

# EDC/HRE FOR PRINCIPALS



## Awareness

Right or wrong?

## Preparation

Becoming real  
and clear

## Action

Rights in Action

# HUMAN RIGHTS BASED SCHOOL



## HUMAN RIGHTS BASED SCHOOL

### Human rights based school

In this sequence, you as a school head, will probably find an unusual proposal: to assess your own school through the lenses of human rights. This focus can have many positive aspects, most importantly, whether the underlying value system sufficiently promotes inclusive learning and the personal development of every student in your school. Are the teachers, the entire school staff, the parents, the board, and you yourself actively engaged in this effort and treated with the same mutual respect?

To that end, we propose to discuss five topics, followed by five matching questions:

1. Is your school **proactively inclusive** by seeking out and enabling the participation of all students, especially those who are 'different' ethnically, culturally, linguistically, socio-economically, and in terms of skills and competences?
2. Is your school **academically effective and relevant** to further the students' needs for life skills and the requisite knowledge and competences?
3. Is your school **healthy and safe** enough to ensure the student's emotional, psychological, and physical well-being?
4. Is your school **gender-responsive** in creating environments and competences that support equality?
5. Is your school actively engaging the students, their families, and the community **in all aspects** of school life?

For all five topics, you will find a short introductory text in support of your and your collaborators' awareness, followed by a list of indicators for your collective review. You might find and list additional ones.

Our self-assessment proposal is the following:

Together with a team, select one of the five topics. Within that chosen topic, please narrow the assessment again down to the 10 indicators that interest you the most.

	<b>(Topic 1) Inclusiveness</b>	<b>(Topic 2) Effectiveness</b>	<b>(Topic 3) Health and Safety</b>	<b>(Topic 4) Gender- friendliness</b>	<b>(Topic 5) Involvement of the community</b>
<b>Key Question</b>	How inclusive is my school and what is the basic understanding of the concept of inclusion among the professionals in my school?	How academically effective is my school in fulfilling the promise of a quality education for all?	How healthy and safe is my school in terms of the students' emotional, psychological, and physical well-being?	Is my school gender-responsive in creating environments and competences which support equality?	How actively does my school engage the students, their families, and the community in all aspects of school life?

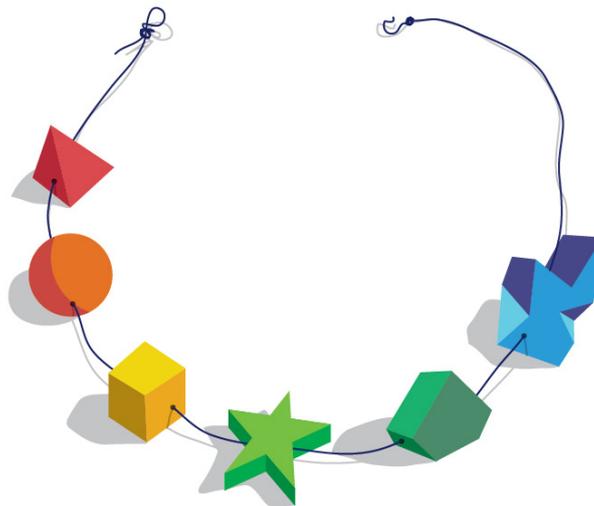
*Human rights based school -Topic 1:*

## **Inclusiveness of my Human-Rights-Based School**

### **Awareness**

Like other heads of schools, you know and have heard and read it hundreds of times: Education has been recognized as a human right in numerous important international conventions. In particular, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) references the rights of children under 18. It recognizes education as a legal right and equal opportunity for every child. Its Article 28 guarantees free compulsory primary education for all, progressive free secondary education that should, in any case, be available to all, as well as accessibility to higher education in terms of capacity. It states the obligation of the State to adopt measures regarding school attendance and discipline while protecting the children's dignity. It encourages international cooperation in terms of education, particularly the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy and promotes access to scientific and technical knowledge.

Its Article 29 defines the aims of education and, recognizing the individuality of children, recommends that education should be directed towards every child's personality, talents, and abilities.



On the whole, apart from the provisions concerning access, the right to education encompasses the obligations of the States to refrain from discrimination at all levels of the educational system, and to set minimum educational standards to improve the quality of education.

And now: you are the head of your school. You have limited resources, and you are faced with the daily routines and the daily problems to solve. To ensure the basic functioning of the school by itself is a huge task. Additionally, you must maintain a welcoming and nurturing environment and educate all students regardless of their sex, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other individual characteristics. Your school must be an inclusive institution, which is the law in many countries. What a task!

You are responsible to ensure that all school staff respect and promote diversity and equal opportunity for all. Moreover, you wish that everyone treat diversity as an opportunity and not as an obstacle to quality education.

But where do you stand in this respect? What are your own memories when it comes to inclusion? Have you ever personally experienced a moment of exclusion? Were you always the successful student, teacher, and head of school who raised awareness when others were not included? It would be worthwhile to critically review this matter and to self-assess your own situation, experience, and values. Will you only initiate an action when you fully agree to support all involved in taking this action together with you? In so doing, you provide others with a first-hand experience of inclusion and evidence of how intensively an HRBS is engaged in practical changes so that all students can succeed - regardless of their background or skills and competences.

Experience shows that these changes will be to the advantage of all students in your school in that they support quality teaching and learning for all. Furthermore, it is not only the students who benefit – everyone else will feel included. In an inclusive micro-society that embraces parents, teachers, school staff and administrators, the board and everyone in the community will be collaborating with your school. Are you ready for this adventure?

In this sequence, you as a school head, will probably find an unusual proposal: to assess your own More importantly, your teachers need to have or develop a broad understanding of inclusion. In meetings together with your specialists (school pedagogue, psychologist, or teachers with additional training in this field) you must find ways to support your teaching staff in this development.

First, everyone concerned must have a basic understanding of inclusiveness. The following might help to clarify the concept.

Inclusion in education is more than what many think it is! <https://inclusiveeducation.ca/about/what-is-ie/> August 18, 2020.

Since its initial conception in the early 20th century, and until quite recently, ‘inclusive education’ was construed as ‘including students with disabilities’ or ‘special learning needs’ in mainstream classroom instruction. Many still understand the term along these lines.

However, inclusive education means that all students attend, and are welcomed by, their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes, and are supported to learn, to contribute and participate in all aspects of school life.

Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools and our programs and activities, so that all students can learn and participate together.

Inclusive education is about ensuring access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive. Students participate in the education program within a common learning environment with support to diminish and remove barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion.

Inclusive education is carried out in a common learning environment, an educational setting where students from different backgrounds and with different abilities learn together in an inclusive environment. Common learning environments are used for most of the students’ regular instructional hours and may include classroom, library, gym, theatre and music room facilities, cafeterias, playgrounds, and the local community. Thus, a common learning environment is a place where students with intellectual disabilities or other special needs can learn together with their peers, rather than separately.

Effective common learning environments:

- Enable each student to fully participate in the learning environment that is designed for all students and is shared with peers in a chosen educational setting.
- Provide a positive climate, promote a sense of belonging and ensure student progress toward appropriate personal, social, emotional, and academic goals.
- Are responsive to individual learning needs by providing sufficient levels of support and applying student-centered teaching practices and principles.
- Common learning environment: an inclusive environment where instruction is designed to be delivered to students of mixed ability and with their peer group in the community school, while being responsive to their individual needs as learners, and used for the majority of the students’ regular hours of instruction.

Ensuring that each individual child has an equal opportunity for educational progress remains a challenge worldwide. Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education and the Education 2030 Framework for Action emphasize inclusion and equity as laying the foundations for quality education.

For this task of making your school a model for inclusive education, you must have many colleagues in the same boat right from the beginning. With your team, you would need to develop a plan on how to get a better understanding of your school’s situation by integrating as many stakeholders as possible in this process.

## Preparation

What steps to take?

1. Form a team to work with during the whole process. Together with your team, start by discussing the approach and consider the list of indicators.
  - a. Choose the important ones for your school.
  - b. Add any indicators you feel are missing.
  - c. Fill in the form with about ten indicators you find important. Be sure to choose some indicators where you do well and some you where you need additional development.
2. With your team, prepare an action plan and a time frame for a first assessment, which will be the starting point for the further development. Include in the assessment:
  - a. Pupils
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Other school staff
  - d. Parents
  - e. School board
  - f. Members of the community with whom you may be cooperating
  - g. ...
3. Develop the action plan and the time frame. Make sure, they include
  - a. The school's profile after the first assessment.
  - b. Steps to undertake (in the next 6 months).
  - c. A second assessment to learn about the developments



## 25 possible indicators for your school to assess your inclusiveness:

1. The school has a mission and/or a vision statement and policies about inclusive, human-rights-based education, including a policy against discrimination.
2. Teachers can understand and explain the full meaning of 'inclusive education' (beyond students with disabilities or special learning needs).
3. All students who reside within the school's jurisdiction attend the school unless the parents have elected to send their child to a private or other school (where applicable).
4. All students are assigned to their age-appropriate grade.
5. The school and its facilities are physically accessible to all students.
6. The school knows which professional organizations, paraprofessionals, advocacy groups, and community organizations may offer resources for inclusive education that will benefit students of diverse backgrounds and abilities.
7. The school uses several types of student assessments and does neither assess students based on performance tests nor publicize their results.
8. The school has measures in place for assisting students with disabilities and/or special needs, particularly in terms of their protection and providing for their learning (e.g., Braille materials, deaf signers, multilingual resources).
9. Teachers visit 'model schools' and/or attend workshops on developing an inclusive classroom and school. Thus, they receive advanced professional training on a regular basis to develop the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes for meeting their students' needs in mainstream classrooms in an inclusive way.
10. Parents and community groups are familiar with inclusive education and offer ideas and resources to assist the school in becoming more inclusive.
11. The school demonstrates in specific ways that its administrators and teachers understand the importance of inclusive education (such ways include mechanisms for guaranteeing access to school by all students regardless of their background or ability).
12. The school has (or plans to develop) a diverse school staff (comprised of women and men of different backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, physical ability, religion, language, socio-economic status, etc.). In countries where teachers are appointed to schools by the State, based exam scores, etc., the school takes advantage of the diverse elements its staff brings with them.
13. The school shows respect for students of all religions; students have opportunities to learn about different religions and belief systems, as appropriate, in school.
14. The school has a steady supply of clean, drinking water and serves or sells healthy, nutritious, and high-quality food/snacks while accommodating and respecting the dietary rules of different religions.
15. Teachers set high expectations for all students, regardless of their background or ability, and encourage them to complete school.
16. Teachers are aware of resources that are available to assist students with special needs including special learning needs.
17. All students have textbooks and learning materials that match their learning needs.
18. Learning activities take place in multiple formats such as individual, pairs, small group, and whole class instruction in which heterogeneous student groups are ensured.
19. Students are given the opportunity to learn their mother tongue while they are mastering the official language(s) of instruction.
20. All students contribute to the development of guidelines and rules for their classroom and school to foster inclusion, non-discrimination and prevent violence and abuse.
21. The learning and teaching processes, as well as the learning materials engage the students in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, regardless of their background or ability.
22. In the learning materials provided by the school, children of diverse backgrounds and abilities are portrayed positively. The students understand the concept of inclusive education and can identify cultural, religious, ethnic, gender and other bias in learning materials.
23. Students with physical disabilities have opportunities for physical play and development.
24. The school culture encourages cooperation and teamwork among teachers, other school staff, the students, parents, and members of the community when needed.
25. Students and parents participate in decision-making.

**Action:**


With your team, select 10 indicators from the list.

Chosen indicators for inclusion	Status of this indicator in my school from 1 to 10.	Steps to be taken (collected by the discussion teams).
1)	1.....10	
2)	1.....10	
3)	1.....10	
4)	1.....10	
5)	1.....10	
6)	1.....10	
7)	1.....10	
8)	1.....10	
9)	1.....10	
10)	1.....10	

1. Based on the list above, prepare a handout or flipcharts to be given to all stakeholders included in the assessment process.
2. Form roundtables with the different stakeholders (pupils, teachers, staff members, parents, board members, etc). They latter may meet on the occasion of a big school event, or scheduled meetings, according to their availability.
3. Ask them to discuss their assessment and their comments.
4. Task them to come up with proposals for improvement.
5. Collect all comments and proposals in your team.
6. Devise a clear and actionable master plan for the coming 6 to 12 months.
7. Report the masterplan to all key players involved.
8. Plan the next assessment period (Transparency comes first!).

Human rights based school - Topic 2:

## Effectiveness of my Human Rights-Based School

### Awareness

Every child has the right to an education. This basic tenet was further developed in Goal 4 of the UN Agenda 2030. What every educator needs to know and understand is that education by itself is not enough: Students of all ages have the **right to a quality education**, and to **effective learning approaches**.

Thus, the main goal for your school is to guarantee exactly this: all students must have the opportunity to become successful learners – on their own level of possible achievements, regardless of gender. Education for all as a human right cannot be achieved without you, as a school head, asking yourself how effective your school is in its systematic support, and how successful your teachers are in supporting individual learners in their everyday classroom practice.

Creating a learning environment that demonstrates and promotes a broad definition of quality must be central to topic 2 – The effectiveness of your Human Rights-Based School. There are many possible criteria for effective learning. In the following four rubrics, we propose to consider four important aspects of quality: *Quality in the learning environment, the students' disposition and readiness for learning, the teaching-learning processes and content, and the outcomes.*



**Quality learning environments include:**

- policies and practices which prohibit explicit or implicit discrimination, harassment, humiliation, violence, corporal punishment, and substance abuse,
- facilities with adequate classrooms, clean water supplies, and sanitation facilities,
- services that promote safety, and physical and psychosocial health.

**Quality learners are:**

- Healthy
- well-nourished
- ready to learn
- supported by their family
- supported by their community

**Quality teaching-learning processes and content:**

- with student-centered and life-skill based competences,
- with approaches to education and technology applications designed to reduce disparities and promote quality learning,
- with relevant curricula and adequate materials for literacy and numeracy, and
- the essential knowledge as well as skills and competences for life.

**Quality outcomes:**

- defined learning outcomes (knowledge, attitudes, and skills),
- suitable ways to assess them at the classroom, school, and national level.

## Preparation:

What steps to take?

1. Form a team to work with during the whole process. With your team, start by jointly discussing the overall approach and review the list of 28 indicators.
  - a. Choose the ones that are important for your school.
  - b. Add Indicators you consider missing.
  - c. Fill in the form with about ten indicators you find important. Be sure to choose some where you do well and some where you need additional development.
2. Prepare a team action plan and a time frame for a first assessment, which will be the starting point for the further development. Include in the assessment:
  - a. Pupils
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Other school staff
  - d. Parents
  - e. School board
  - f. Members of the community you may be cooperating with.
  - g. ...
3. Develop the action plan and the time frame. Make sure, they include
  - a. The school's profile after the first assessment.
  - b. Steps you will undertake (in the next 6 – 12 months).
  - c. A second assessment to learn about the developments



## 28 possible indicators for your school to assess your effectiveness:

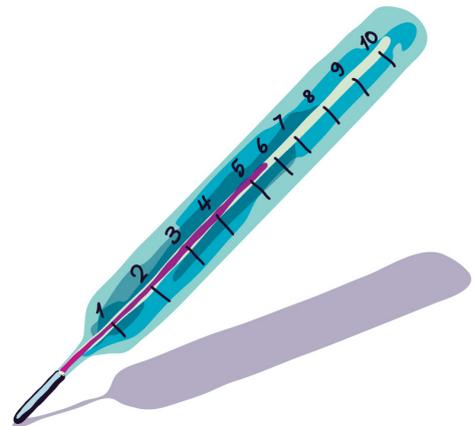
1. The school has a clear mission and/or vision statement that is prominently displayed and has been adequately explained to all school staff, students, parents, and community members.
2. The school has, monitors, and enforces policies against any form of discrimination pertaining to enrollment and teaching.
3. The school has, monitors, and enforces policies against corporal punishment and any other form of violence.
4. The school has, monitors, and enforces policies on proper sanitation and hygiene for teachers, staff, and students.
5. The school head provides strategic direction and effective leadership guided by a written supervisory plan.
6. The school coordinates with local pre-school centers to ensure the seamless continuation of early childhood development.
7. There are adequate desks, chairs, and classroom facilities to meet the needs and abilities of all students.
8. The school grounds provide sufficient room for students to play safely and- if possible - creatively.
9. School buildings and facilities are clean, safe, and regularly maintained.
10. Classrooms are orderly and have adequate lighting, ventilation, heating and cooling.
11. Adequate numbers of clean and separate female and male toilets are available for use by girls and boys, as well as female and male school staff.
12. All students have ready access to clean drinking water.
13. An adequate waste disposal system is provided and maintained.
14. The curriculum and classroom work support each student's learning needs in a meaningful and practical way. If not, pertinent curriculum adaptations are advised as much as possible.
15. Teachers are ready and able to deal with controversial issues (that may arise from the content of educational materials, textbooks, and learning resources), and prepared to encourage critical thinking and understanding.
16. Teachers regularly prepare lesson plans and revise them accordingly.
17. When needed, teachers support students in acquiring the official language(s) of instruction while respecting and supporting the learning of the children's mother tongue - as much as this is possible.
18. Teachers receive appropriate training in student-centered learning approaches to ensure that the students participate actively in their learning, individual differences are respected, and student well-being is promoted. Teachers use instructional methods that are suited to each student's age, abilities, and ways of learning.
19. Teachers regularly assess their students' performance, using different types of assessment, with a view to providing feedback and guidance to help students improve.
20. All students are encouraged to work together in flexible and heterogeneous groups to solve problems, do projects and achieve their learning goals.
21. All students are encouraged to express their views and feelings through the arts (music, drawing, drama, photography, etc.)
22. Classroom learning is flexible, dynamic and active, and occurs in a context of order and stability.
23. Each classroom has a "students' corner" with supplementary learning and recreational materials as well as displays of student work.
24. The school takes positive steps to increase teacher recognition, such as facilitating promotions - where this is possible - and achievement sharing.
25. Teachers support their cohorts by sharing effective teaching techniques and exchanging experiences.
26. Teachers are afforded opportunities for professional development as well as innovation (e.g. through project-based learning or self/peer-reflection techniques).
27. Teachers have their own lounge and/or work area.
28. The community is mobilized to support teachers and their teaching.

## Action

With your team, select 10 indicators from the list.

Chosen indicators for effectiveness	Status of this indicator in my school from 1 to 10.	Steps to be taken (collected by the discussion teams).
1)	1.....10	
2)	1.....10	
3)	1.....10	
4)	1.....10	
5)	1.....10	
6)	1.....10	
7)	1.....10	
8)	1.....10	
9)	1.....10	
10)	1.....10	

1. Based on the list above, prepare a handout or flipcharts to be given to all stakeholders included in the assessment process.
2. Form roundtables with the different stakeholders (pupils, teachers, staff members, parents, board members, etc). They latter may meet on the occasion of a big school event, or scheduled meetings, according to their availability.
3. Ask them to discuss their assessment and their comments.
4. Task them to come up with proposals for improvement.
5. Collect all comments and proposals in your team.
6. Devise a clear and actionable master plan for the coming 6 to 12 months.
7. Report the masterplan to all key players involved.
8. Plan the next assessment period (Transparency comes first!).



*Human rights based school - Topic 3:*

## Assessing wellness- related policies, safety, and protection in my Human Rights-Based school:

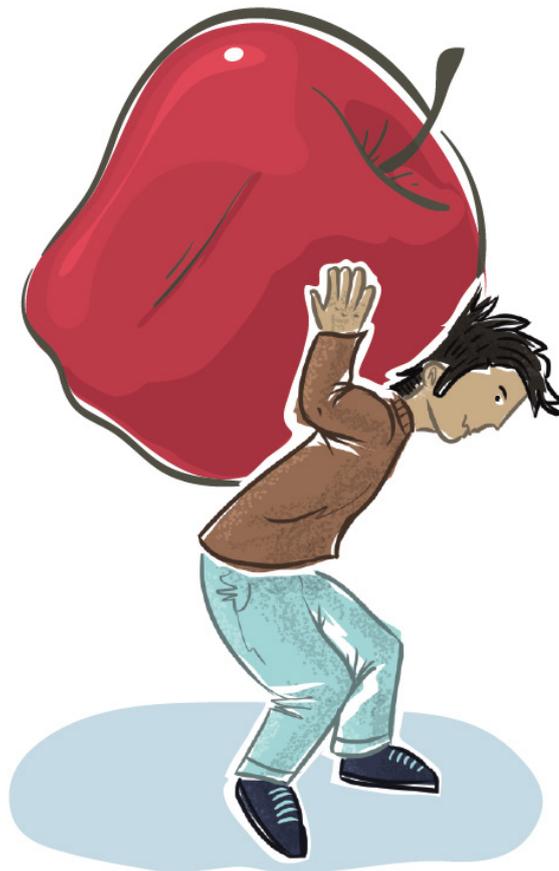
### Awareness

Physical, mental, and social well-being are interlinked core factors for good learning results. The student's good physical health promotes enrollment (particularly from the educationally more disadvantaged population), it reduces absenteeism and class repetition and furthers educational attainment. As to mental health, it is more than the absence of mental illness. Mental health is a state of well-being that allows people to pursue their learning potential, cope with normal stress, and remain connected with community and friends, which in turn contributes to social well-being.

In addition to increasing a person's opportunity and choices in life, the promotion of physical wellness and mental health as an educational core function helps prepare students to.

- successfully navigate their educational journey (more concisely than “flourish”...),
- build resilience against adversity,
- develop proactive abilities for coping with physical and mental ill-health

Moreover, it provides them with the skills and confidence to self-seek help for early intervention if necessary. (<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/mentalhealth/Pages/promoting-mental-health.aspx> August 21, 2020)



Although your responsibility for students' general well-being is necessarily shared by other stakeholders, the schools must provide important guidance and positive influence in many domains through daily practice

1. **Wellness-related policies** in schools help to ensure a safe and secure physical environment and a positive psychosocial environment for the students, thus proactively guarding against injuries and violence, such as bullying, abuse, or sexual harassment.
2. **Providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities** as first steps in creating a healthy school environment reinforces positive hygiene habits and behaviors. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, we all know how important this is. Your school will also strive to provide separate sanitation facilities and privacy for girls as an important contributing factor in reducing absenteeism during and before menstruation period.
3. **Skills-based health education** that focuses on the development of knowledge, attitudes, values, and relevant life skills needed to make appropriate, positive decisions, to establish lifelong healthy practices, and to reduce vulnerability to substance abuse.
4. **Adequate Physical Education classes** are provided in your school, which can have a positive impact on your students' physical health, self-esteem, cognitive function and stress and anxiety levels.
5. **School-based health and nutrition services** that are accessible and safe and can address problems that may be prevalent and important in the short or long run.
6. Your school aims to **improve the sociopsychological development of students** by providing a safe and supportive learning environment, including situations associated with school playtime, after-school activities, and travel between school and home. These different school-related environments have an important influence on how students feel about going to school and on creating the optimal socio-emotional atmosphere in which to promote efficient and effective learning.
7. **The corporal punishment of students is prohibited in your school.** Corporal punishment in schools is prohibited in many European countries as unacceptable and detrimental to mental health and effective education. Corporal punishment suppresses undesirable behavior for only a short period of time, while creating an atmosphere of fear or shame. It is also associated with high rates of mental health problems, including substance abuse later in adulthood. There is growing evidence that discipline is learned from encouragement, as well as from consequences that are fair, firm, and clearly communicated.

## Preparation

What steps to take?

1. Form a team to work with during the whole process. Start by jointly discussing an appropriate approach and review the list of indicators.
  - a. Select the ones you consider important for your school.
  - b. Add indicators you feel are missing.
  - c. Fill in the form with about ten indicators you find important. Be sure to choose some that you do well and some where you need additional development.
2. Prepare a team action plan and a time frame for a first assessment, which will be the starting point for the further development. Include in the assessment:
  - a. Pupils
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Other school staff
  - d. Parents
  - e. School board
  - f. Members of the community you may be cooperating with.
  - g. ...
3. Develop the action plan and the time frame. Make sure, they include
  - a. The school profile after the first assessment.
  - b. Steps you will undertake (in the next 6 months).
  - c. A second assessment to learn about the developments



## 20 possible indicators for your school to assess health, safety, and protection in your school:

- 1) School buildings and facilities are clean, safe, and regularly maintained.
- 2) Clean and safe drinking water is available to all students and school staff.
- 3) School food services (if in place) provide safe and nutritional food and comply with all hygiene rules.
- 4) The school has and enforces policies to provide a safe physical environment with protection from physical and chemical risks that can threaten the safety and health of students and school staff.
- 5) The school has and applies policies to train and has qualified teachers to administer simple health interventions in collaboration with health workers and the involvement of the local community.
- 6) The school has and enforces policies, programs, and procedures designed to identify, prevent, and respond to bullying, harassment, violence, child abuse, and neglect that are understood and known by all members of the school community.
- 7) The school has and implements skills-based health education, including the prevention of risky behavior in terms of substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.
- 8) The school has policies allowing pregnant girls to remain enrolled, as well as encouraging them to return to school after childbirth.
- 9) The school has and enforces policies prohibiting corporal punishment and promoting non-violent punishment as the acceptable disciplinary procedure.
- 10) The school has policies and procedures to help teachers deal fairly and consistently with aggression and violence.
- 11) Teachers do not resort to corporal or emotional punishment, or other aggressive behaviors to discipline students.
- 12) The school discipline rules are practical and clear to everyone.
- 13) The school has a code of conduct that defines how students are expected to behave.
- 14) The school has and enforces acceptable policies on the safe use of the Internet, social media, and related ICT technologies.
- 15) Students and teachers feel safe in school.
- 16) School staff encourage students to care about each other.
- 17) Students are confident that they will get help and support when they need it.
- 18) The school integrates [life] skills-based health education in its curriculum. Students learn subject matters and skills that can be useful in real life in their locality.
- 19) Life skills programs are adapted to meet local socio-cultural norms, values, and religious beliefs.
- 20) The parents have an opportunity to discuss the school's policies and codes of conduct, and they are invited to contribute to the school's decision-making process.

## Action

As a team, select 10 indicators from the list.

Chosen indicators for health, safety, and protection	Status of this indicator in my school from 1 to 10.	Steps to be taken (collected by the discussion teams).
1)	1.....10	
2)	1.....10	
3)	1.....10	
4)	1.....10	
5)	1.....10	
6)	1.....10	
7)	1.....10	
8)	1.....10	
9)	1.....10	
10)	1.....10	

1. Based on the list above, prepare a handout or flip-charts to be given to all stakeholders included in the assessment process.
2. Form roundtables with the different stakeholders (pupils, teachers, staff members, parents, board members, etc). They latter may meet on the occasion of a big school event, or scheduled meetings, according to their availability.
3. Have them discuss their assessment and their comments.
4. Task them come up with proposals for improvement.
5. Collect all comments and proposals in your team.
6. Devise a clear and actionable master plan for the coming 6 to 12 months.
7. Report the masterplan to all key players involved.
8. Plan the next assessment period (Transparency comes first!).



Human rights based school - Topic 4:

## Assessing the gender-friendliness of my Human-Rights-Based School:

### Awareness

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights principles and United Nations values. The tenets associated with human rights prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, meaning that its member States are required to promote gender equality. According to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, more prosperous, and sustainable world. According to the World Health Organization, sex and gender are both important determinants of health. Biological sex and socially constructed gender interact to produce differential risks and vulnerability to ill health, and differences in health-seeking behavior and health outcomes for women and men. 'Gender' describes those characteristics of women and men that are largely socially created, while 'sex' encompasses those that are biologically determined. However, these terms are often mistakenly used interchangeably in scientific literature, health policy, and legislation. (<https://www.who.int/genomics/gender/en/>, August 21, 2020).

*Gender is understood as the relations between men and women, both perceptual and material. Gender is **not determined biologically**, based on sexual characteristics of either women or men. Gender is **constructed socially**. It is a central organizing principle of societies, and often governs the processes of production and reproduction, consumption, and distribution. Despite this definition, gender is often misunderstood as being the promotion of women only. However, gender issues focus on women and on the relationship between men and women, their roles, access to and control over resources, division of labor, interests and needs. Gender relations affect household security, family well-being, planning, production, and many other aspects of life.*

Gender is an integral aspect of all areas of education to ensure not only that the basic needs of girls and boys are met, but also that they have the opportunity – regardless of their sex - to achieve their full potential and realize their human rights.

Unfortunately, education professionals often equate gender with certain 'anticipated' behaviors (what 'boys are supposed to do' versus what 'girls are supposed to do'). They fail to see the broader picture of socially constructed roles and stereotypes that lead to such behaviors.

Gender roles are created by a society and are learned from one generation to the next as part of a society's culture. Because gender is a socially learned construct (for instance, learned in the family or in school), anything associated with it can be changed to achieve equity and equality for both women and men.

When it comes to school and learning, the attitudes and actions of families and teachers can dramatically affect the cognitive development of girls and boys. Families explicitly or implicitly define the different roles that boys and girls should play, and this process starts early. Cross-cultural research shows that children start to be aware of gender differences and stereotypes at around two to three years of age. By the age of four to five, children are often more rigid and stereotyped than they will be later. Everyone grows up among the influences of their families and the school they attend for many years, many hours a day.

**Sex-based differences in institutional educational approaches** are a type of [sex discrimination](#) in the education system that may affect both men and women during and after their educational experiences. Men are more likely to be literate on a global average, although higher literacy scores for women are prevalent in many countries. Men and women find themselves having gender differences when attaining their educational goals. Although men and women can have the same level of education, it is more difficult for women to obtain higher management jobs, and future employment and financial worries can intensify. Men tended to receive more education than women in the past, but the gender gap in education has reversed in recent decades in most Western and many non-Western countries.

Is it normal in your school that questions like these are being posed: “Are there alternatives to girls cleaning the classroom?” or “What would happen if boys did the cleaning, while girls moved the desks?” This kind of critical thinking might inspire people to reflect, reconsider, and look more closely at their own assumptions.

Do girls and boys have equal opportunities to enter your school? Do girls and boys interact with each other as equals in your school? Do girls and boys interact differently with their teachers (male and female)? Are gender stereotypes reflected in the curriculum that the students are taught, in the textbooks that they use, as well as in the clubs and extra-curricular activities in your school that are open and available to girls and boys?

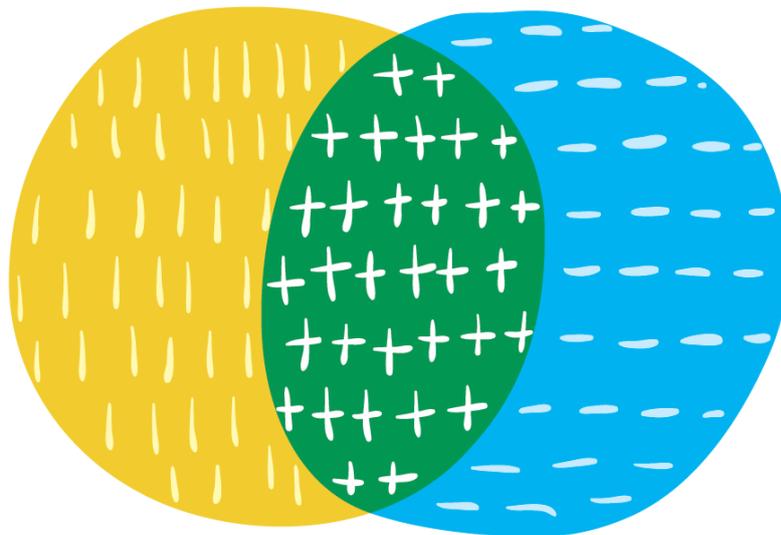
The aim in assessing the gender sensitivity of your school is to promote gender equality. This effort to bridge the gap between girls and boys in terms of the school climate and the teaching and learning processes requires honesty and a step-by-step approach.



## Preparation

What steps to take?

1. Form a team to work with during the whole process. Start by jointly discussing the approach and review the list of indicators.
  - a. Select the ones you consider important for your school.
  - b. Add indicators you feel are missing.
  - c. Fill in the form with about ten indicators you find important. Be sure to choose some that you do well and some where you need additional development.
2. Prepare a team action plan and a time frame for a first assessment, which will be the starting point for the further development. Include in the assessment:
  - a. Pupils
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Other school staff
  - d. Parents
  - e. School board
  - f. Members of the community you may be cooperating with.
  - g. ...
3. Develop the action plan and the time frame. Make sure, they include
  - a. The school profile after the first assessment.
  - b. Steps you will undertake (in the next 6 months).
  - c. A second assessment to learn about the developments



## 24 possible indicators for your school to assess gender -balanced education and behavior in your school:

1. A school mission and/or vision statement and policies against gender discrimination in enrollment and teaching / learning practices exist and are being enforced.
2. Girls and boys have equal access to free and compulsory education.
3. Girls and boys participate equally in defining classroom and school rules and regulations and in determining disciplinary measures, especially in terms of preventing discrimination, violence, and abuse.
4. Parents and community leaders value female and male teachers equally.
5. Girls have access to feminine hygiene commodities and facilities in school.
6. Girls have the same access to, and opportunities for, physical play and other extracurricular activities as boys.
7. The curriculum reflects the realities and daily life needs for both girls and boys. If not, remedial curriculum adaptations are advised as much as this is possible.
8. Teaching and learning materials provided by the school portray girls and boys of diverse socio-economic backgrounds with equal prominence, potential, and respect.
9. Learning materials provided by the school are free of gender bias (e.g., terms such as “he” or “she” are used with equal frequency).
10. The roles, responsibilities, and activities of girls and boys reflect a balance of power and decision-making.
11. Gender stereotypes are reversed (e.g., girls can be doctors or scientists, boys can be teachers or nurses).
12. Girls and boys are depicted in photos, graphics, and illustrations with equal frequency and with equal status (without gender stereotyping).
13. Girls and boys are depicted equally in leadership positions and as ‘heroes.’
14. Girls and boys are treated equally in terms of their confidence, intelligence, and problem-solving skills.
15. All teachers expect and encourage girls and boys to contribute to and participate in learning and other activities equally.
16. All teachers value the views of girls and boys equally.
17. All teachers believe that both girls and boys can achieve equal competence in all subjects, including literacy, numeracy, sciences, and life skills.
18. Teachers are trained to actively identify gender bias in teaching materials, the school environment, their own teaching, and they can correct existing bias.
19. School administrators treat male and female teachers in the same way.
20. Community women and men with specialized relevant knowledge or skills are invited and welcomed into the classes as resource persons.
21. Girls and boys feel confident to make subject choices that may not be considered traditional male or female ones.
22. Girls are supported to achieve mastery of mathematics and sciences.
23. Girls and boys are equally assigned major responsibilities, such as being the head of the class or group in certain activities.
24. Equal representation of girls and boys is ensured in school councils or other school activities.

## Action

As a team, select 10 indicators from the list.

Chosen indicators for gender friendliness	Status of this indicator in my school from 1 to 10.	Steps to be taken (collected by the discussion teams).
1)	1.....10	
2)	1.....10	
3)	1.....10	
4)	1.....10	
5)	1.....10	
6)	1.....10	
7)	1.....10	
8)	1.....10	
9)	1.....10	
10)	1.....10	

1. Based on the list above, prepare a handout or flip-charts to be given to all stakeholders included in the assessment process.
2. Form roundtables with the different stakeholders (pupils, teachers, staff members, parents, board members, etc). They latter may meet on the occasion of a big school event, or scheduled meetings, according to their availability.
3. Have them discuss their assessment and their comments.
4. Task them come up with proposals for improvement.
5. Collect all comments and proposals in your team.



*Human rights based school - Topic 5:*

## **Assessment of the involvement of the family, the community, and the students in the development of a Human-Rights-Based School**

### **Awareness**

Implementing Human Rights principles is a task that necessarily engages governments, as stipulated by the statute of all core human rights conventions, including those about education. At the same time, more and more democratic societies recognize governments' limited ability to implement the standards and principles of Human Rights unless all people are actively involved and adhere to them. For human rights become a reality, they must be upheld and respected by everyone, including families, schools and other institutions that provide services for students, as well as the communities, and all levels of administration.

Especially here, you would need to understand how closely the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are connected (see a short history below). The CRC also highlights the primary importance of parents and families in protecting the rights of the children. However, there is a misperception that the CRC takes responsibilities for children away from the parents and other legal guardians to shift more authority in this area to governments.

This is not the case, however. In several articles, the Convention explicitly references the importance of parents and families, thereby charging the governments with protecting and assisting the families in fulfilling their essential role as nurturers of their children. It calls on governments to respect the responsibilities of parents, legal guardians, and other caregivers for providing appropriate guidance.



<b>1945</b>	Following WWII, many nations in the world agreed to form a union - thus founding the UN, that is, the <b>United Nations</b> . Together they wanted to support peace and liberty in the world.
<b>10. December 1948</b>	On this day, the United Nations adopted the <b>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</b> . These basic rights of all human beings in the world were understood to apply to children as well In recognition of the plight of many children, the understanding was redefined to grant children special status and protection.
<b>1950</b>	A proposed first draft of children's rights declaration was subsequently discussed by the UN member states for several years
<b>20. November 1959</b>	On this day, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child which defines <b>children's rights</b> as the right to protection, education, health care, shelter, and good nutrition.  Although such a declaration was non-binding for all member states, it marked the first major international agreement and consensus on the fundamental principles of <b>children's rights</b> .
<b>1979</b>	In the whole world, this year was celebrated as the Year of the Child. The rights of children were thought about and discussed everywhere. For the benefit of children, more and more people wished these rights to be worked out in more detail, and, more importantly, to be made more legally binding.
<b>20. November 1989</b>	On this day, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the <b>Convention of the Rights of the Child</b> . Since then, the governments of almost all nations in the world have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention also strongly advocates for students' participation and upholding their rights to participation, namely: the right to access information, the right to expression, the right to involvement in decision-making, and the right to association. To promote the right to participation in the school context, it is necessary to provide an enabling environment within the educational institution, the family, the community, and society at large. In this context, such issues as inclusion, language, non-corporal punishment, a safe environment, and gender equality play a crucial role.

Thus, assessing the comprehensiveness of a school's approach to involving student, family, and community participation requires looking at three Key Performance Areas, namely:

1. Mechanisms for students to express their views about schoolwork, school life, and participating in the school organization,
2. Mechanisms for building school-family partnerships for the management and running of the school, the development and protection of students, and
3. Mechanisms for building school-community partnerships for school management and support, student protection, and community improvement.

## Preparation

What steps to take?

1. Form a team to work with during the whole process. Start by jointly discussing the approach and review the list of indicators.
  - a. Select the ones you consider important for your school.
  - b. Add indicators you feel are missing.
  - c. Fill in the form with about ten indicators you find important. Be sure to choose some that you do well and some where you need additional development.
2. Prepare a team action plan and a time frame for a first assessment, which will be the starting point for the further development. Include in the assessment:
  - a. Pupils
  - b. Teachers
  - c. Other school staff
  - d. Parents
  - e. School board
  - f. Members of the community you may be cooperating with.
  - g. ...
3. Develop the action plan and the time frame. Make sure, they include
  - a. The school's profile after the first assessment.
  - b. Steps you will undertake (in the next 6 months).
  - c. A second assessment to learn about the developments



## 18 possible indicators to assess the level of involvement of different actors within your school:

1. The school promotes interaction between students in a manner consistent with democratic methods (i.e., mutual respect, cooperation, critical thinking and understanding to solve problems).
2. The school provides and welcomes opportunities for students to express their views regarding activities and life in school.
3. The school has mechanisms – such as a school newsletter or publication, a student bulletin board, an opinion box, or polling tools – to give students the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns about important school and community issues.
4. The school involves students in meetings and planning sessions that concern their well-being.
5. The school has an actively working student council.
6. All students are given an equal opportunity to participate in the management and leadership of school clubs, teams, and associations.
7. The school has a Parent-Teacher Association that meets regularly and has a written plan of action.
8. The school provides understandable, accessible, and well-publicized processes for influencing decisions, raising issues or concerns, appealing decisions, and resolving problems.
9. The school disseminates information about school reforms, policies, disciplinary procedures, assessment tools, and school goals.
10. The school regularly sends news of school activities to parents and members of the School Committee.
11. Parents feel welcome to ask questions or discuss issues concerning their child/children at the school.
12. Parents are encouraged and assisted by the school to help their students consolidate their learning at home when that is deemed necessary.
13. Schools communicate with parents about positive student behavior and achievement, not just concerning incidents of misbehavior or failure.
14. Parents inform the school about any major changes in their child's home life so that appropriate help can be provided, if needed.
15. The school has links with community leaders and other stakeholders, is responsive to the needs of the community, and provides opportunities for exchanging ideas with community members in an effort to increase all students' access to and well-being in school regardless of their background or ability.
16. The community helps the school to reach out to all students who have been excluded from school.
17. Community women and men with specialized knowledge or skills are invited and welcomed into the classes as resource persons.
18. The school develops partnerships with local businesses, civic society groups and NGOs to advance student learning and assist families

## Action

As a team, select 10 indicators from the list.

Chosen indicators for involvement	Status of this indicator in my school from 1 to 10.	Steps to be taken (collected by the discussion teams).
1)	1.....10	
2)	1.....10	
3)	1.....10	
4)	1.....10	
5)	1.....10	
6)	1.....10	
7)	1.....10	
8)	1.....10	
9)	1.....10	
10)	1.....10	

1. Based on the list above, prepare a handout or flipcharts to be given to all stakeholders included in the assessment process.
2. Form roundtables with the different stakeholders (pupils, teachers, staff members, parents, board members, etc). They latter may meet on the occasion of a big school event, or scheduled meetings, according to their availability.
3. Have them discuss their assessment and their comments.
4. Task them come up with proposals for improvement.
5. Collect all comments and proposals in your team.
6. Devise a clear and actionable master plan for the coming 6 to 12 months.
7. Report the masterplan to all key players involved.
8. Plan the next assessment period (Transparency comes first!).

