

HELPDESK RESPONSE 40

Guidance on Facilitation of E-Learning

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Notes

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CoP	Community of practice
IDP	Internally displaced person
JPGE	Joint Programme on Girls Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
OOSC	Out-of-school children
TAG	Teachers' Action for Girls
TPD	Teacher professional development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1. Document purpose

This document was produced in response to a request from the UNICEF Sudan team that was submitted to the EdTech Hub Helpdesk in November 2021. The UNICEF Sudan team requested the development of three guidance documents to foster gender equity in a 2022 e-learning initiative:

1. **Guidance on Pre-Assessment for Establishing E-Learning Centres**

This guidance can be used by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and UNICEF prior to the implementation of the e-learning initiative to assess locations and communities where e-learning centres will be established for out-of-school children (OOSC), and to determine how to establish the centres in an effective and context-sensitive manner.

2. **Guidance on Community Mobilisation for Girls' Education**

This guidance focuses on how to engage with community members, with particular attention to social norms that may inhibit girls from enrolling in the e-learning initiative.

3. **Guidance on Facilitation of E-Learning** (this document)

As the third of the three guidance documents on e-learning, this document provides instructions and questions for facilitators at e-learning centres to answer. This guidance document aims to support facilitators in promoting gender equity in the classroom and addresses technical and programmatic considerations for facilitators.

2. Overview of gender

Families or communities can have different beliefs about what girls can or should be doing in their day-to-day lives. As a result, girls may be discouraged from going to school or learning centres. This unfortunately keeps girls from learning and growing in their knowledge of the world.

It is important to understand gender concepts and apply them to your work. As a facilitator, you can empower girls to use technology to learn. This guidance document aims to help you encourage equal opportunities for girls and boys in the classroom.

2.1. Definitions

- **Gender:** roles, activities, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for men / boys and women / girls. Our ideas of gender are influenced by society and may not be based on objective facts. For example, some may incorrectly assume that ‘boys are good at maths and science and girls are good at history and language.’
- **Sex:** biological and anatomical characteristics that define men and women. For instance, women give birth to babies; men do not.
- **Gender equity:** the process of being fair to women and men according to their respective needs.
- **Gender responsive:** planning and carrying out activities that consider the different needs of men / boys and women / girls.
- **Gender-based violence:** violence that targets an individual because of their gender. It affects women / girls more frequently than men / boys. In the classroom, it can look like physical punishment, sexual abuse, or bullying.

2.2 Self-reflection

Based on the above definitions, take a few minutes to reflect on the following:

- Do you have any ideas or biases about gender that may not be true (such as that ‘girls are gentle and boys are rough’)?
- How will you make sure that you do not pass on these biases to your students?
- How can you promote gender equity, being fair to both girls and boys in your class?

3. Points for consideration by facilitators

Points for consideration by facilitators are organised into the following categories:

1. Classroom set-up and management
2. Classroom interaction
3. Classroom routine
4. Attendance keeping and assessment
5. Cultural competency

3.1. Classroom set-up and management

Students should be seated in the classroom based on where they feel safe and comfortable. Pay special attention to where girls are sitting and what seating arrangement will support their learning (e.g., girls may wish to sit together with other girls).

Also, be sure to encourage good hygiene practices during the sessions. For example, children should wash their hands before and after using the tablets.

You can create a gender-responsive classroom environment by

- Making sure there is enough space for both girls and boys to use the tablets
- Thinking about if / when spaces used by boys and girls should be separate.

Putting it all into practice:

- Think about how many girls and boys are attending each session.
- Have you thought about where girls and boys will sit in the classroom? Have you created a seating plan?
- If the community prefers an all-boy classroom (e.g., in the mornings), has a classroom also been made available to girls (e.g., in the afternoons)?

Figure 1. Characteristics of good learning environments ([UNICEF Sudan, 2017](#)).

Good learning environments are places...

- That are well organised and pleasant
- That are inclusive to everyone
- That are gender sensitive
- That are safe and free from bullying or physical punishment
- Where expectations are clear
- Where discipline problems are handled with effective classroom management
- That engage children in learning
- That promote independence

3.2. Classroom interaction

It is important to give girls and boys equal attention in the classroom so that they all feel seen and heard. The classroom should be a safe space for all. Also, think about how your facial expressions and body language show that you are approachable and friendly.

You can support gender-responsive interactions by

- Calling on both girls and boys to answer questions that you ask the group
- Encouraging and praising girls and boys equally
- Making sure that girls are not interrupted by others more often than boys
- Assigning leadership roles to both girls and boys in the classroom (e.g., asking both girls and boys to help take attendance)
- Using both 'he' and 'she' when talking to the class. Instead of saying 'If a student studies hard, he will succeed,' say 'If a student studies hard, he or she will succeed'
- Avoiding statements that generalise like, 'girls tend to ...' or 'boys are more ...'. If you hear children make these types of statements, ask them to discuss what they mean and why the statement might not be true
- Looking out for children who are having trouble with the tablets. Girls may need more support with the tablets if they have had fewer opportunities in the past to use technology than boys. In particular,

encourage girls so that they feel comfortable and confident using the tablets

- Preventing children from taking the tablets of others (every child should have their own tablet).

Putting it all into practice:

- Are girls and boys participating equally in e-learning?
- Did you include time during the e-learning session for students to ask questions?
- How will you prevent bullying, teasing, etc. in the classroom?
- Have you developed classroom 'norms' or expectations that emphasise respect and kindness with the students? See the example in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. *Example techniques for developing classroom norms.*
Source: [FAWE, 2018](#).

1. Have students write down and share ideas to the following question: "For me to be able to do my best, I need my teacher to...." Ensure that all students have an opportunity to share.
2. Reflect on their ideas together and talk through any which might be a problem, explaining objections and proposing revised ideas or language.
3. Have students make a poster to hang on the wall.
4. Then ask them to write their ideas to the following question: "For me to be able to do my best and to enjoy this class, every member of our group must...."
5. Have them share their ideas and reflect together on what they need from each other to be able to do their best, learn together and enjoy the class.
6. Revise the list if needed, ensuring that the list of norms is acceptable with the whole group.
7. Have a mixed group of students (boys and girls) make a poster with the list of community norms.
8. Review them at least once a week to see if the group is living up to the class's valued ideals. Norms must be fairly and consistently applied to every member of the group, boys and girls alike.

In your classroom, you may encounter cases of violence, to which girls are especially vulnerable. This might look like physical punishment, sexual abuse,

or bullying by facilitators, children, or others at the e-learning centres. Cases of violence, including gender-based violence, should be reported immediately to the head of the e-learning centre. As much as possible, try to involve local leaders and parents in stopping these harmful and violent practices that impair children's education and well-being.

3.3. Classroom routine

You can follow a general routine for your class:

- Greet children (using their names) as they come through the door to create a positive environment
- Remind children that they can come to you with any questions about the tablets or games
- Throughout the session, check in with the children to make sure that they are engaged with the e-learning apps. Spend extra time with children who are struggling to use the tablets and apps
- As the children are playing games, keep an eye out for potential problems or conflicts. Separate children if necessary
- (If there are any safety concerns) when the class comes to an end, encourage children to walk home together

3.4. Attendance keeping and assessment

At the start of each day, remember to record classroom attendance on paper. At the end of each week, record each child's progress on paper (in the event that a tablet crashes, you can reset the game to the level that the child had reached before the crash).

If children stop coming to the sessions, check with parents or community leaders on potential reasons for their absence.

Putting it all into practice:

- Are children making progress and completing new e-learning levels each week?
- Is the number of children attending each session increasing, staying the same, or decreasing?
- Do attendance rates differ between girls and boys, and if so, why?
- (If applicable) What might be some reasons that are causing lower attendance rates? Is there anything you can do to help resolve these?

Each child will take an assessment through the app to determine their learning level. As children take the assessments, keep an eye on the classroom to make sure that no one is cheating by looking at the answers of others.

You can take a gender-responsive approach to assessments by

- Giving children enough time to complete the assessments
- Providing feedback and support to both girls and boys after the assessments are done
- Make sure that your judgments of children's assessment scores are not based on gender expectations (e.g., do you have higher expectations for boys over girls on the assessments? Why?)

3.5. Cultural competence

It is important for you, the facilitator, to demonstrate cultural competence to the children. This means that you value and accept diversity and others' cultures.

Putting it all into practice:

- Are your interactions with the children, their families, and the community polite and respectful of any differences?
- Are you aware of how your own culture influences your practices and perceptions?
- Do you accept cultures other than your own?

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