Democratic Participation and Child-Friendly Schools[1]

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) declares that all girls and boys in the world are entitled to the right to survival; the right to development (including the right to be educated); the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and the right to participation in matters that affect their lives and that prepare children to take on increasing roles of responsibility as they mature.

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) concept is grounded in the CRC and represents a holistic, system-wide approach to improving educational quality that places the child at the center of education reform. Because of social, political, and cultural contexts of countries, the Child-Friendly School approach is flexible by design. However, stakeholders in countries implementing CFS hold a deep commitment to child rights; and they frame their reform efforts within the Child-Friendly concepts of *access, respect, and quality,* as well as the dimensions of (a) inclusion; (b) learning effectiveness; (c) health, safety, and protection; (d) participation; and (e) gender responsiveness. These concepts and dimensions interact and reinforce each other through country-specific CFS policies and practices.

Much is being learned about CFS dimensions and how they interact to create Child-Friendly Schools. The CFS dimension briefs are intended to summarize these broad dimensions of education quality as the research and literature have discussed them to date.

1. What is Democratic Participation?

Democratic participation is a core CFS concept. It identifies children as "rights holders and those who facilitate their rights as duty bearers," each having a say in the form and substance of his or her education (UNICEF, 2008). Decisions regarding all aspects of the education process and environment consider the "voices" of multiple perspectives within the school and the community—and decisions are made accordingly. Representatives of students, teachers, parents, and community are included in a transparent and open decision-making process that fosters quality schooling for all students. Families and community leaders are enabled to fulfill their rightful responsibility as nurturers and role-models for their children.

The goal of participation is to ensure that children claim their right to a quality education. Parents as "first line" duty bearers play a significant role in achieving this goal by holding schools and governments to the highest possible educational standards (UNICEF, 2009).Collaboration among the school, families, and communities is an effective way to leverage resources to support students' learning (Coleman, 1990).

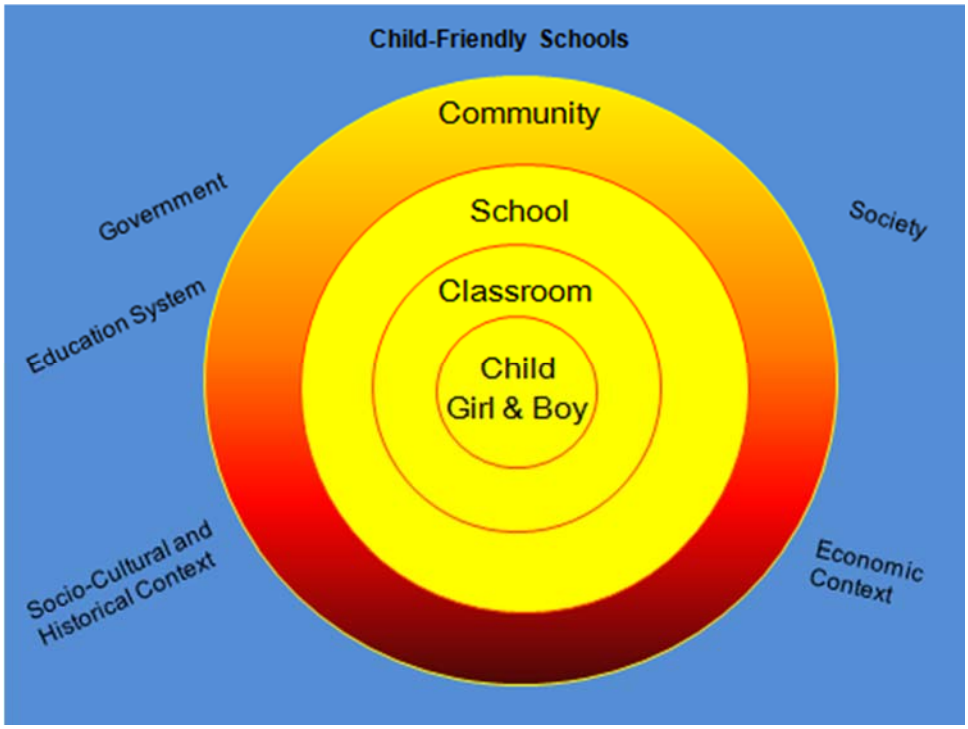
Democratic and authentic participation fosters ownership, helps build cohesive communities, and cultivates students and community members who are productive members of society (UNICEF, 2003, 2009, 2011). Research over the past two decades has established that when schools engage parents, community members, and students at the level of curriculum, communication, parenting skills, and school governance, students in these schools are more likely to (a) achieve better academically; (b) enroll in higher-level programs; (c) attend school regularly; (d) have better life skills; (e) graduate from high school and pursue college education; and (f) enjoy a higher level of mental and emotional well-being (Dauber & Epstein, 1991; Epstein, 1995; Finn, 1997; Hoover & Sandler, 1997; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Cohen, 2004; Riggs, 2006; Evans & Prilletensky, 2007; UNICEF, 2011).

The need for child, family, and community participation in school is paramount. Almost 71 million children worldwide are out of school (UNICEF, 2011). School cost, distance from school, and domestic workload are structural obstacles to children staying in school. Also, where children are in school, many families and community members have little say about their child's education (World Bank, 2008; Miske, 2008). In many schools, teaching conditions and practices are discriminatory and undemocratic (UNICEF, 2009), and children are rarely involved in decisions pertaining to their own education (Miske, 2008). This lack of family involvement along with discriminatory and authoritarian school practices often expedite the child's decision to drop out of school (UNICEF, 2009).

2. The Benefits of Democratic Participation

Democratic participation is both a "top down" and "bottom up" approach. Democratic participation focuses on system change that happens at multiple levels: the classroom, school, community, and nation. In addition, it involves multiple stakeholders: children, family members, teachers, administrators, community members, and policy makers.

Diagram 1 (below) illustrates that democratic participation starts with the child to ensure that girls and boys can claim their right to a quality education.



2.1 The child and the classroom

A child's participation in the classroom can range from selecting books to read, to choosing topics to study and conducting research, to developing classroom rules, to taking responsibility for maintaining books and materials. Students who participate in the classroom or school activities (a) feel safer, supported, and engaged; (b) believe that adults support the inclusion and success of each student; (c) have more positive perceptions of school climate; and (d) report earning excellent grades (AIR, 2009).

In addition, participation teaches children skills such as knowing how to contribute ideas, listen to others, and synthesize new information. These skills are valuable for

school and for future employment. Workers who "add value" to an organization without diminishing the voice of others are highly valued in the workplace (Collins, 2011).

2.2 The school

Participation among stakeholders can enhance the school's ability to provide a quality education for all students. Participatory activities to support student academic and social development include: (a) students participating in school governance; (b) teachers creating or selecting school-based curricula or designing and delivering professional development; and (c) administrators inviting student, teacher, and community participation in school councils.

2.3 The community

Community participation in children's education and school life has shown to improve a child's education significantly. Community activities include: (a) community members participating on school site councils and school improvement efforts; (b) supporting teachers in the classroom; and (c) helping to improve school infrastructure. Child-Friendly Schools that focus on improving the physical infrastructure, ensuring consistent provision of safe water, and expanding sanitation do so with parental and community financial and in-kind support (AIR, 2009). Community members who actively seek to participate in school affairs are more likely to be better connected, and, hence, more capable of using their acquired "social and cultural capital" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Coleman, 1990) to counsel their children about educational and professional opportunities.

In addition, schools with high levels of participation are accessible community resource centers. Some examples of school community services include: (a) use of school facilities such as library, computer room, and recreational facilities; (b) family literacy and adult education classes; and (c) health services housed in the school.

2.4 The local, regional, and national levels

At the national level, communities with stronger economic growth and high levels of human development are more invested in empowering their citizens to participate fully in national development (UNICEF, 2011). In the US, the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education is one of numerous organizations that advocates for parent and family school involvement at the state and federal level. This coalition of organizations monitors legislation and discusses national policies on parental involvement. Parent and community input at the policy-making table conveys parents' goals and concerns about the education of their children. Regional and national parent

councils also help ensure the accountability of educational officials for providing a quality education for all students (UNICEF, 2009).

In decentralized educational systems, parents and community leaders participate in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating child-friendly activities. Elected officials are accountable to parent and community organizations for school improvement. In turn, parents and community members choose regional and national leaders to represent them in national and regional forums.

UNICEF supports a community dialogue process about school improvement (UNICEF, 2009). Through focus group discussions, boys, girls, parents, community members, and teachers share their views about school improvement. Once a consensus is reached, group recommendations inform district-level development planning. In countries pushing for more decentralization, ministry officials are active partners in this process.

3. Examples of Democratic Participation in Schools

The Bandararuwa School in Ampara, Sri Lanka, and the Ambohitnibe Primary School in Madagascar are examples of Child-Friendly Schools where the participation of students, parents, and communities has had a positive impact on school improvement.

3.1 The Bandararuwa School, Sri Lanka

The Bandararuwa School in Ampara, Sri Lanka is an example of the transformative power of democratic participation as a way to improve education quality (UNICEF, 2009). Having benefited from a three-day residential workshop about CFS, the principal and five other teachers launched a participatory process aimed at involving students, parents, and community members in identifying school challenges and in enlisting community members to address them. Students, school staff, and community members prepared a child-centered school vision and mission. The ensuing initiatives clearly spelled out the responsibilities of all school stakeholders in improving student enrollment, attendance, and achievement.

This vision was shared with students and parents and posted on a big school wall as a collective reminder of everyone's role. Teachers and the principal work closely with the students. The students organized themselves, setting up responsibilities for maintaining the school environment. Parents support their children's activities and participate in school discussions about reform initiatives.

The principal defined clear roles and responsibilities among staff and community members, thus reducing overlap and ensuring efficiency and accountability. Finally, school staff persuaded the community to participate in the life of the school by highlighting positive school changes during community meetings.

3.2 Ambohitnibe Primary School, Madagascar

Although the Ambohitnibe Primary School is located in an isolated community in Ambohitnibe, it is showcased as a model CFS school because it institutionalized community school partnerships through contracts signed by parents, teachers, school administrators, local community members, and students (UNICEF, 2009).

The school-community contract is credited for (a) renovating the school building; (b) opening up a canteen; (c) constructing solar panels for heating water; and (d) providing learning tools to help students with arithmetic. Collaboration between the community and school has resulted in a sharp decrease in students' dropout rates, an increase in students' enrollment from 155 students to 207 students; and almost a 100 percent increase in graduation rates.

4. Conclusion

As noted above, participation is a core dimension of Child-Friendly Schools. The goal of participation is to ensure that children claim their right to a quality education. Participation occurs among different stakeholders (children, teachers, parents, administrators, and policy-makers) and at different levels of the education system (the classroom, school, community, and nation). Research over the past two decades has established that when schools engage parents, community members, and students at the level of curriculum, communication, parenting skills, and school governance, all the members of society benefit.

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Gender Responsiveness and Child-Friendly Schools[1]

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) declares that all girls and boys in the world are entitled to the right to survival; the right to development (including the right to be educated); the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and the right to participation in matters that affect their lives and that prepare children to take on increasing roles of responsibility as they mature.

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) concept is grounded in the CRC and represents a holistic, system-wide approach to improving educational quality that places the child at the center of education reform. Because of social, political, and cultural contexts of countries, the Child-Friendly School approach is flexible by design. However, stakeholders in countries implementing CFS hold a deep commitment to child rights; and they frame their reform efforts within the Child-Friendly concepts of *access, respect, and quality,* as well as the dimensions of (a) inclusion; (b) learning effectiveness; (c) health, safety, and protection; (d) participation; and (e) gender responsiveness. These concepts and dimensions interact and reinforce each other through country-specific CFS policies and practices.

Much is being learned about CFS dimensions and how they interact to create Child-Friendly Schools. The CFS dimension briefs are intended to summarize these broad dimensions of education quality as the research and literature have discussed them to date.

1. What is Gender-responsive Schooling?

Gender Responsiveness is a dimension of Child-Friendly Schools. It stipulates that all girls and boys must have equal opportunities to (a) participate fully in a learning environment that addresses the basic and unique needs of girls and boys and the power dynamics in female-male relationships, and (b) be provided materials and learning experiences that support the realization of human rights and that do not demonstrate gender bias.

Gender equality is fundamental to quality basic education. It is a goal of Education for All (goal 5) and it is a key element of the Millennium Development Goals. While great progress has been made, to sustain progress toward the goals of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals of enrolling and retaining all girls and boys in school it is necessary to develop new teaching methods, new ways of learning, and curricula that allow girls and boys to grow, develop, and learn as equals (Oxfam, 2005).

Gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes for girls, women, boys, and men that differ from one culture and society to another, that change over time, and that often define who has power and influence over resources. Gender involves learning to perform according to perceived expectations, and it is inextricably linked to power that can be used for good or for negative outcomes (e.g., constructing unintentional barriers to learning and achievement). In contrast to gender, which is constructed by society, sex is biologically decided at birth.

Gender equality means the provision of equal opportunities and equal access to education for all students, but it also means equal outcomes. Gender equality entails developing of freedoms for all people, regardless of gender, race, class, or other markers of discrimination. This equality can only be achieved through removal of "deeply embedded obstacles and structures of power and exclusion" (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

Gender equity refers to "fairness of treatment for girls and boys, women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities.

1.1 Gender barriers for boys and girls

Both boys and girls are negatively affected by gender expectations and gender bias. While gender differentiation occurs in all societies and cultures, in schools this

differentiation becomes gender bias and affects girls and boys negatively when one group or the other has access to more or better educational resources, or when several adults and peers – especially those who are powerful or admired – enact gender-differentiated patterns of instruction or interaction (Kendall & O'Gara, 1996). Increased international attention to bullying in recent years (especially boys of boys but also involving girls), to issues of boys' work for pay, and to boys' continued dropout rates in countries of Latin and Central America and other regions are reminders that gender is not just about girls.

A variety of factors contribute to gender inequality in education. They include (a) negative cultural values and practices that allow or encourage teenage pregnancy; (b) early marriage; (c) gender-based violence; and (d) excessive domestic chores. In many cases there is also a lack of gender responsiveness in the classroom environment, the curriculum, the teaching methodology, the teaching and learning materials, and in school management systems (Mlama, 2005).

It is clear that the barriers to access and quality of education, especially for girls, affect all areas of life and all levels of education, from pre-primary through to higher education. Therefore, educational access and quality need to be addressed by multiple interventions in each particular socio-economic, ethnic, religious, or other context. They also need to be addressed at the level of the individual girl and boy learner, the learners' interactions in the classroom with the teacher and with each other, in school, and at the level of the school in the community and the national system in which individual schools are embedded.

Socially constructed ideas of gender influence access and learning, and gender-responsive schooling needs to address all these issues. Child-Friendly Schools address these issues by asking such questions as how the curriculum is affected by gender; how the teacher's interactions with students are affected by gender; and whether the school environment is safe for everyone.

2. Creating Gender-Responsive Learning Environments

Gender equality in education addresses the different needs of girls and boys and ensures enrollment and equal participation and achievement. Creating a gender-responsive environment involves restructuring the culture, policies, and practices of the education system to meet the different needs and capacities of all learners (INEE, 2010).

2.1 Helping learners become gender-responsive

It is important to empower girls with skills for self-confidence, assertiveness and decision making. It is also important to empower boys to confront the norms and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality (Mlama et al., 2005; USAID, 2008). All members of the classroom should be aware of norms and practices that impede and promote gender equality. For example, in many societies household tasks are divided into "girls' work" and "boys' work." This often results in girls having more work to do, less time to sleep, and less time to do homework, which hinders girls' success in school. Further, girls and boys should be empowered to protect the human and democratic rights of both sexes (Mlama et al., 2005). For example, girls and boys who are members of after-school girls' clubs in Ethiopia meet to support girls from the harmful practices of abduction or early marriage (UNICEF Ethiopia, forthcoming).

2.2 Helping classrooms become gender-responsive

A gender-responsive school is one in which the specific needs of both girls and boys are taken into account in academics, in the social and physical environment of the school, as well as in the surrounding community. For example, the classroom can be organized in a gender-responsive manner by arranging girls' and boys' seating or desks in a formation that encourages girls to speak out and overcome shyness (Mlama et al., 2005).

2.3 Helping schools become gender-responsive

A school with a gender-responsive environment also ensures that each learner has access to a safe and clean school environment, which takes into account the different needs of boys and girls. For example, a gender-responsive environment will provide clean, private latrine options for girls, and access to clean water.

Equity in the learning process means that boys and girls are exposed to the same curricula (although coursework may be taught differently to accommodate different learning styles and needs). All boys and girls should have freedom to learn and explore as well as to develop skills in all academic and extracurricular activities (USAID, 2008).

2.3.1 Curriculum

Developing gender-responsive curriculum and textbooks is a necessary step towards gender equality in classrooms. Textbooks and other learning and teaching materials can perpetuate gender stereotypes and cultural norms through images and text that focus on gender-biased portrayals of men and women (e.g., images of boys learning science

and math, and girls cleaning homes or fetching water). A gender-responsive curriculum will also address what images of masculinity and femininity students are bringing with them to the classroom.

2.3.2 Teacher training

It is also necessary to ensure that the content of teacher training materials is gender-responsive and gender-equitable. Given the interrelationship between curriculum, teaching, assessment, and learning, addressing gender equity in professional development requires paying attention to pedagogy, curriculum content and learning materials, the learning environment, language of instruction and literacy, evaluation methods and assessment, and learning outcomes (Oxfam, 2005). It is especially important for teacher training manuals to remind teachers about gender-equitable pedagogy, since teachers have the daunting task of constantly developing self-awareness about their teaching practices. This involves teachers' monitoring their own gender bias as well as teaching students how to identify gender bias themselves.

Materials used for teacher training also need to need to be gender-responsive so that all learners will be exposed to teaching methods that are free from stereotypes and gender bias. Teachers should be trained in inclusive teacher strategies to help integrate students marginalized by ethnicity, poverty, or gender discrimination (USAID, 2008).

2.3.3 Pedagogy

International research has demonstrated unequivocally the importance of teacher behavior and classroom pedagogy for moving toward gender equality in education. Teachers' beliefs and practices in the classroom are rooted in wider social and cultural beliefs about men and women and their ability to achieve in and through education (Halai, 2010). Without proper training in gender awareness, teachers may inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes in the classroom (USAID, 2008). For example, in Malawi, researchers have found that teacher behavior can negatively affect girls more than boys (Kendall, 2006). This potentially contributes to girls' increased dropout rates in primary school and decreased enrollment in secondary school. Thus, it is important that teachers learn how their own perceptions or expectations affect learners in the classroom environment, including how they assess learners or provide feedback. Teachers and all education stakeholders need to learn to identify and deal with gender bias (USAID, 2008).

2.3.4 Student evaluation

Equality of educational outcomes means that each learner's outcomes are based on her or his individual talents and efforts. Thus, ways of evaluating student performance should be free from gender bias, and so should the length of one's school career or opportunity for academic qualifications. Academic measurements and tests that contain gender bias not only discourage certain students from continuing their schooling, but they also influence girls' and boys' confidence and perceptions of their own abilities and what is expected of them. Since tests are often the pathway to promotion to higher grades, it is essential that they are free from gender bias (USAID, 2008).

Ethical, transparent, and fair examination processes can contribute to equitable outcomes. Learners should be continuously informed that examination results are based on academic performance, and any type of exploitation should be reported. Parents, community members, and other stakeholders can help to develop fair policies and practices and to ensure that schools are safe, gender-responsive environments.

3. Community

Community support is crucial to the success of education improvement efforts. Many of the gender constraints to education come from the deeply entrenched cultural values, practices and attitudes of parents and community leaders as well as community members in general. Therefore, unless the community is convinced to change cultural practices, little success will be made in trying to change them.

Stakeholders or duty bearers include students, parents, community members, teachers and head teachers, and the government. Each group of duty bearers is necessary and important for the creation, support, and monitoring of an education system that is gender-sensitive at all levels. At the school level, students, teachers, and head teachers are all necessary for enacting respectful, ethical, and gender-sensitive classrooms, curriculum, and pedagogies. However, the efforts towards gender-sensitive curricula, pedagogies, and schools must be supported by parents, community members, and other stakeholders (Mlama et al., 2005).

4. Examples of Gender-Sensitive Schooling

FYR Macedonia

CFS schools in Macedonia have focused on gender equity as a core CFS dimension. For example, in one school, a gender equity committee comprised of students and teachers analyzed textbooks for grades I-VIII. They discovered that (a) the presence of male and female characters was not in equal proportion; (b) in most cases female

characters had supporting roles; (c) the boys and girls were wearing stereotypical clothing and colors; (d) there were stereotypes concerning women's professions; (e) female characters were absent in particular historic periods; and (f) there were few female textbook authors. As a result, the committee worked to address the negative gender stereotypes through school policies and practices. This resulted in school awareness of gender bias and an equal representation of girls in all aspects of school life.

FAWE Centers for Excellence

FAWE's Centers of Excellence were developed to enhance girls' academic and social development through quality education in a favorable learning environment. The COE model uses targeted approaches that focus on the unique circumstances affecting girls' education in each particular country or region. The basic COE model addresses girls' education in the physical, academic, and social environments. It includes gender-responsive training for teachers, managers, and students; provides scholarships for economically disadvantaged girls; and uses gender-fair manuals and facilities. The COE model also pays attention to the physical aspects of the school, empowers girls and boys, and it links with the community (Diaw, 2008).

Girl-Friendly School Project – The Gambia

The Girl-Friendly School Initiative (GFSI) in The Gambia took a whole-school approach. The schools are inclusive, health promoting, gender-responsive, participatory for children and parents, and supported by policies that address the most egregious obstacles to girls' participation. The initiative resulted in an increase in girls' gross enrollment rate in primary school in three disadvantaged districts to 81 percent, exceeding the national average. The survival rate of girls also increased; and, there was a reduction in gender disparity in gross enrollment and persistence across all three districts. UNICEF has now reported efforts to improve child-friendliness in almost 75 percent of The Gambia's three most disadvantaged regions (UNICEF, 2009, p. 19).

5. Summary

Attention to gender equality in education involves much more than gender parity, or monitoring the number of girls and boys enrolled in or attending school. Providing learners with a high- quality education means that teachers learn to identify and confront gender bias in their own teaching, and learn to use teaching and learning methods and materials that are free from stereotypes and gender bias. It also means that teachers will help girls and boys learn to identify and confront gender bias; and, boys and girls will be provided with a safe, clean, protective, and gender-responsive learning environment.

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Health, Safety, and Protection[1]

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) declares that all girls and boys in the world are entitled to the right to survival; the right to development (including the right to be educated); the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and the right to participation in matters that affect their lives and that prepare children to take on increasing roles of responsibility as they mature.

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1. What is Health, Safety, and Protection?

Health, Safety, and Protection is a dimension of UNICEF's Child-Friendly School (CFS) approach to quality education. In accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989), every child has a right to a healthy and safe learning environment at school. A healthy, safe, and protective learning environment considers the whole child, ensuring the physical and psychological well-being of every child, and addressing health and safety issues that interfere with a child's right to learn.

Research from the field supports the argument that the adults entrusted with providing educational services need to create healthy, nurturing, and protective environments for all children. Additional efforts might be required to ensure healthy and safe environments for children with special needs (UNICEF, 2009a). Considerations include: (a) school-based health and nutrition services; (b) water and sanitary facilities; (c) dealing with emotional and physical abuse in and out of school; and (d) the safety of physical space in the school or community where the school is located. Addressing these factors has been shown to increase children's attendance, participation, and educational performance in school.

Health, safety, and protection are interrelated; however, we discuss them individually below, first presenting the problem related to each topic, followed by a strategy for addressing the problem, and then a CFS example from the field.

2. Health

2.1 The problem: Poor health and nutrition affect students' school attendance, as well as retention and educational performance (UNICEF, 2009b). Most commonly, these conditions reduce children's time in school and their learning during that time (Glewwe & Miguel, 2008).

Research shows that malnourished children, especially during their early years, are more susceptible to infections and diseases, and they develop more physical and mental disabilities. These in turn affect such school readiness factors as socio-emotional development (Jukes, 2006). It is estimated that about one-third of preschool age children in developing countries experience growth stunting, and many more suffer from tropical diseases, including malaria and intestinal parasites (Glewwe & Miguel, 2008).

The absence of water and sanitation facilities in schools represents serious health hazards for children (UNICEF, 2009b). Although there is no reliable data about global

coverage of water supply and sanitation facilities in schools, the limited data from a number of countries in Africa and Asia indicate that adequate facilities exist in less than one-third of schools (UNICEF, 2009b).

2.2 Strategies for addressing health in school: The strategies discussed below address health issues while also promoting greater participation in school by students, parents, and communities.

The introduction of adequate latrine facilities positively impacts girls' attendance and retention in schools (UNICEF, 2006). UNICEF's "WASH-in-Schools" initiative implemented in various regions has contributed to reducing the health risks in schools (UNICEF, 2010). The initiative has two components. One component includes building locally-appropriate latrines and hand-washing facilities. During this process, the initiative often encourages children's participation and input on the design of the facilities, as well as input from various members of local communities.

The second core component is hygiene education, which prepares teachers for employing appropriate teaching strategies and students for peer-based health education. The combination of these two strategies has had a positive spillover effect on the local communities with the overall improvement of hygiene within communities.

The health and nutritional status of children can be improved through school services (Partnership for Child Development, 2011). School health initiatives, such as deworming and malaria treatments, positively impact school participation (Miguel & Kremer, 2004; Jukes, Drake, & Bundy, 2007); and school feeding programs positively influence school participation (attendance and enrollment), as well as achievement in learning (Adelman, Gillian, & Lehrer, 2008).

As mentioned above, these services do not rely solely on the educational authorities and teachers for their design and implementation. Rather, they provide opportunities for broader involvement of the local community in the design of policies and programs, in the design and construction of facilities, and they support the engagement of children in the process.

2.3 CFS examples of healthy schools

Tajikistan: Improving hygiene and health through the WASH program (UNICEF, 2010)

Tajikistan implemented UNICEF's WASH program during a two-year period. The goal of the program was to improve children's health. The project involved child-to-child peer education, specialized hygiene education materials, the provision of hand-washing stands, and the construction of latrines in 100 schools across the country. About 40,000 children benefited from the program. The program led to significant improvements in hygiene practices of children and their families. Hand-washing after toilet use increased from 12 to 94 percent, and the percentage of households that had soap near the toilet increased from 11 to 86 percent. Diarrhea rates were reduced from 37 to 11 percent, and pinworm prevalence was cut from 35 to 17 percent.

South Africa: Nutritional services and student engagement for healthier and safer school environments (Osher, Kelly, Tolani-Brown, Shors, & Chen, 2009)

In South Africa, health and hygiene services have been most effective when provided as complementary and multifaceted, including school health policies, nutritional services, adequate water and sanitation facilities, and skills-based health and hygiene education (Partnership for Child Development, 2011). A rural elementary school in South Africa offered a food program run by the local community and sponsored by the Department of Education as part of their CFS initiative. Providing food during the morning break, the program has attracted students back; and the school continues to have a 100 percent daily attendance rate. The school also engaged its students in improved hygiene practices by overseeing the latrines available on the school grounds. Although they have only eight latrines to serve 963 students, student leadership ensures cleanliness of latrines.

3. Safety and Protection: In CFS schools all children have a right to a safe school environment

3.1 The problem: Violence against children includes a wide range of behaviors, from physical violence (including corporal punishment), to neglect, sexual and psychological violence, and harmful traditional practices (Pinheiro, 2006, pp. 50-62). "The forms of violence to which a child will be exposed vary according to age and stage of development, especially as the child starts to interact with the world outside of home" (Pinheiro, 2006, p. 50).

Violence in the school environment impacts children's "ability to get to and from school, to learn effectively while in school, and to remain in school long enough to reap the benefits of education" (Pinheiro, 2006, p. 111). Even when prohibited by law, corporal

punishment, verbal abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, bullying, and other forms of psychological humiliation are widespread in school environments; but they vary in intensity by country or region (Pinheiro, 2006).

A survey across schools in Central and Eastern Europe found that about 35 percent of children ages 11 to 13 said that they had been bullied within the past two months (Pinheiro, 2006). Children are often at risk of violence in their schools from school authorities as well as peers. Sexual and gender-based violence in schools is often ignored by school authorities or not reported by victims due to fear or cultural attitudes (Pinheiro, 2006). A survey in South Africa indicated that about one-third of girls attending school have been raped in school, most commonly in school toilets that are distanced from the school building (UNICEF, 2010).

3.2 Strategies for addressing school safety

Creating safe and protective school environments consists of prediction, prevention, and preparedness. By predicting risks that affect children, education authorities begin by creating appropriate preventative measures related to a wide range of threats. These include: (a) interpersonal relations among students; (b) relations of students, teachers, and community; (c) natural disasters; (d) chemical hazards; and (e) seasonal diseases. "When violence against children is suspected or disclosed, action must be taken to protect the children at risk," ideally in tandem with health and social support services (Pinheiro, 2006, p. 83).

Research continues to show that a variety of interventions can prevent violence. "To maximize effectiveness, prevention strategies should be based on the best available scientific evidence, aim to reduce factors contributing to risk and strengthen protective factors, include mechanisms for evaluating the impact of the strategy, and be carried out within a broader framework for addressing violence against children" (Pinheiro, 2006, p. 76).

Adopting and implementing laws and codes of conduct that prohibit any form of violence in school environments, and supplementing these actions with specific programs about non-violence, help to establish a legal base for preventing violence in schools (Pinheiro, 2006). Building this capacity within schools includes training teachers on the use of non-violent strategies, and it encourages student participation in school-based programs addressing violence.

Children's physical safety in school includes adequate architectural design and a facilities layout that could impact either a child's physiological or psychological well-

being (Osher et al., 2009). Educational authorities and community members can work together in planning and building new school grounds, or assessing the structural soundness of the existing ones.

Preventative measures to promote safety in CFS also include reviewing and revising curriculum to ensure that it is based on non-violence (Pinheiro, 2006).

3.3 CFS example of safe schools

South Africa: In South Africa, student leaders promote a school culture free of bullying and violence. Teachers support this effort by creating open forums with students about the importance of getting along and the effects of bullying. Additionally, teachers encourage students to work in pairs and groups during the classroom time, creating a sense of collaboration and community among students. Finally, teachers and school administrators use sporting and cultural events to raise awareness of the negative impact of bullying and to provide other means of relating with others on school grounds.

FYR Macedonia: Two schools in Macedonia have focused on students' health, safety, and protection through school-based committees. In one school, students designed and distributed a flyer that presents the different forms of violence in the school and distributed it to all age groups of students in the school. In addition, students prepared a guide with basic information about the different forms of violence (including sexual harassment) and distributed it to students, teachers and parents (PPT presentation, UNICEF Macedonia, March 2011). In another CFS school, students formed a health and safety committee and participated in the following activities aimed at making the school safe: (a) marking the unsafe places in the school that were being renovated; (b) drafting, printing, and distributing brochures to students about safety; and (c) providing bins for different types of waste and placing them in the school lobby. (PPT presentation, UNICEF Macedonia, March 2011).

3.4 The problem: Emergency and (post-) conflict contexts call for a special category of safety measures.

School enrollment is severely affected in emergency zones. Following earthquakes, floods, or other natural disasters, establishing safe and protective learning environments is important for easing children's trauma and heightening their sense of well-being. In conflict-affected, fragile states, one child out of three does not attend school. This number is significant: out of an estimated 72 million children out of school, 39 million live in conflict-affected fragile states (Save the Children, 2010). Documented cases in at least 31 countries around the world show that schools are increasingly identified by armed combatants as targets for violence or recruiting grounds for underage fighters

(Snow, 2011). A recent UN resolution allows for treating the protection of schools as an international peace and safety issue.

3.5 Strategies for addressing emergency and (post-) conflict contexts

Schools in emergency zones need to have emergency preparedness plans, which list specific measures to provide adequate levels of health and safety for their pupils. Recovery and reintegration need attention in emergency zone schools, starting with guidance from the government and school authorities and including input from students, families and overall communities (Pinheiro, 2006).

3.6 CFS examples for addressing emergency and (post-) conflict context

North Caucasus: Post-conflict reconstruction through rebuilding of education (UNICEF, 2009a)

About one-third of school buildings were destroyed in the armed conflict affecting the city of Grozny. As a result, children attended schools in alternative locations, usually without electricity and basic school equipment. Employing the Child-Friendly School approach, the schools in the city integrated recreation within these contexts; and they provided learning activities to assist students in understanding children's rights to protection, in developing mine awareness, in engaging in psychological and emotional healing activities, and in learning about prevention of unhealthy and unsafe conditions. Additional efforts were made to provide structured learning opportunities for preschool children in the centers with indoor and outdoor playing spaces and equipment.

4. Summary of Key Points

The Child-Friendly School attends to the health, safety, and protection of its students. A collaborative effort between the educational system, the legal system, and social services is needed to create a comprehensive approach to child health, safety, and protection. This collaboration supports regular attendance in school and creates an environment where all students can learn effectively. The following three points are essential to understanding the role of student health, safety, and protection in learning:

- Good health and nutrition increase children's time in school and their learning during that time (Glewwe & Miguel, 2008).
- "When safe and protected, students are more involved in learning in schools" (Osher et al., 2009).
- Parental support for school participation increases when parents believe a

school is a safe and protective environment for their children (Osher et al., 2009).

The challenges to implementing the dimension of health, safety, and protection in Child-Friendly Schools within every school environment range from financial and material issues (i.e., providing facilities that meet hygienic standards) to unsupportive or hostile behaviors among educational authorities or communities (Osher et al., 2009). While the action of educational authorities is necessary for providing a framework for working within schools, parental and community involvement is also instrumental in improving and sustaining healthy and safe school environments (Osher et al., 2009). "To achieve large-scale reductions in violence against children, legal and policy frameworks must address the underlying risk factors and strengthen protective factors" (Pinheiro, 2006, p. 76).

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Inclusive Education and Child-Friendly Schools[1]

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The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) declares that all girls and boys in the world are entitled to the right to survival; the right to development (including the right to be educated); the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and the right to participation in matters that affect their lives and that prepare children to take on increasing roles of responsibility as they mature.

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) concept is grounded in the CRC and represents a holistic, system-wide approach to improving educational quality that places the child at the center of education reform. Because of social, political, and cultural contexts of countries, the Child-Friendly School approach is flexible by design. However, stakeholders in countries implementing CFS hold a deep commitment to child rights; and they frame their reform efforts within the Child-Friendly concepts of *access, respect, and quality,* as well as the dimensions of (a) inclusion; (b) learning effectiveness; (c) health, safety, and protection; (d) participation; and (e) gender responsiveness. These concepts and dimensions interact and reinforce each other through country-specific CFS policies and practices.

Much is being learned about CFS dimensions and how they interact to create Child-Friendly Schools. The CFS dimension briefs are intended to summarize these broad dimensions of education quality as the research and literature have discussed them to date.

1. What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education ensures that every child, regardless of gender, physical and social attributes, intellectual status, emotional challenges, linguistic backgrounds, or special needs, receives a high-quality education (UNICEF, 2009). Inclusive schools are one approach to meeting the fundamental human right of education for all children. An inclusive school starts with stakeholders actively seeking out all eligible children for enrollment. Once enrolled, it helps children stay in school and attend regularly. This means that fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory rules for accessing school are necessary but not sufficient. There must also be strategies in place to address the barriers that prevent children from participating and being successful in school (UNICEF, 2009).

The goal of inclusive education is to improve broad, systems-based approaches while focusing specifically on individuals. In any school in the world, there are likely to be students with "special needs." The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) organizes such needs into three categories (2007):

- Students with disabilities or impairments viewed in medical terms as organic disorders attributable to organic pathologies (e.g., in relation to sensory, motor, or neurological defects). The educational need is considered to arise primarily from problems attributable to these disabilities.

- Students with behavioral or emotional disorders, or specific difficulties in learning. The educational need is considered to arise primarily from problems in the interaction between the student and the educational context.

- Students with disadvantages arising primarily from socio-economic factors. The educational need is to compensate for the disadvantages attributable to these factors.

OECD's organizational framework is helpful in understanding those students who may have special needs in schools, but the broader "systems" approach to inclusive education does not limit inclusivity to students with the challenges faced above. Rather, inclusive education "focuses on all children and young people in schools; it is focused on presence, participation and achievement … [in addition,] an inclusive school is one that is on the move, rather than one that has reached a perfect state" (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006, p. 25). To this end, inclusive education attempts to create systems that respond to students' needs. Students may have the characteristics of those described above by OECD; or, they may be gifted, religious minorities, or older or younger than their classmates.

The need for inclusive education is pressing. According to UNESCO (2007) monitoring report data, there are more than 70 million out-of-school children in the world. Many of these children might be considered "marginalized" according to the data above. Children who are not in school will never enjoy the private and public benefits of education.

2. Ensuring Inclusive Education: Key Considerations

Inclusive education is both a "top down" and "bottom up" initiative. It focuses on system changes that involve multiple stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and students. At the same time, inclusive education is concerned with specific students. From a broad perspective, policy, positive school climate, and access initiatives are all necessary to create welcoming schools for all children. Once in schools, child-friendly and flexible pedagogies, along with social supports, can make the day-to-day educational experiences of all children rewarding.

2.1 Steps to ensuring inclusive education

Diagram 1 (below) outlines the necessary steps to help a child access her or his educational rights and participate in a high-quality program. This diagram is not an exhaustive list of elements needed for inclusive education, but it provides a general outline and illustration of the multiple layers of stakeholder support needed to create inclusive, child-friendly schools.

Diagram 1: Inclusive Education Process

2.1.1 National and local policies support diverse learners

All stakeholders are responsible for creating education systems that can benefit all students. Ministries of education, administrators, and local education units start the process by ensuring that all students have physical access to schools. Student presence in schools may be accomplished by reducing physical barriers; but psychological, economic, and cultural barriers must also be removed as well.

2.1.2 Schools actively seek out students for enrollment

Inclusive schools have clear policies actively to seek out students for enrollment. Students who do not attend school because of language barriers, disability status, or safety fears can be both identified and recruited to attend school. Overcoming non-attendance necessitates partnerships between education officials and community members (parents, relatives, and friends of out-of-school children).

2.1.3 School climate is welcoming and is physically accessible and psychologically safe

Once in school, students need to feel psychologically and physically safe to be included. This requires entire school inputs, including behavioral expectations for children, teacher education, and administrator support of school climate measures. In the classroom, teachers may present new information in a variety of ways to reach diverse learners (CAST, 2008).

2.1.4 Classroom practice is designed to support all learners

One way to ensure that all learners have access to education is through the concept of “universal design.” Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a philosophy and practice that asks teachers to design instruction so that the widest possible audience may be successful. The UDL approach typically focuses on flexibility in presentation and response in order to improve the learning of all students. For example, within a classroom a teacher may adjust the level of challenge for a particular student in a given assignment while still providing the child with full access to the curriculum. For some students, however, a more comprehensive approach to accommodation may be necessary. Accommodations are changes to standard activities that may be necessary to help a student learn the standard curriculum. Many of these may be covered through inclusive approaches (e.g., a child may be given additional time to finish an assignment), but some may require additional resources, such as supplemental support staff or learning materials. In short, classroom practices in inclusive classrooms provide multiple paths by which students can access curriculum and participate in learning.

2.1.5 Parents participate in learning process and school management

Often, the most knowledgeable person about a student is her/his parents. Parents understand the child's history in school, learning style, and personality. Inclusive schools enlist parents as partners in the learning process. Sometimes this partnership takes the form of seeking consultation from parents, but inclusive schools may also enlist parents as volunteers to facilitate inclusion or require their support on supplemental learning activities at home.

2.1.6 Additional support is provided

For students who require supplemental support, additional help with academic and social skills may be provided by a professional or volunteer outside the classroom. Further, these students may require modifications to the regular curriculum to allow for learning at a rate that benefits the child.

Although supplemental help may be present, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students should weigh the benefits and drawbacks to receiving supplemental help outside of the regular classroom. If the child will miss other valuable instruction or social experiences, supplemental help and curriculum modifications should be carefully considered.

For a very few students with the most significant disabilities or disadvantages, full-time participation in the regular classroom may not be possible. For these students, support teams of teachers, parents, administrators, and other professionals can decide on an alternative curriculum and school environment that might support the child. However, every opportunity should be made to connect the child's curriculum with that of other students (all children will be living in the same country as they grow older, so they should have access to the same skills and knowledge). Further, opportunities to socialize with a wide variety of children are very important for both groups of students – those with special needs and those without special needs. The social isolation sometimes experienced by children in "special" classrooms is contrary to inclusive education principles.

3. CFS Examples of Inclusive Education

Examples of inclusive education can be found in a global evaluation of Child-Friendly Schools (Osher, Kelly, Tolani-Brown, & Chen, 2009). Full inclusion of all students requires great effort and resource availability. In this brief, Guyana and Thailand are highlighted, since they demonstrate countries that are "on the move" in creating inclusive environments (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006).

3.1 Guyana

Guyana has been evaluating its CFS initiatives since 2008. Guyana's educational authorities noted that one barrier to accessing schools was that parents could not afford to buy children food at school. To meet this demand, Guyana implemented a school feeding policy and program. This program, implemented at the Ministry level, created new access to schooling for poor and marginalized children.

At the same time, children with disabilities faced physical barriers at school. Despite efforts to improve physical access to schools, many Guyanese facilities were sub-standard. Children with physical disabilities, in particular, were unable to access school buildings and grounds.

However, Guyana overcame tremendous barriers to schooling by creating open enrollment policies. Such policies helped to mitigate past discrepancies in enrollment by gender. Under new Guyanese policies, both girls and boys are encouraged to attend school. Guyana's Child-Friendly Schools established policies about educating all children, regardless of race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, or religion. By creating policies that are aimed to serve "all" children, Guyana established universal access and enrollment possibilities. At the same time, by naming specific groups, they ensured that traditionally marginalized groups remained at the forefront of educational considerations.

Guyanese teachers also focused on the importance of school attendance. Teachers in the CFS program emphasized the importance of school attendance to their students, and focused on trying to make school a more positive experience for children. By helping children to enjoy their time at school and focusing on the importance of attendance, rates improved over the course of the project.

Inclusiveness was also reflected in the curriculum taught to students. One hundred percent (100%) of principals surveyed in Guyana noted that children were taught about the history and culture of diverse cultures, races, genders, and ability statuses within Guyana. Such inclusive curriculum honors the presence and allows for authentic and experience-based learning of a wide variety of students. According to students, teachers were mostly fair and balanced in terms of expectations and opportunities for males and females in class.

3.2 FYR Macedonia

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYR Macedonia) committed to inclusive education in 2008. This commitment came in the wake of numerous policies designed to engage the learning of children typically on the margins. FYR Macedonia now has laws that provide for instruction in different languages. The country has schools that deliver instruction in the Macedonian language, the Albanian language, and (in rare cases) both languages. Further, children from other language minority populations have the opportunity to take home language courses in primary schools (although Macedonian is the primary language of instruction).

In addition, the Macedonian government and civil society leaders are implementing a series of social and financial supports to encourage the attendance of Roma learners. Families are given small financial allowances when their children attend school. Further, textbooks are provided to children free of charge, and supplemental snacks and clothes (when needed) are provided to Roma students. Finally, transportation allowances are given to several families to help offset costs of public transportation to and from school.

Third, Macedonia is engaging teachers in new and innovative ways. Beginning in 2011, faculties of education (called “departments of education”) at Macedonian univeristies are engaging in training on how to create syllabi that reflect inclusive environments. Further, in-service teacher training will be conducted by professors of education in FYR Macedonia, with support from external consultants.

Finally, Macedonia is engaging international consultants to assist in creating a parent center for parents of children with disabilities. The purpose of the parent center is to engage parents in advocacy training so that they might better understand their children’s right to inclusive education in Macedonia. Recommendations for inclusive faculties and parent centers are the direct result of Miske Witt & Associates’ work in FYR Macedonia.

4. Conclusions

As noted above, inclusive education is both a “top down” and “bottom up” initiative. Case studies and research demonstrate that a multi-faceted approach is needed in order to create inclusive schools. Often, schools may be very strong in one area of inclusive education (e.g., policy), but may need improvement in others (e.g., gender-sensitive teaching). As a dimension of Child-Friendly Schools, inclusiveness requires a comprehensive approach to improving access, climate, and teaching for all students. This can only be done through partnerships among policy makers, administrators,

parents, teachers, and students. Inclusive education is not easy to implement, but it holds great promise as a structure for addressing children's rights to quality schooling.

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Teaching and Learning Effectiveness and Child-Friendly Schools[1]

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The convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) declares that all girls and boys in the world are entitled to the right to survival; the right to development (including the right to be educated); the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and the right to participation in matters that affect their lives and that prepare children to take on increasing roles of responsibility as they mature.

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) concept is grounded in the CRC and represents a holistic, system-wide approach to improving educational quality that places the child at the center of education reform. Because of social, political, and cultural contexts of countries, the Child-Friendly School approach is flexible by design. However, stakeholders in countries implementing CFS hold a deep commitment to child rights; and they frame their reform efforts within the Child-Friendly concepts of *access, respect, and quality,* as well as the dimensions of (a) inclusion; (b) learning effectiveness; (c) health, safety, and protection; (d) participation; and (e) gender responsiveness. These concepts and dimensions interact and reinforce each other through CFS policies and practices.

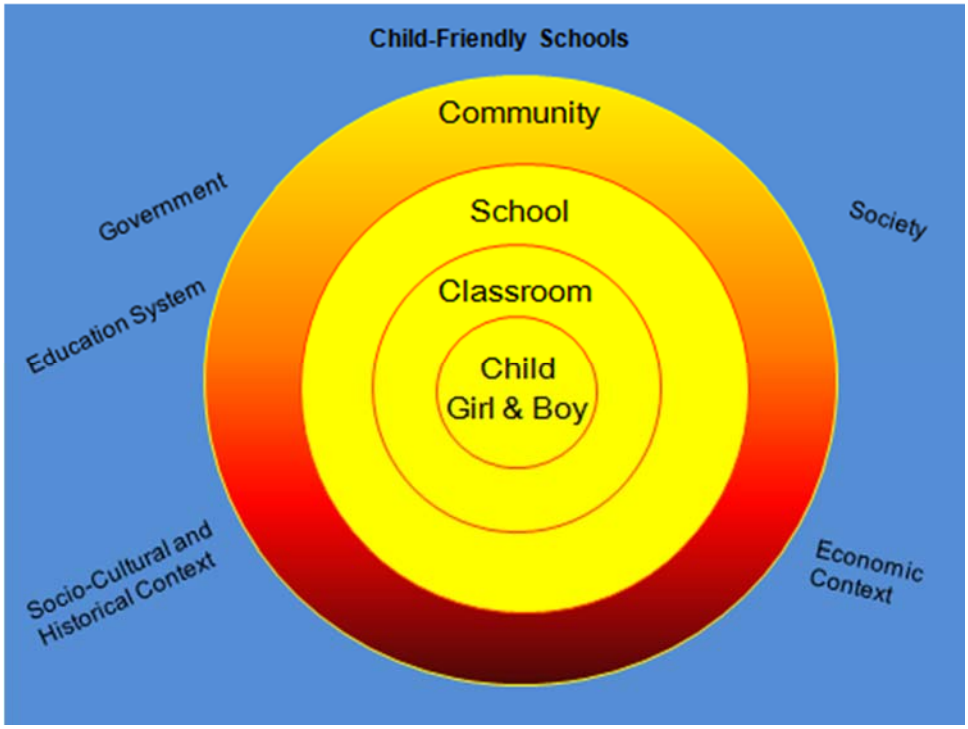
Much is being learned about CFS principles and dimensions and how they interact to create Child-Friendly Schools. The CFS dimension briefs are designed to summarize these broad dimensions of education as the research and literature have discussed them to date.

1. What is Teaching and Learning Effectiveness?

The following description of Teaching and Learning Effectiveness is drawn from the work of educators in Macedonia who are developing CFS standards. They define effective education as promoting quality learning and teaching; it is child-oriented and customized to individual needs, regardless of whether the needs originate from developmental level of ability, learning styles, language issues, or other special needs. It uses active, cooperative, and democratic methods in teaching; and it strengthens the capacity and the ethics of teachers. In CFS schools, the style of teaching and learning practices centers on what is best for students as they work to master the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required in the curriculum.

2. Ensuring Teaching and Learning Effectiveness: Key Considerations

Students' success in school begins with a focus on the learner and her or his needs and is influenced by a number of factors that occur within a specific school context. The figure below illustrates this child-centered view of factors influencing teaching and learning effectiveness.



2.1 At the center of this figure is the **child**. Effective teaching and learning practices ensure that children are actively engaged in learning tasks. They are equal participants in learning, inclusive of language, ability, national origin, gender, and religion. As part of

daily instruction, children have opportunities to make choices and to take responsibility for their own learning.

2.2 Moving out from the center is the **classroom** environment. In the culture of the CFS classroom, teachers demonstrate commitment to creating a child-friendly classroom. They do this by promoting student-student and student-teacher interactions that support movement toward grade-appropriate learning outcomes for all students. The learning environment is physically safe as well as psychologically safe. Children are encouraged to think critically and creatively, and feedback about their work and their learning is provided in a way that encourages further effort.

In CFS classrooms, curriculum and instructional materials are designed with student learning outcomes in mind. Teachers utilize content and curriculum knowledge appropriate to students' grade levels. Teachers use child-friendly instructional methods that engage all learners. Girls and boys are treated equally. For example, girls and boys are called on equally, given equal opportunities to participate in class activities, and use curriculum materials that are gender-friendly. Information from assessment and evaluation is used to make sound decisions about learning and teaching. Both teachers and students engage in the assessment process through a range of assessment practices, including student self- and peer-assessment.

2.3 The next level is the **school**. In schools demonstrating teaching and learning effectiveness, the culture of the environment emphasizes that learning is important and worthwhile. In CFS schools, well-designed professional development programs support teachers in implementing more effective teaching and learning practices by building teacher competencies in using child-centered approaches. School leadership promotes and supports child-friendly practices. Monitoring systems are in place to assess student learning outcomes across classes and grade levels, and teachers and school leaders use results to set goals and plan improvements.

2.4 The outermost level includes **parents and community**. Parents and community members are kept informed of the school's academic goals and are encouraged to take an active role in achieving them. Parent and community participation actively supports school innovations that promote teaching and learning effectiveness. Examples include participating in parent-teacher organizations, meeting with teachers to discuss their children's progress, working with their children at home as suggested by teachers, volunteering at the school, and serving as resource persons.

3. CFS Examples of Teaching and Learning Effectiveness

The first two examples of teaching and learning effectiveness are taken from a global evaluation of selected CFS schools (Osher, Kelly, Tolani-Brown, Shors, & Chen, 2009). Excerpts from focus group interviews with educators from the Philippines and Thailand illustrate how schools are implementing child-centered pedagogy to promote teaching and learning effectiveness.

3.1 Philippines

In the Philippines, where CFS has been implanted since 1999, educators have described the shift in urban schools from teacher-centered to child-centered teaching approaches. Previously, teachers would deliver a lecture on a lesson, and the children would listen and try to absorb what the teacher was explaining. Now, teachers choose from a variety of teaching methods and strategies, opting for one that best suits the lesson and keeps the interests of the students to maximize the achievement of objectives. Sample strategies employed by teachers include:

- Collaborative learning among the students. Students are assigned to work in groups, with fast learners paired with slow learners in some activities, and with interest-based grouping at other times. For interest-based grouping, children are allowed to choose the group they work in, based on where and/or with whom they are most likely to excel.

- Grouping for doing classroom work. To ensure that everyone contributes, a peer evaluation is done at the end of the group work. (Note: Rotating roles of responsibility – notetaker, reporter, leader – is important for ensuring equity.)

- "Show Me Boards." All students have a board on which they write their answers during recitations and which they later show to the rest of the class.

3.2 Thailand

CFS has been implemented in Thailand since 1998. A school head in Thailand defines what it means to create a CFS school emphasizing teaching and learning effectiveness.

> Child-Friendly School means the school helps to take care of all children in all aspects, so that they grow up to be good citizens. They will be taken care of in terms of love, affection, and safety; and all students must be able to survive in the real world. The child-rights promotion activity should include four aspects: safety, development, protection, and living in harmony. Teaching and learning activities focus on the following:

- Child-centeredness should be the core principle for teaching and learning activities.
- The teaching and learning process should aim at enabling all students to develop themselves at their own pace and to their own potential.
- Educational provision, substance, and activities should be in line with the learners' expectations, bearing in mind individual differences.
- Boys and girls are given equal opportunity and are treated equally.
- Teachers give equal attention to both boys and girls regardless of their background, ethnicity, and culture.

All related parties must be aware that in order to help children develop to meet desirable traits, they must understand child rights. All buildings must be safe for children; and classrooms must be organized in a way that is safe, clean, and comfortable for children to study.

An additional example is drawn from notes taken during regional meetings in Macedonia, in the CEE/CIS region. Unlike the previous examples, this country is in the beginning stages of implementing Child-Friendly Schools; however, descriptions of their progress in the dimension of teaching and learning effectiveness can already be found, based on earlier "active learning" interventions.

3.3 FYR Macedonia

Researchers conducted a comprehensive CFS baseline study in Macedonia. Examples of existing resources that promote CFS practices include:

- Child rights workshops, a Life Skills curriculum, school self-evaluations, literacy and math training of trainers, and activities to promote inter-ethnic relations.
- Revision of curricula in all subjects, adding Life Skills-Based Education to the primary education curriculum.
- Malina Popivana Primary School: CFS committees were established based on dimensions, standards, and indicators; activities organized by teacher working groups include all six dimensions, also classroom-level continuous assessment.
- Sande Sterjoski School: Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish are languages of instruction; activities include multi-ethnic teacher professional development and school-level activities.

4. Summary

The dimension of teaching and learning effectiveness includes a number of key components at various levels, from the individual to the classroom, school, and community. These combine to focus attention on child-centered learning. In the past, children were receivers of information dispensed by the teacher, and the children's task was to memorize and recite this information; in Child-Friendly Schools, the learner is now at the center of the learning process. Children engage in activities in a learning environment that supports their achievement of identified learning outcomes. Teachers design activities geared to learning outcomes; and they provide support, instruction, and feedback. School leaders go beyond the traditional focus on management to become instructional leaders. Parents and community members take an active role in their children's education. By working together, in Child-Friendly Schools, all are partners in promoting student learning and development.

Reference

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For Further Reading

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