

Programme 1

Before school



Programme 1: Before school

Key points to cover during this session

Whether you run a full-day training session or just a very short discussion, try to include these key points:

- What happens to children before school can have a big impact on the rest of their day, especially their experience of school. Issues we need to consider include:
 - Are children getting enough sleep? Tiredness affects learning and wellbeing.
 - Are children eating breakfast? Hunger affects concentration and health.
 - Are children doing a lot of chores at home? Chores can be a part of learning skills and responsibility, but can also affect education by making children tired, dirty or late for school.
- Chores can be linked to issues of gender inequality and stereotyping. Stereotyping leads to discrimination. Schools and teachers can help to end discrimination in society by challenging stereotypes.

Watch the video and then facilitate the activities.

We recommend using all the activities in this first programme, if possible.

A

Basic workshop activities

Activity 1.1 – Reflect on challenges before school

🕒 60 minutes

Main purpose of this activity

To encourage teachers to think about some of the factors in children's home lives that affect their attendance or participation in education, and how they can help reduce the negative impacts.

Give participants the following instructions:

- Work in 3 groups.
- **Group 1, think about the issue of sleep.**
 - Take a piece of flipchart paper and make a simple drawing of a child sleeping in the middle. Then discuss the following and make notes on the flipchart:
 - What causes children in your school community to get insufficient sleep?
 - How does lack of sleep affect children's inclusion in education?
 - How does sleep support children's inclusion in education?
 - What can be done to ensure they get sufficient sleep?
- **Group 2, think about breakfast.**
 - Take a piece of flipchart paper and make a simple drawing of a child eating breakfast in the middle, or even just a picture of a bowl and spoon. Then discuss the following and make notes on the flipchart:
 - Why might children in your school community not have breakfast before school?
 - How does lack of breakfast affect children's inclusion in education?
 - How does eating breakfast support children's inclusion in education?
 - What can be done to ensure children have something to eat before the school day starts?
- **Group 3 think about chores.**
 - Take a piece of flipchart paper and make a simple drawing of a child doing some chores. Then discuss the following and make notes on the flipchart:

- What chores do children in your community do and why do they do them?
 - How can chores at home, on the farm or in the community negatively affect children’s education?
 - How might they benefit children’s education?
 - What can be done to ensure that chores do not negatively affect children’s inclusion in education?
- Each group should think of your own experiences when you were younger, as well as children you know. Try to provide examples to illustrate your points.

After about 20 minutes, invite each group to stick their flipcharts on the wall.

Give participants the following instructions:

- One member of each group should stay with their flipchart.
- The other members of the group should visit another flipchart and find out what was discussed.
- They can add more points to the flipcharts if they think something has been missed.
- Spend 5-10 minutes at each flipchart and then move to the next one.
- You could put these flipcharts in your staff room to remind you of important issues. You and your colleagues can add to them. In particular, you could add details of solutions you have tried and whether they worked.

Possible answers to expect from participants

You can use these ideas to fill gaps in participants’ answers, or help them if they are struggling to think of answers.

Sleep

Why might children not sleep enough?

- Noisy home or local area
- Uncomfortable place to sleep
- Too many chores
- Too much homework
- Worrying about something
- Feeling unwell
- Playing with friends or siblings
- Playing computer games.

Lack of sleep affects children’s inclusion in education in many ways such as:

- Too tired to concentrate
- Tiredness affects memory
- Tiredness can make children grumpy, emotional or even aggressive
- May fall asleep in class

- Risk of injury on the journey to school or at school if they are not concentrating or are not physically co-ordinated due to tiredness
- May be too tired to play with peers.

What can be done to ensure children get sufficient sleep to be able to learn effectively?

- You can observe children in class and the playground to see who is tired, and talk to them and their parents to find out possible causes.
- Give parents advice on the importance of sleep. Or encourage local clinics or other social services to run a health and wellbeing campaign around the issue of children's sleep.
- You could do an activity in class about the importance of sleep and use this to encourage children to go to bed early enough. This could be part of a biology lesson, for instance.

Breakfast

Why might children not have breakfast before school?

- Family cannot afford it
- Parents are too busy to make breakfast for them, or have already gone to work early in the morning
- Not enough time – e.g. because they are doing chores or must walk a long way to school
- They choose not to have breakfast.

Lack of breakfast affects children's inclusion in education in various ways such as:

- Hunger affects concentration and memory.
- It can also affect children's moods and emotions. Hungry children may feel anxious, depressed or withdrawn. This may affect their behaviour in school.
- Hungry children may not be able to do curricular or extra-curricular physical activities, like sports or helping to prepare the classroom.
- Long-term hunger and malnutrition can affect physical and intellectual development in children, causing longer-term problems which can affect their education.
- Hunger can affect children's health and cause absence from school which affects their ability to keep up. This may lead to children dropping out or failing exams and being unable to progress to the next grade or level.

What can be done to ensure children eat before school starts?

- You can observe children in class and the playground to see who may be hungry. Talk to children and parents to find out why they are hungry in school. You can explain the importance of breakfast for learning and encourage parents to provide breakfast if they can. This is more feasible if the problem is related to lack of time (the family could perhaps adjust its routines a bit to fit in breakfast), or related to children refusing to eat breakfast.
- You can talk to children about food and nutrition, for instance in a science or cooking lesson, and encourage them to see breakfast as the most important meal of the day. You could help them to learn what is the most nutritious food they could eat for breakfast that is available to them.

- You could try to link with local health or welfare services to find out if there are any support options for families who are struggling to provide breakfast for their children.
- You could work with colleagues in the school to develop a breakfast club, perhaps with help from community members or local businesses.
- You could try to link with local organisations that may be able to help parents generate more income so that they can afford to feed their children better.

Chores

What sort of chores do children do?

- Domestic tasks like cleaning, cooking, fetching water and firewood
- Looking after siblings or elderly or disabled relatives
- Looking after livestock
- Helping to sell things at the market or on the street
- Planting, weeding and harvesting crops
- Helping parents with other business activities.

Why might chores negatively affect children's inclusion in education?

- Children may be too tired to learn or to come to school at all.
- They may arrive at school late. They may miss lessons which makes it difficult to keep up, or they may get into trouble for arriving late.
- They may arrive at school dirty. Some teachers punish children for this, which can discourage them from coming to school.
- Children may feel there is more benefit in doing chores that earn money than coming to school and may drop out early.

In what ways do chores contribute to education?

- Children may learn practical, analytical and problem-solving skills that will be useful in life, and that help them in school.
- Children may develop a sense of responsibility, confidence and initiative.
- Some chores may help the family to earn money which enables the family to afford to send children to school.

What can be done to ensure that chores do not negatively affect children's inclusion in education?

- You can talk to children and their parents to find out what chores they do, especially if you suspect that a child is being negatively affected by chores.
- You can encourage parents to reduce or reschedule children's chores to reduce the impact on their attendance at school.
- You can adjust your rules in school, for example, so that lessons start later or children who have to work in the morning are not punished for being late or dirty.
- You could try to link with local organisations that may be able to help parents generate more income so that they do not need to rely on their children's labour.

Optional extension activity – advocacy with parents and community members

🕒 90 minutes minimum

Teachers can play a very important role in raising awareness of important issues linked to children's inclusion in education and they can help support parents to make positive changes.

Give participants these instructions:

- Work in small groups.
- Take the issues that were discussed in Activity 1.1. You can choose to focus on one or more of these (sleep, breakfast, chores).
- Use the answers on the flipcharts to develop some guidance for parents, families and community members on how (and why) to support children to get proper sleep, eat breakfast, and/or reduce the burden of chores.
- Think about:
 - *Messages* – what are the specific messages for students, parents and families.
 - *Methods* – how can these messages be conveyed in a way that does not blame or accuse parents/families? How can you open up a positive dialogue with them? What are the best ways to engage parents, families and community members in these issues?
 - *Examples* – draw on your own experiences of how you have already engaged with parents/families, students, or other community members about challenging issues like this.
- Try to develop a creative way of conveying your guidance. For instance, you may want to write a script for a drama, or create a radio presentation. You could design a poster or series of posters.

B

Important theoretical issues to discuss

Activity 1.2 – Stereotyping and discrimination

🕒 90–120 minutes

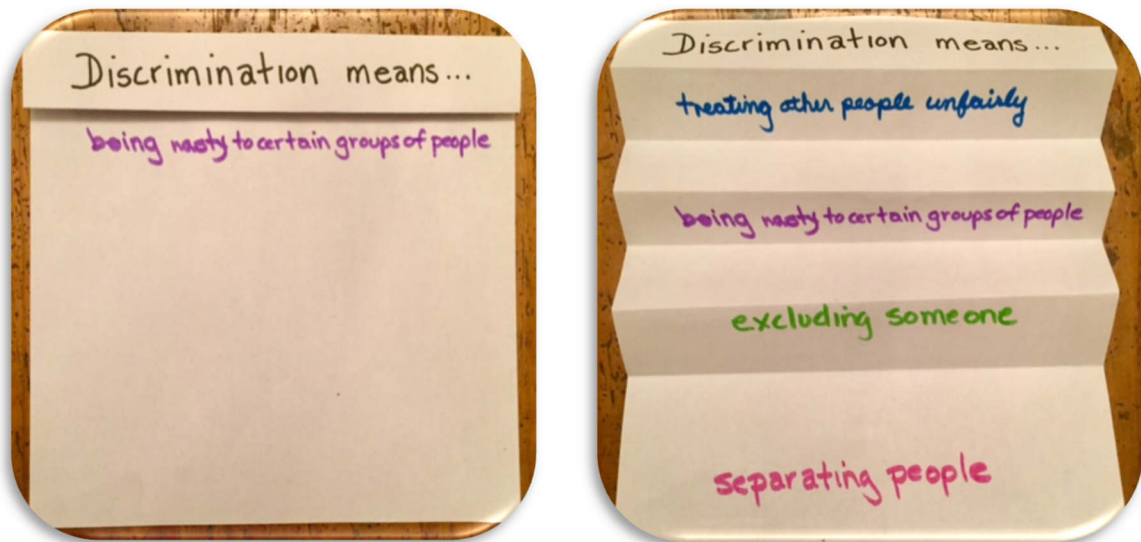
Main purpose of this activity

To help teachers understand the concept of stereotyping and how it relates to discrimination and to educational exclusion.

Give participants the following instructions:

- Work in small groups of about 5 people.
- For half of the groups, take a piece of paper and write at the top of it: “discrimination means”.
- For the other half of groups, write at the top of your paper: “stereotype means”.
- One person in your group needs to write one line to explain what they think discrimination or stereotype means. They must write this line without the others in the group seeing. Then they should fold the paper so that their definition is hidden and pass the paper to the next person. This person writes a one-line explanation, folds the paper to hide their line, and passes the paper to the next person. This continues until everyone in your group has written at least one line each. You can go around the group several times if you want to.
- After about 10-15 minutes, unfold your pieces of paper and read all the definitions together.
- Discuss these questions:
 - Were your definitions similar or different? How?
 - Are there any definitions you disagree with?
 - Now that you can see each other’s definitions, is there anything else you would like to add?
 - In your groups, use the ideas you have already written and discussed, to create a final short definition of discrimination that you all agree with.

Hold a whole group discussion to share the short definitions from each group and try to create one definition of each word that the whole group agrees on.



Example of folded paper from the definitions activity

Optional extension activity – experiencing stereotyping

⌚ 60–90 minutes

Main purpose of this activity

To help participants reflect on how it feels to be affected by stereotyping.

Preparations for this activity:

Write various stereotypes onto stickers or post-it notes (one per sticker/note). For example, lazy, unintelligent, good at maths, beautiful, slow learner, forgetful, trustworthy, ignorant, poor, over-emotional, untrustworthy, unclean, depressed, criminal, calm, excitable, helpful, dangerous). You will need one for each participant.¹

Give participants the following information:

- You will be conducting a labelling exercise to explore how stereotypes work. Participation in this exercise is optional and anyone who prefers not to participate directly can play the role of an observer.

Attach a sticker to each participant's forehead (or back) so that the label is not visible to the wearer. Be very clear that these labels are being assigned randomly and have nothing to do with participants' actual attributes.

Give participants the following instructions:

- Spend 15 minutes talking with each other about 'future goals'.

¹ Adapted from Goldstein, S. B. (1997). The power of stereotypes: A labeling exercise. *Teaching of Psychology*, 24, 256-258.

- Circulate around the room so you talk with several different people.
- Treat the person you talk to according to the attribute on their sticker. For example, if you talk to someone labelled 'forgetful' you might keep repeating key points or remind them several times about the instructions of the task.

After 15 minutes give participants these instructions:

- Come and sit in a circle [if the room allows for this].
- Keep your labels on for now.
- Share how you felt during the exercise. How were you treated by others, and how did this treatment affect you? [Note: participants may mention their discomfort not only with being stereotyped, but with treating others stereotypically].

After a while, tell participants that they can remove and look at their labels.

Discuss the following questions:

- Was your label what you guessed it would be, or were you surprised by it?
- When people stereotyped you or treated you in a way that you did not feel comfortable with, were you able to ignore it?
- Did you try to disprove the stereotype or opinions they had about you? If so, did it work?
- How did you feel towards the person who was stereotyping you?
- If your attribute was positive (e.g. 'good at maths'), how did you feel?

Optional extension activity – experiencing discrimination

Display a bowl full of sweets. Tell participants that you have brought them for the whole group to share. Then offer a sweet to people sitting in the front row, or those you can reach with minimal movement. The rest do not get a sweet.

Discuss the following questions:

- Those who did not receive a sweet, what did you feel?
- Those who did receive a sweet, were you comfortable with knowing others did not get a sweet?
- Why do you think only those close to the facilitator received them?
- What more effort would it have taken to distribute sweets to everyone?
- What different ways could have been used to ensure everyone equally received one?
- How is this similar to ensuring that education is inclusive of all equally without discrimination?

At the end of the discussion, make sure all participants have a sweet if they want one!

[Continuation of Activity 1.2]

Present the following:

Let's recap: A stereotype is an oversimplified and rigid generalisation about a particular group based on gender, ethnicity, race, religion, age, disability, sexuality, HIV status and other types of difference.

Discrimination is the systematic and institutionalised mistreatment of certain groups in order to deny equal access or equal rights.

Stereotyping and discrimination have very negative effects on children's inclusion in education and in wider society, as well as affecting their overall wellbeing.

Most people have, at some point in their lives, been stereotyped or discriminated against in some way.

Give participants the following instructions:

- Work in pairs. Tell each other about any experiences in your life when you felt affected by stereotyping or when you felt discriminated against. Try to think of an example linked with education.

After about 10-15 minutes, invite volunteers from the pairs to share their experiences with the whole group. Write notes on the flipchart.

Ask participants to brainstorm as a whole group examples of negative stereotypes that they know exist in their community.

Then ask them to say how these stereotypes might affect girls' and boys' inclusion in education.

Possible answers to expect from participants

The exact answers will vary depending on the local context, but the following could be used to prompt participants if they do not know where to start.

Stereotypes about...	Examples of negative stereotypes	How might this affect inclusion in education?
Gender	"Girls cannot understand science or maths"	Girls may be discouraged from studying subjects considered to be technical, and pushed to study arts and social studies subjects instead
Disability	"Children with disabilities are stupid"	Children with disabilities may be denied education opportunities There may be low expectations from teachers and parents

Appearance	“People with a certain coloured eyes are bad tempered”	Stereotypes based on appearance may lead to peers and even teachers treating children unfairly. In this example, it might lead to teachers misinterpreting a child’s emotions as bad temper when in fact they might be upset or worried. Or it might lead the teacher to blame the child for causing every disturbance, even if they were not to blame.
Ethnicity	“People from a certain ethnic group are all thieves”	Children from these groups may face unfair treatment from teachers and peers. In this example, it may lead to teachers not trusting children from this ethnic group to borrow books from the library, which would unfairly hinder their learning.
Religion	“Everyone who follows a certain religion is a terrorist or supports terrorism”	This might lead to children being bullied by peers and treated unfairly by teachers. In extreme examples, it might lead to them being excluded from attending a certain school, even if they or their families have done nothing wrong.
Geography	“People from rural areas are backward”	This might lead decision-makers to under-invest in rural schools. This stereotype might also make teachers reluctant to take a job placement in a rural area.

The exact groups that might be mentioned will vary in each context, but the following are all examples of group that may experience stereotyping and discrimination. Encourage participants to consider groups they may not have mentioned:

- Women/girls and in some cases men/boys
- People with disabilities
- People with mental health conditions
- People who are very poor
- People who are homeless
- People who are unemployed
- People from certain religions
- People from certain ethnic groups
- People from certain geographical and/or linguistic areas
- People who have a certain sexual orientation
- People with HIV and AIDS or other health conditions
- People with certain physical attributes
- People who dress in a particular way
- People who have not had much education

C Digging deeper into specific issues

You may want to focus on some of the specific issues raised in Programme 1. A key issue is:

- Children's rights

Activity 1.3 – Children's rights

 **60 minutes**

Main purpose of this activity

To introduce teachers to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) or remind them about it, and encourage them to reflect on how it relates to their context.

Note: this activity could be used at various points throughout the 10 modules of training, to encourage participants to reflect on the children's rights issues seen in several of the 10 short videos.

Present the following:

The video for Programme 1 mentioned international conventions that governments have signed which should uphold girls' rights to education. There are various international conventions that mention education rights, but in this session we will focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Most countries in the world – except Somalia and the USA – have signed up to the UNCRC. This convention is meant to guarantee important human rights for all children. Unfortunately, many people are still unaware of these rights and many governments do not enforce them.

Start with a brief brainstorm. Ask participants:

- What do you already know about the UNCRC?

Give participants the following instructions:

- Look at Handout1, 'UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Child Friendly Language'.
- Read it by yourself.

After 10 minutes, give participants the following instructions:

- Work in small groups to discuss the articles detailed on the handout.
- Choose which of these articles connect with something you have seen, or heard in the video.
- Pick at least two of these articles. Discuss in your groups.
- Write down what specifically needs to happen to ensure the rights detailed in the articles can be achieved in your own context. Try to answer the following questions:
 - What changes need to happen at the school and community level to make these rights achievable?
 - Who needs to be involved and how?
 - What must the government do to ensure and enforce these rights?
 - What can teachers do to ensure these rights?

Discuss the answers as a whole group. Ask one of the small groups to volunteer to present their answers. Then invite the other small groups to add things from their own discussions that have not been said yet. Or they can comment on any points they disagree with.

Programme 1 transcript

Before school

Every child has the right to a quality, inclusive education.

What happens inside a school can make a child feel included or excluded.

But problems with participating in a good education start before a child reaches the school gate.

A busy start to the day

From the moment a child wakes up in the morning they may face challenges that affect their inclusion in education.

Many children, from a young age, help with chores around the house – often in the morning before school.

“What I do in the morning, I wake up and I sweep and mop the floor, and we cook.”

By doing chores, children help their families, and they develop skills and responsibility.

But chores can also get in the way of children’s education.

Traditional beliefs about the roles of women and men mean girls often do more household chores than boys, and this can affect girls’ inclusion in education.

Of course, boys also do things to help the family that can affect their participation in education, such as looking after livestock or working to earn money.

“With regards to gender aspects in our school, we are fighting for equal chances, but that does not depend only on us. It depends on the parents as well. Parents, especially of children with disabilities, do not always have the same understanding and currently prioritise boys rather than girls.”

Working in the mornings can make girls and boys late for school. They may get into trouble for this, which can put them off going to school.

Having to do lots of chores can also make children too tired to concentrate and learn properly.

What can you do?

You can talk to the children in your class or school to find out about their home lives. You may be able to help them balance chores and school better.

You can meet with parents to discuss the effects of chores on children's education. Maybe you can work together to make plans for reducing these chores.

You may be able to have broader discussions with parents about girls' education rights, which your country has agreed to uphold by signing various international conventions.

Breakfast

Breakfast is a very important meal for children.

Unfortunately, around the world, millions of children go to school hungry. This can affect their learning – it is very difficult to concentrate when you are hungry.

Making education more inclusive can therefore involve making sure children are not hungry.

What can you do?

“School feeding schemes are really very valuable because that encourages children to come to school in poorer communities because that's often the place where they get their only meal. So it's a good way of also encouraging attendance of learners who come from very poor communities.”

You can observe children to see who may be struggling to learn because they are hungry.

You can talk to children and their parents to find out more about their situation and see what solutions might help them.

You could help your school to start or run a breakfast club, so that children can have free food before lessons start.

Local organisations or businesses may be willing to help.

You could find an organisation that works locally to help people generate income, and encourage them to work with parents from your school.

You could even help to start or run a school garden.

Children could learn about plants, growing food, and how to protect the environment whilst growing food for breakfast and lunch.