

Leh Wi Lan

Improving Secondary Education in Sierra Leone



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GUIDANCE

Gender Responsive Practices: A guide for implementing gender responsive approaches in the teaching practice and school management in Junior 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
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
FSU	Family Support Unit
GRP	Gender Responsive Practice
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
RVS	Reducing Violence in School
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
SSC	School Safety Committee
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TLC	Teacher Learning Circle
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
TSC	Teaching Service Commission

Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Contents	6
Unit 1: About this guide on Gender Responsive Practices	7
Unit 2: Why should we focus on Gender?	8
Unit 3: The effects of unfair treatment based on gender	11
Unit 4: How to stop unfair treatment in schools.....	14
Unit 5: Gender Responsive Practice	17
Unit 6: Gender Responsive Language and Interaction	20
Unit 7: Gender Responsive Teaching and Learning Materials.....	22
Unit 8: Challenging the Traditional Gender Roles	25
Unit 9: Gender Responsive Planning	28
Unit 10: Gender Responsive Management of Sexual Maturation.....	32
Unit 11: Gender Responsive School Practices and Protocols	35
Unit 12: A School Safety System.....	39
Unit 13: Gender Responsive School Management.....	41
Annex 1: A Gender Responsive Checklist for Principals and Teachers	44

Unit 1: About this guide on Gender Responsive Practices

Aims of this Guide

This guide aims to equip principals and teachers with the knowledge and skills to improve the gender responsiveness of their day-to-day practice to provide quality education to all pupils, girls and boys, including those who are often excluded and marginalised.

Who is this Guide for?

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

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 the guide.
- 2) One to two questions on the "Gender Responsive Checklist for Principals and Teachers".
- 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 Gender 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 Gender Responsive Practice guide

Unit 2: Why should we focus on Gender?

‘Gender issues’ are about the unfair treatment of females based on false assumptions about what they can or can’t do. These assumptions can also be made by females themselves, and often lead to a bigger assumption that males are superior, which is what leads to unfair treatment between women and men.

Unfair treatment can be based on false assumptions related to other characteristics such as race, tribe, social class, disability, and even religion. For example, in some countries, people of a certain race may experience unfair treatment because of false assumptions about what they can or can’t do (especially when compared to another race that is assumed to be ‘superior’). This was the case in South Africa during apartheid, when black people were not allowed to vote or to access “white areas”. In other countries, false assumptions are made about people from a ‘poor’ social class, which then leads to unfair treatment between them and people from a social class that is deemed to be ‘superior’. **Unfair treatment - whether it is related to race, social class or gender - is completely unjust because it is based on hugely false assumptions about intelligence, ability and that one group is superior to another.**

Unfair treatment can be based on false assumptions about a person’s gender, race, tribe, social class or disability



The following table shows how unfair treatment can occur through individuals, policies and laws:

Intentional and explicit forms of unfair treatment	
Examples of behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Verbal abuse: making negative remarks to or about a person/group because they are a different gender, race, tribe, or social class. 2) Avoidance: not interacting with a person/group of a different gender, race, tribe, or social class. 3) Segregation: actively excluding a person/group of a different gender, race, tribe, or social class. 4) Physical attack: inciting violence against a person/group of a different gender (as seen in domestic violence), race, tribe (as seen in the Rwandan genocide), or social class.
Examples of policies and laws	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Women in the United Kingdom not having the right to vote until 1918. 2) Apartheid in South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s. 3) Slavery in the United States of America between the 17th and 19th century.



Is this equal treatment? Is this fair?

In Sierra Leone, it is not socially acceptable to treat people unequally however, unfair treatment does exist in subtle or unconscious ways. For example, a girl in a rural area might have to collect water before and after school, but her brother does not have to, or at least not to the same extent. On the surface this is unfair treatment, but the children’s parents think it is ‘normal’ because they experienced the same treatment when they grew up and see it in their community every day. But is it okay to treat people unfairly just because society thinks it is okay or normal? If something is ‘socially acceptable’ does that make it fair or just?

The following table shows common forms of unfair treatment that are subtle and often unconscious, which can make unfair treatment harder to detect (but no less unjust).

	Subtle and unconscious forms of unfair treatment
Examples of behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The ‘natural’ justification: the assumption that a gender, race, tribe, or social class is naturally different and should thus be treated differently (e.g., assuming that women are ‘natural’ child carers; men can take care of children as well). 2) Unconscious assumptions: unconsciously assuming shortcomings of a gender, race, tribe, or social class (e.g., American police stopping black people more than white people because of assumptions about criminality). 3) Different sets of rules: judging the same behaviour in different ways based on gender, race, tribe, or social class (e.g., a very determined and self-confident man is seen as positively assertive while a woman with the same personality is seen as negatively ‘pushy’). 4) Unconscious avoidance/exclusion: not making a conscious effort to include others of a different gender, race, tribe, or social class (e.g., socialising with people like you and excluding others who are different). 5) ‘Equal’ opportunities with unequal outcomes: giving equal access to an opportunity but not considering how unfair treatment affects this opportunity (e.g., offering special training at the weekend, but women can’t attend because of their unfair/unequal childcare duties).
Examples of policies and laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Hiring policy: the policy might offer equal access to all, but what occurs is that people from a certain gender or tribe get hired more. This imbalance means that certain issues regarding gender or tribal dynamics are overlooked or de-prioritised. • The absence of a Sexual Harassment policy: because of the unfair treatment of women (through sexual advances by men), the lack of a sexual harassment policy exposes women to greater risk of personal and professional harm.

As you can see, there are many different ways that unfair treatment can occur. If you recall the girl and her brother, you can see that the unfair treatment was likely due to the unconscious assumption that girls are 'naturally' better suited to domestic duties and should thus take on extra work. Do you think this is fair? Why? Why not? If this justification was based on race or tribe – whereby one race or tribe was considered better suited for domestic duties and was given extra work – would that be fair? Unfortunately, this was the case when slavery existed in the USA.

ACTIVITY: Think about a time that you were treated unfairly and unequally in your life. It can even be a small or minor situation. 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 you were treated unfairly or unequally compared to others. Was it because of your gender, race, tribe, or social class?	Was the unfair treatment like any of the examples above? Which one?	How did this unfair treatment make you feel?

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 'gender issues' are and why they are important?

Unit 3: The effects of unfair treatment based on gender

In Unit 2 we discussed how unfair treatment based on gender or other characteristics, is often based on hugely false assumptions. What is worse is that this unjust treatment has long-term effects on those experiencing it.

Unfair treatment can:

1. **Limit a person's aspirations.** If a girl is constantly told that her education is not important and she is made to do unequal chores because her 'role' in society is to be a wife and a mother only, she will start to believe it and will not think she has the intelligence or ability to have a career, for example as a teacher, doctor or engineer. This also occurs when people are treated unfairly based on their race/tribe or social class.
2. **Affect a person's achievement.** Girls who are not treated equally to boys in school (usually they are overlooked by teachers) will not learn well and will do worse on exams. This will have a negative impact on girls' results in school, their retention, their entry into university and access to a career.
3. **Limit an entire group's achievement and representation.** If girls limit their aspirations and do poorly in school, there will be fewer qualified women competing for jobs (do you know more men or women who are doctors, engineers or JSS/SSS teachers?). This lack of representation of women in certain professions reinforces the message that they should not do certain things.

The extent of unfair treatment in school

Given the long-term effects of unfair treatment, it is important to be aware of the many ways in which girls are treated unfairly to boys inside and outside of schools. Boys are also sometimes affected by some unfair treatment, but if we think about who experiences *more* unfair treatment, and *more often*, we can see that the extent of unfair treatment is greater for girls. Unfair treatment at home (like extra chores) adds to the unfair treatment girls receive at school (like teachers' prioritisation of boys).

The diagram on the next page outlines some constraints affecting girls' education often due to unfair treatment at institutional level, in school, in the community and at home.



Figure 1. Different constraints to girls' education

ACTIVITY: In looking at the diagram, think about how it applies to your school and community. Is there anything missing? Is there anything that is not relevant or does not apply? Write these in the table.

Unfair treatment of girls at home and in the community		Unfair treatment of girls in class and in the school	
What is missing:	What doesn't apply:	What is missing:	What doesn't apply:

The effects of unfair treatment in school

Given the extent of unfair treatment based on gender inside and outside of school, we can start to understand how these extra constraints might lead to lower achievement for girls, especially compared to boys. If we recall the girl who has to do more chores than her brother, we can see how her brother has more time and energy to study and do better on his exams. **When a girl doesn't have enough time and energy to study, she will do well in school and this will lead to her parents believing that it's not worth supporting her for further education.** If the girl's teachers also prioritise boys, we can see how she will fall even further behind.

Long distance to school, absence due to menstruation and school-related gender-based violence are barriers to girls' attendance and participation in school, and have significant impact on girls' learning outcomes. Also, in Sierra Leone **girls may drop out of school due to early marriages and teenage pregnancies that are not of their choice.**

To assume that girls are not as intelligent as boys (particularly in maths and science) is to make the same faulty assumption that certain ethnic groups or tribes are more intelligent than others. Teachers should be aware that exam scores are not an accurate measure of a person's intellect – scores are affected by many factors, particularly the unfair treatment that we discussed in this unit. And we should always remember:

The intelligence you are born with is not affected by your gender, race, tribe, or social class – however, the unfair treatment you receive in society and school can affect the extent to which you can use your intelligence and achieve results in life.

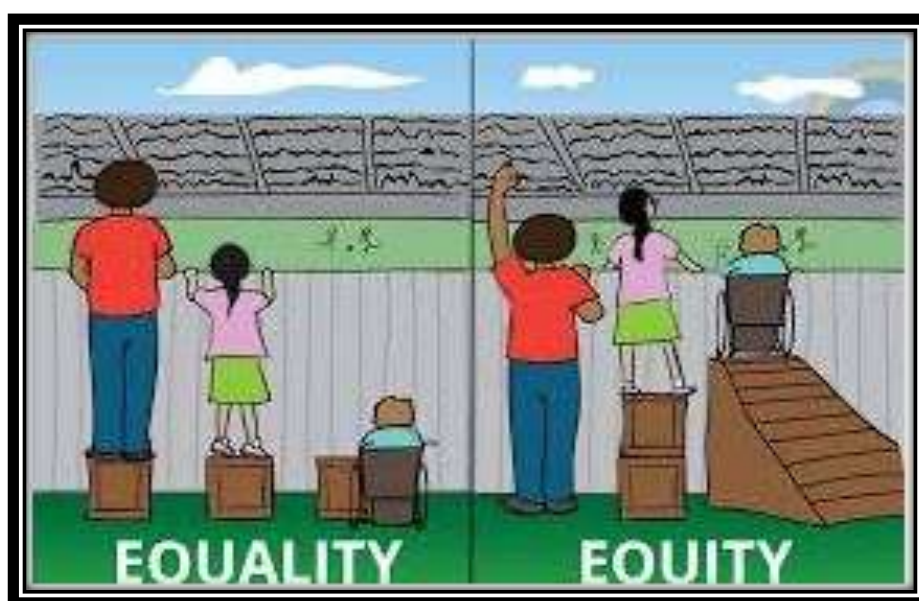
REFLECTION: In your TLC, discuss your answers to the following questions:

- 1) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with, or find unclear?
- 2) Can you see a difference in enrolment or test scores between girls and boys in your class? Can you relate any differences to the types of unfair treatment discussed in this unit?
- 3) How might you explain to parents what the effects of unfair treatment are?

Unit 4: How to stop unfair treatment in schools

Stopping unfair treatment of girls requires that principals, teachers and communities take steps that:

- 1) **Stop current unfair treatment:** principals, teachers and communities should reflect on their actions and recognise when they treat girls unfairly as compared to boys. *What forms of unfair treatment need to stop?*
- 2) **Compensate for past unfair treatment:** if we recognise that we have been treating girls unfairly, we need to think about how this type of treatment has affected girls' aspirations, behaviours and achievements over the years. *Are girls quiet? Less confident? Not passing exams?* Luckily, this damage is not irreversible, and teachers, principals, families and communities can do things to counteract some of these negative effects. *How can we compensate for past unfair treatment?*
- 3) **Ensure equal outcomes in the future:** ensuring that girls have equal outcomes as boys doesn't necessarily mean treating them 'equally' (although that is helpful). Sometimes *extra actions* and resources should be put in place because a person has a disadvantage due to the past unfair treatment, like a girl's limited confidence. Putting in this extra effort is referred to as **equitable treatment**.



Equal treatment means giving the same support to all; **equitable** treatment means making the extra effort to adapt the support to the different needs of each person. Can you see the difference?

The Radical Inclusion Policy

In Sierra Leone, the new *National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools* (Radical Inclusion Policy) aims at removing all the barriers that can limit the learning of any child, emphasizing in particular the inclusion of those groups who have been historically marginalized: pregnant girls and parent learner, children with disabilities, children from rural and underserved areas, and children from low-income families.

The Radical Inclusion policy states that **“To compensate for the chronic neglect of female education, this policy will encourage positive discrimination in favour of girls in basic education”**. Positive discrimination is the act of favouring a group of people, in this case girls, which are known to have been discriminated against in the past. Positive discrimination is a clear example of how to compensate for the past unfair treatment of girls.

Pregnant girls and parent learners

The Radical Inclusion Policy focusses on **supporting girls who are pregnant, girls who have been pregnant and parent learners to stay in school and learn**. Traditionally, in Sierra Leone girls were not allowed to attend school or sit for examinations while visibly pregnant. In 2015, when schools reopened after the Ebola outbreak, the Government of Sierra Leone imposed a ban on pregnant girls to attend school or sit for examinations. Five years later, in March of 2020, the ban was lifted with immediate effect because it was discriminatory and denied the girls their right to education. However, **the stigma and the discrimination against pregnant girls and parent learners** is still a barrier to their full participation in school. Principals and teachers are critical to ensure that all children, including pregnant girls and parent learners, have equitable access to education, in line with the Education Act 2004 that prohibits any form of discrimination between pupils.

ACTIVITY: Think about your class. Write how you might change your treatment of girls to be more fair.

What forms of current unfair treatment need to <i>stop</i> ?	How can I <i>compensate</i> for past unfair treatment?	How can I <i>ensure</i> equal outcomes in the future?

Since unfair treatment can be very subtle and unconscious, it is not always obvious what we should do to ensure equity. That is why there is a **Gender Responsive Checklist for Principals and Teachers**. You will find the full checklist at the end of this guide (Annex I). The questions of the checklist will be introduced in each unit from unit 5 to unit 13 so that we can start practicing in school.

The Gender Responsive Checklist for Principals and Teachers outlines nine competencies (and related actions/strategies) that will ensure that principals and teachers *stop* unfair treatment that is currently happening, *compensate* for unfair treatment that has occurred previously, and *ensure* equal outcomes for girls and boys in the future.

It is not expected that principals and teachers will be able to immediately implement everything in the checklist – some things will take time. However, if principals and teachers follow the guidelines for implementing the actions/strategies, they will be on their way to creating classrooms and schools that are truly equitable and gender responsive.

Take the time for an individual reading of the Gender Responsive Checklist for Principals and Teachers at pages 40-42 now.

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 the difference between “equality” and “equity”?

Unit 5: Gender Responsive Practice

Why is gender responsive practice important? When a JSS 2 teacher asks a question in class often the first pupils to raise their hands are boys. This can lead to the teacher believing that boys are smarter, and the teacher might unconsciously give boys preferential treatment. However, boys are not necessarily smarter. Rather, they have learned to be assertive over the 13 or 14 years of their lives; while girls have instead learned that they should be *quiet* over the 13 or 14 years of their lives. Girls also see teachers and parents give preferential treatment to boys, and they either give up trying or start to believe that they are not as smart as boys. Do you think this is fair?

Remember: The intelligence you are born with is not affected by your gender, race, tribe, or social class – however, the unfair treatment you receive in society and school can affect the extent to which you can use your intelligence to your fullest potential.

Teachers and principals must be aware of false assumptions they may have about girls' intelligence and/or their 'natural' inclination to be shy, and the unfair treatment that it leads to. Since assumptions and unfair treatment are often unconscious (even to female teachers), it is not always obvious what we should do to ensure fairness and equity. That is why teachers should follow the checklist below to ensure that their practice is gender responsive.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
1. The teacher uses gender responsive practice in class	The Teacher:
	1) gives equal chance to girls and boys to ask and answer questions in class (and provides extra encouragement to girls who may lack confidence)
	2) uses participatory methods such as group work and ensures the equal participation of girls and boys (giving extra encouragement where needed)
	3) pays attention to the composition of females and males during group work and assigns females leadership roles
	4) ensures that girls have equal access to teaching and learning resources (Pupil Handbooks, FQSE materials, desks, etc.), particularly if boys are more assertive and take resources first
	5) is patient with females and males who may be shy or afraid to speak
	6) checks to see if both girls and boys understand the lesson
7) provides constructive and positive verbal feedback to both girls and boys in class	

Guidelines for implementing the actions/strategies:

- ❖ All these strategies require teachers to pay attention to pupils who may *not* be the first ones to speak or raise their hands. At the beginning of every class, teachers should make it clear that *everyone* should participate equally and provide extra encouragement to quiet pupils (especially girls) to build their confidence.
- ❖ Using participatory teaching methods is another way to get quiet pupils to participate because participatory methods do not focus attention on one person. For example, grouping pupils together to discuss a topic or a difficult question is a helpful way to get quiet pupils to participate. However, be sure that girls take leadership roles and speak/participate as much as boys.

Teachers should also pay attention to the composition of girls and boys in groups. If you have a large class, you can have pupils form groups based on the 4-5 pupils sitting around them. However, feel free to move pupils around so that you create groups that are most comfortable and effective, like the following:

- 1) **All girl groups** - Girls tend to benefit from a non-competitive, collaborative dynamic of working with other girls. However, boys should also be made aware that they shouldn't dominate and that *all* voices should be heard. One strategy is to start with all girl groupings and transition into mixed groups gradually.



- 2) **Groups in which there are mostly girls, and 1 or 2 boys** – As you transition to mixed groups, establish the rule that all members of a group should speak and participate – no one should dominate.

- 3) **Mixed groups** – Ensure equal speaking and participation rules are followed and make sure to assign leadership roles to females (especially if there are fewer girls in the class).

ACTIVITY: to include these actions/strategies in your teaching practice, do the following:

- 1) **Read carefully** the seven strategies on your own – make sure you understand them and if you have questions share them with your TLC.
- 2) **Practice on your own first** – plan and practice the seven strategies in your classes. After each class, reflect on what worked, what didn't work and how you could improve next time. Remember it might not work well first time as it is something new, you can try again next lesson. You can use the scorecard in the next page for self-assessment.
- 3) **Ask a colleague to watch you teach and assess you on implementation** using the scorecard. You can then assess your colleague. Discuss each other's strengths and weaknesses afterwards.
- 4) **Reflect and plan** – once you feel that you master the strategies, sit down with your colleagues to reflect on how you will make sure to incorporate these strategies in any class you teach in the future. Sharing ideas with colleagues will help you all improve.

Scorecard:

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
1. The teacher uses gender responsive practice in class	The Teacher: 1) gives equal chance to girls and boys to ask and answer questions in class (and provides extra encouragement to girls who may lack confidence)			
	2) uses participatory methods such as group work and ensures the equal participation of girls and boys (giving extra encouragement where needed)			
	3) pays attention to the composition of females and males during group work and assigns females leadership roles			
	4) ensures that girls have equal access to teaching and learning resources (TLMs, books, desks, etc.), particularly if boys are more assertive and take resources first			
	5) is patient with females and males who may be shy or afraid to speak			
	6) checks to see if both girls and boys understand the lesson			
	7) provides constructive and positive verbal feedback to both girls and boys in class			

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) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing?

Unit 6: Gender Responsive Language and Interaction

Why is gender responsive language and interaction important? In Unit 2 we discussed how unfair treatment can be explicit and intentional, as well as subtle and unconscious. In a classroom setting, boys sometimes bully or tease girls (which is explicit unfair treatment), and this is made worse if teachers overlook it. As well, teachers may use body language that shows preference for boys (like standing with their back to girls), which is subtle unfair treatment. After years of experiencing this, many girls lose confidence and do poorly in school. To prevent this from happening, teachers should follow the checklist below to ensure that their classroom language and interaction is gender responsive.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
2. The teacher uses gender responsive language and interaction	The Teacher:
	1) does not use negative expressions or language that demeans, excludes, or gives females the impression that are not as intelligent or do not need to perform as well as males
	2) does not use harsh/threatening language or actions that instil fear in both girls and boys
	3) does not say things that reinforce false assumptions about females and males (e.g., girls are bad at maths/science, girls are always shy, boys are the first to answer)
	4) does not use body language that excludes girls or shows preferential treatment to boys (such as speaking mostly to boys or turning your back to girls)
	5) sets and reinforces ground rules that prohibit teasing or bullying, particularly from boys towards girls
	6) empowers all pupils (especially females) with skills for self-confidence, speaking out and leadership
7) knows the difference between 'being friendly' with girls and being flirtatious. Jokes and conversations <u>should not</u> have sexual undertones, and teachers should not use terms like 'girlfriend' or 'sweetie'	

Guidelines for implementing the actions/strategies:

- ❖ All the above strategies require teachers to pay attention to their own behaviour (verbal and non-verbal) and reflect on the negative effects it may have on their pupils.
- ❖ Teachers should not use corporal punishment in order to control their class, instead they should think about alternative strategies for managing their class (see the RVS guide for ideas).
- ❖ At the beginning of every class, teachers should set rules about prohibiting negative behaviour and language from pupils.
- ❖ At the beginning of every class, teachers should also make clear that *everyone* should participate, speak out and take leadership roles in class, and provide extra encouragement to quiet pupils (especially girls) in order to build their confidence.
- ❖ Male teachers should always reflect on the difference between 'being friendly' with girls and being flirtatious. Flirtatious actions include hugging, touching, dancing together, or calling a pupil 'girlfriend' or 'sweetie'. These actions have sexual undertones and are completely inappropriate in a classroom or at school.

ACTIVITY: to include these actions/strategies in your teaching practice, do the following:

- 1) **Read carefully** the seven strategies on your own – make sure you understand them and if you have questions share them with your TLC.
- 2) **Practice on your own first** – plan and practice the seven strategies in your classes. After each class, reflect on what worked, what didn't work and how you could improve next time. You can use the following scorecard for self-assessment.
- 3) **Ask a colleague to watch you teach and assess you on implementation** using the scorecard. You can then assess your colleague. Discuss each other's strengths and weaknesses afterwards.
- 4) **Reflect and plan** – once you feel that you master the strategies, sit down with your colleagues to reflect on how you will make sure to incorporate these strategies in any class you teach in the future.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
2. The teacher uses gender responsive language and interaction	The Teacher:			
	1) does not use negative expressions or language that demeans, excludes, or gives females the impression that are not as intelligent or do not need to perform as well as males			
	2) does not use harsh/threatening language or actions that instil fear in both girls and boys			
	3) does not say things that reinforce false assumptions about females and males (e.g., girls are bad at maths/science, girls are always shy, boys are the first to answer)			
	4) does not use body language that excludes girls or shows preferential treatment to boys (such as speaking mostly to boys or turning your back to girls)			
	5) sets and reinforces ground rules that prohibit teasing or bullying, particularly from boys towards girls			
	6) empowers all pupils (especially females) with skills for self-confidence, speaking out and leadership			
	7) knows the difference between 'being friendly' with girls and being flirtatious. Jokes and conversations should not have sexual undertones, and teachers should not use terms like 'girlfriend' or 'sweetie'			

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) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing?

Unit 7: Gender Responsive Teaching and Learning Materials

Why are gender responsive Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) important? Textbooks, storybooks, pictures and posters are often the biggest culprits of portraying subtle forms of unfair treatment. For example, look at the following textbook illustration.



1. How many men and how many women do you see?
2. What roles are men playing?
3. What roles are women playing?
4. What underlying message is being communicated?

If you look at the illustration critically, you might notice that it is communicating the message that only men can have professional careers and that women are only expected to be mothers in charge of domestic duties. This type of subtle messaging, when repeated in textbooks and reinforced in society and the media, can significantly affect girls' aspirations and preferences. After seeing such images for 12 or more years of schooling, many girls will unconsciously accept these roles, which very much limits their goals and their confidence in what they can do. Is that fair? If the illustration showed only white people in professional roles, how would you feel?

Since teachers don't have much choice about the textbooks or materials available at their schools, it is important to do a **gender analysis** of any textbooks, books, posters, or any material used in class. Ask the following questions about any images, characters, stories, or exercises in the materials you use.

Questions for a Gender Analysis of your TLM

1. **How many men/boys and how many women/girls are featured?** (Is it unbalanced? Why? Why not?)
2. **What roles are men/boys playing?** (Are the roles professional? Prestigious? Heroic? Positions of power? Do they show the positive things that men/boys can do?)
3. **What roles are women/girls playing?** (Are the roles in the home? Are they positions that are low-status or subordinate to men? Are females portrayed as less brave, capable, or successful?)
4. **What underlying message is being communicated?** (Is the subtle message that men/boys are more important? More powerful? Braver? Smarter or better?)
5. **Do you think these messages are fair?** (What if these messages were based on race or tribe? – That one race tribe is more important, more powerful, braver, smarter, or better. Is that fair, accurate or just?)
6. **If the underlying message is unfair, how might this affect girls?** (Messages based on false assumptions about ability or intelligence are extremely unfair; and reduce female pupils' confidence, limit their goals in life and cause them to achieve less.)
7. **How could we improve this TLM to make the message fairer and give females more confidence?** (Would it be to increase the number of females? To change the roles they are playing? Show males doing typically 'female' jobs or females doing typically 'male' jobs?)

If you find that your TLM portrays equal numbers of females and that the roles they play are equal to the roles of the males, then it is likely to be gender sensitive. However, if your TLM (or portions of it) contain unfair portrayals of women/girls, it is *not* gender sensitive. That said, you can still use the TLM in class; **however, you need to make pupils aware of the unfair messaging that is being portrayed.** In order to do this, you should ask the seven questions to your pupils while using the TLM so that they too become conscious of unfair portrayals of women/girls.

Teachers should follow the checklist below to ensure that the TLM they use in class is gender responsive.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
3. The teacher uses gender responsive TLM	The Teacher: 1) reviews all textbooks, pictures, posters, and materials before using them to see if they reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., women cooking/cleaning, men in professional roles)
	2) identifies traditional gender roles that appear in books/materials and makes a point to alert pupils to these portrayals when using the materials in class
	3) discusses with pupils how portrayals of traditional gender roles limit what female pupils think they can do and achieve
	4) ensures that books, materials, or equipment are equally distributed amongst females/males

ACTIVITY: to include these actions/strategies in your teaching practice, do the following:

- 1) **Read carefully** the four strategies on your own – make sure you understand them and if you have questions share them with your TLC.
- 2) **Conduct a Gender Analysis of the TLM available** – Conduct your own gender analysis first (ask yourself the *Questions for a Gender Analysis of your TLM* while looking at the material you use in class). If you find that there are unfair assumptions and portrayals of women/girls, ask the same questions to pupils in your class the next time you use the material.
- 3) **Plan, do, reflect** – If they find unfair portrayals of women/girls, discuss this with the other teachers and reflect on how to use the TLMs without reinforcing the gender stereotypes. You can use the following scorecard for self-assessment.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
3. The teacher uses gender responsive TLM	The Teacher: 1) reviews all textbooks, pictures, posters, and materials before using them to see if they reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., women cooking/cleaning, men in professional roles)			
	2) identifies traditional gender roles that appear in books/materials and makes a point to alert pupils to these portrayals when using the materials in class			
	3) discusses with pupils how portrayals of traditional gender roles limit what female pupils think they can do and achieve			
	4) ensures that books, materials, or equipment are equally distributed amongst females/males			

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) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing?

Unit 8: Challenging the Traditional Gender Roles

Why is challenging traditional gender roles important? In the last unit we discussed how teaching materials often perpetuate unfair portrayals of women and girls, and how teachers must make themselves and their pupils aware of this unfair treatment. This helps to *stop* unfair treatment that is currently occurring. However, it is also important for teachers to *compensate* for past unfair treatment and *ensure* equal outcomes between girls and boys in the future; and one way to do this is to *challenge* and *reverse* traditional gender roles in class. To help with this, teachers can follow the below checklist to ensure that are challenging traditional gender roles in class.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
4. The teacher challenges traditional gender roles	The Teacher:
	1) empowers males to be critical of and challenge traditional views of masculinity (e.g. men should be 'powerful', should not be 'weak', should never cook/clean)
	2) empowers females to be critical of and challenge traditional views of femininity (e.g., women should be dependent on men, should only be mothers/carers, should not be assertive)
	3) actively uses examples (e.g., exercises, activities, role play, pictures) that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles (such as having men cook)
	4) supports and encourages females to achieve in maths and science and aspire to professions traditionally taken by men (such as engineering, police, medicine)

Guidelines for implementing the actions/strategies:

For teachers to empower their female and male pupils to be critical of traditional views of femininity and masculinity, teachers have to be critical of these views themselves. **Teachers should be aware that assumptions about how females and males should behave are based on social expectations – and these expectations are often based on false assumptions about people's intelligence and ability.** For example, look at the list of jobs below. Use your first instinct and circle who you would normally associate with the jobs: Males (M), Females (F), or both.

JOB	GENDER		
1. Pharmacist	M	F	Both
2. Police Officer	M	F	Both
3. Lawyer	M	F	Both
4. Child Carer	M	F	Both
5. Accountant	M	F	Both
6. Judge	M	F	Both
7. Maths Teacher	M	F	Both
8. Cook	M	F	Both
9. Pilot	M	F	Both
10. Doctor	M	F	Both
11. House Cleaner	M	F	Both
12. Engineer	M	F	Both

Now look at the list again but imagine yourself in the USA during the 1700s when slavery was occurring. Use your first instinct and circle who you would associate with the jobs: Whites (W), Blacks (B), or both.

JOB	WHITE / BLACK		
	W	B	Both
1. Pharmacist	W	B	Both
2. Police Officer	W	B	Both
3. Lawyer	W	B	Both
4. Child Carer	W	B	Both
5. Accountant	W	B	Both
6. Judge	W	B	Both
7. Maths Teacher	W	B	Both
8. Cook	W	B	Both
9. Pilot	W	B	Both
10. Doctor	W	B	Both
11. House Cleaner	W	B	Both
12. Engineer	W	B	Both

Do you think the social expectations about black people in the USA were fair? Do you think those expectations were based on correct assumptions about black people’s intelligence and ability? Do you think the social expectations about women in Sierra Leone are fair? Do you think those expectations are based on correct assumptions about women’s intelligence and ability?

As we discussed in Unit 2, unfair treatment is often based on hugely false assumptions about the intelligence, ability and the superiority of an ethnic group or tribe, gender, or social class; **unfair treatment includes how we expect people to behave and the jobs they should take**. When teachers realise that their social expectations of females are unfair and based on false assumptions, then they should prevent pupils from having these false assumptions as well. To prevent pupils from developing these false assumptions, teachers should make sure all the exercises, activities and TLM that they use *challenge* and even *reverse* traditional gender roles. For example, when writing exercises, don’t write “Mother cooks dinner...”. Instead, make sure that you demonstrate:

1. An equal number of women and men doing similar occupations. Make sure to show women doing jobs that you don’t normally associate them with (like the list above).
2. An equal involvement of men and women in domestic work and childcare (such as men cooking and taking care of the children).
3. An equal number of females and males doing similar leisure activities (such as sports, relaxing, playing).
4. Characters that challenge traditional beliefs about masculinity and femininity (such as boys who are afraid or girls who are brave).

ACTIVITY: to include these actions/strategies in your teaching practice, do the following:

- 1) **Have your pupils do the 'job' activity** – first with Male/Female and then with White/Black. Then explain why assumptions about females (and what jobs they should take) are unjust and unfair and why we should *challenge* or *reverse* these traditional gender roles in class.
- 2) **Plan, do, reflect** – conduct a gender analysis of your exercises and activities. If you find that they portray traditional gender roles, revise them so that they *challenge* or *reverse* these roles. After using them in class, reflect alone and then with your colleagues on how it went and what you might do differently next time. You can use the following scorecard for self-assessment.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
4. The teacher challenges traditional gender roles	The Teacher: 1) empowers males to be critical of and challenge traditional views of masculinity (e.g. men should be 'powerful', should not be 'weak', should never cook/clean)			
	2) empowers females to be critical of and challenge traditional views of femininity (e.g., women should be dependent on men, should only be mothers/carers, should not be assertive)			
	3) actively uses examples (e.g., exercises, activities, role play, pictures) that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles (such as having men cook)			
	4) supports and encourages females to achieve in maths and science and aspire to professions traditionally taken by men (such as engineering, police, medicine)			

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) Do you think that challenging traditional gender roles is important or not really?

Unit 9: Gender Responsive Planning

Why is gender responsive planning important? We have discussed several ways in which teachers can ensure that their classroom practice is gender responsive – through pedagogy, language/interaction, teaching and learning materials, and challenging gender roles. Gender responsive planning brings all of these elements together. Teachers should follow the checklist below in order to strengthen their overall planning for class.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
5. The teacher uses gender responsive planning	The Teacher:
	1) plans classroom seating so that pupils who need more support sit at the front
	2) reviews pupil attendance every term (particularly for females) – if there are problems with attendance, the teacher should follow up with the principal, mentors and parents
	3) reviews pupil assessments every term– if there are large gaps between girls and boys, the teacher should develop strategies to close the gaps
	4) plans to use teaching strategies that ensure equal participation of both girls and boys
	5) reviews TLM for traditional gender roles and ensures that materials are distributed and used equally between female and males
6) plans to use exercises/activities that do not reinforce traditional gender roles and in some cases, actively <i>challenges</i> or <i>reverses</i> traditional gender roles	

Guidelines for implementing seating strategies:

- ❖ Many schools do not have sufficient infrastructure, which means that classrooms can be overcrowded, often without an adequate number of seats and desks. This is a challenge, but even in these cases, teachers can take steps to ***make sure the classroom seating is gender responsive***. As mentioned earlier, growing up many girls lose their confidence because they are victim of unfair treatment at family, school and community level. Girls often do not speak out and are not assertive. So, when pupils come into class, confident boys usually take up the best seats, and girls and poor-performing boys end up sitting in the back or corners of the classroom. This does not enhance the participation or achievements of either group. That is why teachers should plan to re-organise the seating, see how it goes for a month and make adjustments if necessary.
- ❖ How to plan: take a look at the current seating arrangements. Mentally divide the pupils in three groups and take notes if necessary:
 - Group 1) Pupils who are confident/assertive and sit at the front (or front half of the classroom)
 - Group 2) Pupils who are quiet and sit in the back or corners of the class (particularly the girls)
 - Group 3) Pupils who have trouble seeing the chalkboard or have learning/physical disabilities
- ❖ Plan on seating Group 3 at the front of class; also plan to bring Group 2 to the front of class. Then think about whether either of these groups would benefit from sitting next to a stronger/confident pupil who could help them during class. If so, plan on strategically placing some of the stronger pupils next to those who would benefit. Make a note of all these pupils who should be sitting up at the front.

- ❖ Before your next class, have the pupils queue up outside of the classroom door before they enter. Then bring the pupils that you noted earlier (Group 2 and Group 3) up to the front of the queue. Then have the pupils enter class and take the seats one by one, starting from the front of class. Once all the pupils have been seated, tell them that this is the seating arrangement for the next month and that they must sit in these assigned seats from now on. However, let them know that they should tell you if they are uncomfortable with their new seat and explain why.
- ❖ Monitor the dynamics of this new seating arrangement for the rest of the month. Ask yourself:
 - 1) Am I able to support the quieter pupils better now that they are at the front?
 - 2) Are these quieter pupils participating more?
 - 3) If I have strategically placed stronger pupils with weaker ones, has it been mutually beneficial?
 - 4) Have any pupils complained about the new seating arrangement?



After reflecting on these questions, feel free to adjust the seating where necessary. You can also try to keep girls and boys mixed. Remember, the aim of this planning exercise is to maximise and equalise the participation of all pupils, particularly girls who are often overlooked.

Guidelines for implementing attendance and achievement strategies:

As a teacher, you should be keeping records of pupil attendance and test scores. Every term, **review both the attendance registers and test scores**. You probably already know where the major problems are, but take this time to look carefully at who is not attending on a regular basis, and who is performing poorly.

- 1) Make a note of the two groups: pupils not attending regularly and pupils performing poorly (it is likely that there are many pupils in both).
- 2) For pupils who are not attending regularly, do you suspect that they are doing chores/labour? Are they caring for family members? Could the girls be missing class because of menstruation? If you're not sure, that is fine.
- 3) After reflecting on the pupils who aren't attending, discuss the possible reasons with your principal. If your principal agrees, follow up with the pupils' parents by asking them to come to school for a meeting (you may also have to go to them). Every case will be different, but sensitise parents to the importance of education / girls' education and see if you can help them solve challenges they might be facing.
- 4) For pupils who are performing poorly on tests or assessments, is it because they are not attending? If they are attending, is it because they are being overlooked in class? Are they being bullied or intimidated by other pupils? Could they have a learning or physical disability that you were not aware of? Try to come up with strategies or solutions: should these pupils sit at the front of class?
- 5) After reflecting on the pupils who are performing poorly, discuss possible reasons/solutions with your principal. In the case of attendance issues, follow up with the pupils' parents. In the case of extra support, try to implement strategies in class and discuss any extra support you might need with your principal.

Guidelines for implementing gender responsive lessons:

A gender responsive lesson takes into consideration the specific needs of girls and boys in all teaching and learning processes, content, TLM, activities, classroom arrangement, and so on. Teachers have to ensure that the delivery of the lessons is participatory and gender responsive. The following are gender responsive action that teachers can implement in their class:

Gender Responsive Actions

1. Make sure that the seating arrangement of class is gender responsive before starting. Emphasise that everyone should participate equally in today's class.
2. When asking questions, make sure to ask and encourage girls to answer. Also encourage all pupils to ask questions.
3. When working in groups, make sure groups are gender responsive. Assign two group leaders to present the work of the group, if possible a girl and a boy. Ensure that both girls and boys participate and present the group's findings or ideas.
4. Ensure that both girls and boys participate in any discussion.
5. Use examples that challenge the traditional gender roles (you can use examples where a man is cooking or a woman is a doctor)

ACTIVITY: to include these actions/strategies in your teaching practice, do the following:

- 1) **Practice the Gender Responsive Actions in your class** – After each class, reflect on what worked, what didn't work and how you could improve next time.
- 2) **Implement the attendance and achievement strategies** and discuss the outcomes with other teachers, your principal and TLC.
- 3) **Plan, do, reflect** – Plan and implement gender responsive lessons. You can use the scorecard in the following page for self-assessment.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
5. The teacher uses gender responsive planning	The Teacher: 1) plans classroom seating so that pupils who need more support sit at the front			
	2) reviews pupil attendance every term (particularly for females) – if there are problems with attendance, the teacher should follow up with the principal, mentors and parents			
	3) reviews pupil assessments every term – if there are large gaps between girls and boys, the teacher should develop strategies to close the gaps			
	4) plans to use teaching strategies that ensure equal participation of both girls and boys			
	5) reviews TLMs for traditional gender roles and ensures that materials are distributed and used equally between female and males			
	6) plans to use exercises/activities that do not reinforce traditional gender roles and in some cases, actively <i>challenges</i> or <i>reverses</i> traditional gender roles			

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) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing?

Unit 10: Gender Responsive Management of Sexual Maturation

Why is gender responsive management of sexual maturation important? Menstruation remains a taboo topic in most societies, so much so that it is hard to have open conversations about it – especially with men. However, menstruation is a natural event, and considering that half of the population is women, it is highly likely that there is a person in your vicinity who is menstruating right now. Given how common and biologically significant menstruation is, we should stop thinking that bleeding is shameful and be more open to discussions about it. Especially since too many girls avoid going to school during their menses because they either do not have adequate sanitary napkins, or because the ridicule they receive when getting a period stain is one of the most embarrassing things that can happen to them. Teachers should follow the checklist below to strengthen their ability to manage the sexual maturation of girls and boys in a gender responsive way.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
6. The teacher deals with sexual maturation in a gender responsive way	The Teacher:
	1) understands sexual maturation issues for both girls and boys and provides extra support or counselling to pupils if needed
	2) takes actions to address negative perceptions and interactions (such as ridicule or teasing)
	3) is sensitive to girls needing to use the toilet more (because they may be uncomfortable to use the toilets during break if shared with boys)
	4) regularly reviews the state of the school’s toilets and reports issues to the principal and the School Safety Committee
	5) sensitises the school community to manage sexual maturation issues for both females and males, particularly regarding menstruation

Guidelines for implementing actions/strategies:

- ❖ Most girls start menstruating between the ages of 10 to 15, and this can be a very stressful time in their lives, particularly if they do not have adequate sanitary products. The rate of absenteeism amongst girls for this reason is high – they miss as many as three to four days of school each month, which means **missing up to the 20% of the school year**. If you start to see this pattern in attendance amongst your female pupils, you should try to have a conversation with them to understand the reason. Then see what kind of support you can provide – can your school provide sanitary products, or can you suggest how to make them or get them locally?
- ❖ In addition to this, you should also ensure that the school’s toilet facilities are supportive of girls’ menstruation. Do girls have separate toilets? Are they private? Is there water nearby? Are there any rubbish or hygiene bins for them to dispose of sanitary napkins or tissue? If there aren’t private toilet facilities, girls may not like using them at break time while boys are around. Be sensitive to this and give girls ample access to the toilet during class if needed. If water needs to be collected far from the school, both girls and boys should be responsible for it.

- ❖ In addition to menstruation, girls' and boys' bodies rapidly change as they go through puberty, which can be a cause for ridicule, teasing and self-consciousness. When girls develop breasts or when boys' voices break, fellow pupils may tease them and make them feel bad. As their teacher, you should set ground rules that such behaviour is unacceptable. Sensitise pupils to the fact that everyone's body changes at different rates, and that no one is 'normal' or 'abnormal' if they change before or after everyone else.
- ❖ Pregnant girls and parent learners may need additional support to attend school and participate in classes. They may not be able to attend regularly and when in class, pregnant girls may need to take short breaks and use the toilet more often than the other pupils. Try to have a conversation with pregnant girls and parent learners to see what kind of support they need and discuss that with the principal and the other teachers to make provisions to meet your pupils' needs.
- ❖ The points raised in this unit about menstruation and maturation (for both girls and boys) should also be made to parents. Especially if girls are missing class because of their periods. If you are seeing negative effects on your pupils' performance because of these issues, make that a reason for meeting with parents. Then try to discuss possible solutions to providing support to the pupils to improve their attendance and achievements.

ACTIVITY: to include these actions/strategies in your teaching practice, do the following:

- 1) **Do an analysis of your class** – Take look at the attendance register. Are there any girls who are not attending regularly? Do you suspect that the girls might be missing class because of menstruation? Are there boys whose voices are breaking? If either is the case, plan to have a discussion with your class about how their bodies change as they are growing up.
- 2) **Have a discussion with your class** – As discussed in Unit 6 on gender responsive language and interaction, you should set ground rules about behaviour that is unacceptable in class. 'Teasing' is one form of unaccepted behaviour – revisit this behaviour by asking your class what they think 'teasing' or 'making fun of someone' means. Ask them why they think pupils do it. Ask them how it makes people feel.
- 3) **Sensitise pupils to teasing that occurs because of puberty** – talk to pupils about how boys are often teased when their voices change, and girls are teased when they grow breasts or start to bleed (and get a stain by accident). Tell pupils that this form of teasing makes people feel bad and is completely unacceptable. Remind pupils that everyone's body will change, that bodies change at different rates, and that no one is 'normal' or 'abnormal' if they change before or after everyone else.
- 4) **Provide girls an opportunity to talk to you or a mentor about menstruation** – after discussing teasing with your class, finish the discussion by letting girls and boys know that they can talk to you if they need to. You should also say that if girls feel like they have to miss school because of menstruation they should talk to you about it. If you are a male teacher and are worried that this type of conversation would be uncomfortable for your female pupils, direct them to the school mentor or a female colleague.

- 5) **Reflect on the discussion with your colleagues** – your colleagues should have had similar discussion with their classes. Ask them about their thoughts and reflections. Reflect on your approach and what you could improve. You can use the scorecard in the following page for self-assessment.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
6. The teacher deals with sexual maturation in a gender responsive way	The Teacher:			
	1) understands sexual maturation issues for both females and males and provides extra support or counselling to pupils if needed			
	2) takes actions to address negative perceptions and interactions (such as ridicule or teasing)			
	3) is sensitive to females needing to use the toilet more (because they may be uncomfortable to use the toilets during break if shared with boys)			
	4) reviews often the state of the school's toilets and reports issues to the principal and the School Safety Committee			
5) sensitises the school community to manage sexual maturation issues for both females and males, particularly regarding menstruation				

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) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing?
- 3) Would you approach managing sexual maturation in your class differently? If so, how?

Unit 11: Gender Responsive School Practices and Protocols

Why are gender responsive school practices and protocols important? There are many school practices and protocols that contribute to unfair treatment towards girls. For example, cleaning activities might reinforce traditional gender roles (like females doing the mopping and sweeping). Or, school or class prefect and assistant prefect roles are unfairly assigned so that girls are only allowed to be the ‘assistant’. Many extra-curricular activities revolve around typically ‘male’ activities like football. And corporal punishment is a practice that affects both boys and girls in a negative way, but often makes girls even more afraid to assert themselves. Thus, principals and teachers should follow the checklist below to be aware of unfair treatment that might be happening and to ensure that all school practices and protocols are gender responsive.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
7. The principal and teacher ensure that school activities are gender responsive	The Principal and the Teacher ensure that:
	1) school cleaning and chores do not reflect or reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., only female pupils run errands or clean up)
	2) girls and boys have equal opportunities to take leadership roles (school and class prefects, club leaders, etc..)
	3) girls and boys have equal access and opportunities to extra-curricular activities
	4) school mentors or counsellors are in place to provide support and a safe space to all pupils
	5) all pupils are encouraged to participate to the Girls’ and Boys’ Clubs
	6) all forms of corporal punishment are banned, and all teachers read the Reduce Violence in School guide

Guidelines for implementing actions/strategies:

- ❖ All school chores should be reviewed to make sure they do not reflect or reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., only female pupils run errands or clean up). If they do, consider revising the rules so that all activities are done equally by girls and boys and are not based on traditional gender roles.
- ❖ Class or school leadership roles (prefect, club leaders, etc...) should be reviewed to ensure that girls and boys have equal opportunities to be appointed. If not, consider revising.
- ❖ All extra-curricular activities should be reviewed to ensure that girls and boys have equal access and opportunity to activities. For example, if there is a sports activity or sports day, girls should be able to play with boys or at the very least, have their own league/match.
- ❖ The principal should facilitate the nomination and appointment of school mentors, a man and a woman. If there are no female teachers in the school, a female community member can be appointed. This is a

leadership role that is extremely important to the school. A mentor is the first point of contact for any pupil who needs support with any type of problem: problems at home, problems at school, problems with teasing (Unit 6), problems with menstruation (Unit 10), problems with sexual harassment (Unit 12), etc.



- ❖ If the school doesn't have two appointed mentors yet, the principal should explain the roles of the responsibilities of the mentor at a staff meeting and ask the staff for nominations for this post. Nominees should have a good relationship with the pupils and other teachers, and they should have a genuine concern for the welfare of pupils at the school. In the case of a community female mentor or community mama, the principal should make sure that the nominees live close to the school and can visit the school two or three times per week at least.
- ❖ The staff should vote for the nominees who they think would do the best job, and once assigned, the principal should let all pupils know who the school mentors are, and that they can talk to them about any problems they are facing.
- ❖ The school should also have a suggestion box in which pupils can write their problems down anonymously (as explained in the RVS guide, Unit 3).
- ❖ The school mentors should also encourage all pupils to participate to the Girls' and Boys' Club. The aim of the Girls' and Boys' Clubs is to provide all pupils with helpful information on topics that affect their learning and well-being. Topics like violence in schools, bullying and teasing, sex education, problem solving and communicating with others. Teachers can also listen to this content in their free time if they want to learn more about those topics.
- ❖ The principal should establish zero-tolerance against any form of violence, including corporal punishment or intimidating disciplinary measures. The RVS guide contains effective non-violent classroom management techniques that teachers can use to gain control of class, to get pupils quiet and ready to learn, and to discipline pupils who might misbehave (RVS guide, Unit 4).

GIRLS' CHAMPIONS

The Radical Inclusion Policy asks schools to appoint two teachers (including at least one female teacher) as **Girls' Champions**. The Girls' Champions will advocate for gender responsiveness in school and support a girl-friendly learning environment. They will offer advice to girls on issues affecting them, including sexual harassment and abuse.

ACTIVITY: to include these actions/strategies in your teaching practice, do the following:

- 1) **Go over the actions/strategies** included in this Unit on Gender Responsive School Practices and Protocols. Make sure that you understand why these are important.
- 2) **Revise the non-violent classroom management techniques from the RVS guide.** Plan on implementing at least two of the techniques when you teach in class. After completion, reflect on how it went and how you might adapt or improve things next time.
- 3) **Have a discussion in your TLC** about the actions/strategies on Gender Responsive School Practices and Protocols. You can use the scorecard in the following page for self-assessment.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
7. The principal and teacher ensure that school activities are gender responsive	The Principal and the Teacher ensure that:			
	1) school cleaning and chores do not reflect or reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., only female pupils run errands or clean up)			
	2) girls and boys have equal opportunities to take leadership roles (school and class prefects, club leaders, etc..)			
	3) girls and boys have equal access and opportunities to extra-curricular activities			
	4) school mentors or counsellors are in place to provide support and a safe space to all pupils			
	5) all pupils are encouraged to participate to the Girls' and Boys' Clubs			
	6) all forms of corporal punishment are banned and all teachers read the Reduce Violence in School guide			

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

- 1) Do you have or have you ever had any pregnant girl or parent learner in your school or in your class?
- 2) Did they need any additional support? If yes, what kind of support have you provided?
- 3) Please discuss your experience of supporting pregnant girls and parent learners in your school and/or in your class.

Supporting Pregnant Girls and Parent Learners

The Radical Inclusion Policy provides clear guidelines on how schools should ensure adequate support to pregnant girls and parent learners to stay in school and complete their education. The following are the main responsibilities of principals and teachers:

1. Principals should ensure that pregnant girls and parent learners are able to enrol in school and attend classes; this means also supporting girls to return to school after giving birth or after miscarriage.
2. Principals should also ensure that pregnant girls and parent learners are supported to sit all examinations, including public examinations.
3. Principals should allow pregnant girls to take reasonable leave to attend medical appointments during pregnancy.
4. Principals should make reasonable arrangements to the timetable of lactating mothers so that they can leave the school to breast-feed.
5. Principals should ask every pregnant learner to identify a teacher to provide additional support and counselling during their pregnancy, or name one (preferably female) if the girl has no preference. The support person will meet the pregnant girl regularly to ensure she remains engaged in education throughout the pregnancy.
6. Principals and teachers should ensure that pregnant girls should not be punished, excluded or expelled from school because of absence, or any other issue related to their condition.
7. Principals and teachers should establish a zero-tolerance policy against teasing or bullying of a pregnant pupil by other pupils, teachers, or any other personnel.
8. Teachers should support pregnant girls and parent learners to stay in school and learn, and provide specific support to make up for lost lessons.
9. Teachers can put in place a buddy system where a pupil of the same class is identified to share notes with the pupil who is pregnant or the parent learner when they miss school.

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

- 4) Which parts of this unit did you find important/interesting, disagree with or find unclear?
- 5) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing? Is there anything you would change or adapt for your context or school?

Unit 12: A School Safety System

Why is the School Safety System important? School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) has been described in Unit 2 of the Reduce Violence in School guide as physical, psychological, or sexual violence against pupils occurring in and around schools (which can also include the home). It can be committed by teachers, community members, parents, relatives and fellow pupils. Not only pupils, but also female teachers can be victim of a common form of sexual violence that is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is treatment that involves unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature¹. These harmful behaviours can have an extremely negative impact on the learning process or the work of the victims. In order to prevent this from happening, principals and teachers should read about the School Safety System in the RVS guide and follow the checklist below:

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
8. The principal ensures the setting up of a School Safety System and the implementation of the RVS guide with the support of all teachers	The Principal ensures that:
	1) all teachers read the Reduce Violence in School guide and sign the Teachers' Code of Conduct
	2) all teachers are aware of the School Safety System and the reporting mechanism for School-Related Gender-Based violence
	3) a male and a female school mentor are appointed to act as first point of reporting SRGBV
	4) the School Safety Committee meets once a week to respond to reports from the suggestion box or from the school mentors
5) the School Safety System to prevent, report and respond to SRGBV is known by all teachers, pupils, parents and community members	

Guidelines for implementing the actions/strategies:

- ❖ To ensure that all teachers read the RVS guide, the principal should ensure that copies of the RVS guide are available in school and that all teachers read it at least once a year in a TLC.
- ❖ Principals should also ensure that all teachers sign the Teachers' Code of Conduct each year. Any form of misconduct or breach of the Teachers' Code of Conduct should be reported to the Teaching Service Commission.
- ❖ If a pupil reports a case of SRGBV to a school mentor, he/she should first provide counselling to the victim, then report the case to the School Safety Committee (SSC). The SSC will assess the situation (they should determine if there is evidence; what type of harassment occurred; and to what extent it occurred) and inform the relevant authorities (MBSSE, TSC, FSU). The principal, mentors and SSC can ask the support of the Leh Wi Lan District Education Officer. If there is sufficient evidence of wrongdoing, the perpetrator should undergo disciplinary measures.

¹ Read the RVS guide, Unit 2: Understanding School-Related Gender-Based Violence.

ACTIVITY: to support the principal include these actions/strategies in his/her school management, do the following:

- 1) **Participate** actively in your TLC and read the material available on your own when you can.
- 2) **Ensure** that your pupils are aware of the School Safety System, in particular how to report SRGBV.
- 3) **In your TLC, discuss the actions/strategies** of this unit. You can use the following scorecard to assess your school.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
8. The principal ensures the setting up of a School Safety System and the implementation of the RVS guide with the support of all teachers	The Principal ensures that:			
	1) all teachers read the Reduce Violence in School guide and sign the Teachers' Code of Conduct			
	2) all teachers are aware of the School Safety System and the reporting mechanism for School-Related Gender-Based violence			
	3) a male and a female school mentor are appointed to act as first point of reporting SRGBV			
	4) the School Safety Committee meets once a week to respond to reports from the suggestion box or from the school mentors			
5) the School Safety System to prevent, report and respond to SRGBV is known by all teachers, pupils, parents and community members				

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) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing? Is there anything you would change or adapt for your context or school?

Unit 13: Gender Responsive School Management

Why is gender responsive school management important? Gender responsiveness extends beyond what happens in the classroom. As teachers attempt to change their classroom practice, principals must also change the broader school environment (policies, protocols, resources, teachers and parents) to become more gender responsive. School management sets the tone and vision – if principals have zero tolerance for unfair treatment of female pupils and staff, the rest of the school will follow. Units 11 and 12 discussed how principals are central to the development of gender responsive practices, protocols and policies. The checklist below lists additional actions that principals can take to ensure gender responsiveness at their school.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:
9. The principal ensures that school management is gender responsive with the support of all teachers	The Principal ensures that:
	1) all teachers read this guide on their own or in the TLC, follow the guidelines for gender responsive teaching practice, and review it annually
	2) teachers are being gender responsive in class and conducts spot checks to verify it
	3) the School Safety Committee reports annually on whether the school infrastructure is gender responsive (especially toilets)
	4) all school practices, protocols and policies are gender responsive (reviewed annually with support from the staff); if not, revisions are initiated to improve the situation
	5) female staff have equal opportunities for appointments and leadership positions
	6) female pupil attendance and achievement is monitored – if there are disparities between females/males, strategies are used to close the gaps
7) the teachers / SSC sensitise parents and community about the need to support girls' education	

Guidelines for implementing the actions/strategies:

Many of the above actions and strategies regard the broader context of the school and community, which is why the principal is central to making sure they are implemented. On a consistent basis, the principal should monitor the following:

- 1) **Teachers:** to make sure they are reading this guide, in order to make their classes more gender responsive.
- 2) **Infrastructure:** to make sure toilets, classrooms and common areas are responsive to female pupils and female teachers' needs.
- 3) **Protocols and policies:** to make sure they do not reinforce traditional gender roles or sexual harassment.
- 4) **Leadership:** to make sure that there is gender balance in the school's decision-making.
- 5) **Pupils:** to make sure that teachers follow up with parents where there are problems with attendance and/or achievement.
- 6) **Community:** to make sure that principals themselves, as well as teachers and the SSC sensitize parents and community leaders to the importance of supporting girls' education and reducing unfair treatment both in the school and at home.

ACTIVITY: to support the principal include these actions/strategies in his/her school management, do the following:

- 1) **Participate actively in your TLC** and read this guide on your own when you can, using the full checklist in Annex 1 for self-assessment.
- 2) **Read the National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools (Radical Inclusion Policy)** on your own and take note of issues you would like to discuss in your TLC.
- 3) **Discuss the Radical Inclusion Policy in your TLC.** What can you do to ensure that the Radical Inclusion Policy is implemented in your school?
- 4) **Think** of different ways that the principal, teachers and SSC can sensitise parents and the community on the need to support girls' education and reduce unfair treatment at school and in the home. Share the most interesting ideas with your principal and in the TLC.
- 5) **In your TLC, discuss the actions/strategies** of this unit. You can use the following scorecard to assess your school.

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
9. The principal ensures that school management is gender responsive with the support of all teachers	The Principal ensures that:			
	1) all teachers read this guide on their own or in the TLC, follow the guidelines for gender responsive teaching practice, and review it annually			
	2) teachers are being gender responsive in class and conducts spot checks to verify it			
	3) the School Safety Committee reports annually on whether the school infrastructure is gender responsive (especially toilets)			
	4) all school practices, protocols and policies are gender responsive (reviewed annually with support from the staff); if not, revisions are initiated to improve the situation			
	5) female staff have equal opportunities for appointments and leadership positions			
	6) female pupil attendance and achievement is monitored – if there are disparities between females/males, strategies are used to close the gaps			
7) the teachers / SSC sensitise parents and community about the need to support girls' education				

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) Which actions/strategies do you think will be most helpful? Is there anything missing? Is there anything you would change or adapt for your context or school

Annex 1: A Gender Responsive Checklist for Principals and Teachers

Gender Responsive Competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
1. The teacher uses gender responsive pedagogy in class	The Teacher:			
	1) gives equal chance to girls and boys to ask and answer questions in class (and provides extra encouragement to girls who may lack confidence)			
	2) uses participatory methods such as group work and ensures the equal participation of girls and boys (giving extra encouragement where needed)			
	3) pays attention to the composition of females and males during group work and assigns females leadership roles			
	4) ensures that girls have equal access to teaching and learning resources (TLMs, books, desks, etc.), particularly if boys are more assertive and take resources first			
	5) is patient with females and males who may be shy or afraid to speak			
	6) checks to see if both girls and boys understand the lesson			
2. The teacher uses gender responsive language and interaction	The Teacher:			
	1) does not use negative expressions or language that demeans, excludes, or gives females the impression that are not as intelligent or do not need to perform as well as males			
	2) does not use harsh/threatening language or actions that instil fear in both females and males			
	3) does not say things that reinforce false assumptions about females and males (e.g., girls are bad at maths/science, girls are always shy, boys are the first to answer)			
	4) does not use body language that excludes girls or shows preferential treatment to boys (such as speaking mostly to boys or turning your back to girls)			
	5) sets ground rules that prohibit teasing or bullying, particularly from males towards females			
	6) empowers all pupils (especially females) with skills for self-confidence, speaking out and leadership			
3. The teacher uses gender responsive TLM	The Teacher:			
	1) reviews all textbooks, pictures, posters, and materials before using them to see if they reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., women cooking/cleaning, men in professional roles)			
	2) identifies traditional gender roles that appear in books/materials and makes a point to alert pupils to these portrayals when using the materials in class			
	3) discusses with pupils how portrayals of traditional gender roles limit what female pupils think they can do and achieve			
4) ensures that books, materials, or equipment are equally distributed amongst females/males				

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
4. The teacher challenges traditional gender roles	The Teacher: 1) empowers males to be critical of and challenge traditional views of masculinity (e.g. men should be 'powerful', should not be 'weak', should never cook/clean)			
	2) empowers females to be critical of and challenge traditional views of femininity (e.g., women should be dependent on men, should only be mothers/carers, should not be assertive)			
	3) actively uses examples (e.g., exercises, activities, role play, pictures) that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles (such as having men cook)			
	4) supports and encourages females to achieve in maths and science and aspire to professions traditionally taken by men (such as engineering, police, medicine)			
5. The teacher uses gender responsive planning	The Teacher: 1) plans classroom seating so that pupils who need more support sit at the front			
	2) reviews pupil attendance every term (particularly for females) – if there are problems with attendance, the teacher should follow up with the principal, mentors and parents			
	3) reviews pupil assessments every term – if there are large gaps between girls and boys, the teacher should develop strategies to close the gaps			
	4) plans to use teaching strategies that ensure equal participation of both girls and boys			
	5) reviews TLM for traditional gender roles and ensures that materials are distributed and used equally between female and males			
	6) plans to use exercises/activities that do not reinforce traditional gender roles and in some cases, actively challenges or reverses traditional gender roles			
6. The teacher deals with sexual maturation in a gender responsive way	The Teacher: 1) understands sexual maturation issues for both females and males and provides extra support or counselling to pupils if needed			
	2) takes actions to address negative perceptions and interactions (such as ridicule or teasing)			
	3) is sensitive to females needing to use the toilet more (because they may be uncomfortable to use the toilets during break if shared with boys)			
	4) reviews often the state of the school's toilets and reports issues to the principal and the School Safety Committee			
	5) sensitises the school community to manage sexual maturation issues for both females and males, particularly regarding menstruation			
7. The principal and the teacher ensure that school activities are gender responsive	The Principal and the Teacher ensure that: 1) school cleaning and chores do not reflect or reinforce traditional gender roles (e.g., only female pupils run errands or clean up)			
	2) girls and boys have equal opportunities to take leadership roles (school and class prefects, club leaders, etc..)			
	3) girls and boys have equal access and opportunities to extra-curricular activities			
	4) school mentors or counsellors are in place to provide support and a safe space to all pupils			
	5) all pupils are encouraged to participate to the Girls' and Boys' Clubs			
	6) all forms of corporal punishment are banned and all teachers read the Reduce Violence in School guide			

Gender Responsive competency	Actions/Strategies:	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Achieved
8. The principal ensures the setting up of a School Safety System and the implementation of the RVS guide with the support of all teachers	The Principal ensures that: 1) all teachers read the Reduce Violence in School guide and sign the Teachers' Code of Conduct			
	2) all teachers are aware of the School Safety System and the reporting mechanism for School-Related Gender-Based violence			
	3) a male and a female school mentor are appointed to act as first point of reporting SRGBV			
	4) the School Safety Committee meets once a week to respond to reports from the suggestion box or from the school mentors			
	5) the School Safety System to prevent, report and respond to SRGBV is known by all teachers, pupils, parents and community members			
9. The principal ensures that school management is gender responsive with the support of all teachers	The Principal ensures that: 1) all teachers read this guide on their own or in the TLC, follow the guidelines for gender responsive teaching practice, and review it annually			
	2) teachers are being gender responsive in class and conducts spot checks to verify it			
	3) the School Safety Committee reports annually on whether the school infrastructure is gender responsive (especially toilets)			
	4) all school practices, protocols and policies are gender responsive (reviewed annually with support from the staff); if not, revisions are initiated to improve the situation			
	5) female staff have equal opportunities for appointments and leadership positions			
	6) female pupil attendance and achievement is monitored – if there are disparities between females/males, strategies are used to close the gaps			
	7) the teachers/ SSC sensitise parents and community about the need to support girls' education			