads to social exclusion. **Social exclusion happens when some individuals are unable to participate fully in social, political, economic and cultural life, and in all the related decision-making.** Social exclusion is not only unfair, but it is also dangerous because it causes poverty. When people are excluded from education and skills training, they are often excluded from employment and from being productive members of our society. The social exclusion of people with disabilities is a barrier to their contribution to the economy of their families and to the economic growth of the country, and that has an impact on us all. The inclusion of children with disabilities in school is necessary to achieve social inclusion, and social inclusion is key to development.

How can we promote the inclusive education of children with disabilities?

Principals and teachers have the potential to become change makers for inclusion in their communities. They can promote inclusive education by ensuring that children with disabilities feel safe in school and have equal access to quality education. To do that, it is important that principals and teachers understand what disability discrimination is and how to address it.

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL	
Direct Discrimination	Direct discrimination happens when someone treats a pupil worse than another pupil in a similar situation because of disability. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a child who does not talk is refused enrolment in primary school because of his disability.• a deaf girl is not allowed to take part in a school choir because the teacher thinks that deaf children cannot benefit from music.
Indirect Discrimination	Indirect discrimination happens when a particular policy or practice has worse impact on pupils with disabilities compared to pupils without disabilities, and this puts children with disabilities in a disadvantaged position. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a teacher asking all pupils to pass written tests but not providing an accessible format to blind children (a Braille version or an alternative exam format, such as an oral exam).• the school organises a sport day but there are no activities that children with limited mobility (wheelchair or crutches users) can join.
Harassment, teasing and bullying	Harassment and bullying occur when pupils with disabilities are treated in a way that makes them feel humiliated, offended, or degraded. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a girl is called names by the other pupils because one of her legs is shorter than the other.• a teacher makes continual remarks out loud during class that a boy with learning difficulties should not attend school because he will not benefit from education.

ACTIVITY: Read again the examples of discrimination in school from the box in the previous page. Think about how you would address them, and then discuss it in your TLC.

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with, or find unclear?
- 2) How might you explain to your pupils what 'disability discrimination' is and why we should talk about that?

Unit 4: Understanding Disability

A disability is any continuing condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for a person to do certain activities and interact with the world around them. For example, blind pupils have the same ability to learn than any other child, but it is more difficult for them to take notes, study and interact with the school environment.

If we look at disability focusing on what the person is not able to do, we will tend to have low expectations for what people with disabilities can achieve. **This is unfair because a disability is not the person's fault.** Instead of seeing the person with a disability as “having something wrong”, we need to look at how we can support their full and effective participation in society. When it comes to pupils with disabilities, families and teachers should recognise that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs, so every child has the right to receive quality education to learn and progress in life.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD): “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments (includes visual, speech and hearing impairments), which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”






This means that a difficulty or impairment becomes a disability only if there is a barrier.

**DISABILITY =
Impairment + Barrier**

What is an impairment?

Impairment is the limited or total loss of functioning in parts of the body or organ of the body that results in additional difficulties for a person in interacting with the others, performing certain tasks or engaging in activities. **Impairments by themselves are not disabilities.**

Types of impairment:

Physical		difficulties in moving
Visual		difficulties in seeing
Hearing		difficulties in hearing
Intellectual		difficulties in understanding and behaving appropriately
Speech		difficulties in communicating

What are barriers?

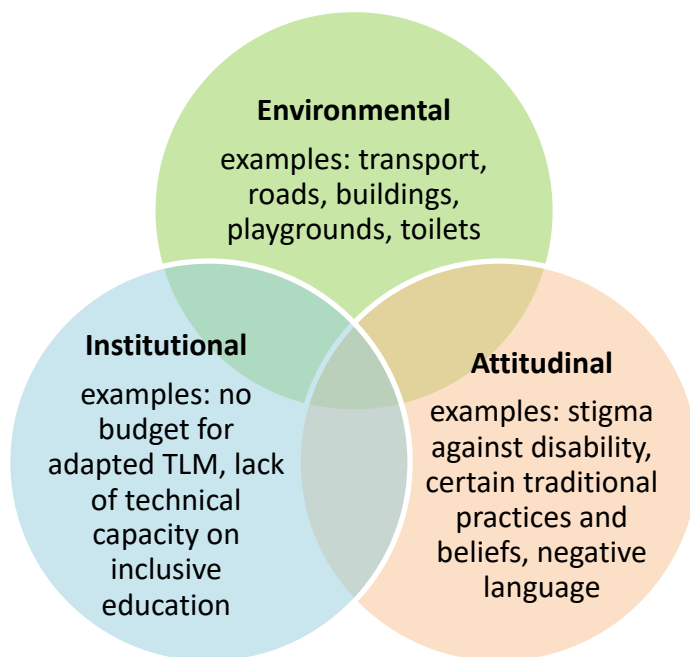
Barriers are obstacles that block a person to participate in society and access services. By addressing the various barriers, we can all contribute to make it less difficult for children with disabilities to learn in schools and progress in life.

TYPES OF BARRIERS	
Environmental Barriers	<p>Environmental barriers are obstacles to physical accessibility. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stairs or poor road conditions are barriers for people on wheelchairs.• speaking in a low tone of voice can represent a barrier for people with hearing difficulties. <p>These barriers are often the easiest to identify.</p>
Attitudinal Barriers	<p>Attitudinal barriers are related to the prejudices and negative language used to label a person and can be very destructive their self-esteem. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• labelling a child with a learning difficulty as incapable.• considering the education of a blind pupil less important than the education of a sighted pupil. <p>These barriers are often the hardest to overcome and are extremely damaging to vulnerable people, especially children and adolescents.</p>
Institutional Barriers	<p>Institutional barriers concern the regulation and procedures of a country or institution that unfairly discriminate, exclude, or separate people with disabilities. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a school that has an admission policy that stipulates that only children who score 80 per cent on an entrance exam can enrol but does not provide braille printing to allow blind children to take the exam.

ACTIVITY: Carefully read the examples of barriers in the box. Can you give more examples? Discuss it in your TLC.

Families, schools, communities and society at large can make it less difficult for people with disabilities to participate by removing the barriers which stop them and becoming more inclusive. **People are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.**

People with disabilities may face multiple barriers. For instance, if someone cannot walk, they not only require a wheelchair. Buildings will need to be made accessible for them. Even if they have a wheelchair, they may still face problems entering the buildings without ramps and wider doors. Then, they may also have to deal with stigma, teasing or avoidance. As you can see from the figure below, the different barriers can overlap, and people can be affected at different levels. However, even when there are many barriers that need to be removed, we can still make a start by **removing as many barriers as possible**.



ACTIVITY: Read the following stories and discuss together what could be done to remove barriers and allow each of the characters to overcome their difficulties.

Scenario	What are the barriers?	What can be done to address the barriers?
<p>Aisatu cannot see well from far. Her Maths teacher writes all the lessons on the blackboard and that makes it difficult for her to take good notes, so she struggles in keeping up with the lessons.</p> <p>Lansana has lost a leg in an accident, so he uses crutches to move around. He is a good student but he is often missing classes because it takes him a long time to walk from home to school.</p> <p>Mariama is deaf. She attends school but she cannot hear the teacher and the other pupils</p>		

during class, so she gets distracted and does not participate to the lesson.		
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REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

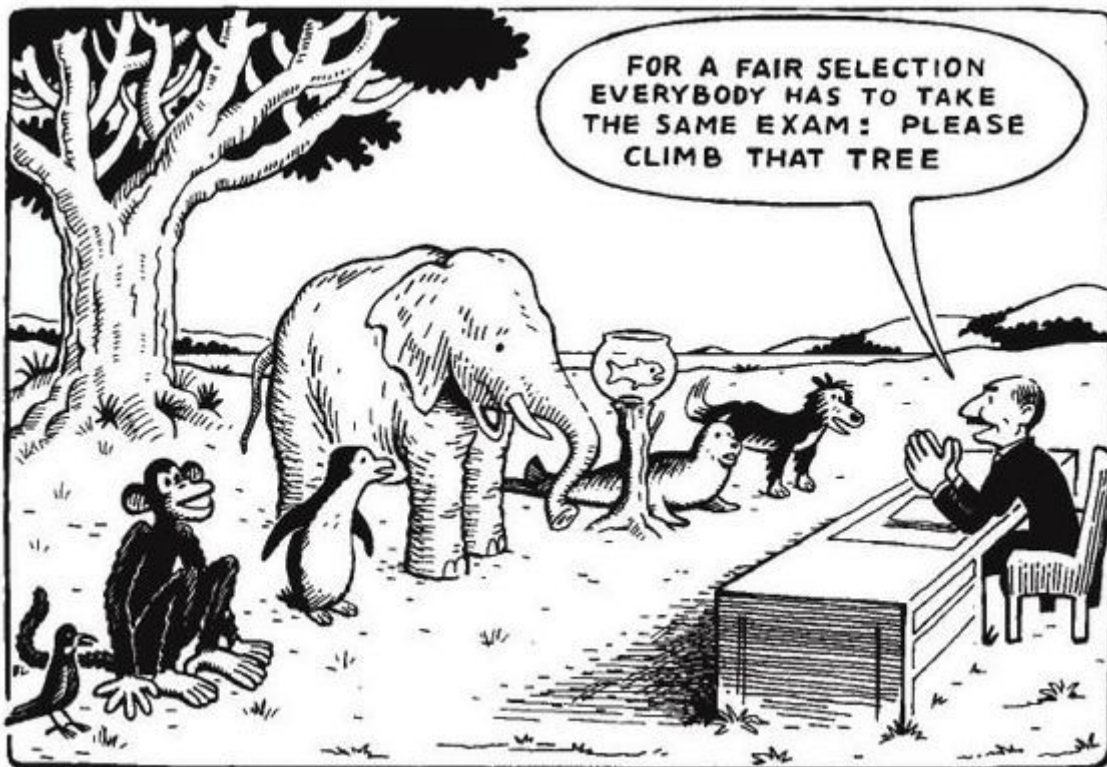
- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with, or find unclear?
- 2) Can you think about barriers to inclusion in your school? What actions have already been taken to address them? What actions still need to be taken?

Unit 5: Disability Inclusion Responsive Practice

Each individual is unique. We all have our individual differences, such as our race, gender, religion, abilities and more. In our society, the mix of our races, genders, cultures, beliefs and all the other characteristics is called **diversity**. Diversity represents an opportunity for everyone to learn and grow. When studying with a diverse group of children in the same classroom, pupils learn to respect all people and understand that everyone is alike, but also different. When teachers adapt classroom practice to diversity, this enriches learning for everyone. By creating a learning environment where all children can participate irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, teachers foster a culture of respect and acceptance that benefits all. Children with disabilities can learn and participate like every other pupil, because everyone is **unique** and learns in a different way. Principals and teachers should take in account the learning needs of all, their strengths and their weaknesses.

ACTIVITY: take a moment to look at the picture below:

- 1) **Reflect:** What is happening in the picture?
- 2) **Discuss together:** Is this unfair treatment? Why? Why not?



Principals and teachers should enact a **disability inclusion responsive practice**, in other words they must find strategies to enable the full participation of all children in schools, including children with disabilities. Teachers should adapt their teaching practice and encourage all children to participate in class, while principals should be engaged in making their schools accessible to all and establish a zero tolerance for any form of violence, including bullying and teasing.

The first step towards a disability inclusion responsive practice is to recognise that some children may have **difficulties or impairments** that prevent them to fully participate to learning. In Annex 1 of this guide is the *Table for Pupil Observation* that describes common difficulties that pupils can have in class, and what these difficulties look like when they are mild, moderate, or severe. In Units 7 to 10 of this guide, we will talk about the content of the *Table for Pupil Observation* and discuss how principals and teachers can support children with specific impairments in class.

After completing the reading of this guide, teachers should observe their class for two weeks using the *Table for Pupil Observation*. They should confidentially note down pupils who consistently display the characteristics described (note: some pupils can have multiple challenges at the same time). Then they should use the tips in the right-hand column to provide targeted support to these pupils. The strategies will address many difficulties and improve learning quickly!

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with, or find unclear?
- 2) Have you ever tried any strategy to support a pupil with specific difficulties in your class? Can you share your experience?

Unit 6: Inclusive Classrooms

In an **inclusive classroom**, the teacher respects the children and deals with all children fairly and equally. Children respect the teacher and respect each other. Children want to help each other and support other children to learn. The teacher has high expectations of all the children in the class but recognises that children have different abilities and adapts his or her teaching to meet the learning needs of every child. The teacher encourages children to learn from each other and to respect each other's differences. The teacher praises the work of any child who has really tried hard.

Teachers realise that pupils work at different speeds. Some pupils need time to process information and complete work. Others will finish the same learning tasks more quickly than others. **Children with disabilities are the same as other children.** It is important that, as much as possible, teachers treat these children just the same as the other children in their class. However, teachers may also need to do some specific things to make sure these children are appreciated and respected by the other children. Here are some ideas that teachers might find useful:

Explain to the whole class the reasons why some children in the class may behave differently or have to learn in different ways.

Encourage children with disabilities to explain to the class about the special equipment or aids they use (for example Braille books).

Don't make children with disabilities feel different from the other children. Don't single them out in an obvious way. Set up a buddy system for children with disabilities – a group of students who help the pupil when necessary (see below for more information).

Think of how sports and games can be adapted to include children with disabilities.

ACTIVITY: Have you already had pupils with disabilities in your class? Have you tried any strategy to support them? Please, share your experience and discuss it in your TLC. Are there any common strategies that have proven successful?

Planning your lesson for every child

Teachers should try to adapt their lesson plan to the learning needs of the different pupils focusing on:

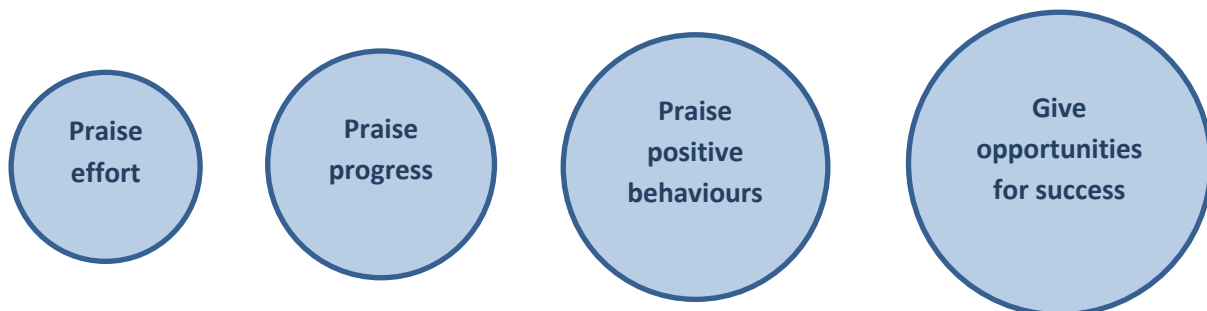
- **What is taught**

You can make the lesson content simpler or more complicated according to the needs, interests and capacities of pupils – for instance, some pupils can be given simpler texts to write than other pupils.

- **How is the lesson being taught**

- **Communication** – You can communicate in different ways with different learners. For instance, you can use simpler or more complicated language when communicating with certain pupils.
- **Presentation** – You can present information in different formats – for instance, information can be presented in the form of pictures or diagrams for pupils who have difficulty with reading, or you can write in larger prints on the blackboard if you have pupils with low vision in your class.

There is one last crucial question to consider: *'How can we differentiate lessons without damaging learner confidence and self-esteem?'*



Buddy System

Some children can find it hard to make friends, in particular children with disabilities. This may be because they have not had many opportunities in the past to play with other children. It also because other children are not very friendly towards them – perhaps because they are not used to being with children with disabilities. This can affect their self-confidence and have a negative impact on their learning.

As a teacher, you can set up a **buddy system**. This involves you finding pupils who are willing to be friends (or 'buddies') with another pupil who has a disability. You can either identify children in your class who you think will be good 'buddies' or you can ask for volunteers. Encourage these buddies to talk to and make friends with the other child. Encourage them to help the other child, but only when this is necessary – for instance, the other child may not yet know classroom routines or may not be able to find their way to certain places. It is important that 'buddies' do not think they have to spend all of their time with their new friend. They are like a helper who checks that their fellow pupil is okay and supports him or her with specific tasks. For example, a child with a hearing impairment may benefit from a buddy who helps sharing notes of the lesson or repeats teachers' instructions.

The buddy should also be trained to do the following if they notice that the other child is having problems:

- Encourage the child to talk to the teacher or an adult that they trust.
- Accompany the other child when the child speaks to an adult.
- Talk to a trusted adult on behalf of their buddy.

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with, or find unclear?
- 2) Have you already used a strategy similar to the buddy system in your class? Can you share your experience?

Unit 7: Using the Table for Pupil Observation

In this unit we will start learning about how to use the **Table for Pupil Observation** in Annex 1. Teachers are not expected to make any medical diagnosis, but to observe their pupils for two weeks to identify those who consistently show specific difficulties and may need support. Observing the pupils will help teachers recognise the challenges some pupils are facing and find the best strategies to ensure that they can participate in class and progress in their learning.

In the Table for Pupil Observation, we have used three different categories: mild difficulty, moderate difficulty, or severe difficulty. **Mild difficulties** are the most common and they are not generally associated with disabilities, however pupils showing mild difficulties need support in class and to be seen by a health professional as soon as possible. For example, children with mild difficulties in seeing may need prescription glasses, but that does not mean they have a disability. Children in this category are often not aware of having a problem or are too embarrassed to mention their difficulties to others, so it is very important that teachers identify them to intervene and provide the necessary support. Sometimes children with mild difficulties have only temporary problems which can easily be resolved, for example an eye infection that can be treated with eye drops. Pupils showing **moderate difficulties** need more robust support in school and immediate medical attention, while pupils with **severe difficulties** have normally already been diagnosed with one or more disabilities. The three categories will help principals and teachers to understand how much support the pupils may need.

Remember:

Pupil observation is the first step for teachers to identify children with difficulties and disabilities.

The observation using the Table in Annex 1 should be carried out at the beginning of the school year but possibly repeated every six months (so, if the school year starts in October, teachers should use the table again in April). However, teachers should observe their pupils regularly and be able to identify difficulties even without using the Table for Pupil Observation.

Sometimes it is not easy to determine whether a child has a mild or moderate difficulty. Principals and teachers are not expected to make a medical diagnosis. The Table for Pupil Observation is a tool to support teachers with tips to provide support to their pupils. For this reason, in the tips column you can find advice on how to support the pupil with difficulties whether they are mild, moderate, or severe. Teachers should implement the different tips and find the best strategy to support their pupils.

Whether a pupil has a mild, moderate, or severe difficulty, it is very important that principals and teachers inform the family, and also the MBSSE and TSC education officials who support the school. The three categories included in the Table for Pupil Observation will help principals and teachers to describe the situation when making these **referrals**. Principals and teachers can also refer to project partners such as the the Leh Wi Lan DO.

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with, or find unclear?
- 2) Have you already used any tool similar to the Table for Pupil Observation in your class? Can you share your experience?

Unit 8: Including pupils with difficulties in seeing, hearing and movement

Principal and teachers will notice that the learning of pupils with difficulties in seeing, hearing and movement will improve quickly when teachers use the tips of the Table for Pupil Observation.

Pupils with difficulties in seeing

Minor visual impairments are very common, and many pupils struggle in school because of their difficulties in seeing. These children may have problems that can be easily resolved with treatment or a pair of glasses. In all cases, it is very important that the child is seen by a health professional as soon as possible.

The first step for teachers is identify pupils with difficulties in seeing using the Table for Pupil Observation.

Seeing		
Mild Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Severe Difficulty
Pupil tries getting closer to the board, often squints to see the board or read, may read things very close to their face; some may tilt their head or close one eye to see better.	Pupil can't see the board from far away, sees things blurred out (ask them), colours may be difficult to see; some may get headaches.	Pupil can only see certain colors, or cannot see at all but can perceive light and dark.

After that, teachers should try to implement the tips to support the pupil in class and discuss about it with the principal, mentor, and other teachers.

Tips to support pupils with seeing difficulty to learn well in lessons
<p>Before class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a pupil has difficulty seeing, have them sit close to the board. Try out different seats with them before class to see which seat the pupil can see best in. 2. Make your classroom as tidy as possible. Insist bags and chairs are put away. 3. Pupils with low vision may benefit from glasses – if they don't have a pair or they have it but it doesn't help them, discuss this with your principal so that they can link the pupil with health services and appropriate NGOs. 4. Pupils with low vision may benefit from reading materials in large print and writing on wide-lined paper. They may also benefit from voice recording the lesson and listening after school. Ask your principal if these resources are available. <p>Opening/ Introduction to new material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Make sure your writing on the blackboard is large enough for them to read. <p>Guided/Independent Practice and Closing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Pupils with visual impairments should take part in the same learning activities as the other pupils. Adapt learning activities so they are accessible as possible for them. Focus on what these pupils can do, not what they find it difficult or impossible to do. 7. Set up buddy systems in your class and school. Fully-sighted pupils will be able to help visually impaired and blind children with certain tasks and vice versa. 8. Pupils with visual impairments will find it particularly hard to read or write large quantities of text. Given them less to read/write or have a buddy read/write for them. 9. Remember, pupils with difficulties in seeing may experience bullying and teasing from the others. Constantly monitor your classroom to make sure this is not happening. Encourage the other pupils to treat these children with respect and consideration.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the tips in the box in the previous page. Are they easy or difficult to apply in your classroom? Are there other tips you want to share with your TLC?

HOW CAN PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS SUPPORT BLIND PUPILS?

Some teachers may have pupils in their class who are blind or severely sight impaired. To support them, principals and teachers should have frequent meetings with them and their families or guardians to discuss the best teaching and learning strategies.

These are some specific tips:

Always use names

Always use the pupils' first name when addressing them. This way they will know you are talking to them and not someone else. When meeting them, instead of saying only "Hi", use their name and yours as well, as pupils may not be able to recognise faces. An example, "Hi Fatmata, it's Mr. Koroma, how are you today?". Teach the other students to do the same.

If you use writing or gestures, use words as well

When writing on the board, always read what you are writing so the pupil has access to that information and can follow along. Avoid words like "here" and "there", use words like "above/under" or "left/right" instead – use descriptive sentences like "The ball is next to the door" instead of "The ball is over there".

When you use gestures that provide direction, like pointing to a location, describe the situation for the pupils who cannot see your gesture clearly.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the following questions:

1. Are there any blind or severely sight impaired pupils in your school? If yes, how do you support them?
2. Have you ever worked with blind or severely sight impaired pupils? If yes, how have you supported them?
3. Do you have any other experience with blind or severely sight impaired people?

Pupils with difficulties in hearing

Difficulties in hearing are less common than difficulties in seeing. Some children may experience temporary mild hearing loss – for instance, if they have a cold or an infection – but their hearing usually returns to normal when the infection is gone. If you suspect that a child might have a problem with hearing, it is very important that the child is seen by a health professional as soon as possible.

The first step for teachers is identify pupils with difficulties in hearing using the Table for Pupil Observation.

Hearing		
Mild Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Severe Difficulty
Pupil misunderstands questions or statements, often says 'what?', sometimes can only hear out of one ear and thus points it forward.	Pupil may have difficulty speaking, or speaks more loudly or softly than others, sometimes cannot tell where noises come from.	Pupil can only hear you when standing next to them and using a very loud voice, or cannot hear at all but can sense vibrations.

After that, teachers should try to implement the tips to support the pupil in class and discuss about it with the principal, mentor and other teachers.

Tips to help support the pupil in class
<p>Before class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a pupil has difficulty hearing, have them sit closer to the board. Try out different seats before class to see which seat the pupil can hear best in. 2. Make sure they sit somewhere where they can always see your face and mouth. Make sure you're also facing the window so that they can see you speak as clearly as possible. 3. If the pupil uses through sign language, do not worry that you don't know sign language! The pupil might understand by watching you speak – confirm this with them. Ask the pupil to teach you and the other children some basic signs themselves! <p>Opening/ Introduction to New Material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Reduce background noise in the classroom so the pupil can hear you as best they can. 5. Make sure to get the child's attention before you start talking. You and the pupil can come up with your own hand sign for this. 6. Make sure you face the pupil when speaking and keep eye contact as much as possible. 7. Speak clearly and where appropriate use facial expression to communicate meaning. 8. Use your normal rhythm of speech - it is not helpful to mouth words slowly. 9. Use visual aids and pictures whenever possible. 10. Write important information on the blackboard. Also provide supplementary notes. <p>Guided/Independent Practice and Closing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. It is important that pupils speak one at a time during discussions. 12. Remember, pupils who cannot hear may experience bullying and teasing from the others. Constantly monitor your classroom to make sure this is not happening. Encourage the other pupils to treat these children with respect and consideration.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the tips in the box above. Are they easy or difficult to apply in your classroom? Are there other tips you want to share with your TLC?

HOW CAN PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS SUPPORT DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING PUPILS?

Some teachers may have pupils in their class who are deaf or hard of hearing. To support them, principals and teachers should have frequent meetings with them and their families or guardians to discuss the best teaching and learning strategies.

These are some specific tips:

Seat the pupil in the first row

So, the pupil can see the teacher and the blackboard.

Face your pupils when talking to them

Be careful about turning your back while teaching, because deaf and hard of hearing pupils need to see your face and mouth to understand you. Try to talk clearly, no need to raise your voice.

Use the board

Use the blackboard as much as you can. Always write questions, tests and homework assignments.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the following questions:

1. Are there any deaf or hard of hearing pupils in your school? If yes, how do you support them?
2. Have you ever worked with deaf or hard of hearing pupils? If yes, how have you supported them?
3. Do you have any other experience with deaf or hard of hearing people?

Pupils with difficulties of movement

The first step for teachers is identify pupils with difficulties in moving around using the Table for Pupil Observation.

Movement (Walking, standing, holding things)		
Mild Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Severe Difficulty
Pupil cannot walk easily, or has hard time carrying and lifting things.	Pupil walks with great difficulty, or finds it hard to use hands/arms for complex tasks. Some have difficulties holding their head up.	Pupil cannot walk independently, or they cannot use hands for grasping or reaching. or they have no head control;

After that, teachers should try to implement the tips to support the pupil in class and discuss about it with the principal, mentor and other teachers.

Tips to help support the pupil in class

Before class:

1. If a pupil has a mild difficulty or has crutches, have them sit close to the door or board. Try out different seats with them before class to see which is the most comfortable.
2. Make your classroom as tidy as possible. Insist bags and chairs are put away.
3. If you think the pupil would benefit from crutches or wheelchair, discuss with your principal so that they can link the pupil with health services and NGOs working with disability.
4. Work with the principal to see if there are ways to make classrooms and toilets easier to use and more accessible (can ramps and/or handrails be put in?).

Opening/ Introduction to New Material/Practice/Closing:

5. Set up buddy systems in your class and school. Buddies can help pupils who are physically disabled with certain tasks and vice versa. They can share homework and notes if needed.
6. Children with physical difficulties are just as intelligent as children without, so continue to be clear, patient and encouraging.
7. However, children with a physical disability or disfigurement may experience bullying and teasing from the other pupils. Monitor your classroom to make sure this is not happening. Encourage the pupils to treat each other with respect and consideration.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the tips in the box above. Are they easy or difficult to apply in your classroom? Are there other tips you want to share with your TLC?

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with or find unclear?
- 2) How might you explain to your pupils how to interact with pupils with difficulties in seeing, hearing or moving around?

Unit 9: Including pupils with learning difficulties

Pupils with learning difficulties are pupils that can have difficulties in one or more areas of learning, such as reading and writing, understanding and keeping up with lessons, concentrating and finishing tasks, and even sitting still. Most pupils with learning difficulties are as smart as everyone else but **their brain functions in a different way**, and that affects how they receive and process information. This cannot be changed, but with the right support, however, pupils with learning difficulties can succeed in school and later on in their professional career.

It is also important not to assume that all pupils who struggle in school have learning difficulties or intellectual disabilities. Sometimes children fall behind because they do not receive adequate support from their families, they do not have enough time to study, or they have received poor teaching in the past. For example, children who have developed weak reading skills in Primary school will struggle with most subjects in JSS.

At home and in school, all children should be encouraged and supported to find their strengths and understand their weaknesses. Teachers should be mindful that adolescents with learning difficulties have high rates of behavioural problems because their learning difficulties often result in low self-esteem, lack of confidence and frustration which can lead to aggressive behaviours, withdrawal, and other relational problems.

Pupils with difficulties in reading and writing

Reading and writing are fundamental skills that all pupils need to master to do well in school. Pupils who struggle with reading and writing can easily fall behind in their classes, so teachers should be very attentive to provide the targeted support. Teachers can identify pupils with difficulties in reading and writing using the Table for Pupil Observation.

Reading and Writing		
Mild Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Severe Difficulty
Pupil reads slowly in a word-by-word manner, they are often reluctant to read; pupil has weak spelling, writes less and/or considerably slower than others.	Pupil has trouble recognising words and/or in sounding out unknown words; they have difficulties in writing unknown words and/or keeping text straight, often they don't leave spaces between words.	Pupil cannot recognise letters, cannot recall the sounds of letters or write single letters.

After identifying pupils with difficulties in reading and writing, teachers should try to implement the tips to support the pupil in class and discuss about it with the principal, mentor and other teachers.

Tips to help support the pupil in class
<p>Opening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain concepts and tasks clearly. Observe the pupil's facial expressions and body language to see if they understand. If they don't, follow up one to one later. <p>Introduction to New Material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Don't ask them to read in front of others. Be sensitive and treat these pupils with respect. 3. Encourage the use of lined paper. <p>Guided/Independent Practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Find the pupil a 'buddy' who can sometimes can read aloud for them. The buddy can also share their notes with the pupil if they aren't able to write everything down. 5. Think of alternatives to written tasks – for instance, can the pupils make oral presentations? 6. Don't expect them to read or write a lot of text, especially in a short amount of time. For example, can you reduce the amount of text they have to write for their assignments? 7. Be encouraging: praise them for hard work and effort <p>Closing/After school:</p>

8. Try to provide the additional support they require. If you have time after class, sit with them and have them show you words or sentences that they find challenging.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the tips in the box in the previous page. Are they easy or difficult to apply in your classroom? Are there other tips you want to share with your TLC?

Pupils with difficulties in understanding and keeping up with lessons

Another category of pupils with learning difficulties is the one of pupils with difficulties in understanding and keeping up with lessons. These learning difficulties are not easy to identify because many other factors can cause or contribute to these difficulties, such as lack of family support, health issues including poor nutrition, weak basic reading and writing skills, etc...

When teachers think that one of their pupils may have difficulties in understanding and keeping up with the lessons, they should discuss that with the other teachers who know the pupil. It can be helpful to collect information on the pupil's performance across the subjects, agree on a common support strategy, and monitor progress. Teachers can identify pupils with difficulties in understanding and keeping up with lessons using the Table for Pupil Observation.

Understanding and keeping up with lessons		
Mild Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Severe Difficulty
Pupil takes longer to speak and to understand others, or doesn't like to speak much.	Pupil has very limited vocabulary, struggles to solve simple problems, cannot socialize with others.	Pupil finds it difficult to do everyday tasks such as speak, dress, feed, or wash themselves.

After identifying pupils with difficulties in understanding and keeping up with lessons, teachers should try to implement the tips to support the pupil in class and discuss about it with the principal, mentor, and other teachers.

Tips to help support the pupil in class
<p>Opening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the pupil's mother-tongue whenever possible/appropriate. <p>Introduction to New Material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Don't try to teach the pupil everything all at once. Introduce new topics gradually, one step at a time until the pupil becomes more skilled and confident. If you don't have time to give this support in class, try to do so after class. 3. Allow the pupil to learn through experience – through touching, seeing, hearing and doing. <p>Guided/Independent Practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Reinforce learning. Don't just teach something new and move on. Provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to practice new skills on their own, in pairs and in groups. 5. Find the pupil a 'buddy' or group of buddies that can go through steps again with the pupil. Praise the buddies for being good teachers. 6. Monitor the pupil's progress. Make sure you know what the pupil knows and what they still find difficult so that you can focus on supporting their weaknesses. 7. Reduce the workload when possible. <p>Closing/After school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Talk to the pupil's family. The family can provide you with background information. They can also reinforce what you are doing at home so that together you can help the pupil.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the tips in the box above. Are they easy or difficult to apply in your classroom? Are there other tips you want to share with your TLC?

Pupils with difficulties in concentrating and finishing tasks, sitting still

The last category of pupils with learning difficulties is the one of pupils with difficulties in concentrating, finishing tasks and/or sitting still. The inability to concentrate can be caused by a learning disorder, but also caused by other factors such as lack of sleep, poor nutrition, problems at home or stress. In any case, teachers should try to identify girls and boys who display this kind of behaviour systematically. Teachers can identify pupils with difficulties in concentrating, finishing tasks and/or sitting still by using the Table for Pupil Observation.

Concentrating and finishing tasks, sitting still		
Mild Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Severe Difficulty
Pupil cannot sit still and focus for long periods of time.	Pupil has limited self- control, speaks out of turn, has temper tantrums and mood swings.	Pupil can have erratic behaviour, severe impulsivity, hyperactivity, and inattention.

After identifying pupils with difficulties in concentrating, finishing tasks and/or sitting still, teachers should try to implement the tips to support the pupil in class and discuss about it with the principal, mentor, and other teachers.

Tips to help support the pupil in class
<p>Opening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Many pupils are highly intelligent and their inability to concentrate is not their fault. They are often misinterpreted as being troublesome. Instead, be sympathetic and patient. <p>Introduction to New Material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Be creative: try to make your lessons as stimulating and varied as possible. If the pupils are bored, they will pay even less attention.3. If they talk a lot, acknowledge their opinion but explain that others need a turn to speak. <p>Guided/Independent Practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Rather than punish the pupil, try to turn their extra energy into something beneficial. Give them an extra task on a topic or activity they enjoy.5. Try to use positive reinforcement to manage behaviour – have a ‘pupil of the week’ competition: have pupils contribute ideas on what good behaviours lead to winning.6. Encourage: praise effort as much as achievement <p>Closing/After school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Students will learn better if they are treated with respect and consideration.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the tips in the box above. Are they easy or difficult to apply in your classroom? Are there other tips you want to share with your TLC?

REMEMBER: Pupils with learning difficulties may feel frustrated when they cannot perform well in class despite trying hard and this may affect their confidence. Principals and teachers should help build the confidence of all pupils, girls and boys, so that they can participate actively in school irrespective of their different abilities.

ACTIVITY: Have you already had pupils with learning difficulties in your class? What kind of learning difficulties? Have you tried any strategy to support them? Please, share your experience and discuss it in your TLC.

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with or find unclear?
- 2) How might you explain to your pupils what learning difficulties are?

Unit 10: Including pupils with relational difficulties

Pupils with relational difficulties are pupils that have difficulties in relating and speaking to others. Some girls and boys have trouble connecting with other pupils in school, they tend to isolate themselves and limit the interactions with the adults as well. This can happen because a child is not confident or lacks self-esteem. Some children do not participate in class for fear of telling the wrong answer or being ridiculed by other children. Girls in particular tend to be quiet, for reasons that we have discussed in the Gender Responsive Practice (GRP) guide. Many children are not used to speak up in front of adults and need more encouragement. In some cases, this behaviour is associated to learning difficulties. Unfortunately, relational difficulties can easily provoke rejection by the others, and make the pupils targets of teasing and bullying. Teachers can identify pupils with difficulties in relating and speaking to others by using the Table for Pupil Observation. If a teacher suspects that a child has relational difficulties, it is recommended to observe how the pupil interacts with the other children outside of the classroom or during group work.

Relating and speaking to others		
Mild Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Severe Difficulty
Pupil has difficulties in making friends and may not speak much; sometimes they don't smile when smiled at or have poor eye contact; they often seem to prefer to be alone/keep to themselves.	Pupil has difficulties interacting with others; they can get "stuck" doing the same things over and over (like repeating words), and/or spend time putting things in a certain order.	Pupil has difficulties managing their own behavior; they can have unusual movements, throw intense tantrums and be uncooperative, resistant, and overly sensitive to noise.

After identifying pupils with difficulties in relating and speaking to others, teachers should try to implement the tips to support the pupil in class and discuss about it with the principal, mentor and other teachers.

Tips to help support the pupil in class
<p>Opening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask simple, short and clear questions that require short answers or just a nod/shake of head. <p>Introduction to New Material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Explain concepts and tasks clearly. Observe the pupil's facial expressions and body language to see if they understand. If they don't, follow up one to one later. 3. When possible, use visual aids and pictures to make yourself clear. 4. Don't force the pupil to speak in front of the rest of the class, but gently encourage the pupil to participate in class discussions. 5. Don't expect the pupil to listen for long periods of time. <p>Guided/Independent Practice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Make sure pupils understand the tasks. Check understanding by looking at what they are doing and what they are writing. 7. If you think you have not been understood, don't just keep repeating a sentence or instruction. Instead, rephrase the sentence/instruction so that your meaning is clearer. 8. If you don't understand what the student is saying, ask them to repeat or re-phrase. 9. Encourage group activities and / or a find the pupil a 'buddy' or group of buddies that can go through steps again with the pupil. Praise the buddies for being good teachers. <p>Closing/After school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Talk to the pupil's family. The family can provide you with background information. They can also reinforce what you are doing at home so that together you can help the student.

ACTIVITY: Have you already had pupils with relational difficulties in your class? Was that associated with learning difficulties as well? Have you tried any strategy to support them? Please, share your experience and discuss it in your TLC.

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with or find unclear?
- 2) How might you explain to your pupils what relational difficulties are?

Unit 11: Inclusive language and interaction

Principals and teachers should set an example for the pupils and the entire school community by adopting inclusive language and interaction that avoid discriminating people on the base of their race, tribe, gender, social status, ability or disability.

Inclusive language is a language that avoids the use of certain words or expressions that may offend, exclude or discriminate against certain people. **Inclusive interaction** is the capacity to have meaningful relations with people irrespective of their race, tribe, gender, social status, ability or disability. Also, **being inclusive** means ensuring the full participation of everyone irrespective of their race, tribe, gender, social status, ability or disability.

Children with disabilities are more likely of being bullied and teased in school and in their communities. They can be victims of **name-calling** and ridicule from other pupils, **being laughed at** and/or receive offensive or **humiliating remarks**. Children with disabilities can also be **ignored** or **rejected** by their peers. Principal and teachers should never tolerate the use of offensive or inappropriate language in school, and promote inclusive and non-discriminatory interactions within the school community.

Offensive words can harm people. Verbal abuse is a form of violence, as discussed in Unit 2 of the RVS guide. Psychological violence can have devastating consequences on girls and boys because it affects their confidence and self-esteem. A lack of confidence and low self-esteem have an extremely negative impact on pupils' learning and participation in school.

ACTIVITY: In your TLC, discuss the following:

- What are some common terms used to identify people with disabilities in Sierra Leone?
- Do you think those terms are appropriate? Why? Why not?
- Do you think any of those terms is offensive? Why? Why not?

If any of the terms is offensive or not appropriate, can you suggest any alternative terms?

Please, use the table below:

Inappropriate and offensive terms to identify people with disabilities	Appropriate and inclusive terms to identify people with disabilities



AVOID

INVALID
HANDICAPPED
BROKOBROKO
DEAF AND DUMB
CRAZY
RETARDED
AMPUTEE
CRIPPLED
EFULEFU / AFLAUN
ORKOKI



USE

DISABLED PERSON
PERSON WITH A DISABILITY
BLIND
DEAF
HARD OF HEARING
CHILD WITH A PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT
CHILD WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT
CHILD WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT
CHILD WITH INTELLECTUALL IMPAIRMENT
CHILD WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
CHILD WITH MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with or find unclear?
- 2) How can you explain to your pupils that words can harm people?

Unit 12: Disability responsive planning

In Unit 9 of the GRP guide, we discussed the importance of planning for class in a gender responsive way. We identified strategies that can help teachers creating a classroom environment that allows the participation of all children, girls and boys. Look at the box below for additional tips to support pupils with difficulties and children with disabilities in your school:

Principals	
	Ensure that teachers use the <u>Table for Pupil Observation</u> to identify pupils with difficulties in their class.
	Make <u>reasonable adjustments</u> to make schools accessible to children with disabilities.
	Establish <u>zero tolerance for any form of violence</u> , including bullying and teasing. Refer to the RVS guide for more guidance.
Teachers	
	Use the <u>Table for Pupil Observation</u> to identify pupils with difficulties and children with disabilities in your class. It is very important to know which children need additional support.
	<u>Plan the class seating</u> using the strategies of Unit 9 of the GRP guide. Remember to try to have the children who need more support to sit at the front. Blind pupils and pupils with severe visual impairment will benefit from sitting close to the teacher to be able to hear the lessons well. Deaf and hard of hearing pupils should seat where they have a clear view of the teacher and the blackboard. Some children may also need specific support. For example, if a pupil only uses his left eye, he would need to sit on the right side of the classroom. This is the reason why it is very important for teachers to observe their class regularly.
	<u>Encourage all pupils, including children with disabilities</u> to participate in class and taking on leadership roles such as class prefect or club leader. Children with disabilities may not have the confidence to take on additional responsibilities or tasks, however they face unique challenges in their daily life, and this makes them develop unique skill sets.
	<u>Review pupil attendance and assessments</u> as suggested in Unit 9 of the GRP guide. If there are problems with the attendance or performance of any pupil, the teacher should follow up with the principal, mentors and parents. This is particularly relevant for children with disabilities, who may face additional barriers to learning.

ACTIVITY: to ensure that school and classroom planning are more responsive to disability inclusion, principal and teachers should do the following:

- 1) **Read again** Unit 9 of the Gender Responsive Practice on *Gender Responsive Planning*.
- 2) **Use the tips** of the Table for Pupil Observation to support pupils in your class.
- 3) **Establish a buddy system** for pupils with difficulties and children with disabilities in your class.
- 4) **Discuss your experience with the other teachers** – Talk to the other teachers about your experience, from planning the class seating, to establishing the buddy system. You can do this with all the teachers during the TLC or in smaller groups when you have time. Discuss successes and challenges.
- 5) **Discuss specific cases with the principal** – If you are aware of children with specific difficulties, inform the principal and discuss strategies to support them.

REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with or find unclear?
- 2) Read the success stories in Annex 2 and discuss them in your TLC. You can share the stories with your pupils and discuss with them as well.

Annex 1: Table for Classroom Observation