



CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

CHAPTER 9 Mainstreaming child-friendly concepts

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CHAPTER 9

MAINSTREAMING CHILD-FRIENDLY CONCEPTS

9.1 UNDERSTANDING MAINSTREAMING

Once the child-friendly school model is successfully implemented in a number of schools in a country, the next step is to work with the government to make all schools child-friendly over an agreed time frame. There are two related ways to do this: (a) scaling up child-friendly school implementation throughout the country, and (b) mainstreaming child-friendly schools within the education system. Although these two processes are strongly interrelated, there are significant differences.

9.1.1 Scaling up

Scaling up involves a systematic, often rapid replication of the CFS model so that within a given period all schools can be identified as child-friendly. This can be done through the 'big bang' approach, which uses major investments over a short time span to make all schools child-friendly. For instance, a large-scale project for training all teachers and school managers in child-friendly school methods, coupled with extensive school construction, renovation and supply of pedagogic materials, can be used to create the necessary CFS features in facilities across the country.

This 'big bang' scaling-up approach works best where sufficient financial resources are available and the model to be replicated has a high degree of certainty, with a finite set of well defined characteristics that vary little from case to case. In this scenario, it becomes a

relatively simple matter of building or renovating schools, training teachers and supplying learning materials on a scale that covers the whole country. The rationale behind this approach is that the education system has already established child-friendly schools in a way that makes large-scale replication feasible and straightforward.

Although the broader, short-term approach is definitive and efficient, the limited flexibility it offers can result in costly errors if the replicated features do not work well for some schools or are not in line with conditions in a particular district. An alternative way to scale up child-friendly schools is through the 'roll-out' process: The CFS model is gradually replicated from one location to a manageable set of other locations and then to a further set of locations until the whole country is covered.

The roll-out approach is most appropriate where there is limited financing in the short term and some degree of uncertainty about what works best. This is especially true when the model to be replicated is based on key principles or on a set of hypotheses that may lead to varying characteristics and features in a specific context. Successful implementation in a set of schools in one district, for example, can be followed by efforts to replicate them in a number of schools in another district. The idea is to learn from the experience of the first district, using what has worked and avoiding what may have gone wrong, while also putting in place

new variations of CFS features in line with particularities of the new district.

This heuristic approach to scaling up may appear to be slower and less efficient, but it allows for applying lessons learned and making changes to improve the model as it is rolled out to more schools. It also avoids costly errors, which is especially important when available resources are limited.

9.1.2 Mainstreaming

Another approach to making all schools in a country child-friendly is to mainstream the CFS model. This is not just about scaling up, but it is related. Mainstreaming infuses key elements of the model into all aspects of the education system, including the processes and parameters that shape the system. This means that planning, implementation, financing, staffing, management, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of education in the country will intrinsically embrace the CFS model.

Mainstreaming therefore involves a 'systems approach' rather than a 'project approach', which is typically used for scaling up. The systems approach is usually done through simulation modelling that allows for building a range of scenarios with CFS variables to show how the education system would operate and what it would cost to have CFS features in

all schools. It also allows for national standards to be set in key areas to guide practice and help determine the budget required for implementation across the education system within a given time frame.

The advantage offered by mainstreaming is that it promotes sustainability. The model becomes an integral part of the education system rather than a project that needs to be fully integrated into the system later as it takes hold in schools and districts.

UNICEF recommends that partner countries choose either the mainstreaming approach or scaling up through a 'big bang' or a 'roll-out' strategy based on a number of factors:

- The extent to which key child-friendly school elements or full CFS models have already taken root across the country's education system;
- How adaptable the education system is to innovation in general;
- The availability of adequate and predictable resources that schools can use in flexible ways to implement change and improvement;
- What best fits the requirements to make innovative models like child-friendly schools take root and become a sustainable part of education throughout the country.

9.2 SIMULATION MODELLING AND MAINSTREAMING

What is most significant about mainstreaming as distinct from scaling up is that it infuses key CFS elements into the process of planning and investing in an education system as a whole. Again, this is usually done

through the use of simulation models. There are various simulation models available for planning, and, in general, they are used to better understand how a system behaves as variables are changed. They can be used to 'try out'

trade-offs between critical factors to help prescribe appropriate national standards and decide on optimum balances between cost and quality of education for all learners.

Simulation models are especially useful for understanding the impact of policy decisions on performance, cost and outcomes of the system. To support governments and partners in mainstreaming child-friendly schools, policy simulation models and costing tools can be used to assess the resource implications of various policy options in the face of budget constraints. They can also project alternative and feasible CFS development scenarios that will help determine the best options for a given country.

UNICEF promotes the use of the EPSSim model. (See Chapter 7.) The EPSSim tool can utilize a checklist or guidelines generated by countries as part of the process of setting national CFS standards and strategies. China, for example, has developed such a checklist around four categories of CFS principles and is using this to set national standards for child-friendly schools. (See Box, page 4.)

Through the use of simulation modelling, it is possible to show the impact of decisions at the consultation stage, when key stakeholders use CFS principles to generate desirable characteristics for child-friendly schools. This can promote a healthy dialogue and generate a balanced approach between the ideals of CFS and the practicalities of what can be afforded over a given time frame. Once broad standards have been set for elements in the four categories, simulation modelling can be used to explore specifics to be implemented in order to make all schools child-friendly.

Although the EPSSim model is more than adequate for mainstreaming child-

friendly schools in education systems, UNICEF appreciates a country's need to utilize many other models in planning for education development. These could be models recommended by a key donor or models that planners in the country are already familiar with. In these circumstances, it is important to ensure that mainstreaming of child-friendly schools does not impose demands by requiring major changes in the simulation model already in use. One way to avoid this is to provide countries with a common suite of models they can use as standard tools for different purposes in planning for education development.

In an effort to provide countries with appropriate models, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF and the World Bank have convened a working group of experts in education modelling to review current models and use their key elements to design a collection of interconnected models for country use. Through this eclectic approach, it is anticipated that partners can better engage countries to explore policy options, formulate scenarios and project implications for costs and results of various policies and strategies, including mainstreaming child-friendly schools.

The path to child-friendly schools may vary, but the goal is the same: to ensure that all children have access to quality education and are nurtured in a child-friendly environment where they can develop their full potential. This is central to the education-related MDGs and the EFA goals. It is therefore important to advocate for mainstreaming or scaling-up of the child-friendly school model as a 'one-stop' shop for designing and implementing quality education for all.

CHINA DEVELOPS NATIONAL CFS STANDARDS

“All-rounded development of all children” and the flourishing of creative human potential

Successful piloting of the child-friendly school model in 1,000 schools in China informed the Government’s decision to use the CFS approach as its model for improving the quality of primary and secondary education in implementing its new governance measures.

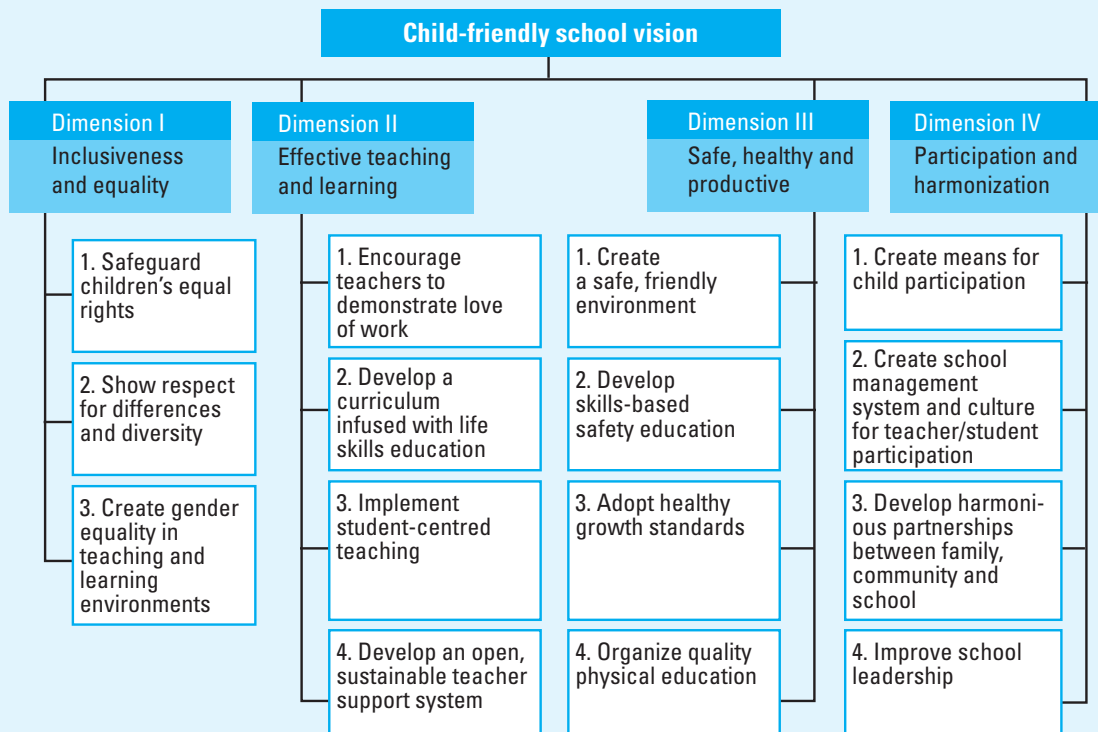
Supported by UNICEF, the Ministry of Education set out to develop national standards on school quality and learners’ achievements in late 2006. The standards’ framework integrated the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the country’s development goal in basic education defined in its ‘law of nine-year compulsory education’ and the priorities of four departments of the Ministry of Education. With technical support from the China National Institute for Educational Research and Beijing Normal University, the Ministry of Education led 16 technical groups through the preparations. The collaborative effort by a multitude of stakeholders, with

technical support from UNICEF, resulted in the completion of standards in 2008. They will be tested in at least six provinces in 2008 and will be promoted in more provinces and schools beginning in 2009.

The vision, purpose and scope of the Chinese National Standards for child-friendly schools are contained in the opening paragraph of the final document:

“The ultimate aim of CFS in China is the all-rounded development of all children and the full flowering of creative human potentials of each pupil. Children at Chinese CFS will learn to learn, with motivation and capability of learning well; they will learn to do, developing problem-solving, knowledge-application and life/social skills; they will learn to be, developing human competencies, respecting teachers, parents, peers and others, and building moral characters and psychological as well as physical health; and they will learn to live together, pursuing cooperative learning, ready for helping others, and working with others in team spirit. In sum, Chinese CFS pupils shall be enabled to develop in an all rounded way, in ethical, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and life-skills dimensions.”

A FRAMEWORK OF NATIONAL CFS STANDARDS



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