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**Partner's Name: CSI**

**Unit: 6**

**Identifying and determining BIC in school**

**Effective observation practices & Evaluation protocol for assessing Best Interest of the Child practices in school**

**Target audience: Head teachers**

**Four Sub-units**

**Non discrimination and respect for all children**

**Safe wider physical environment**

**Education for gifted and talented children**

**Adequate examples for children. The case of role models**

### *Aim*

The aim of this Unit is to present participants with ways to identify and determine BIC in school. In specific, special attention will be paid to effective observation practices as well as on the evaluation protocol for assessing BIC practices in school. It is primarily addressed to head teachers.

### *Objectives*

- to provide participants with vital knowledge in specific areas of the concept of BIC with particular emphasis on educational settings
- develop school head administrators' cognitive dexterities for decision making purposes in favour of BIC
- effectively introduce participants to efficient ways of observing and assessing the presented areas of concern in educational environments
- cultivate a strong awareness and a commitment for collective and individual action towards the incorporation of BIC in schools

### Duration:

The duration is 1 hour

### Materials and Resources:

- Internet connection
- Digital Media: Audio or Video Clips (YouTube, short films, talks, etc.)

### Methodology

The units developed in Module 6 are based on **an interdisciplinary tool** that was devised by Kalverboer & Zijlstra (2006) in order to assess the child's best interests based on a number of factors including pedagogical ones. This so called '**Best Interests of the Child' Model** includes 14 environmental conditions for the optimal development of children. As the researchers that devised this Model suggest, "if all conditions are of a good quality for a considerable period of time, the child will be given optimal opportunities for development" (Kalverboer & Zijlstra, 2006).

The units developed through this Module are devoted to four of these conditions which are considered as most relevant to educational settings, namely a) the principle of non discrimination and respect) the need to provide to the students a safe wider physical environment c) suitable education based on the talents and the personality of the child (talented and gifted) d) adequate examples in society that play a role as models and mediate to the child important societal values.

The Model is in line with the articles of the Convention for the Rights of the Child and its provisions and we regard it as an auxiliary tool for decision makers in school environments since some of the 14 fields of the BIC Model (among which the four ones that constitute our subunits) are societal factors that affect the BIC at the school environment. Inspired by the provisions of this strategy we drafted the subunits of module 6.

## Subunit I

### Introduction: Non discrimination and respect for all children

According to the Best Interests of the Child Model one should ensure that "the needs, wishes, feelings and desires of the child are taken seriously by the child's environment and the society the child lives in. There is no discrimination because of background, race or religion" (Kalverboer & Zijlstra, 2006). The first subunit is based on these principles and starts with a

quote from the UNESCO Recommendation against Discrimination in Education from 1960. The quote places the issues of non discrimination at the heart of educational context that is our special interest here and elaborates also on the notion of the dignity of each individual which we associate with the concept of respect (UNESCO, Recommendation).

It is a gloomy reality that children in many countries face discrimination not only based on their minor status and age but also associated with ethnicity, religion, gender, disability etc. In addition, quite often children have fewer opportunities compared to adults when it comes to challenging discrimination (Child Rights International Network). In terms of the EU legislation, the Racial Equality Directive (RED) “prohibits racial discrimination in the field of education in both the private and public spheres ....various international human rights treaties that prohibit racial discrimination and/or safeguard the right to education, and have been signed, as well as ratified by the Member States.” (Farkas, L. & Gergely, D. 2020).

The principle of non discrimination in schools needs to be under the protection of head teachers that should be the first to make the rightful observations, decisions and assess any situation that might come up in a classroom and pose a threat to a student’s dignity. In that respect, the school administration shall provide relevant course of action in situations where there is the risk of discrimination against certain students and the scenario for problem solving focus on such an imaginary case prompting the training participants to contemplate on their own future reaction on such as situation and on the need for specific procedure in place and modus operandi in order to avoid discrimination and act according to the BIC principle.

### *Evaluation*

The evaluation of subunit 1 aims to assess head teachers’ ability to identify practices and areas where the head administration can apply the principle of BIC at school in the area of non discrimination and respect for every child.

Such evaluation is achieved through short answer questions through which participants are asked to either read a text or watch a short clip and critically evaluate them while they can also express their views on certain imaginary situations presented. a fill-in-the-table assessment activity is also used.

## **Subunit 2**

### **Introduction: Safe wider physical environment**

The BIC Model suggests that one has to make sure that the neighbourhood in which “the child grows up in is safe, as well as the society the child lives in. Criminality, (civil) wars, natural disasters, infectious diseases etc. do not threaten the development of the child” (Kalverboer & Zijlstra, 2006). Based on this condition the relevant subunit examines a topic related to

hypothetical criminality in a neighbourhood around a school as well as the case of Coronavirus infectious disease that is a current concern.

As children tend to spend much time in school and around it every day it is imperative for head educators to ensure safety conditions in the physical environment of the educational setting but also in the surrounding areas as well as during the traveling of students to and from school. Safety precautions can vary from inspection of infrastructure ([Keshavdas, 2020](#)) to control access to school premises and further restrict it to those who are not associated with the educational process. Through the subunit's scenario, activities and questions, head teachers are encouraged to observe the situation in their own school and ponder of these issues.

Furthermore, nowadays, the Covid-19 pandemic brought into surface the issue of hygiene in schools and the responsibility of school administrators for the necessary measures that would promote healthy conditions in schools thus resulting to the development of students according to their best interests. The related subunit material includes a hypothetical scenario regarding a crime that happened around a school and questions aiming to stimulate the head teachers' perceptions about students' safety as well as regarding the need to hire gate guards in educational units that could facilitate protection and safety for the students. The second topic of the subunit includes a checklist by a WHO publication and is related to necessary measures for students' protection from the Covid-19 pandemic while the related activities aspire to assess the most important precautions for prevention of health risks among the students that could impinge upon their development according to their best interests.

### *Evaluation*

The evaluation of subunit 2 aims to assess head teachers' ability to observe existing physical infrastructure at school from the point of view of safety and engage the school administration in a process that would enable them to provide a safer school for all.

Such evaluation is achieved through open-ended/short answer questions through which participants are asked to critically evaluate a situation presented as well as with rating scale survey questions.

## **Subunit 3**

### **Introduction: Education for gifted and talented children**

As the BIC Model recommends one should make sure that “the child receives a suitable education and has the opportunity to develop his personality and talents (e.g. sport or music)” (Kalverboer & Zijlstra, 2006). The third subunit of this Module is created with an emphasis on talented and gifted children and on how head educators can provide suitable education to them.

First and foremost, educators in general should be able to identify gifted children therefore a chart with the traits of giftedness is presented in the subunit. The activity that follows is related to the key traits of gifted children. It is a great challenge to educate gifted children according to their best interest and head educators shall be able first to observe the student body in order to discover them and then assess the educational processes in their institutions as to whether it corresponds to the particular needs of such students. In many cases, the later report that they do not learn in ways they prefer and suit their ability for talent and creativity. Students can be gifted on different grounds and since they tend to learn in advanced ways, educators should be able to provide for these special characteristics. They can use a variety of means when it comes to teaching methods and they should also allow the students to express themselves as to how they wish to be taught and assessed (Munro, 2019). In case there is a disparity between the gifted children's learning needs and the classroom instruction the gifted student might be observed as 'misbehaving'. It is essential that head educators identify the areas of talent of their students, adjust the assessments to match their abilities and needs and provide for them opportunities inside and outside the classroom (Brown, 2017). All these are necessary to ensure their development according to their Best Interest.

The second topic of this subunit and the associated activity include another scenario for problem solving in which the participants are presented with an imaginary condition of a talented student and are asked to respond to a situation where this student will be acting outside the conventional norms of the school environment. In such a context, the head teachers need to first observe and assess the gifted student's but also other students' behaviours and act according to the child's best interest. School protocols can be adjusted accordingly so that they can serve such students and further develop their talents.

### *Evaluation*

The evaluation of subunit 3 aims to assess head teachers' ability to understand the characteristics of gifted and talented children and generate observation practices that would engage the former in actions that would allow the later to develop according to their personality.

Such evaluation is achieved through open-ended/short answer questions through which participants are asked to critically evaluate a situation as well as multi select multiple choice questions.

## **Subunit 4**

**Introduction: Adequate examples for children. The case of role models**

The final subunit of this module is related to the BIC Model Condition according to which “the child is in contact with children and adults who are examples for current and future behaviour and who mediate the adaptation of important societal values and norms” (Kalverboer & Zijlstra, 2006). Although the emphasis on this subunit is on individuals with which the students cannot come in direct contact, however, head educators can still bring them in virtual contact with their inspirational work, actions and spirits via targeted actions at their educational institutions. The importance of role models for the development of children is recognized in the relevant research displaying clearly that positive role models can transmit positive values to children and help them develop to their best potential. Role models can motivate the youth, inspire them in educational contexts and serve as models of behaviour, while as suggested in the relevant literature, they can offer abundant positive impact on marginalized youth in particular (Morgenroth, Ryan, Peters, 2015). Role models for the students can represent the feasibility of potential and realization of plans and future dreams.

The subunit that is devoted to role models presents and discusses two speech excerpts, one with a female role model, who became an inspirational model for education already during her childhood, namely Malala Yousafzai, while the second one relates to the actions of a male adult, a dynamic proponent of the struggle for human rights, namely Nelson Mandela. These role models have similarities and differences and the activities associated with the topics are designed to lead head educators to contemplate on the significance of role models for students, to assess the consequences of their introduction in the learning process and to think critically on the expected outcomes of role model presentation in school curricular and extracurricular activities. The age and gender variation in the role models presented is designed to present the participants with an idea on the different possibilities that are available in terms of role models while the issues on which the two exemplary figures were focused (education and human rights in general) are related to the theme of BIC in educational settings and rights education.

In this subunit, as well as in the previous ones, the participating educational stakeholders will be able to re-consider their existing practices at their educational institutions when it comes to basic principles around the concept of BIC and review their future planning so as to observe and assess a number of methods and protocols for the benefit of all their students.

### *Evaluation*

The evaluation of subunit 4 aims to assess head teachers’ capability to identify suitable role models and reflect on their importance for students.

Such evaluation is achieved through short answer questions through which participants are asked to critically evaluate a reading as well as true/false, fill-in-the-table and fill-in-the-blank questions.

## Activity 1 (subunit 1): Disability and child protection.

Disability and Child protection
<p>Watch the short clip from UNICEF on “Disability and Child Protection” Video assessed from <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SzazN2OrsQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SzazN2OrsQ</a></p> <p><b>Activity for Head Teachers: Observing and assessing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which are the reasons why discrimination towards children with disability exists?</li> <li>• What can head teachers do to counteract such discrimination at school environments?</li> </ul>
Closing Activity for subunit 1: Not in our School
<p>According to the movement <b>Not in our School</b>, teachers are trying to make <b>Identity Safe Classrooms</b> to reduce discrimination and bullying.</p> <p>How:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bring the identity of each student in the classroom</li> <li>- Educate children how important is the identity and history of each child</li> <li>- Provide as many opportunities as possible and let students learn from their mistakes</li> <li>- Everybody in the classroom matters</li> <li>- The teacher appreciates anything that students have to offer</li> <li>- Encourage discussion, especially after an incident the teacher should discuss with students, explain what happened and why it’s wrong</li> <li>- <b>See through the eyes of their students</b></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Source: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04hkbRYCpgI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04hkbRYCpgI</a></p> <p>The movement <b>Not in our School</b> is built on the idea that students can lead the way in creating a safer school</p> <p>Watch the video to learn more about the movement</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.niot.org/nios/about">https://www.niot.org/nios/about</a></p>

**Activity 2 (subunit 2): Safety measures at school related to the Covid-19 pandemic.** Watch the video about safety measures at school when the students return after the lockdown due to COVID-19. Make some key points about measures that are mentioned, and you also use at your school, which work, which don’t and why. Video assessed from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xycP73jDTa0>



Question 1: What is the estimated budget of your school for protecting staff against coronavirus and other infectious diseases (antibacterial soaps, hand sanitizers, cleaning staff, gloves, masks)?

Question 2: Schools all over the world are trying to find new ways to utilize their spaces for students and school staff to feel safe and keep the required distance. Some schools are transforming their spaces so that they promote learning but also distance between students. They are also using centers that are closed so that children are separated in different buildings. What is your opinion about this? Is this possible in your school environment? What are your suggestions?

### **Closing Activity for subunit 2: Further suggestions for risk mitigation.**

Various school facility safety assessment tools can be used to, first, assess your educational unit. Further steps include the creation of a relevant committee at school, the drafting of a hazard mitigation plan, risk assessment, calculation of costs and identification of possible sources of funding and eventually, crisis management, if need be.

Question 1: Please provide a list of items/tools/practices that you would employ to ensure that students in your school are in a safe and protected wider environment.

**Activity 3 (for sub-unit 3): Video watching on gifted and talented children.** Watch the video on gifted and talented children following the link <https://vimeo.com/275780417> and then state the suggestions from educational psychologists and whether you agree or not and why. Describe your opinion on the presence of an educational psychologist and how helpful it can be or not when securing the best interest of a talented child.

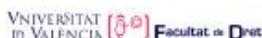
### **Closing Activity for subunit 3: Provision of support in school environments**

Schools and educators, including head educators, should be able to recognize gifted students and enhance their talents offering further opportunities for them so as to become talented and develop their abilities according to their best interest. Head educators shall try to ensure community support (i.e. municipalities, parent's associations) and, possibly the necessary funding, for providing such opportunities in their educational setting.

Please answer the question: How is the best interest of a talented child addressed in terms of curriculum, aptitude and participation?

**Activity 4 (for sub-unit 4): A speech by Malala Yousafzai.** Please read the following excerpt from Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize speech and answer the questions that follow

"Nobel Peace Prize Lecture (December 10, 2014) Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); from: [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Malala\\_Yousafzai](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Malala_Yousafzai)





- This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change. I am here to stand up for their rights, raise their voice ... it is not time to pity them. It is time to take action so it becomes the last time that we see a child deprived of education.
- Education is one of the blessings of life — and one of its necessities.
- Sometimes people like to ask me why should girls go to school, why is it important for them. But I think the more important question is why shouldn't they, why shouldn't they have this right to go to school.
- The world can no longer accept, the world can no longer accept that basic education is enough. Why do leaders accept that for children in developing countries, only basic literacy is sufficient, when their own children do homework in Algebra, Mathematics, Science and Physics?
- Why is it that countries which we call strong “are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace? Why is it that giving guns is so easy but giving books is so hard? Why is it, why is it that making tanks is so easy, but building schools is so hard?”

#### Questions

Please read the following sentences and write T if the affirmation is TRUE or F if the affirmation is FALSE.

“To ensure the best interest of the child, making children able to get in touch with role models is crucial”  
(T)

“Head teachers are not responsible for the presentation of role models at school” (F)

“Presenting the work of Malala Yousafzai at school is beneficial only for the female students” (F)

**Closing Activity (for subunit 4): Feedback provided** Malala Yousafzai is a female role model, who became an inspirational model for education from her childhood onwards. This is a topic that is associated with the SEBI project and the present training.

Following activity 4 you are kindly asked to think critically about the ways through which you can introduce inspirational individuals into your educational unit and the benefits of such introduction for your students.

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