Inclusive Education as a strategic approach

UNRWA Inclusive Education Policy and the Inclusive Education Strategy provide an Agency-wide, unified framework and strategic approach which supports UNRWA schools in all its five Fields in moving towards inclusive education. The Inclusive Education Strategy seeks to mainstream inclusive education into the existing structures and systems of the Education programme through three strategic dimensions: the first dimension focuses on inclusive approach for all children, the second focuses on additional support, and the third dimension focuses on developing support systems for extensive needs.

A strategic approach means recognizing and removing any barriers that can hinder students’ access, learning, development and participation. It is about asking questions such as: Is our school a safe and violence-free environment? Are all students feeling welcome in my classroom? Can I do something to improve my teaching methods to make learning easier?

The approach will further promote inclusive, child friendly, healthy, safe and stimulating school environments where practices in classrooms are more responsive to the diverse needs. Teachers are expected to carry out ongoing informal assessments, observation and information gathering to identify the learning, psychosocial and health needs of a student. It also means utilizing data which is generated from different systems for responsive plans that are applicable to different levels.
Making a positive difference

Inclusive education practices contribute to a better education system for all children, while ensuring that children with additional and extensive needs are identified and supported appropriately, so they can reach their full potential. In summary:

• All students will benefit from more child-friendly school environments, and child-centered teaching practices.
• Children vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion from education will benefit from the removal of barriers that may hinder their access, learning, development and participation.
• Students who need extra help to learn will have school-based support.
• Students with disabilities, additional health and psychosocial needs will benefit from a comprehensive approach to addressing their diverse needs.
• Teachers and education staff will benefit by being empowered to improve their professional practices.
• The overall school community will benefit from increased health and well-being of staff and students.

For more information
Please contact your Chief Field Education Programme or UNRWA HQ Education Department on info.education@unrwa.org.

Psychosocial Support Framework
A Conceptual Framework for Psychosocial Support for UNRWA schools was developed to further establish a shared understanding of how the education system can support the psychosocial well-being of students. The Psychosocial Support Framework emphasises how schools can provide child-friendly environments that foster psychosocial well-being and meet the psychosocial needs of Palestine refugee children.

The Framework aims to guide Counselors and educators to apply the inclusive approach to holistic, comprehensive, rights-based, child-centered, and enabling psychosocial support, within UNRWA’s education system which is aligned with the Agency’s Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Framework. It is intended to help Counselors and educators foster inclusive learning environments by enabling them to better understand the psychosocial needs and the well-being of the children.

The UNRWA School Health Strategy (SHS)
Developed in close collaboration with the Health Department and all Fields, the School Health Strategy (SHS) addresses four core areas to promote the healthy development of a student: comprehensive health services; a child-friendly, safe and healthy environment; health education; and healthy nutrition and canteens. The Strategy offers guidance as to how to provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to reduce health risks associated with poverty, high population density and poor living conditions and malnutrition.

Towards gender-sensitive classrooms: guide for teachers
The Teacher Guide for Gender Sensitive Classroom Practices will support teachers in how to recognize, and address practices and attitudes that may lead to bias and discrimination. All UNRWA teachers can use this Guide as a support tool in their daily work. Advocacy is needed at all levels to facilitate and strengthen awareness of the inclusive education approach. Existing practices and regulations continue to be reviewed to ensure that they address and support students’ health and well-being.

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5,094,886 registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA’s services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.