TEACHING
FOR ALL

Inclusive Teaching and Learning for South Africa

Unit 3
Inclusive School Communities

Basic Education
Higher Education and Training

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Overview of study unit

Figure 1: Overview of Study Unit 3

During Unit 1, we discussed the legislation, policy, regional and international instruments that commit us to realising the right of all children to quality education.

In Unit 2, we deepened our understanding of learner diversity and explored what that means for us as teachers who value equity, inclusion and social justice in our classrooms.

In this unit, Unit 3, we will think about what it means for a school to be an inclusive centre of learning, care and support, where learner diversity is welcomed and supported by all stakeholders who work together to realise their shared vision of quality education for all children. We look at the South African framework (Care and Support for Teaching and Learning) and tool (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support) for building inclusive school communities. We discuss the roles of all stakeholders with a focus on you, the teacher.

Part 1 explores the concept of inclusive school communities and what this means in practice. The roles of the various stakeholders involved in inclusive school communities are discussed, and we look at ways in which teachers can be empowered and in turn empower their learners to play an active role in their own learning and development.

Part 2 discusses a framework through which teacher actions in building **inclusive communities** are guided. Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is presented as the DBE's framework for building inclusive school communities. Within this we look at the DBE priorities for addressing education exclusion as well as the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) as a practical strategy that guides support provision.

In Part 3, we explore **collaboration** further and how it could assist in realising the rights to education of diverse learners. We discuss collaborative partnerships at school, community and district levels.

Part 3 reflects further on **teacher and learner agency**: teachers have power within their classrooms and need to consider voices and actions of learners as active participants in school initiatives and cultivate a strong culture of learner participation.

Introduction and aim

The main focus of this unit is on building and enacting inclusive school communities through teacher and learner agency. Teachers are at the heart of strategies to build an inclusive education system. From a practical perspective, we look at the South African policy framework (Care and Support for Teaching and Learning) and tool (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support) for the development of inclusive school communities. We explore the question: What is your role as a teacher and how do you collaborate with other stakeholders, both within the education system and in the broader community, to ensure that all your learners are supported to achieve to their highest potential?

Specific outcomes

By the end of the unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of an inclusive school community and how it contributes to providing quality inclusive education for all South African learners
- Examine the role of the CSTL framework and SIAS policy in promoting inclusive classrooms
- Explore how you could implement the SIAS policy in your classroom
- Critically analyse different ways for stakeholders to work together, including collaboration, consultation and involvement in various contexts
- Evaluate, using specific examples, ways to develop effective school-based, district-based, and community-based collaborative partnerships to support inclusion in your context

Abbreviations

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CBO	Community-based organisation
CBST	Circuit-Based Support Team
CSTL	Care and Support for Teaching and Learning
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
DBST	District-Based Support Team
FBO	Faith-based organisation
LSE	Learning Support Educator
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Study
PLC	Professional Learning Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (Policy)
SMT	School Management Team
SSRC	Special School Resource Centre
WHO	World Health Organization

Unit 3 INCLUSIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

1

Building inclusive school communities

By Chiara Baumann 2018-06-30

WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE TO BE AT SCHOOL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Getting an education is fundamental to moving our young people out of poverty and into economic opportunity. So why are we struggling to ensure children make it all the way through school? Perhaps it's because we fail to see what they're up against each and every day.

As a country we have committed to greater access to education for all children. The importance of early childhood education (the first five years of a child's life) to improve children's capacity to learn and thrive is now firmly on the national agenda. Even the significance of prenatal care is making inroads in our attempt to give children the best start in life—right from conception. But what use are these building blocks if we are not investing the same amount of energy and forward-thinking into keeping our children in school?

Studies show that over the course of primary and secondary school, we lose 45 percent of learners—they never make it to Grade 12, much less write a matric exam. While it may be legal in South Africa to exit the school system at the end of Grade 9, we know that young people without a matric are those who struggle most to find a job. To make matters worse, further educational opportunities are scarce for those who don't matriculate—only one percent of learners who drop out of school go on to study at colleges.

We've now reached a situation where more than half of young people are unemployed, and almost a third of all youth are out of employment, training and education opportunities. Such high levels of economic exclusion lead to crime and social instability that keeps mounting over time. Dropout is therefore not an individual problem, it's a challenge that affects us all.

For many, the term "school dropout" conjures up the image of lazy, naughty, reckless teens—learners who choose to leave school and so are responsible for their own misfortune. But, what if we looked at the situation from the point of view of our learners? Perhaps we would better understand what it's really like to be a learner in South Africa.

Each morning, millions of children wake up hungry because they've had no supper the night before and have to leave for school with little or no breakfast. According to the General Household data for 2015, 13 percent of children reported going hungry sometimes, often or always in South Africa—that's 2.4 million children. For some, the only meal they'll receive for the rest of day is from their school's feeding scheme, or from a concerned teacher who has dipped into her own pocket to buy porridge for her class. Many children will also wake up alone because their caregivers have had to leave early for work, often leaving them to get their siblings ready for school, too.

Next, they have to make the journey to school. For many, it is difficult and unsafe—either requiring long distances on foot (sometimes over 10 kilometres each way in rural areas), or waiting in long queues for multiple bus and taxis rides. This is on good days; on bad days, the weather, transport strikes, or taxi violence will make the journey even longer, and even more dangerous. Children on the Cape Flats, for example, have to choose their routes carefully in case a stray bullet comes their way.

So, by the time the first school bell rings—if children manage to make it in time for the first period at all—they've already depleted much of their reserves. Now they are expected to sit in loud, large classes with as many as 60 learners in one class. The walls of the school are often completely bare, and there are bars on the windows. Add to this the immense pressure on teachers to stick to the curriculum, and the result is largely unimaginative lessons that are rushed; leaving many children behind or simply losing their interest along the way. Sometimes children have to run the classes themselves because their teacher is not present.

Then there's bullying and violence to contend with. A 2015 survey found that 48 percent of Grade 5 learners in no-fee schools in South Africa reported being bullied weekly. Another study notes that

extreme levels of sexual violence are experienced by girls not only commuting to school, but also during school hours—by teachers and classmates, with little in place to hold their educators to account. And, despite it being banned more than 20 years ago, many teachers continue to use corporal punishment in the classroom, even for minor of transgressions, such as being late.

Once the final bell rings for the day, learners still have to face the long journey back home, only to come home to an empty house, a mound of homework, and for some, a violent home. With no one around to help, and often with household chores or childcare duties also to tend to, schoolwork drops to a low priority.

When we add up these experiences, we begin to get a more accurate picture of what it's like to be a learner in SA. It comes as no surprise then that by high school our learners are running on empty, with school dropout peaking in Grades 10 and 11. This may seem like a picture of doom and gloom, but it's also a picture of immense resilience, courage, hope and opportunity. Every day, children are showing up at school, despite the odds. And they show up over

and over again for many years, some for 16 years—until all the things that weigh them down finally force them to sink. Dropout is therefore less of an active choice, and more of a culmination of the many factors that work together to push our children out of the school system.

But this doesn't have to be the case. For five to seven hours, five days a week, we have learners within our reach. Let's use this time wisely. Let's acknowledge the reality in which children live, and hold their well-being at the centre of every decision we make. Let's create moments of relief for them where they feel acknowledged, supported and safe. Let's be mindful of the language we use, and build simple, loving connections within our schools. We may not be able to change the broader and deep-seated constraints that children and young people are up against in the short term, but we can protect the time we do have with them—and ensure that schools are deliberately recognising the obstacles they must constantly overcome just to make it through the day. DM

(Source: Baumann, 2018, Daily Maverick: http://bit.ly/2EQyH6w)

ACTIVITY 1: The road travelled

Reading

Read the article "What it's really like to be at school in South Africa", and consider the following questions:

1. What is the article saying about the current education system in South Africa? Do you agree or disagree? Support your opinion by referring to your own experience, and what you have learnt in your course and this module so far.

2. How do the circumstances described in the article compare with your own schooling? What are the similarities and differences? How does this affect the way you approach your role as a teacher?

3. What can you, as a teacher, commit to doing to "acknowledge the reality in which [your learners] live, and hold their well-being at the centre of every decision [you] make"? What support might you need to achieve this?

1.1 What is an inclusive school community?

> *"Inclusive school communities are about creating communities of learning where difference is welcomed."* **Phasha, Mahlo & Dei, 2017**

Central to inclusive education is the idea of inclusive school communities—schools as inclusive centres of learning, care and support that are embedded within their communities. But what does this mean?

There is no agreement about what **community** means when it comes to schools (Watson & Bogotch, 2016). There is the idea of "a school community" and also the idea of "school as a community".

The idea of a school community refers to "the various individuals, groups, businesses, and institutions that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a school and its community" (Great Schools Partnership, 2019). The idea of school as a community "includes other groupings of people sharing common characteristics or interests" (Green & Mercer, 2001: 1927).

A community has particular characteristics: its organisation, culture and climate (Dove, Zorotovich & Gregg, 2018; Stefanski, Valli & Jacobson, 2016). These characteristics describe the environmental and people factors that determine the values, attitudes and behaviour of educators, learners and all the other stakeholders who are part of that school community. These factors include rules governing schools and the extent to which the rules create the feeling of belonging and shared vision that is typical of communities (Watson & Bogotch, 2016).

ACTIVITY 2: What is an inclusive school community?

Writing

Define and list the key characteristics and features of an inclusive school community. Use the above definitions and what you learnt in Unit 1 and Unit 2 about inclusion and learner diversity. You can present your ideas in writing, or as a mindmap or diagram.

An ideal inclusive school community is one where all the learners in the vicinity of a school attend that school, and where all stakeholders are involved in the school and share the vision of realising quality education for all. Stakeholders include learners, teachers, caregivers, school management and leadership teams, as well as other local schools, government departments, businesses, faith-based, community-based and non-governmental organisations.

In terms of **culture** and **climate**, inclusive school communities are about creating communities of learning where difference is welcomed (Phasha et al., 2017). All forms of exclusion and marginalisation and inequalities in access, acceptance, participation and learning outcomes should be rejected. "Differences in classrooms" should be understood as a normal aspect of human development. This entails understanding inclusive school communities as **spaces that ensure that everyone has access to quality education and no learners are marginalised due to pre-determined exclusionary judgements about who they are and what they can learn** (Florian, 2017: 10–11; Phasha et al., 2017). Inclusive schools adopt a social model approach within which human rights and participation of all role-players are respected. It is essential that all relevant government departments are involved.

Enshrined in such a community is a commitment to **constitutional values** and the **spirit of ubuntu**, which refers to "being compassionate, welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share, open, available, as well as affirming others" (Phasha, 2016).

Key terms related to an inclusive school community

School as a community refers to an organisation that consists of a group of people sharing (i) basic conditions of common life; (ii) a feeling of belonging together and (iii) a sense of mutual identifications of hopes and aspirations among members themselves; and hold a collection of normative beliefs and values that govern interaction.

School culture consists of the shared ideas, such as assumptions, values and beliefs that give a school its identity and standard for expected behaviours. (Tableman & Herron, 2004:1)

School climate refers to the kinds of feelings, opinions and attitudes learners and the school community express about the school, given the specific ways in which their school does things. These opinions reflect the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. (Tableman & Herron, 2004:2)

ACTIVITY 3: Evaluate school culture and climate

Writing

Think about the last school you attended.

1. Complete the three tables below.
2. What do the answers tell you about the culture and climate of the school?
3. To what extent did the school put into practice the democratic values enshrined in the Bill of Rights? How could it do so more effectively? Explain your answer.

Table 1: Getting along

In your opinion, how well did the following groups get along at the school?	Not well	Fairly well	Very well	Does not apply
Boys and girls				
Learners who speak different languages				
Learners with different abilities				
Learners of different races				
Learners who belong to different religions				
Teachers and management				
Parents and teachers				

Table 2: School culture

Are the following statements mostly true or mostly false about the school?	T	F	Don't Know
School management and teachers collaborated toward making the school run effectively.			
The principal encouraged experimentation in teaching.			
The principal made a point of praising teachers and learners when they did something well.			
Learners cared about the school and felt proud to be there.			
Parents and the community were receptive to new ideas.			

Table 3: Teacher attitudes

Which of the following descriptors are mostly true of the teachers at your school and which are mostly false? *(Mark one answer for each line)*	T	F	Don't Know
Apathetic: Indifferent, not interested in school/classroom issues			
Cohesive: Unified as members of the school community			
Enthusiastic: Eager and passionate about the wellbeing of the school			
Frustrated: Discouraged about being at the school			
Innovative and open to change: Always thinking of new ways of teaching or dealing with challenges; willing to try new approaches			
Satisfied: Fulfilled and happy			
Unappreciated: Not acknowledged for effort			
Traditional: Fixed in their ideas and not willing to try new approaches			
Tense: Nervous and anxious			

(Source: Adapted from Welsh, Jenkins & Greene, 1998)

1.2 Stakeholders in inclusive school communities

As we know from Unit 1, South African legislation and policy aims to develop democracy and active citizenship, based on principles of human rights and inclusivity, where citizens take responsibility for what happens in their communities. Full participation of the following stakeholders is essential for school communities to be inclusive and effective.

1. The **learner** is at the centre of the school community, based on the principle of *"Nothing about us without us"* (title of a 1998 book on disability rights by James Charlton). Learners are recognised, respected and enabled to exercise their rights and to participate in all decisions that affect them.
2. **Teachers** are at the heart of the strategy to build an inclusive education system.
3. **Parents and caregivers** are equal partners in their children's education.
4. **School structures** are functional and play their **mandated roles**: the School Management Team (SMT); School-Based Support Team (SBST), the School Governing Body (SGB) and the Representative Council of Learners (RCL)
5. **Department of Basic Education structures** support school structures: the **Circuit-Based Support Team** (CBST) and the **District-Based Support Team** (DBST).
6. **Education is everybody's business**: government departments, the private sector, faith-based organisations (FBOs), NGOs and CBOs are all essential partners toward the realisation of quality education for all.

Policy mandates for school and government structures

The *South African Schools Act 1996* sets out the roles and responsibilities of core structures in school communities: the **principal** leads the school, supported by the **School Management Team** (SMT); the **School Governing Body** (SGB) represents the caregivers and school community and the **Representative Council of Learners** (RCL) represents learners. Because governance and management are closely connected and affect the functionality of schools, these committees need to work closely together with the best interests of learners

in mind. For example, while the majority of SGB members are parents, teachers and RCL members are also represented on the SGB, along with the principal, who is automatically a member. The **School-Based Support Team** (SBST) is a sub-committee of the SMT, and is mandated in *Education White Paper 6 2001*. The SBST's core function is to assist teachers and learners to identify support needs and access support from the local community and government structures. At circuit and district level there are corresponding structures to support the SBST: **Circuit-Based Support Team** (CBST) and the **District-Based Support Team** (DBST).

All of the above stakeholders have a role to play in building inclusive school communities. A useful way of looking at this is through the application of Complexity Theory, which sees organisations as similar to living organisms. This means that rather than understanding school systems as fixed and separate, we see them as inter-connected, dynamic, continuously changing, open to their surroundings and engaging in feedback. Feedback through communication and **collaboration**[1] means schools continuously transform (Cunningham, 2003). Within an inclusive school community this is achieved through **purpose-driven actions**—e.g. teaching, interactions among individuals and members, decision making and participation, which are all focused around creating a climate of mutual respect and inclusivity. We will explore collaboration among stakeholders in an inclusive school community in more depth in Part 3 of this unit.

> *"We should see organisations as similar to living organisms: inter-connected, dynamic, continuously changing, open to their surroundings and engaging in feedback."* **Cunningham, 2003**

1.3 Enacting inclusive school communities through teacher and learner agency

In Unit 1 we discussed the importance of **teacher and learner agency**[2] in inclusive education. As we continue with the topic of developing inclusive school communities, it is time to place teachers and learners at the centre of these discussions in a practical way.

1.3.1 Teacher agency in practice

Teacher agency[3] can be defined as the individual and collective actions taken by teachers in situations in which they find themselves. In this sense, agency is not given but involves a negotiation of power as constituted in the individual teachers, structures and conditions in which they find themselves. Long et al. (2017: 10) refer to teacher agency as "critically shaping our responses to problematic situations in diverse contexts". They state that "agency is conditioned by past experiences and lived realities of the teachers". This means that we can't take it for granted that just because someone is a professional teacher they will always exert their power in ways that are compatible with the principles of inclusive pedagogy (see Unit 1).

Definition

1   **Collaboration:** A style of direct interaction between at least two co-equal persons who are voluntarily engaged in shared problem-solving, shared decision making and shared resources as they work towards achieving a goal.

2   **Teacher and learner agency:** Their active contribution to shaping their work as teachers and learners and its conditions—for the overall quality of education. In this way agency speaks to what teachers and learners do and not what they have.

3   **Teacher agency:** The individual and collective actions taken by teachers in situations in which they find themselves. In this sense agency is not given but involves a negotiation of power as constituted in the individual teachers, structures and conditions in which they find themselves.

ACTIVITY 4: Inclusivity in physical education

📖 Reading

Read the case study and article below and then answer the following questions:

1. In what ways might Keke's attitude create barriers to participation and learning at the school?
2. How do views like Keke's impact on the creation and maintenance of an inclusive school culture?
3. Keke says, "They'll never get anywhere close to playing for a national team, or any team, so why bother?" Comment on this in the light of the article about Ntando Nokamo, and other examples you know about.
4. How would you advise Keke to address the challenge of including the two learners in sport?

CASE STUDY: Inclusivity in Physical Education

Keke Motlotla teaches Physical Education/Human Movement as part of the Life Skills curriculum. Read her conversation with her colleague, Lerato Mahao:

Keke: You know Lerato, I just don't understand why I'm expected to involve those two learners in wheelchairs in basketball. What does it mean to them? I think it's unfair that in addition to ensuring the safety and involvement of 40 learners on the sports field, I now have to worry about two children in wheelchairs! They'll never get anywhere close to playing for a national team, or any team, so why bother?

Lerato: Ao choma, I thought you learnt about the importance of physical education in your B Ed programme? Sport really helps all learners to be able to do their school work better! In our school community we support all learners and try to help them become the best versions of themselves. Why not join me at the next meeting of "Teachers who Care". I always find the discussions very helpful in finding ways to meet the challenges we face as teachers. It helps to know you are not alone.

Keke: I don't see how a meeting will help but OK, I'll join you.

ARTICLE

By Mfundo Piliso - 19 August 2018

NTANDO SET TO SLAM DUNK HIS WAY TO TOP

Eastern Cape player only 13, but gets nod for SA U23 basketball team

He is only 13, but Ntando Nokama sees his inclusion in the national U23 basketball men's wheelchair squad as a chance to travel the world.

Nokama, the youngest wheelchair Springbok in the province, represents the Eastern Cape wheelchair basketball men's U23 side and is set to make it into the main team—Buffalo City Suns—who are campaigning in the Supersport Wheelchair Basketball National League.

"I think young people should stop abusing drugs and alcohol, and rather focus on playing sport and on their books because that's how I managed to get selected to the team," said Nokama.

The "guard man" on the court said being born in Stutterheim in Mgwali, where opportunities for the disabled are few and far between, prompted his relocation to Mdantsane's Vukuhambe Special School.

"It all began here when I met the people who inspired me to play this sport," he said.

(Source: DispatchLIVE © 2019 Tiso Blackstar Group (Pty) Ltd.)

Let's take a look at how physical exercise can help boost learners' achievement in class, and think of ways you can give learners opportunities to participate in sport and other physical exercise, both in class and after school.

How physical activity boosts learners' achievement
Exercise for children appears to stimulate brain growth and boost cognitive performance. It helps them focus. It may make it easier for them to learn and achieve. Studies suggest that physical exercise yields short- and long-term benefits for achievement in the classroom, especially when combined with an element of fun (Dewar, 2019).

In 2016, 24 experts published a statement in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* on the effects of physical activity on students age 6 to 18. Among their conclusions:

- Physical activity and cardiorespiratory fitness are good for children's and young people's brain development and function as well as their intellect
- A session of physical activity before, during, and after school boosts academic achievement
- A single session of moderately energetic physical activity has immediate positive effects on brain function, intellect, and academic performance (Britt, 2019)

And a 2017 review of 26 studies in the United States and 10 other countries and involving more than 10,000 children, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, concluded: "Physical activity improves classroom behaviours and benefits several aspects of academic achievement, especially mathematics-related skills, reading, and composite scores in youth." (Ibid.)

ACTIVITY 5: Encouraging learners' participation in physical activity

Writing

1. Do you agree that incorporating physical activity would impact positively on the achievement of all the learners in your class? Give evidence to support your opinion.
2. Suggest other types of physical activity, in addition to sport, that would be enjoyable and beneficial for learners to do before, during and after lessons.
3. What could you do to involve caregivers and the local community in providing support and opportunities for learners to participate in physical activity at school?

1.3.2 Promoting learner agency

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is based on the **Theory of Constructivism**, which places learners at the centre as **active agents in their own development**. As we saw in Unit 1, the key message of Constructivism is that learning best takes place if learners are actively involved in the process (Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2014). In other words, the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes largely depends on learner agency[4], with learners playing an active role in their learning. This continuous and active involvement of learners is referred to as **active agency**[5], and the teacher's key role is to encourage this in learners.

> *"Cultivating active learner agency requires education systems to support and develop learner participation in all decisions that affect them."* **OECD Learning Framework, 2018**

Definition

4 **Learner agency** is when learners have "the power to act", when they take responsibility for their own learning and don't only rely on inputs from the teacher, the curriculum, the resources and so on.

5 **Active agency,** especially where learners are concerned, describes the state of being personally engaged in one's learning which is often indicated by the ability to initiate and take control (Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2014).

In teaching we make a clear distinction between teacher-centred and learner-centred pedagogy. **Learner-centred pedagogy** is a teaching approach that develops learner autonomy and initiative by giving learners the responsibility of actively constructing knowledge rather than teachers just transmitting knowledge (Bada, 2015). We will explore this further in Unit 4.

According to the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Learning Framework* (2018), cultivating active learner agency requires education systems to support and develop learner participation in all decisions that affect them.

The CSTL framework stresses that education systems should prioritise the preparation of young people for democratic citizenship. It states that learners "need to exercise agency in their own education and through life" (OECD, 2018).

As we saw in Unit 1, Africa's *Agenda for Children 2040* (ACERWC, 2015) advocates a pedagogical approach that prepares children for change and equips them to be change agents. Learners must be enabled to make full and responsible use of information, navigate tensions, disagreements and challenges, and understand the consequences of their actions. This in turn develops a range of aptitudes, including problem-solving, creativity and a sense of responsibility.

ACTIVITY 6: What can you do to promote active learner agency?

Journal

What are the implications of the constructivist view of learning for learner participation in inclusive school communities? What can you do to promote active learner agency in your classroom practice? Keep this in mind as you work through this unit and Unit 4.

Teacher agency specifically refers to the human power teachers have that enables them to make a difference within given structures and cultures and to transform or reproduce them (Pantic & Florian, 2015; Pantic, 2015).

ACTIVITY 7: Examples of teacher and learner agency in practice

Audio Visual

Click on https://youtu.be/D8lm9dfz8-8 to watch a video that portrays teachers and learners as active agents of change. Then answer the following questions:

1. How is active agency of learners being promoted at this school?
2. How are teachers and learners portrayed as agents of change?
3. Are you familiar with the World Health Organization's (WHO) concept of health promoting schools? If not, find out from these two links and answer the questions that follow:
   a. https://www.who.int/school_youth_health/gshi/hps/en/ (WHO website)
   b. http://bit.ly/2EPDwNx (a report on Health Promoting Schools initiatives in South Africa)
4. In what ways are the efforts of this New Zealand school demonstrating the concepts of inclusion and health promotion?

There are many ways in which teachers can bring about change in schools and classrooms. From a perspective that inclusion is a basic human right, teachers need to think about the extent to which the voices of learners are heard as reflected in the examples above from New Zealand.

Embracing your own agency as teacher is crucial because teacher agency implies that every teacher (including you) has the capacity to make schools truly inclusive. Your interactions with learners, the curriculum and other co-actors continually impact positively on learning goals of all the learners, making classrooms and schools inclusive.

In Part 2 we look at South Africa's policy framework for building inclusive schools—Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL), and tool for implementing inclusivity in the classroom—Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS). Information in Section 2.1 has been adapted from an article by Vanessa Japtha, which was featured in the *Inclusive Education South Africa Newsletter* 2014, and updated to include new developments in South Africa.

2 The South African framework and tool for building inclusive schools

The Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) **framework** is a home-grown tool for building inclusive school communities. It was initially piloted in South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia, and then adopted by all Ministers of Education in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 2008, including the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa.

The DBE provides for a standardised and documented process for organising support provision within the system, for coordinating and tracking delivery and addressing resourcing. This is outlined in the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS).

> *In this unit, a framework refers to a set of ideas, principles, approaches, policies, activities and indicators used to guide intentional action and to measure its impact.*

2.1 Care and Support for Teaching and Learning—a SADC initiative

Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) is a dynamic and flexible framework that responds to the needs of children and youth to ensure their full access, participation and achievement by creating an enabling environment to improve their learning experiences and outcomes.

The CSTL framework grew from the recognition by Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States of the large numbers of children in the region made vulnerable by a host of interrelated factors such as poverty, HIV, disability and exposure to violence and abuse. Based on the strong regional and international mandate to ensure that all children, in particular vulnerable children, realise their right to education, the Ministries of Education in all of the SADC Member States adopted the CSTL framework in 2008.

Several pilot projects informed the development of the framework including Schools as Centres for Care and Support, piloted in South Africa, Zambia and Swaziland. The CSTL framework is an education-led coordinating framework that calls for integrated action from all stakeholders in each Member State to prioritise particular challenges facing children and youth.

Given the various and diverse types of support that are required for children to realise their constitutional rights, it is clear that no one government agency or other stakeholder could, alone, address he needs of vulnerable children. Rather coordinated collaboration between all stakeholders with CSTL as the over-arching framework is the approach agreed to that will best promote learner well-being and achievement.

2.1.1 How the CSTL framework fits into the global and African agenda

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action, providing the most ambitious and transformative framework to date for ending poverty, reducing inequalities, improving the lives of all global citizens and preserving and protecting the environment. They came into effect in January 2016, building on the Millennium Development Goals, and will continue to guide the United Nations and its member states until 2030. Figure 2 shows these 17 SDGs.

Figure 2: Sustainable Development Goals

Several of the SDGs address areas of vulnerability impacting on the lives of children. These include SDG 1—Poverty; SDG 2—Hunger; SDG 3—Health and well-being and SDG 5—Gender Equality. These echo the challenges affecting children in the SADC region and having a profound impact on their access to and participation in education. The CSTL Framework specifically aims to remedy these.

Of particular relevance to the CSTL framework is **SDG 4—Quality education.**

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG 4 promotes **every** child's right to **inclusive and equitable, quality** education. The CSTL framework recognises that in order to achieve this the education system must acknowledge and seek to address the impact on learning of the issues raised in SDGs 1–5.

In addition to being aligned to the SDGs, the CSTL framework is based on regional African and SADC policies. SADC's vision is of a common future, within a regional community, that will ensure for all of the people of Southern Africa:

- Economic well-being
- Improved standard and quality of living
- Freedom

- Social justice
- Peace and security for the people

This vision is anchored the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, where we share:

- Ubuntu
- Common values
- Shared histories

- Cultural connectedness
- Human rights

A wide range of national laws and policies including our Constitution and National Development Plan all support this international and regional human rights-based approach towards children and their well-being.
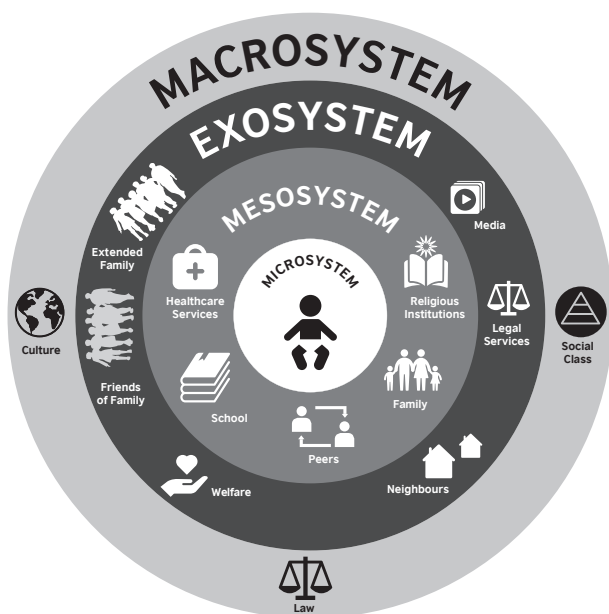
Figure 3: Bronfenbrenner's Social-Ecological Model
(Adapted from: http://bit.ly/2KqobHv

2.1.2 The CSTL approach

The CSTL framework applies a social-ecological model (Figure 3). There is a recognition of the influence of direct (individual beliefs and attitudes) and indirect (socio-economic and public policy) factors on a child's well-being and achievement at school. These factors can work together to impact a child's vulnerability.

Children are made vulnerable by their environment, community and circumstances. They may experience:

- Needs related to basic survival (food, healthcare, clothing, shelter)
- Lack of parental care / burden of heading a household
- Educational challenges
- Family and community abuse and mistreatment

Figure 4 shows a range of vulnerabilities that can intersect and are almost always exacerbated by poverty, and how these impact on a child's education.
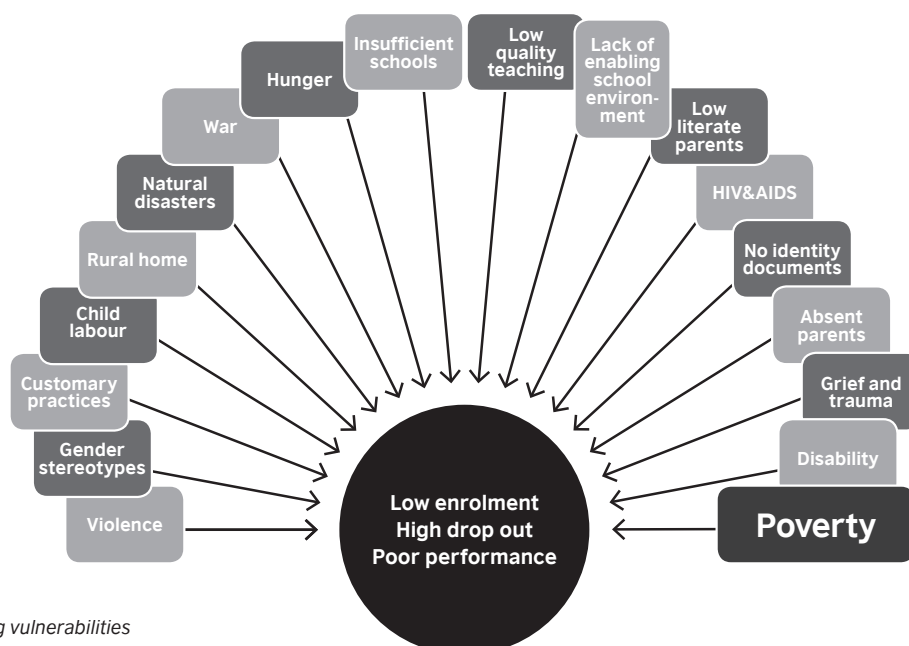
Figure 4: Intersecting vulnerabilities

In Unit 2, **intersectionality** was defined as "The study of what happens when different forms of discrimination, domination and oppression combine, overlap and intersect." This is of direct relevance to education, as it is important to know which children are vulnerable and therefore at risk of being educationally marginalised or excluded. It is most often a combination of factors at many levels that create a spectrum of educational disadvantage. In these circumstances, it is also important to consider enabling factors that can mitigate the child's vulnerability, such as caring supportive family or community members.

Intersectionality means that every child experiences their own unique combination of factors that either promote advantage or are compounded to increase marginalisation. For example, the lived reality of a child living in a poor rural community with a disability is very different to the experience of a child in a well-resourced urban community with a disability. The fact that they both have a disability cannot be viewed in isolation. The intersection or combination of their different identities must be considered.

The goal of the CSTL framework is to reduce vulnerability and increase wellbeing and resilience through supportive schools and collaborating with multi-sectoral stakeholders who can reduce risk factors.
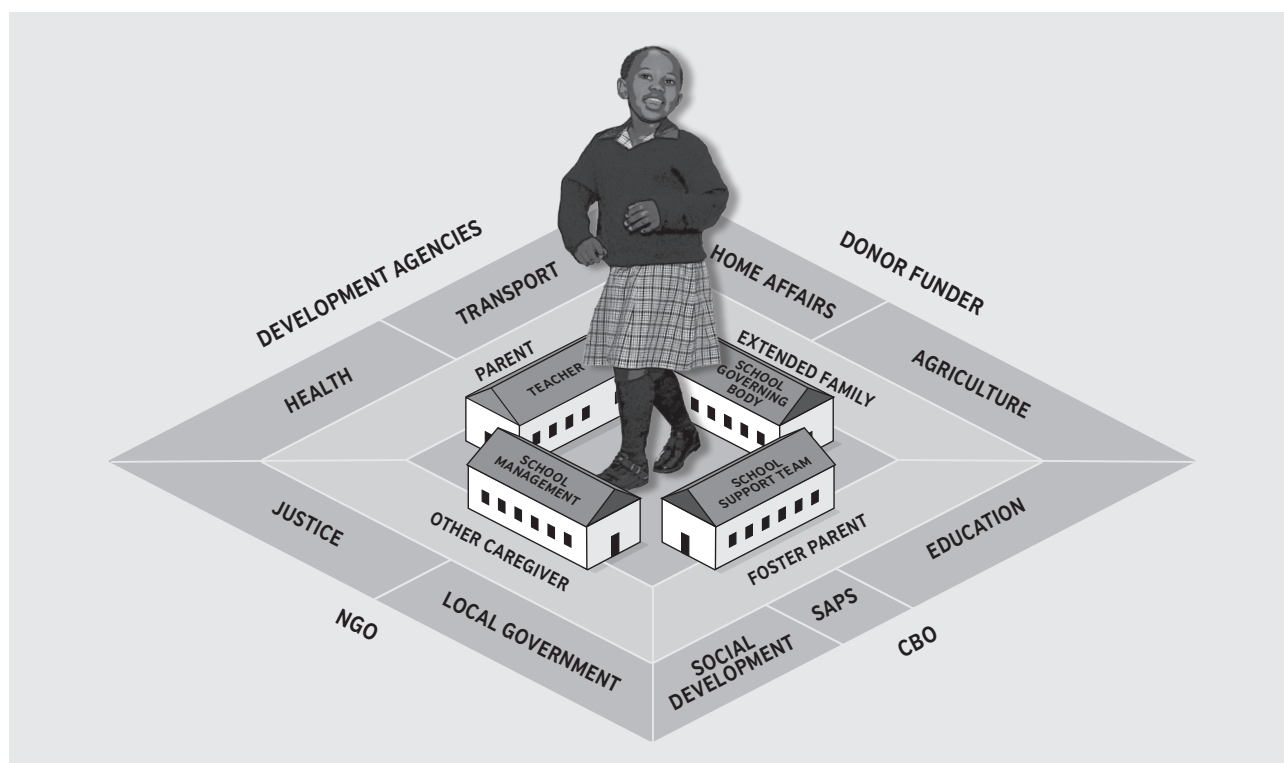
Figure 5: The CSTL Conceptual Framework

ACTIVITY 8: Linking CSTL to other theories and philosophies

Writing

The CSTL Conceptual Framework (Figure 5) shows that it takes a village to raise a child. The variety of concentric systems in CSTL—e.g. family, school, local government—is similar to systems of thinking contained in other theories and approaches.

Refer back to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the philosophy of ubuntu (Unit 1) and intersectionality theory (Unit 2).

1. How does the CSTL Conceptual Framework link to each of these theories/approaches?
2. How can these systems of thinking help in building inclusive school communities?

2.1.3 CSTL in South Africa

The **domestication**[6] of the CSTL Framework in South Africa took place between 2009 and 2015. The framework fits into a strong existing mandate supporting the protection and realisation of rights for all children. This resulted in the Department of Basic Education identifying **ten priority action areas** necessary to respond to the needs of children in the country.
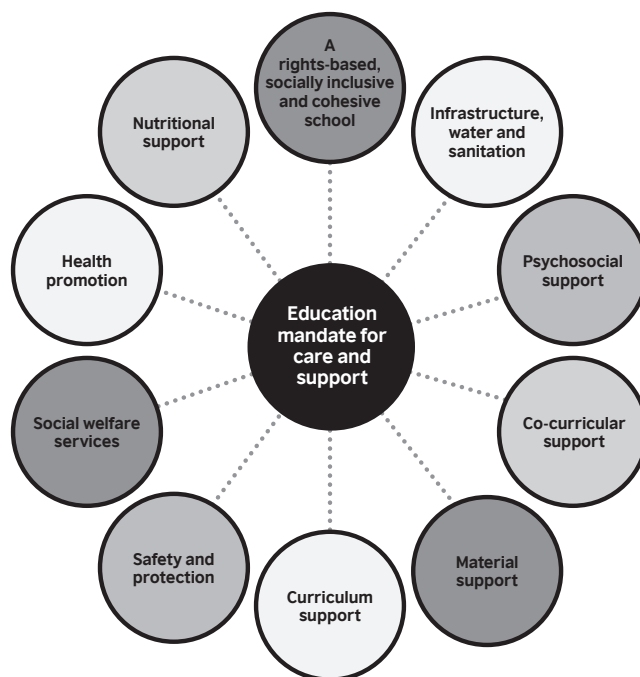
Figure 6: CSTL South Africa's 10 Priority Action Areas

Here is a description of each of the ten areas:

A rights-based and socially inclusive and cohesive school: This priority area aims to ensure that all school community members view education through a human rights lens—that is, they know, respect, protect and promote all children's rights, including their right to education and rights in education including equality, dignity, equity and freedom from discrimination and violence. A human-rights-based approach to education is based on the principle of ubuntu/botho—a recognition of the value of each child's life in our community and our obligation to care and protect them equally. Strongly linked with this are the values underpinning South Africa's inclusive education system, which recognises the right of every child to receive the support they need to participate meaningfully and achieve success in education in their local community school.

Safety and protection: This encompasses both the physical and psychological safety of learners and teachers. Schools should be free from all forms of violence, abuse, harassment and bullying. Learners should feel safe to ask questions, enquire and learn without the fear of ridicule. Safety and protection also includes the physical infrastructure of the school such as fencing, gates, and accessibility ramps.

Psycho-social support: Schools should meet the social and emotional needs of learners and teachers. Many children have not learnt appropriate ways of behaving or the necessary social skills to form functioning relationships. Some learners may also need support to deal with trauma, abuse, domestic violence or other issues that affect their emotional well-being. Schools should actively teach appropriate social behaviour and provide counselling support for learners.

Curriculum support: All teachers require the knowledge, attitude and skills to teach inclusively. This means they should be able to adapt their teaching, classroom environment and the curriculum to meet the learning needs of a very diverse learner population. To do this, teachers should have the resources and support to effectively and efficiently teach ALL children in their class.

Definition

6 **Domestication** refers to the process of customising the framework for a specific country.

Co-curricular support: Schools need to develop in-school or after-school enrichment activities to promote the holistic development and well-being of a child. These could include opportunities for free play, participation in sport, arts and culture, life skills and extra homework support.

Material support: This area includes assistance with school fees, uniforms and school transport. No child should be excluded from participating in any school activity because they do not have the money to pay for school-related costs.

Social welfare services: This area refers to the role of the school and duty-bearers in facilitating access to child support grants, acquiring documentation (birth certificates and identity documents) and the enforcement of childcare and protection legislation.

Nutritional support: The National School Nutrition Programme, food garden schemes and other initiatives ensure that no child goes hungry at school.

Infrastructure, water and sanitation: This is a commitment to ensure human dignity through access to clean, safe and habitable schools.

Health promotion: This priority area focuses on early identification and intervention in improving and promoting the overall health and well-being of children and teachers. This is achieved through health screening and education about health-related matters. (DBE, 2014b)

With these 10 priority areas in mind, a school as a centre for care and support should:

- Ensure availability of nutritious food through the National School Nutrition Programme
- Reduce the financial burden on poor parents by facilitating the application for exemption from school fees
- Promote parental involvement in the lives of children
- Offer skills development for parents
- Conduct regular home visits
- Provide a range of recreational activities
- Offer an aftercare programme
- Ensure school safety for learners
- Be a local network for care and support
- Engage with community stakeholders to offer support services at the school

These are all protective factors that improve a child's well-being.

ACTIVITY 9: Finding out more about the 10 Priority Areas

Audio Visual

Read about the ten priority areas above and watch the DVD at http://y2u.be/R0CL3VcQjgQ

Then answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think these ten priority areas were prioritised?
2. Why it is important for schools to implement activities in all the priority areas?
3. Identify overlaps among the priority areas.
4. Look back at the article at the beginning of the unit about the challenges faced by learners. Link these challenges to one or more of the priority areas. Think of other examples from schools you are familiar with.
5. What do you think your role as a teacher could be in implementing the priority areas?
6. Who else should be involved?

Focusing on these **policy-mandated priorities** has been shown to effectively address barriers to learning and participation, and improve children's educational outcomes. Thus schools are required to implement all ten of the CSTL areas in ways that complement related policy directives.

Because of the complexity and interrelated nature of the rights and services needed to address intersecting challenges causing exclusion, it is important that they are delivered as a holistic and integrated package in school communities. This involves collaboration with multiple stakeholders. We talk about this in Part 3 of this unit. Now we are going to look at the DBE's Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) process, which enables you and other stakeholders in the school community to provide the support learners need to achieve to their potential.

2.2 Using the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support process to build support into the education system

2.2.1 What is the purpose of SIAS?

ACTIVITY 10: Why learners need systemic support

Reading

South Africa was the lowest-performing country out of 50 countries in the 2016 *Progress in International Reading Study* (PIRLS). Read the *South African Highlights Report* (http://bit.ly/2Xlb5Oz), and answer the following questions:

1. The report analyses a number of background factors associated with achievement (pages 7–10). Which factors are strongly associated with learners' reading literacy?
2. Which of these factors would prevent learners from achieving their full potential and why?
3. What issues do the results of the study raise about equal access to quality education for all learners?

The PIRLS report raises issues around offering systemic support for learners in South Africa. In providing a systemic response to identifying barriers to achievement and providing support, the SIAS policy aims to ensure the effective inclusion and full participation of all learners within the education system. It provides standardised procedures for supporting learners to achieve to the best of their ability. This involves screening, identification of barriers, assessment of support needs, and provision and monitoring of support.

2.2.2 Principles of SIAS

Chapter 3 of the SIAS policy (DBE, 2014a: 15–17) offers principles and guidelines for support provision. Every learner has the right to receive quality basic education **within their local community**. This means that, as far as is practically possible and affordable, the support must be brought to the learner with little or no movement from their local community and home. School staff, in consultation with parents/caregivers, should be involved in support activities that will enable learners to participate in all learning activities. In addition, support should not emphasise diagnosis and remediation of an individual learner's difficulties, but should be a holistic approach, taking into consideration the learner's home circumstances, socio-economic status and experiences in life. Therefore, the support programme should be designed to facilitate learning with the purpose of ensuring that **all** learners succeed.

A strengths-based, holistic, social-model approach takes into consideration the learner's home circumstances, socio-economic status and experiences in life.

Standardised procedures must be followed to assess support needs

The DBE has developed standardised procedures "to assess the level and extent of support required in schools and in classrooms to optimise learners' participation in the learning process". The SIAS policy explains how to "identify individual learner needs in relation to the home and school context, to establish the level and extent of additional support that is needed" as well as how to get "access to and provide such support at individual levels" (DBE, 2014a: 13).

Much depends on the way that the school, led by the SBST, responds to diversity (including attitudes and ethos), the nature of the barriers, as well as the resources available (and effectively mobilised) in the school and surrounding community (MIET Africa, 2016).

Support could mean a variety of things. For example, an educator planning lessons in a different way; increased action to tackle bullying; teacher training on curriculum and assessment differentiation; building wheelchair accessible toilets; or accessing specialist services (MIET Africa, 2016).

Collaboration and community are essential

> *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."* **Zulu proverb**

Support involves the wider school context as well as learners' specific individual needs in inclusive classroom contexts. The policy describes ways in which different stakeholders of a school community (teachers/schools, parents, learners, school based support teams, district based support teams, health professionals etc.) come together as a community to address concerns.

All schools are inclusive centres of learning, care and support

Education White Paper 6 describes three types of schools: ordinary, full service, and special schools (DoE, 2001). The difference among these types of schools is that, through Departmental provisioning, some schools have more facilities and specialised services enabling them to offer higher and more intensive levels of support.

Ordinary schools must admit all learners in their area—regardless of their difficulties—and take all possible measures to offer reasonable accommodation to learners with additional support needs and disabilities. While the school might not immediately be able to offer the required levels of support to every learner they admit, the aim is to mobilise support through outreach services delivered by the DBST, full service schools and special schools within the district. Out-placement of learners to full service schools or special schools should be a last resort. (DoE, 2001)

Full service schools are ordinary/mainstream schools that are equipped with additional support provisioning, so that they can respond to a broader range of learning needs. These include specialised support staff (Learning Support Educator [LSE] and counsellor), specialised infrastructure (e.g. counselling room, disability-friendly toilets) and specialised Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) and assistive devices (e.g. braille typewriters and textbooks). These full-service schools also serve as hubs and share their additional resources with neighbouring schools. (DoE, 2001)

Special schools and Special School Resource Centres (SSRCs) are ordinary schools that are equipped with even greater support provisioning to cater for the needs of learners requiring specialised, high-intensity support. Special schools and SSRCs are able to provide site-based, specialised programmes to learners requiring high to very high levels of support, and SSRCs are also able to provide support (specialist skills and resources) to a cluster consisting of ordinary schools and a full-service school (DoE, 2001).

However, regardless of what type of school they are, **all** schools are inclusive centres of learning, care and support. This means that **every** school must provide relevant quality education for a broad range of learning needs and should include the following minimum components:
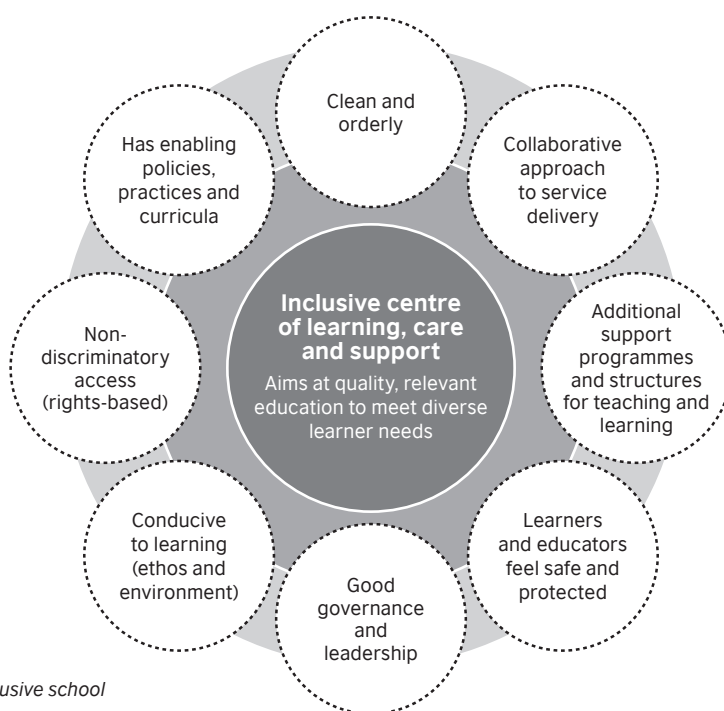
Figure 7: Components of an inclusive school (Source: MIET Africa, 2010)

The level of support is rated and not the learner. In principle, levels of support are unrelated to the type of school. They are determined by the frequency/intensity, scope, availability and cost of the required support. Low-level support is generally proactive or preventative, and is covered within general departmental programmes, policies and line budgets. Moderate-level support is usually over and above standard programmes and provisioning, and is generally once-off, short-term or of moderate intensity. High-level support is also over and above provisions covered by policies and provisioning for public schools, and is generally highly specialised, expensive, high frequency and high intensity. (DoE, 2001)

Let's do an activity to make sure we understand the principles of the SIAS policy.

ACTIVITY 11: Understanding SIAS principles

Reading

Refer to Chapter 3, pages 15–17 of the SIAS policy to help you complete this task (DBE, 2014a: http://bit.ly/2X4iHVA).

Read the following statements relating to the principles of the SIAS policy, and decide if each is true or false.

If you say a statement is "false", rewrite it as a "true" statement.

	Statements	True (T) or False (F)
1	Every child has the right to receive quality education within their local community.	
2	A child can be refused access to their local school.	
3	Support includes all activities in a school that increase its capacity to respond to diversity. For example, this could include reviewing school culture, admission policies and co-curricular programmes.	
4	There is no need to involve parents or learners in decisions around types of support offered and where to place learners.	
5	A learner may experience a range of barriers, for example, poverty, disability or a violent home situation, requiring a holistic approach to assessing needs and designing support programmes.	
6	In the context of the SIAS process, assessment refers to the assessment of scholastic achievement.	
7	Parents of learners experiencing a physical or mental disability should apply directly to a special school for admission of their child.	
8	Support is about the remediation of deficits within the learner.	
9	The nature and extent of support needed by a learner could include addressing educator or school needs.	
10	Placement of learners in a specialised setting to access support is a last resort and should not be seen as permanent.	

2.2.3 The SIAS process

As a teacher you need to be able to identify any challenges preventing learners from achieving, assess their needs, and offer and monitor support.

The **SIAS process** aims to ensure that:

- Every learner accesses the education system and no one is denied access
- Support, and not out-placement, is the guiding principle
- Schools provide additional support to learners and are enabled to access additional support provisioning (via the SIAS process)
- Parents/caregivers and learners are involved in the decisions taken to access additional provisioning (DBE, 2014a: 37)

The SIAS policy outlines a step-by-step process for accessing support. The process diagram is reproduced in Figure 8.

Read Chapter 6.24 of the policy, which describes and summarises each stage of the process. DBE, 2014a: http://bit.ly/2X4iHVA)

SIAS Process for Individual Learners

A: Admission, completion of vulnerability assessment and learner profile.

B: No risks or concerns identified.
No additional support required at this stage.

C: At risk learner identified.
Refer to SBST which recommends action to be taken.

D: Support needs not clear.
Investigate further.

E: Support needs clear.
Support given, monitored and reviewed.

F: Teacher observes, conducts classroom assessment, reads learner profile, screens and conducts learner and parent interviews to inform planning.

G: Support successful.
No additional support required at this stage

H: No concerns identified.
No additional support required at this stage.

I: Barrier identified.
Parent (and learner) consultations. Individual support plan (ISP) support strategy drawn up and implemented. May include referral to social services, clinic etc. or requests for assistance from the LSE counsellor.

J: Support successful.
No additional support required at this stage.

K: Support unsuccessful.
Teacher requests assistance from SBST.

L: SBST examines case. Recommends further assessment which is conducted and/or support which is given, monitored and reviewed. Parent and learner liaison.

M: Support successful.
No additional support required at this stage.

N: Support unsuccessful.
CBST makes recommendation to DBST for outplacement or strategic planning.

O: CBST reviews SBST action and draws up own action (recommends that support accessed at institution level OR refers to DBST for implementation). Get parental consent.

P: Support successful.
No additional support required at this stage.

Q: Support unsuccessful.
CBST makes recommendation to DBST for outplacement or strategic planning.

R: DBST examines, approves with conditions or recommends different support which is given, monitored and reviewed. Parent and learner liaison..
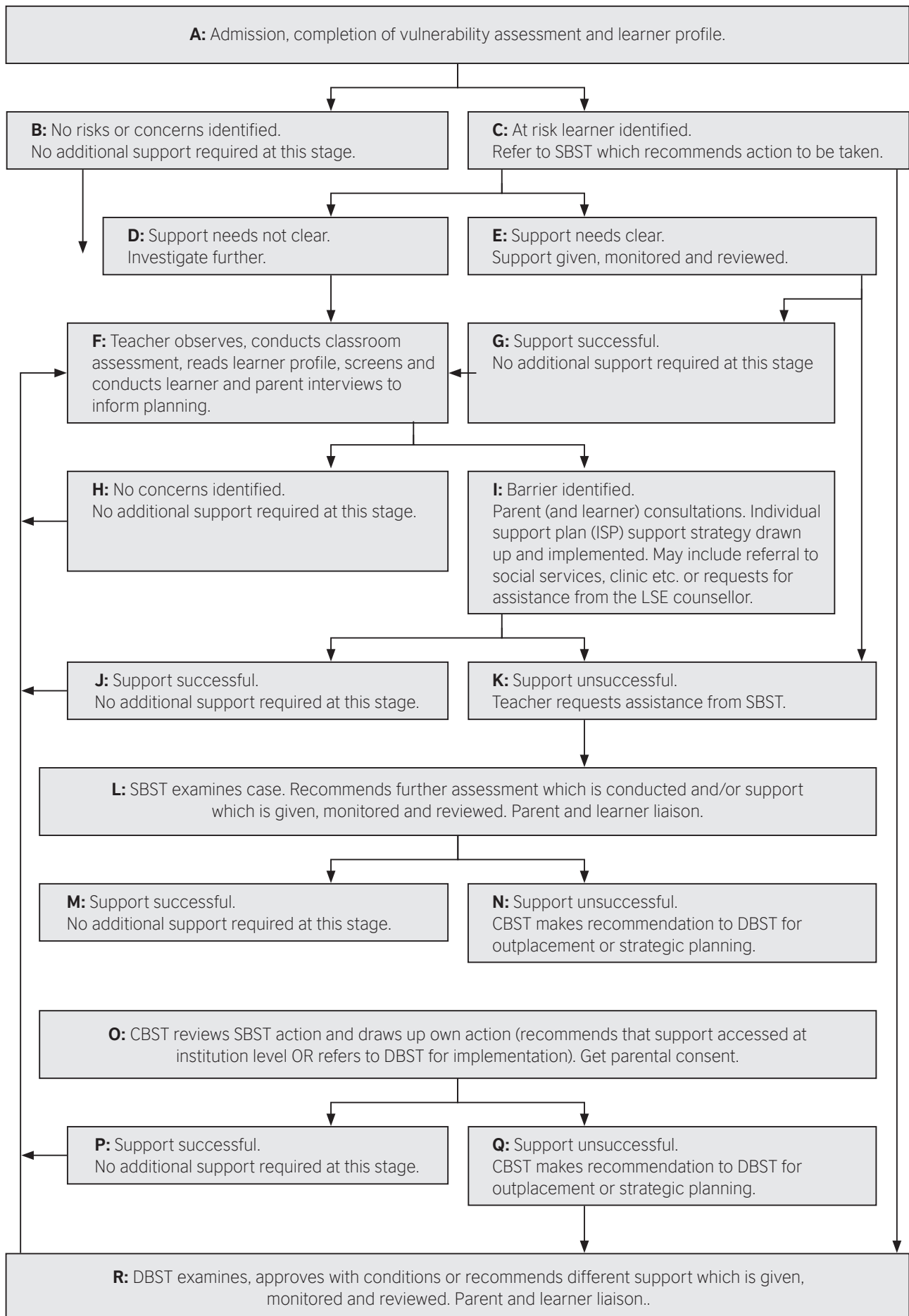
Figure 8: The SIAS process diagram

Explanation of SIAS process diagram

As soon as a learner is identified as vulnerable in the Learner Profile the SBST must be notified and this learner would automatically go to Block C. This promotes early identification.

Support needs differ. Some learners will need low levels of support at their school—this does not mean other support is not available. The teacher, with the SBST, can request assistance from officials, e.g. short-term input from psychologists, assessment by speech therapists s at the circuit/district office.

Accessing additional support is a learner's right but is not automatic. The support must be applied for through the SBST.

Every learner must be admitted at their local school. The line on the right hand side from C straight to R at the bottom of the page is for an "at risk" learner identified at admission in an ordinary school, who needs DBST support. These learners take the path directly to the DBST.

Most learners will follow the route A, B, F, H, F, H, F, H throughout their school lives. This cycle is ongoing. Even if a learner receives support, further and different support needs can develop.

ACTIVITY 12: How the SIAS process works

Reading

This activity will help you to understand how the SIAS process works. To do the activity you need the SIAS process diagram above and the scenarios below.

1. Work through each of the four scenarios one at a time (1. Linda, 2. Dennis, 3. Portia and 4. Andy).

2. For each of the learners, read each stage and answer the questions before you go on to the next stage.

3. Use the SIAS process diagram to decide what happens next and to follow each learner's journey.

Follow the SIAS process

1.	Linda
1.1	[Start at Block A] *("Blocks" refer to the blocks on the SIAS diagram on the previous page)* Linda changed schools in the middle of the year. She was from a middle income, stable family with two working parents. She appeared to be a secure child with good self-esteem and social skills. Reports indicated average academic performance. • Is Linda at risk or not? • Do you go to Block B or C?
1.2	[Move from Block B to Block F] During the first term at her new school, her teacher discovered that Linda was struggling with maths, and working at a slightly lower level than her peers. • Are there any concerns? Does Linda have possible additional support needs? • Do you go to Block H or I?
1.3	[Move to Block I] After discussion with Linda and her parents, the teacher put in place a more intense programme with extra homework to help Linda catch up the work she had missed due to changing school mid-year. Within two months she had caught up with her peers in maths. • Was the support successful or not? • Do you go to Block J or K? • Where do you go after that?

	Follow the SIAS process
2.	**Dennis**
2.1	[Start at Block A] When Dennis applied for Grade 1, his Road to Health booklet showed he was not up to date with his measles and polio immunisation. • Is Dennis at risk or not? • Do you go to Block B or C?
2.2	The teacher and SBST gave him a letter referring him to the clinic. Staff at the clinic gave him the missing immunisation. A copy of his updated Road to Health booklet was filed in his Learner Profile. • Was the support successful or not? • Do you go to Block D or E? • Where do you go next?
3.	**Portia**
3.1	[Start at Block F] Portia had been at her school for some time without any signs of difficulty. During routine observation, the teacher noticed that Portia often copied words incorrectly from the board, but that her close-up reading was fine. She moved Portia's desk closer to the board after discussion with Portia, and recommended that Portia visit the clinic. • Are there any concerns? • Does Portia have possible additional support needs? • Do you go to Block H or I?
3.2	During the Department of Health's planned ISHP eye screening visit shortly thereafter, it was discovered that Portia needed glasses. With regular check-ups for changes in her eyesight, Portia no longer had difficulties with her long-distance vision. • Was the support successful or not? • Do you go to Block J or K? • Where to next?
4.	**Andy**
4.1	[Start at Block A] When Andy was admitted to his new school, his previous reports indicated that he was very aggressive, was unable to control his temper, and often endangered himself and others with his impulsive and anti-social behaviour. • Is concern raised or not? • Do you go to Block B or C?
4.2	The SBST examined Andy's records and recommended that the support given at his previous school be continued, because those strategies seemed to have been successful. They controlled Andy's anti-social behaviour and ensured that he was able to engage productively and effectively with the curriculum and all school activities. The SBST and teacher met his parents and recommended that the same support be given, and regularly mon itored and reviewed the situation. • Do you go to Block D or E?

	Follow the SIAS process
4.3	Within two weeks, however, Andy had pushed another learner down a flight of steps, and threatened to stab himself with his scissors if he was made to do maths. The teacher was very concerned about Andy's behaviour. She was worried about what might happen if she carried on with her existing strategy. She felt ill equipped to handle Andy and urgently requested the help of the SBST. • What now? Block G or K?
4.4	The SBST recommended that the Learning Support Educator and counsellor get involved immediately to help the teacher and to further assess Andy to determine the cause of his aggression, and ways to handle it. In spite of teacher training on strategies to deal with Andy and fortnightly visits from the counsellor, Andy's behaviour did not improve, and the situation worsened. Andy hit a child with a cricket bat then climbed onto the roof of the school, threatening to jump off if he got into trouble. • Support successful or not? Block M or N? • Where to next?

(MIET Africa, 2016)

2.2.4 SIAS documents and role-players in individual support planning

The process for individual support planning is outlined in the SIAS policy document. The flow diagram on the right identifies the role-players and documents involved in this process.

Let's look at a case study and consider the documentation and role-players involved in putting an Individual Support Plan (ISP) in place for a Grade 3 learner, Misha.
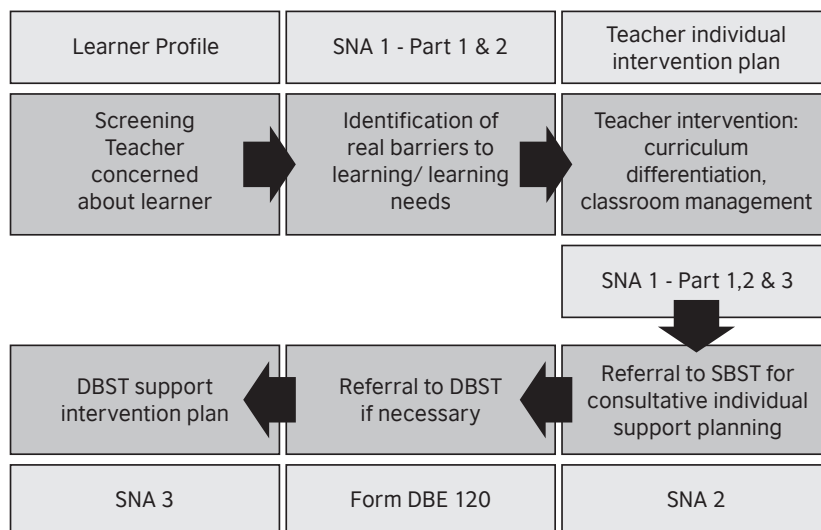
Figure 9: The SIAS process flowchart (Source: MIET Africa, 2016)

ACTIVITY 13: Identify role-players and documentation in SIAS process

Reading

Read the case study about Misha and use the diagram in Figure 9 to answer these questions:

1. Make a table in which you list the role-players involved at each point in Misha's story and specify each of their roles in the support process. Also list the documents that each role-player was responsible for completing. (Do you know what these documents are for? Look them up in the SIAS policy: http://bit.ly/2X4iHVA

2. What is the purpose of the forms that needed to be completed?

3. What was the teacher's role in the process?

4. When did the SBST become involved? What did it do?

5. When did the DBST become involved? What did it do?

6. How did collaboration contribute to the success of the process?

CASE STUDY: Misha

What happened?	Who was involved? Role-players	What documents did they use?
When Misha started school in Grade 1, her parents completed an admission form. The school admitted her and her teacher screened her and recorded the findings in Misha's **Learner Profile**. This was then captured in the **Learner Unit Record Tracking System**. There was no obvious evidence of any barriers to learning. The school kept copies of relevant documents like her **Road to Health Booklet** in her Learner Profile.		
During her foundation phase schooling, her teachers taught, observed, assessed and got to know her, and met and interacted with her parents. They found Misha to be a happy child and her year-end reports showed that although she was slow to start reading, she had made good progress, especially in Maths.		
When she got to Grade 3, it became clear that Misha had some kind of language-based learning difficulty. Her teacher, Mrs Guma, called a meeting with Misha's parents to discuss the issue. They decided to consult a doctor to find out if there was a medical reason for Misha's difficulties. After examining her, the doctor gave her a clean bill of health and completed **Form DBE126**. Mrs Guma then completed support form, **SNA1**, and put an extra reading programme in place.		
After monitoring the reading programme for two months, Mrs Guma found that Misha had made very little progress and, in consultation with Misha's parents, she formally requested additional support from the SBST. Using the **SNA2** form, the teacher and SBST drew up an **Individual Support Plan** (ISP) with the assistance of the district Learning Support Educator (LSE).		
The LSE worked with Mrs Guma and the SBST to develop and implement the ISP. Mrs Guma continued to offer support in accordance with the plan but Misha's performance remained poor compared to the potential that she seemed to have. At an SBST review meeting to monitor the ISP, it was decided that Misha might require the additional assistance of a speech and language therapist on a daily basis over an extended period of time.		
The SBST completed **DBE 120** to request support from the district. The DBST reviewed Misha's case and, using **SNA3**, drew up a plan of action for Misha (**DBE121**), which recommended providing additional support in the form of intensive speech and language therapy for a period of two months, after which her progress would be reviewed.		

(Adapted from MIET Africa, 2016)

Figure 10: Mrs Guma meeting with Misha and her parents

2.2.5 The teacher's role in implementing SIAS

Your inclusive approach to teaching should ensure that all learners in your class are actively engaged and learning (more about this in Unit 4). This should provide almost all your learners with the support they need. However, sometimes you may have learners in your class with specific higher level learning needs. As you can see from the previous activity, your role is crucial in identifying and addressing difficulties individual learners may be experiencing in class. To do this you need to get to know them well. Here are some ways you can do this:

• Understand each learner and know about their home circumstances
• Meet their caregivers
• Talk to them about things that interest them
• Observe their behaviour and relationships with peers
• Observe their performance and how they engage with different tasks
• Observe any changes in their behaviour or performance in class

Identifying your learners' needs is not a one-off event, but an ongoing process. You need to involve your learners in the process and constantly monitor and assess their progress, both formally and informally. You can do this by recording learners' strengths, areas of concern and needs as part of the normal teaching–learning process. You will need to create an **Observation Book** in which you record any concerns you have about individual learners.

Let's look at how Mrs Guma does this.

Based on her observations in class, recorded in her Observation Book—and her interactions with Misha, Mrs Guma wrote the following progress report on Misha in the first term of her Grade 3 year. The SBST and LSE, together with Mrs Guma, used this information to complete the SNA1 form.

Figure 11: Mrs Guma observing her class

PROGRESS REPORT: Misha Joseph, Grade 3G

Enabling factors
- Misha is cheerful and friendly with her peers during break.
- On the whole she achieves very well in maths.
- Her parents are attentive and supportive and the home situation seems happy.
- Misha continues to be happy and cooperative at home, except when doing homework.

Challenges

Home Language/LOLT:

Persistent reading/phonics/listening difficulties seriously affecting performance:
- Misha does not have phonic knowledge at Grade 3 level. She's still struggling to pick up small differences in sounds between similar sounding words. She can't easily spot the odd word out in sound patterns.
- Doesn't seem to realise that I am asking the class a question rather than giving information—she looks rather blank.
- Easily loses her place when reading aloud.
- Comprehension: She's seldom able to pick out the main idea from spoken information (even if it is only one or two sentences).

Other areas:

Difficulties described above also evident across other areas of work:
- Some problems when teacher poses "story-sums" orally in maths (her maths performance is strong otherwise).
- Short concentration span, easily distracted.
- Short attention span means that she sometimes distracts her partner in class, chatting (though very quietly).
- Polite in meetings with parents, but looks anxious and withdraws noticeably when her difficulties are discussed.
- Anxious and irritable when doing homework.

Classroom/school capacity
I am planning to put in place an extra reading programme for Misha. If there's no positive change by next term, I will need to consider more specialised assessment and possibly more specialised support than I can offer.

Overall
I feel that Misha may be experiencing some form of cognitive barrier because there seem to be some concentration and memory difficulties and issues of logical comprehension. However her strong ability in maths must also be taken into account.

Figure 12: Mrs Guma's progress report for Misha

In order to put a classroom support programme in place for Misha, Mrs Guma, together with the SBST and LSE, needed to complete the SNA1 form. This form is in the pack of documents at the back of the SIAS policy document. If you identify a learner in your class as being "at risk" or needing additional support, you will need to fill in the SNA1 form to start the support process. The following task will help to familiarise you with SNA1.

ACTIVITY 14: Understanding how to use SNA1

Reading

Look at the SNA1 form in the SIAS policy, page 48 (http://bit.ly/2X4iHVA) and discuss the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of this form?
2. Who is it for?
3. When should it be completed and by whom?
4. What information does the form record? (What are the various sections?)
5. Why is this information important?
6. Who is the form submitted to?
7. When submitting this form, what related documents should be included and why?
8. What information and documentation about Misha does Mrs Guma need to submit, in addition to the report she wrote?

2.2.6 SNA2 and Individual Support Plan (ISP)

Let's follow Misha's progress further. After Misha had been on the reading programme for two months, Mrs Guma found that she had made very little progress and, in consultation with Misha's parents, she formally requested additional support from the SBST. Using the **SNA2** form, the teacher and SBST drew up an **ISP** for Misha, with the assistance of the district Learning Support Educator (LSE). The ISP provided her with goals to be achieved and strategies on how to reach these goals.

Bear in mind that an ISP is not just used to address academic needs. It looks at the holistic needs of a learner with a view to providing wide-ranging support for these. You might refer learners requiring other interventions to the SBST. Examples would include assistance in applying for a social grant, inclusion on the school feeding scheme or counselling support.

To summarise: When a learner is identified as being vulnerable or at risk, you discuss this with the SBST but you drive and coordinate the support process in consultation with the learner and other role-players, and document the interventions and progress. You will involve your SBST further if you need additional help. The SBST will review the documentation and your support strategies so far. If your initial support has been ineffective, you will work with the SBST to develop an ISP with strengthened support. If this is still not successful, the SBST will ask the CBST or DBST for help. Further assessment may be needed and support could take the form of assistive devices, counselling, or services attached to full service schools. Only as a last resort will the DBST consider moving a learner from their local school to a full service or special school.

- **Keeping good records** is important, and you need to document the support given to a learner on the SNA forms in the SIAS document.
- **Collaboration** is also important. We will explore this more in Part 3.

To conclude this section and prepare for Part 3, reflect on the following questions:

1. What makes collaborative activities such as this succeed or fail?
2. If the school community collaborates is learner success guaranteed? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How does the SIAS policy try to ensure a collaborative approach? Do you think this is sufficient? What do you suggest could be added or changed in the policy?
4. What role can you as the teacher play in developing collaborative practices?

Keep these questions in mind as we work through Part 3, where we continue to deepen our understanding of inclusive school communities by examining practices that promote collaboration.

3 Practices that promote collaboration in inclusive school communities

> *"We regard our living together not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate act …. to make us a community of brothers and sisters jointly involved in the quest for a composite answer to the varied problems of life. Hence all our action is usually joint community-oriented action rather than individualism."* **Steve Biko**

In Part 1, we found that collaboration is a key part of inclusive school communities. In this section we explore approaches and strategies for collaborating with others as equal partners.

3.1 Different ways of working together

ACTIVITY 15: What does collaboration mean to you?

Journal

1. What does the term "collaboration" mean to you?
2. In what ways do you think collaboration could help teachers to build inclusive school communities?
3. What are some of the requirements of working collaboratively?
4. What are some of the challenges that teamwork and collaboration might present. Give examples from your experience.

It has been suggested that inclusive school communities should be an outcome of social justice, equity and diversity within an education system based on human rights. Inclusive school communities should be places where everyone has access, is accepted and can fully participate. To achieve this, members of the school community should interact and share, as co-equal partners, networks and partnerships to achieve the goal of providing all learners with equal opportunities to achieve their full potential (Engelbrecht, 2007; Phasha et al., 2017; Sands, Kozleski & French, 2000).

Different terms are used to describe the way in which members of school communities interact, share and work together. The most important of these are **team and group, consultation[7], collaboration** and **collaborative partnerships**. Let's look at the meanings of these terms:

- **Team and group:** In educational practice the terms "team" and "group" are often used interchangeably and refer to a group of individuals with a shared identity (e.g. a group of Grade 3 teachers). It needs to be noted, however that teams, in contrast with groups, usually share a common commitment and a goal for which they share responsibility (Vangrieken et al., 2015).
- **Consultation:** This is when a professional (e.g. educational psychologist) who is regarded as having expertise formally advises another person (e.g. a parent or teacher) who needs the benefit of that expertise (Engelbrecht, 2004).

Definition

7 **Consultation:** is a specialised problem-solving process in which a professional (e.g. educational psychologist) who is regarded as having expertise formally advises another person (e.g. a parent or teacher) who needs the benefit of that expertise.

- **Collaboration:** The term "collaboration" is usually used to describe the participatory and co-equal interaction among members of school communities (Engelbrecht & Hay, 2018). Collaboration can therefore act as an 'adhesive' by fostering community, a sense of belonging and participation among all the role players within an inclusive school community. The types of resources contributed depend on the roles and activities of the different participants; be it parents, teachers, support professionals, learners or community members (Oswald, 2010). Learners' interests, needs and goals become the focus of collaborative decision making, creative problem solving and shared responsibility and accountability (Engelbrecht & Hay, 2018).
- **Collaborative partnership:** This is based on the recognition that all partners are equal (Engelbrecht, 2007). This contributes to greater equality in collaborative efforts in general and professional-parent-teacher relations specifically.

The following case study about Lerole High School will get you thinking about approaches to collaboration.

ACTIVITY 16: Evaluate ways of improving learner success

Reading

Read the case study on Lerole High School, and answer these questions:

1. Suggest two or more strategies to promote sharing of information and capacitation that you would contribute to the subject meetings.
2. In what ways is sending learners to Seretse not aligned to principles and values of inclusion discussed in Unit 1?
3. In what ways were Seretse's colleagues using him as a consultant teacher as opposed to a collaborator?
4. In your opinion, what is the difference between consultation and collaboration?

CASE STUDY: Improving learner success at Lerole High School

Mr Seretse is a Maths teacher with 12 years' experience, who has been achieving excellent results. He has recently been appointed Maths HOD for FET at Lerole High School.

Lerole High School has had a very low Maths pass rate for the past five years and everyone is hoped that Mr Seretse would be able to turn things around at the school.

When he joined the staff at Lerole he noticed that his colleagues had fixed ideas about what their learners could and could not do, and believed they could not help learners experiencing difficulties. They often complained about the lack of professional support for these learners. They saw Seretse as a "miracle-worker" and often made comments like, "Now that you are here Seretse, Lerole High School will become known as a school that produces excellent Maths results!"

Seretse's colleagues often referred their "problem" learners to him in the hope that he would help them overcome their difficulties with the subject. Because he was a good listener, the learners told him about their personal issues, such as difficulties at home

and with their peers. In some sessions, issues with Maths were barely discussed.

By the end of the first term Seretse was overwhelmed by the high volume of referrals. He had little time to attend to his own workload, and was exhausted.

He realised the need for a strategy to involve all his colleagues. At their monthly subject meeting, he suggested that they could:

- Have weekly meetings to share challenges and suggestions
- Use team-teaching and share resources and ideas
- Investigate possibilities of additional support through school management

Seretse approached the principal and offered to do a presentation to the whole staff on ways the whole school (teachers, learners and caregivers) could work together to improve the teaching and learning. He also suggested that a Learning Support Teacher (LST) be appointed to run workshops for all the staff on providing effective education support for their learners.

The issues at Lerole High School are common. While the SIAS policy promotes collaboration as a way to share skills, caring and supporting strategies, it can be difficult to achieve for various reasons, including a fixed, medical model mind-set, insufficient teacher training and lack of resources.

> *The medical model sees difficulties in learning and disability as problems belonging only to the individual concerned rather than as social, environmental and attitudinal barriers.*

Lerole High's approach reflects the traditional medical model approach to educational provision—one of separation. Teachers have little understanding of inclusive pedagogy and expect support to be provided by education support professionals—e.g. educational psychologists—because they believe that only professionals can assess and define the problems and needs of their learners. Rather than **collaboration**[5] among teachers, parents and support professionals, the relationship is one of **consultation**[6] where the specialist makes all the decisions. This is not a relationship among equal partners.

Separation means that learners experiencing difficulties are having lessons with specialists separately from the rest of their peers, often missing lessons in other subjects to do so. As a result, learners experiencing difficulties in one subject fall behind in other subjects too, resulting in a downward spiral leading to a sense of failure, poor self-esteem and lack of motivation.

ACTIVITY 17: Rethinking learner support

 Reading

Reread the previous case study about Lerole High, and the next one about Unity Secondary School's approach, and answer these questions:

1. Draw up a table comparing the approaches to learner support at Unity Secondary School and Lerole High School.
2. How would you sum up the difference in these approaches?
3. Which approach do you prefer? Give reasons for your preference.

CASE STUDY: Learner support at Unity Secondary School

Feeling overwhelmed by endless requests to help Lerole learners who were experiencing difficulties in Maths, Seretse suggested that the school investigate a whole-school strategy together, aimed at supporting learners and improving results.

He invited a colleague from the DBST to talk to the staff about ways to implement an inclusive approach. The official brought along members of the learner support team at a neighbouring school, Unity Secondary School. They included an LST, an SGB member, a local religious leader, and a Grade 9 learner who had benefited from Unity Secondary School's learner support interventions.

The learner shared his experiences:

I'm the third of five children in my family. Every day I walk about three kilometres to school. It is not like there are no taxis, but I walk so that I can save money for things that my family can't afford to buy me. I do pretty well in most subjects but I find the

amount of reading we need to do quite a challenge. As a result I tend to fall back on subjects that require a lot of reading such as Languages and History.

Our school has a team that helps learners. It consists of a teaching representative for every subject, caregiver volunteers, a learning support teacher, and volunteering learners who are doing well in specific subjects. Whenever I or other learners are experiencing difficulties the team meets and invites our caregivers to be part of the discussions.

One of the things I enjoy a lot is that other learners also get invited to these meetings to suggest ways we would like to be helped. At first I was scared but now I enjoy the meetings. It helps a lot that some of my classmates and more senior learners are part of these meetings as I can speak to them about things I find difficult to discuss with teachers. Our school is like a bigger version of my family and I really enjoy going to school every day!

While Lerole High's practices could be described as **medical model**[8], Unity Secondary's approach offers support that is more aligned with the growth-mindset **social model**[9]. The school's culture respects and values contributions of all members of the school community equally, and nurtures and enhances the **active agency** of learners. Collaboration takes place on multiple levels, for example: among learners, among teachers, learners and caregivers, and between the school and members of the community.

As we saw in Unit 2, true collaboration cannot happen in schools that, consciously or not, have a medical model mind-set and use "bell-curve thinking" about learner ability and teacher competency.

Teachers with bell-curve thinking have what can be termed a "fixed mind-set". They believe a learner's success is based on their innate ability (the ability they were born with and cannot change)—how they perform now is how they will continue to perform in the future. These teachers have little motivation to work collaboratively.

On the other hand, a teacher with a "growth mind-set" believes that learners are capable of improving and that their capacity for learning can be developed. They believe that the teachers' role is to facilitate learning achievement for every child in the classroom.

ACTIVITY 18: Medical and social model approaches

Reading

Now contrast Mr Seretse's experiences to the scenarios in the case study below.

1. Which scenario represents the medical model, and which the social model? Explain your answer.
2. What similarities and differences can you identify between the scenarios below and Mr Seretse's experience in the preceding case study?
3. In your view, what is the ideal approach to learners' barriers to participation and learning? Why do you say so?

CASE STUDY: Medical and social model scenarios

The following scenarios imagine two different discussions between Grade 4 teacher (Ms Buthulezi) and Ms Sono (LST):

Scenario 1

Ms Buthelezi: *My learner Lindiwe has a problem. She struggles to identify letters of the alphabet, reads poorly, and writes backwards. Can you help her?*

Ms Sono: *Yes. Send her to me after lunch tomorrow. I will do an assessment and send you a report.*

Ms Buthelezi: *If she has dyslexia can we arrange for you to see her three times a week?*

Ms Sono: *That will be fine.*

Scenario 2

Ms Buthelezi: *My learner Lindiwe is good at maths but reading and writing are a challenge. She struggles to identify letters of the alphabet, reads poorly, and writes backwards. Can we make a time to discuss ways to strengthen her abilities?*

Ms Sono: *Yes. Let's find a time when we can assess her together. Then we can discuss strategies to use in class that will work for many of your learners not just Lindiwe.*

Ms Buthelezi: *I will ask her parents to come and see us. I am sure they have information to share.*

Ms Sono: *If we work together in the classroom and at home, Lindiwe will soon find ways to make progress with our support.*

Definition

8 The **medical model** sees the person with a disability as the problem. In this model the focus is on the disability.

9 The **social model** sees attitudes, as well as social and environmental barriers, as the problem. People are "disabled" by the world around them.

3.2 Characteristics of collaborative practices in inclusive school communities

3.2.1 Models of collaborative practice

There are many models of collaborative practice and many reasons why people collaborate. Collaboration is not only about addressing barriers or challenges as described in the case studies above. In Table 4 three broad categories of collaboration are identified. Even though they are presented as separate categories, there are overlaps, for example, a collegial digital collaboration among teachers. Identify strategies that could be helpful in your context.

Table 4: Three categories of collaboration

Collegial collaboration	Community collaboration	Digital collaboration
Teachers swapping classes for a day of two **Team-teaching** a lesson or a topic **Organising school-wide projects** and working together on them (teachers and learners) **Learners-to-learner collegiality** under the supervision and mentorship of a teacher **Encouraging learner reflection and evaluation** of collegial practices: what worked, what did not work, and why?	**Expanded stakeholder roles:** invite community members (e.g. Subject Advisors, local religious leader, parents, etc.) to serve on committees **Advisory boards:** Invite experts in the field, e.g. former teachers, to participate in an advisory capacity as mentors to teachers and learners **Service learning/community engagement collaboration:** Learners participating in service learning projects which give them opportunities to play an active role in bringing about the desired change in their lives and those of their peers	**Personal and professional learning networks** established through e.g. social media platforms (e.g. "Teachers for Real Change"), with the purpose of connecting and collaborating **Social media:** While at times it is frowned upon, it can also be a powerful collaboration strategy whereby learners and teachers can connect/collaborate and in the process learners receive real-time support when they need it. A set of guidelines communicated to participants in social media groups is key, so that members do not operate outside these guidelines **Collaborative blog writing:** With so many issues that confront education, why not start a collaborative blog with colleagues or learners with the purpose of reflecting on daily struggles and achievements?

(Source: Adapted from Getting Smart, 2019)

In inclusive school communities, collaboration is a style of **direct interaction** among people who are engaged in working towards achieving a shared goal. This often includes shared resources, problem-solving, and decision making. Each person brings their own unique views, experiences and knowledge into the process. These receive equal respect and are seen as having equal value. Every member of the group has a role and is regarded as crucial to the process.

Mahlo and Condy (2016) highlight the importance of **collegiality and collaboration**. In their view, collegiality is the very essence of any collaborative activity aimed at promoting inclusiveness. Through collegiality and collaboration there will be enhanced knowledge sharing, effective management of conflict and many other benefits.

Collegiality is built on shared values. All stakeholders feel that they belong and have an interest in the school and its learners. There is a willingness to work together to problem solve and communicate effectively. Rituals and celebrations build collegiality and commitment. The school is value-driven, child-centred and recognises the value of stakeholders' contributions (WSG & Bridge, 2016).

3.2.2 Characteristics of effective collaboration

Sands et al. (2002: 121, in Engelbrecht & Hay, 2018) identified the following characteristics of effective collaboration:

a. Co-equal parties (stakeholders have equal voice and authority)

b. Voluntary participation*

c. Shared responsibility

d. Shared accountability

e. Joint decision making

f. Trusting respectful relationships

g. Mutual support and benefits

h. Converging values

*Note: Where teachers are concerned, voluntary participation is not applicable. It is a teacher's responsibility to be part of a team that provides on-going support to learners who need it.

ACTIVITY 19: Shared values of collaboration

Writing

Think back to Unit 1. Some of the values identified as underpinning inclusive pedagogy included: reliability, trust, responsibility, respect, willingness to compromise, tolerance, integrity, compassion.

Suggest ways in which these values could facilitate more effective collaboration by the various stakeholders. Relate your answers to Engelbrecht and Hay's list of characteristics above. Support your ideas with examples.

3.3 Benefits of collaboration

Various researchers indicate that collaboration and meaningful collaborative partnerships—not only among learning support professionals (inclusive of teachers), but also among school and district support teams, caregivers, teachers, learners, and community members—have been identified as critical elements in the development of inclusive school communities in South Africa (Engelbrecht, 2004; Engelbrecht & Hay, 2018; Nel et al., 2013; Walton, 2011).

ACTIVITY 20: Benefits of collaboration

Journal

Think about what you have learnt about collaboration and collaborative partnerships. Consider the possible benefits for:

• Teachers

• The school

• Learners

• Caregivers and the wider community

Research on the benefits of collaboration shows that the following aspects are important:

- **At teacher level:** Teachers are more motivated and experience a decreased workload; they report higher levels of competence, better relationships with colleagues and feeling less isolated
- **At school level:** Benefits include supportive school cultures, a cultural shift towards an acceptance of diversity, a wider acknowledgement within schools of the needs of learners and a more participatory approach to school leadership
- **At learner level:** Improved learner performances and greater participation in decision-making
- **At caregiver and community levels:** Positive involvement of caregivers and other interested community members as vital sources of information and support (Engelbrecht & Hay, 2018; Sands et al., 2000; Vangrieken et al., 2015).

3.4 Collaboration among teachers

Teacher–teacher collaboration is an important strategy in the development of inclusive school communities. Informal collaborative strategies among colleagues could include: exploring opportunities and challenges in their classrooms together, and discussing how to deal openly with conflicts. In addition, more formal collaborative strategies could be agreed on, such as: collaborative planning and adaptation of lessons; team-teaching.

ACTIVITY 21: Collaboration at a school

Reading

Read the case study below, and answer the following questions:

1. Comment on the first paragraph in terms of the spirit and ethos of inclusion. What approach to collaboration is the principal criticising, and what approach is he advocating?
2. Do you recall the procedures of care and support in the SIAS document? How well is this school doing in line with the SIAS process?
3. Is there a role-player within the support system described below whose voice is missing? If so, what do you propose should be done about this?

CASE STUDY: A school principal discusses collaboration at his school

Effective collaboration means co-collaborators engage in a rigorous, measured and monitored process, with clearly defined targets. A collaborative meeting is not a talk shop, a place to vent, a scandal session, or an opportunity to moan about the child's behaviour, where there are no notes taken, no measures discussed. This is nothing more than a way of abdicating responsibility.

At our school we have pastoral meetings. We look at emotional and social issues rather than just academic performance. Sometimes changes in academic progress are the result of emotional or social barriers. We have a number of Professional Learning Committees (PLCs) a collaborative team of teachers who meet once or twice a term.

The PLC decides the structure of these meetings and appoints a leader to write up the task sheet, send it out, keep to time within the meeting and send out the minutes.

Clear criteria are set for each intervention. Teachers monitor learners' progress against these criteria.

Teachers come to the meeting with a list of their learners experiencing difficulties. Each learner is allocated a colour (either red of green) for three separate components: academic; social; emotional.

Red means intervention is needed and green means outcomes have been met. Our goal is to change reds to greens. So for example, you may have a learner who is doing well academically but is struggling to socialise.

We assign a number from 1–10 which indicates how complex or simple the task ahead may be. For example, Sibongile suffers from poor vision. We can enlarge the font size in her reader, and move her closer to the board. We can easily get this done. That may be allocated a 1 or a 2.

Robert is disruptive in class and finds it really difficult to concentrate on tasks. His marks have dropped since last year. We may need to look at cooperative teaching and differentiation strategies, as well as meeting with his parents to see if there are issues at home that are affecting him. We might allocate that a complexity level of 8 and it's unlikely to be solved by the next meeting. Rather, we will discuss Robert's progress and he will stay on the agenda until his red turns to green.

3.5 Enabling learner agency

Involving children in decision-making has been found to be effective from as early as the Foundation Phase years (Grade R–3). Shaik (2016) states that involving children in their education through enabled decision-making, improves their self-esteem and achievement because they feel their opinions are valued and acted on by others. Including learners in support collaborations improves the likelihood of success as learners have a sense of co-ownership of strategies.

ACTIVITY 22: Enabling learner agency

Reading

Read the case study below. Then answer the following questions:

1. Compare Ms Solomons' and Ms Tshaka's approaches. Indicate the aspects of both teachers' approaches that you think would be "effective" and "not so effective" in empowering their learners. Explain your opinion.
2. What aspects of their approaches would you adopt and why?

Ms Solomons and Ms Tshaka are friends and Grade 3 teachers at Ubuntu Primary School. Ms Solomons believes strongly that a good teacher is one who demonstrates control and has the upper hand in everything that happens in her classroom. Her classroom environment is very orderly with neatly arranged rows of little tables and chairs for her Grade 3s. The key learning for their Grade 3 year is how follow instructions precisely and speedily. Ms Solomons emphasises to her class the importance of being good listeners. She doesn't encourage her learners to share information during lessons and continually reminds the class that they must only speak when asked to. Activities are highly structured and there is very little negotiation about who does what and when. All the learners have now learnt that the teacher's word in final on everything. Ms Solomons is proud of her learners and believes that her teaching strategies will ensure that they are well prepared for Grade 4. She does not believe that collaboration with other teachers would be helpful or useful.

Ms Tshaka takes a different approach from Ms Solomons. Displayed at the back of her class is a slogan in large letters YOUR OPINION MATTERS. She allows for lots of discussion time so that learners can process their ideas and deepen their understanding of topics. She knows what her learners' interests and backgrounds are and uses this information to make lessons more relevant and interesting for her learners. Ms Tshaka's classroom is a hive of activity. She encourages her learners to express themselves creatively through art, music and movement. She enthusiastically shares with her colleagues that her classroom is "littered with literacy"; from the walls to various stations she has organised so that learners can choose from a wide variety of activities.

3.6 Building relationships with caregivers

Caregivers should be seen as informed partners in collaboration. They can give input on their child's behaviour at home, what makes them happy or unhappy, and home circumstances that may affect their school performance. In turn, a teacher can make suggestions about how caregivers can assist their children with homework and make the environment more conducive to learning.

A successful caregiver–teacher meeting means a sharing of ideas, drawing on the strengths and assets of the collaborators, while building their understanding and skills as they share ideas. For every commitment a teacher makes, the caregivers should make a counter commitment. This should result in a documented collaboration framework with a manageable number of strategies to be tried at home, and at school, and a date set for a follow-up meeting.

If caregivers find the school environment intimidating, or are unable to get to the school, you could make a home visit once a term. This will enable you to see the home environment first hand which will help you to understand your learner better.

Involving caregivers in school activities, where their views are heard, and decision-making is shared, will result in stronger school–family partnerships, which will benefit your learners. As teacher, you play an important role in encouraging caregiver involvement at the classroom level.

Schools can strengthen links with caregivers by, for example:

1. Ensuring that the SGB meets regularly, and that all caregivers are invited
2. Making caregivers feel welcome when they visit the school
3. Encouraging caregivers to participate in discussions and decision-making on school policies and activities, where their opinions are valued, and that they are kept up-to-date with news and changes
4. Setting homework exercises that require learners to involve caregivers and elicit their opinions and experiences
5. Encouraging caregivers to discuss concerns about their children with you, and providing regular opportunities for them to inform the school authorities about events at home or in the community
6. Hosting events that involve the learners' families, such as inviting them to for events that showcase their children's work
7. Encouraging volunteering among caregivers (but not just for cooking, cleaning and gardening), for example: listening to learners' reading; running a homework club; coaching sports

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ACTIVITY 23: Establishing collaborative partnerships with caregivers

 Writing

Look at the above ideas for strengthening links with caregivers.
1. Can you think of any more ideas? Choose three ideas that you, as a teacher, would like to implement.
2. Plan how you would put each idea into practice, including possible challenges and ways to overcome these.

3.7 Creating an enabling environment for child-centred collaboration

3.7.1 Collaboration through the CSTL

> *"The goal of the CSTL Framework is to reduce vulnerability and increase well-being and resilience through supportive schools, collaborating with multi-sectoral stakeholders who can reduce risk factors."* **CSTL article, DBE**

Given the various and diverse types of support that are required for children to realise their constitutional rights, it is clear that no government agency or other stakeholder can, alone, address the needs of vulnerable children. Rather, coordinated collaboration among all stakeholders, with CSTL as the over-arching framework, is the approach that will best promote learner well-being and achievement.

Schools need to build and maintain close collaborative relationships with local government stakeholders by inviting representatives from local organisations, such as the police station and the clinic, to become ad hoc members of the SBST.

Table 5 summarises the main government and external stakeholders for each of the CSTL Priority Action Areas.

Table 5: Stakeholders schools can liaise with to deliver on the 10 Priority Action Areas

Priority Action Area	Government department	Other external stakeholder
A Rights-based, Socially Inclusive and Cohesive School	Department of Labour Department of Home Affairs Department of Health Department of Social Development (DSD) Chapter 9 Institutions	NGOs with a focus on equity, sports, recreation activities and peer education Local business for sponsorship
Nutritional Support	Department of Agriculture Department of Health	NGO with a focus on food gardens Local business for sponsorship
Health Promotion	Department of Health Department of Social Development	NGO with a focus on HIV and AIDS and/or other health and wellness areas
Infrastructure, Water and Sanitation	Department of Public Works Local Municipality	Local business for sponsorship
Social Welfare Services	Department of Home Affairs DSD / South African Social Services Agency (SASSA)	NGO with a focus on child protection
Psychosocial Support	Department of Social Development Department of Health	NGO with a focus on counselling for young people FBO offering counselling for young people
Safety and Protection	SAPS (for alcohol and drug use) Department of Social Development	NGOs with a focus on crime and violence and alcohol and drug use
Curriculum Support	Department of Higher Education and Training South African Council for Educators (SACE)	NGOs with a focus on subject teaching such as maths and science or reading Tertiary institutions providing leadership, governance and professional development courses
Co-curricular Support	Department of Sports and Recreation Department of Arts and Culture	NGOs with a focus on sports, recreation activities and peer education Local business for sponsorship
Material Support	Department of Social Development	Local business for sponsorship and donations

(Source: DBE, 2014b)

ACTIVITY 24: Participation of external stakeholders

Writing

1. On a large sheet of paper, make a mind-map to show the involvement of external stakeholders in implementing CSTL. Copy Figure 6: CSTL South Africa's 10 Priority Action Areas. Around the outside of the circle, add the government departments and other external stakeholders, showing which area/s they are responsible for.

2. Identify the government departments and external stakeholders who would need to be involved in each of the following situations:
   - A learner needs glasses
   - Some learners only get school meals. They are not being fed at home.
   - The school has a major problem with bullying and hasn't been able to deal with it.
   - The school has a problem with substance abuse.
   - Many learners have worms.
   - The school doesn't have access to safe, clean water.
   - The school does not have sporting facilities for learners in wheelchairs.
   - Teachers at the school are struggling to implement inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms.
   - A learner has been raped and is extremely traumatised by the experience.

3. Choose three of the above situations and discuss:
   - What challenges might the various stakeholders need to overcome in order to collaborate effectively?
   - What solutions can you suggest?

3.7.2 Building community relationships

All communities value education for their children and all community role players, and stakeholders have a role to play in helping to develop and support inclusive school communities.

Schools can strengthen links with the local community by, for example:

a. Using expertise in the community to support learning (e.g. nurses could teach learners about health issues; police officers could teach about keeping safe; social services could give information about applying for grants)

b. Inviting community leadership to awards ceremonies and acknowledging parents

Figure 13: A clinic nurse teaching learners about the importance of washing their hands

c. Offering capacity-building workshops or courses from the school (e.g. adult basic education and training courses, parenting courses, small-business courses)

d. Investigating businesses, institutions or individuals in the community that could help the families of the poorest learners

e. Using public spaces like community libraries, halls and sports fields

f. Inviting community members to use the school buildings for community functions

g. Running a homework club so that children who live in homes where there is no adult who can help them with their homework get the help they need

h. Helping families apply for grants

i. Becoming involved in community functions and events

j. Developing an asset map and network of local resources

Can you add to this list?

Writing

1. Choose three examples from the above list that would be possible for you, as a teacher, to implement at the classroom level.
2. Draw up a plan of action on how to put each of these strategies into practice. Make sure that the plan includes possible challenges and ways to overcome these. Who would be involved and what roles would they play? How might you enlist their support?

3.8 Challenges to collaboration

Education White Paper 6 and SIAS recommend a collaborative community-based approach among equal partners in inclusive classrooms in South Africa. This is in keeping with the philosophy of ubuntu and connections with family life, community and social relevance. Community teachings emphasise togetherness, sharing and reciprocity (Phasha et al, 2017), which are all key characteristics of collaboration within inclusive school communities.

However, collaboration is often easier to talk about than to do. Various challenges, including lack of skills, fixed ways of doing things, teacher attitudes and power dynamics can hinder effective collaboration. As a teacher working toward building an inclusive school community, this is something you will need to keep working at as it forms a key part of your mandate.

Let's look at some of the challenges to effective collaboration facing South African teachers, and explore ways of overcoming them.

Here are some challenges to effective collaboration that have been identified:

a. Most teachers believe that they are not adequately trained and skilled enough in collaboration strategies to play an equal participatory role in collaborating with parents and professionals (Nel et al., 2013).

b. Time constraints and work pressure prevent teachers from fully participating in collaborative partnerships (Nel et al., 2013).

c. Some teachers have indicated that the levels of competition and individualism in schools hinder teacher collaboration (Vangrieken et al., 2015).

d. Teachers sometimes lack clarity about the goals of collaboration.

e. Caregivers, class teachers and other support professionals have historically participated in a system that was divided and separated, which was incompatible with the notion of shared responsibilities. As a result, including caregivers in a support team and acknowledging their contribution can be difficult.

f. Notions of power have caused barriers to collaboration, for example where support professionals believe that their knowledge gives them power over classroom teachers and caregivers

g. Voices missing from collaborative efforts have tended to be those of caregivers and their children (Swain & Walker, 2003).

h. Unwillingness to collaborate, personality clashes, ineffective leadership and groups that are either too small or too big can also create barriers to effective collaboration. (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Effective collaboration needs structure but even when we agree to rational rules for dialogue, relationships with power can still distort and limit participation.

ACTIVITY 26: Finding solutions to collaboration challenges

 Writing

Read the list of challenges, and consider the following questions:

1. How would each challenge impact effective collaboration? Give examples to support your opinions.

2. Bearing in mind what you have learnt in this section, what strategies would you suggest to ensure more effective teacher collaboration, and collaborative partnerships among all community stakeholders?

Study unit summary and reflection

This unit looked at how schools can be developed as inclusive centres of learning, where learner diversity is welcomed and supported. The unit foregrounded teacher and learner agency in this process—we looked at ways in which teachers could be empowered and in turn empower their learners to play an active role in their own learning and development.

We examined the approaches, tools and processes of CSTL and SIAS and analysed their potential to direct efforts of key agents in creating caring and supportive schools that support quality learning for all learners.

We also looked at the role of collaboration and collaborative partnerships in ensuring the active participation of the various stakeholders. This included teachers, learners, parents and caregivers, the wider community, government departments and other external agencies.

Suggested study unit assessment

Assessment 1

Read the following article. Discuss the role of teachers as agents for change in developing inclusive school communities with particular reference to social justice, inclusive pedagogy and collaboration.

Themane M & Thobejane HR (2019) Teachers as change agents in making teaching inclusive in some selected rural schools of Limpopo Province, South Africa: implications for teacher education, Department of Education Studies, University of Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 2019, 23(4). http://bit.ly/2QQvgBG

Assessment 2

How are teacher and learner agency articulated in the CSTL Handbook (http://bit.ly/2XoOqUI) and SIAS policy (http://bit.ly/2X4iHVA)?

1. Identify indicators of active agency of teachers and learners in these documents.
2. Are they strong enough? If not, make suggestions regarding what can be added or changed in the documents to promote teacher and learner agency respectively.

Assessment 3

The PIRLS *South African Highlights Report* (http://bit.ly/2Xlb5Oz) make a number of recommendations to improve literacy in schools. Some of these relate to teachers, either directly or indirectly, and include:

- Increasing the proportion of time spent on reading in Foundation and Intermediate Phases, as well as encouraging extra-mural reading and reading habits
- Finding ways to increase resources such as school and classroom libraries
- Increasing effective and sustainable access to ICT at schools
- Reducing teacher and learner absenteeism
- Campaigning for greater parental involvement in school and learner activities

Think of ways in which collaboration and collaborative partnerships could help in implementing these recommendations. Refer specifically to opportunities for:

- Teacher–teacher collaboration
- Developing learner agency
- Teacher–parent collaboration
- Drawing on community and local business support

Draw up a collaborative strategy for a school you know.

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