



School Clusters Guidance

South Sudan





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Section 1: Introduction

South Sudan's new curriculum has been developed to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to achieve the highest possible standard. It is a curriculum that equips young people for the challenges of today and for those they will face in the future. It focuses not only on knowledge and understanding but also on developing skills and competences. It is underpinned by sound values and principles, and is set within the context of the South Sudanese heritage and culture.

The Curriculum Framework underpins all the learning that takes place in the nation's schools and gives a full explanation of these components. The model shows the components (the four sides of the frame) combining to deliver the four key aims of the curriculum (in the centre).

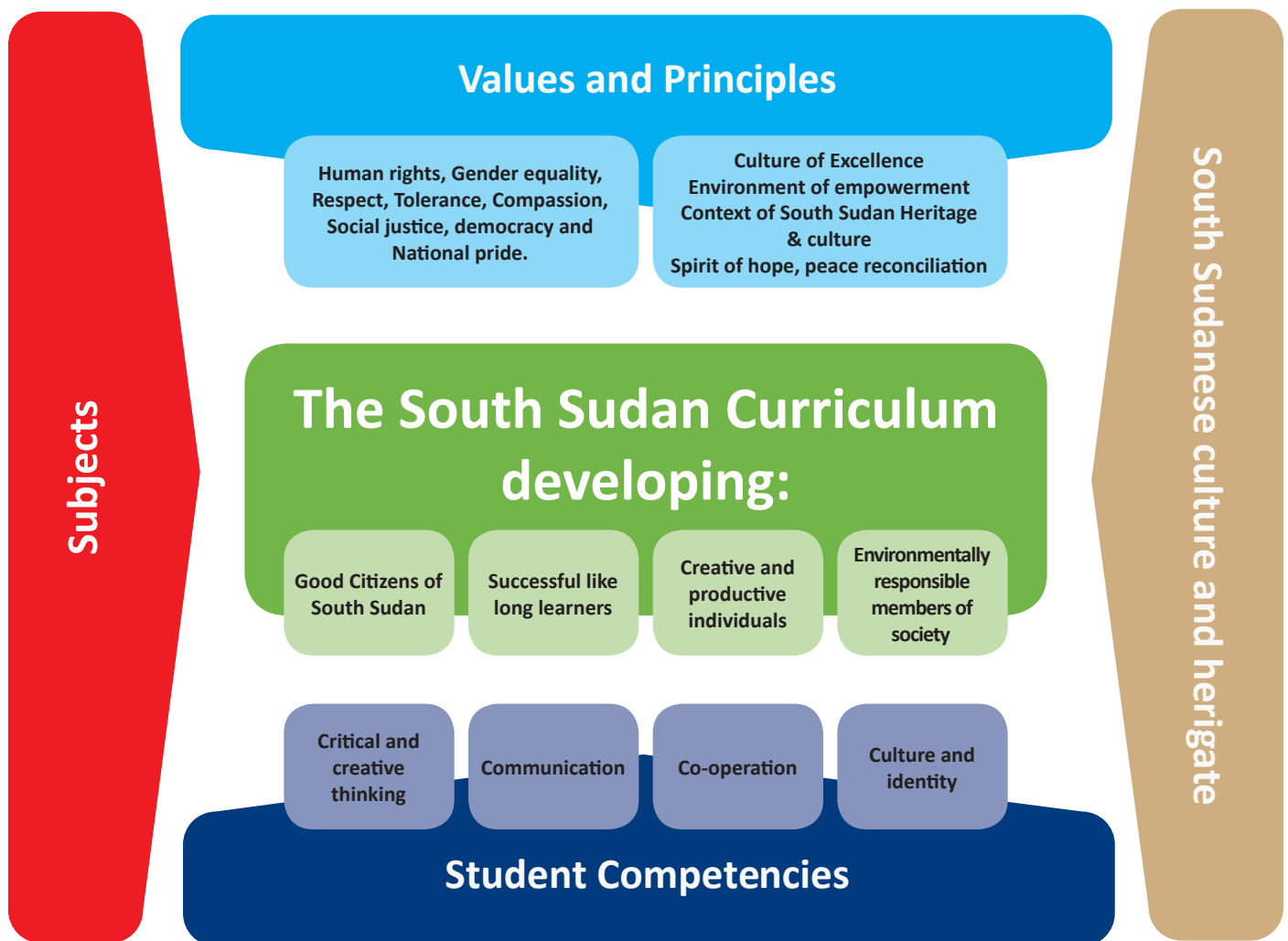


Figure 1. The Curriculum Framework model

Teachers and school leaders should familiarise themselves with the framework, the syllabuses and other guidance documents.

Successful implementation of the curriculum will not only enable each individual learner to achieve but, as a result, will also provide South Sudan with the skills it needs. Schools are in the forefront of the drive to ensure the country can make the best use of its human and other resources and take its place as a successful participant in the global economy.

Successful implementation of the new curriculum will require a move from:

- Knowledge to deeper understanding and skills
- Passive to active learning
- Teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches
- Memorisation to higher-order thinking

Teachers and school leaders will need to adapt their approaches to the new requirements. This can best be achieved when schools work together in groups, or clusters. Teachers sharing good practice with colleagues in their own schools will be helpful but the value of school clusters is that the number of teachers whose expertise and experience can be called upon is so much greater.

This guidance is provided to help teachers and school leaders maximise the benefits of working in clusters so that progress towards full and effective implementation of the curriculum can be as rapid as possible.

There are already some schools working together to support each other in a variety of ways. This guidance provides a clear and systematic approach to help schools build upon existing good practice.

Working in clusters is an expectation reflected in national documentation. The inspection framework stipulates that schools should be actively working together and supporting each other. Furthermore, in the National Professional Standards it is stated that teachers should ‘assume responsibility for their own professional growth as individuals and as members of a learning community’.



Section 2: What is a school cluster?

A school cluster is a group of schools, usually in the same geographical area, that works together for the benefit of everyone involved.

An effective teacher is able to draw upon a wide range of skills and abilities to provide exciting and engaging learning experiences. As a result students make excellent progress and perform well in school and throughout their lives.

All teachers can become more effective over time, improving the quality of learning that takes place in their lessons as they gain more experience. The more teachers can share

experience, the more they can learn from each other. The great strength of school clusters is that they bring together large numbers of teachers to form a supportive network.

Collectively, cluster teachers have a large pool of experience and expertise from which to learn. The accelerated professional development that is made possible by cluster working leads to better outcomes for students in all cluster schools much more quickly than might be possible otherwise.

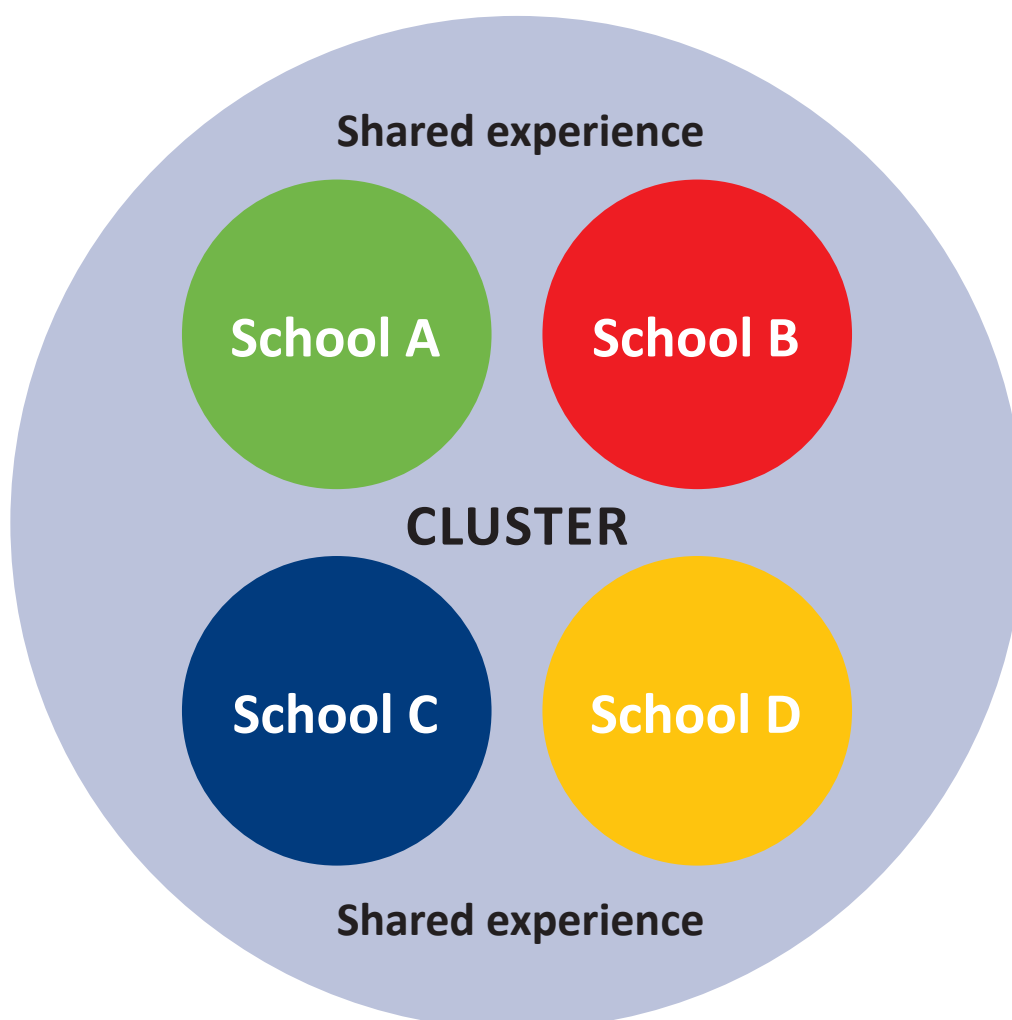


Figure 1. Cluster schools benefit from a large pool of experience and expertise

Section 3: Composition of clusters and cluster models

The Ministry of General Education and Instruction has recognised that establishing effective school clusters is an important strategy for supporting the implementation of the curriculum. A key decision that will have to be made in each locality concerns the composition of the cluster: Which schools should come together to form a cluster?

i) Composition

When making decisions about the composition of a cluster, school leaders and local education officials will have to take account of a range of factors. Some of the key factors are outlined below:

A. Geographical location

Working together in a cluster is most effective when teachers in different schools have opportunities to come together for meetings and shared professional development sessions. It is therefore helpful if the schools are not too far apart.

In practice, the geographical location of schools is likely to be the prime factor that determines the membership of each cluster.

This is relatively easy when schools are close together as they usually are in urban areas. However, it can be much more difficult in sparsely populated rural areas where schools may be widely separated. In such cases, decisions will have to be made regarding how schools can form effective clusters. Rural clusters with few schools that are far apart may not be able to meet very often and will have to make good use of available communication channels to support each other. Local education officials may be able to assist in this respect.

B. Cross-phase or same-phase clusters

There are three phases of general education in South Sudan: Pre-Primary (ECD), Primary and Secondary.

As schools implement the curriculum, teachers have much to learn from each other both intra-phase (from those working in the same phase) and inter-phase (from teachers in other phases).

In a same-phase cluster, teachers face common challenges of how best to teach particular subjects or competences either across the school or to particular grades.

For example:

- Pre-primary teachers could support each other with examples of learning activities that have more than one learning outcome. For example, a leaf sorting exercise could be used for learning about number and shape (mathematics); describing the leaves (language development); colours; making a collage (art).

- Primary teachers could share experiences of how best to develop writing skills in learners in P1 to P3 before they switch from national languages to English as the medium of instruction.
- Secondary teachers could come together in subject groups to learn from each other about how to organise group work for the best learning outcomes.

In a cross-phase cluster, primary teachers can learn from ECD teachers about prior learning that has taken place before children come to primary. Similarly, secondary teachers can gain a good understanding of the learning that happens in primary schools. It would also be helpful to ECD and primary teachers if they know what will be expected of learners when they move on to the next phase.

Clearly, there are advantages to both same-phase and cross-phase clusters. In practice, geographical location and school structures may determine which phases are involved in clusters. Most ECD provision is likely to be attached to primary schools so most clusters are likely to involve both primary and ECD. In rural areas, the involvement of secondary schools in clusters will depend on whether there are any in the locality.

Whether clusters are same-phase or cross-phase, schools will have plenty to gain from cluster working.

C. Fixed or fluid cluster membership

Another factor to consider when establishing clusters is whether schools should be grouped together permanently or whether it might be better to allow clusters to change over time.

The key driver is the benefit cluster working brings to the outcomes of learners in schools. The potential benefits should be carefully considered when clusters are set up. Monitoring and evaluation of cluster effectiveness should focus on the impact on learner outcomes across the cluster. If the impact is poor and this can be attributed to inappropriate grouping of schools, thought should be given to how cluster membership can be improved.

F. Vocational schools

There are several TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) schools in the country and their number is expected to grow in the coming years. TVET education is a specialist branch of the new curriculum and TVET teachers will have the same needs in terms of professional development as teachers in other schools. Like other secondary schools, TVET schools will join clusters and work with cluster partners contributing to activities and learning from the experiences of others.

ii) Cluster models

While there are considerable benefits to be gained from cluster working, it is important to remember that these benefits are not automatic. They come from how cluster schools work together. Making sure they work together effectively requires co-ordination and commitment from everyone, particularly school leaders.

One of the key issues to address to make sure clusters operate effectively is how they are organised, i.e. the cluster model adopted. Two possible models are the 'hub' and 'flat' models.

A. Hub model

One of the schools agrees to act as a hub for cluster activity, making space available for events and meetings and ensuring they are well organised. The hub is often the largest school in a cluster and may be a secondary school in a cross-phase cluster.

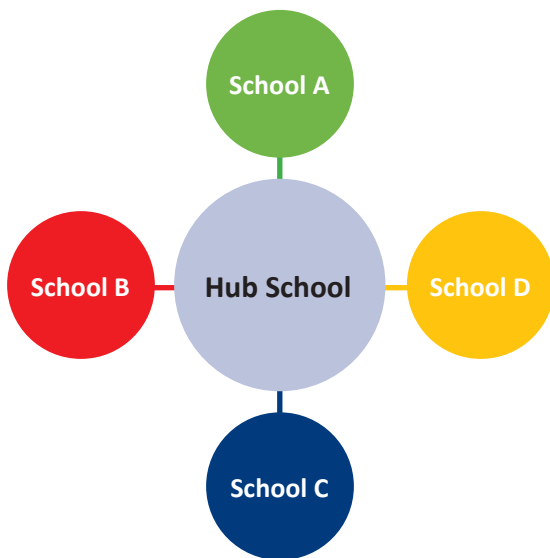


Figure 2. The Hub Model

B. Flat model

In this model all schools are equal participants and all share the tasks involved in making sure that cluster working has an impact on all learners. The responsibility for coordination of cluster activities is shared either by being divided between the schools or rotated over time.



Figure 3. In a flat model all cluster schools have equal status

Section 4: Purposes of school clusters

The single most important reason for schools working together in clusters is to ensure that all learners across the country gain the maximum possible benefit from implementation of the curriculum in the shortest possible time.

This outcome is achieved through accelerated professional development so that teachers are equipped to provide appropriate learning experiences so that every student succeeds. This is made possible through teachers across the cluster supporting each other, sharing experience and good practice as they try out approaches to the new curriculum.

A teacher's role is complex, involving many different skills. Each school, by collaborating with others in the cluster, can help its teachers develop their skills in relation to all aspects of the job. School leaders also have to adapt their practice to secure the best outcomes for the learners in their schools. The professional development required to enable school leaders to do this will also be more effective through working in clusters.

Improved professional development is a key benefit that schools can gain from working in clusters. However, other changes are also required to ensure that schools can optimise the effectiveness of implementation of the new curriculum. For example, all schools in a cluster will face the same challenges associated with developing systems for planning learner-centred lessons and for monitoring teacher performance. Working together, cluster colleagues can share the workload of developing new systems as well as improving quality by drawing on cluster-wide expertise.



In order to achieve the desired overall outcome for learners in its schools, a cluster serves a range of purposes, some of which are detailed in the list below.

Advantages to cluster schools of working collaboratively:

- Accelerating schools' progress towards effective learner-centred practice
- Shared in-service training of teachers, headteachers and other school leaders
- Drawing on best practice from across the whole cluster rather than from within single schools
- Engaging collectively with inspectors and County Education Centre (CEC) colleagues to ensure consistent quality of support
- Sharing good inclusive practice to secure good outcomes for all learners, including those with special needs
- Reducing workload through collaborative school development planning and sharing tasks such as development of new systems and planning professional development activities
- Establishing formal groups of teachers and school leaders to work on particular priorities e.g. subject clusters; groups to focus on particular phases (ECD, lower primary, upper secondary); assessment; monitoring teacher performance; school programmes
- Developing common approaches to producing schemes of work and lesson planning
- Motivating colleagues through engagement in cluster-wide teamwork and by recognising their good practice and sharing it with others
- Increasing teacher professionalism through developing teacher self-evaluation systems and through teachers taking increasing responsibility for their own development
- Developing common approaches to timetabling for the new curriculum
- Developing common systems for assessment
- Collaborative approaches to benchmarking and moderation so that schools agree common standards and work to ensure learners achieve them
- Developing common systems for monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness, including quality of lessons and lesson observation
- Developing common systems to ensure accountability and transparency across the cluster
- Collaborative approaches to addressing challenges in the community and to building cultural understanding, tolerance and harmony

Section 5: What makes a successful cluster?

As detailed in section 4, working in clusters can make a considerable contribution to improving the outcomes of learners in cluster schools. It is therefore important that schools gain the maximum possible benefit from cluster membership. This section provides guidance on how schools can work together effectively.

All of the following contribute to effective cluster working.

A. Agreed guiding objectives and principles

When clusters are first established, time devoted to agreeing the objectives of working together and the principles that guide how schools collaborate is time well spent. This approach can avoid much wasted time and effort later sorting out the misunderstandings that can arise from cluster schools following different agendas or having different levels of commitment to cluster collaboration.

The agreement should focus on the common objectives of all cluster schools so that all cluster activity contributes to progress towards the same ends.

The agreement regarding principles may cover such issues as:

- the scope of the collaboration (what cluster schools do collaboratively and what schools do individually)
- how responsibilities for organising and participating in cluster activities are shared between schools
- commitment and level of engagement of school leaders, teachers, Boards of Governors, PTAs and school communities in cluster activities
- how frequently there should be cluster meetings or conferences and the purpose and nature of such events;
- strategies for schools to help each other in cases of emergency
- specialist support that schools provide for each other
- establishing networks of subject specialists or colleagues with a focus on particular areas of work (leadership, special needs, assessment, literacy, etc)

B. Commitment of all schools

Every cluster is only as strong as its members. If all members of all cluster schools are strongly committed to making it successful, it will succeed. School leaders are the key to making sure teachers, learners and other stakeholders recognise the value of the cluster and actively support it.

School leaders can do this in a number of ways:

- Involving all teachers and other stakeholders in the process of establishing the cluster so that they are well informed about the cluster objectives and its purposes
- Ensuring teachers are fully aware of the benefits that cluster membership can bring to them as professionals and to the outcomes of their learners

- Ensuring that these benefits are realised and highlighted once clusters are established
- Engaging with Boards of Governors and PTAs to secure commitment to the cluster and to collaborating to improve the outcomes of learners in all schools involved
- Demonstrating commitment to cluster engagement, keeping cluster communication channels open and keeping colleagues in their schools well-informed and engaged
- Ensuring teachers are empowered to engage with cluster colleagues and to play an active part in the cluster and its development

C. Strong leadership, management and sustainability

It is important that all cluster activities and events are well organised and that they make a positive contribution to cluster objectives. This requires strong leadership and management of the cluster. Effective collaboration between school leaders is the key to making this happen, involving local education officials as appropriate.

One aspect of this strong leadership is establishing robust systems so that, as far as is desirable, cluster working is routine and administrative rather than needing active intervention from school leaders. This aspect is important in ensuring the sustainability of clusters.



D. Good communication

Every relationship is maintained and strengthened through effective communication. This is particularly important in a school cluster where individuals in different schools may be separated by considerable distances and may meet only infrequently.

School leaders have a key role to play as the conduit between their schools and others in the cluster. All possible routes through which information can be shared across the cluster should be exploited. Each cluster needs to find its own solution to ensuring that all of its members are kept informed and encouraged to feel engaged.

Communication strategies may include:

- A cluster newsletter for teachers, learners, Boards of Governors, PTAs and the wider community
- A cluster noticeboard in each school
- A cluster website
- Making use of local media: newspapers, radio and television
- A text messaging system
- Regular headteacher briefings / updates in each school
- Formal systems through which individuals in each school are encouraged to contribute to cluster communication

E. Effective monitoring and evaluation, responsiveness

All cluster activity must be effective and must be seen to be so or commitment to the cluster will diminish. For this reason, clusters need strong systems for monitoring their work and for evaluating the extent to which it contributes to achieving the agreed objectives. Where shortcomings are identified, the cluster must be responsive, acting quickly and decisively to address them.

F. Teamwork, honesty, transparency and accountability

As the new curriculum is implemented across the country, there are common professional development needs shared by all teachers. However, every teacher is different and each individual has also particular professional development needs.

In order to ensure that the professional development needs of every teacher are met, there must be a strong spirit of teamwork, mutual respect and trust across the cluster. Teachers need to be honest and transparent about their areas for development and open to drawing on help and support from wherever it can be found across the whole cluster team. Similarly teachers must be prepared to share their expertise and experience with colleagues in other cluster schools. The same clearly applies to school leaders.

These positive attitudes towards teamwork, honesty and transparency are important for effective monitoring and

evaluation, and so for ensuring the cluster can be responsive. Professionals are accountable for the outcomes of their work and accountability should be welcomed for its potential contribution to improvement. Openness and recognition of the importance of accountability underpin effective cluster working.

G. Resource management and mobilization

There are never enough resources in schools. Teachers and school leaders continually have to be creative and imaginative in making the best of what is available.

Cluster working gives schools access to the ingenuity of teachers from across all the schools so that creative ideas can be shared for the benefit of all learners. Another strength is that schools can share resources. By sharing books and equipment, schools can give learners greater access to limited resources. Collectively, cluster schools have greater influence and may be able to secure resources more cost-effectively.



Section 6: Overcoming barriers

In Section 5 ways were identified in which schools can work together effectively to contribute to success across the cluster. A clear expectation is the recognition that everyone has a role to play to ensure school clusters are successful and that there is a genuine commitment to work with other schools to help them become successful.

This section provides examples of some of the challenges that schools may face along with the rationale and practical strategies that could help overcome these challenges. The examples highlight the importance of the key themes necessary to secure effective cluster working. These include: good communication, clear co-ordination processes and effective relationships.

Example 1

Barrier

Diversity of academic performance across schools

Description

Schools that are performing highly and demonstrating high standards may be reluctant to work with schools that are judged to be performing less well, thus creating a barrier to cluster formation.

Rationale

There is an expectation that all schools will work and support each other to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to achieve the highest possible standard in all schools. The community and the nation need every learner to benefit from best practice.

Strategies to overcome

- Expectations set by local education officials that schools will support each other and collectively improve performance across schools
- Good practice identified in schools alongside expertise in subject knowledge; experiences shared across cluster and a common agenda agreed
- Planned paired teacher observations, development of coordinator roles and joint strategies, organisation of resources, sustained monitoring of impact, observations by cluster leaders
- Establishment of teachers' resource centres which share good practice across all schools in the cluster

Example 2

Barrier

Limited community involvement

Description

Absence or shortage of active community participation in schools so schools are deprived of local resources. Limited interest in or support for cluster working.

Rationale

The creation of effective community involvement in the cluster and its schools will lead to improved educational outcomes, better community relations and greater prosperity.

Strategies to overcome

- Involve and engage community in planning the process of creating a school cluster
- Improve relationships between school cluster and community through effective communication and co-ordination of shared events
- Encourage collective drive and determination amongst all stakeholders to create the best opportunities for all within the cluster community
- PTAs lead campaign to develop a sense of community ownership and pride in the progress of individual schools and the school cluster.
- Policies and processes with a focus on cost-sharing to be identified
- Resources, skills and talents within community to be identified, harnessed and used for the benefit of all cluster schools

Example 3

Barrier

Geographical location

Description

The distance between cluster schools can limit the potential for face to face engagement, especially in sparsely populated rural areas.

Rationale

Schools can work in clusters without frequent face-to-face meetings.

The benefits of school clusters can and should be gained through creative approaches to working together across distances.

A spirit of team work and team management can be a powerful force for successful cluster working.

Strategies to overcome

- Local education officials play a critical communication role between schools that are not close to each other and facilitate co-ordinated activities
- Utilisation of all available channels of communication such as text messaging, local radio, newspapers, newsletters
- Planned meeting programme based on specific locations in a central place in the cluster

Example 4

Barrier

Teachers command of the English language and the National language

Description

Teachers in schools may not be competent in the language of instruction and the local national language and may feel this is a barrier to cluster working.

Rationale

Highly skilled teachers fluent and confident in the national language and the language of instruction will secure the best outcomes for the learners in their schools.

Clusters provide a wide range of skills and talents that teachers can draw upon to improve language fluency.

Strategies to overcome

- Cluster training for teachers in English and the national language so that they model teaching approaches precisely
- Use of local radio to promote all languages and offer support with language development
- Use of language teacher expertise in cluster to support and improve competency
- Development of a language library – professional library as a cluster shared resource
- Bring teachers of same language together to develop their competence
- Maximise exposure to English for all teachers

Section 7: Formative assessment

Section 4 highlighted the importance of developing common systems for assessment, alongside benchmarking and systems for moderation. All schools agreeing common standards and working to ensure learners achieve them are key advantages of cluster working.

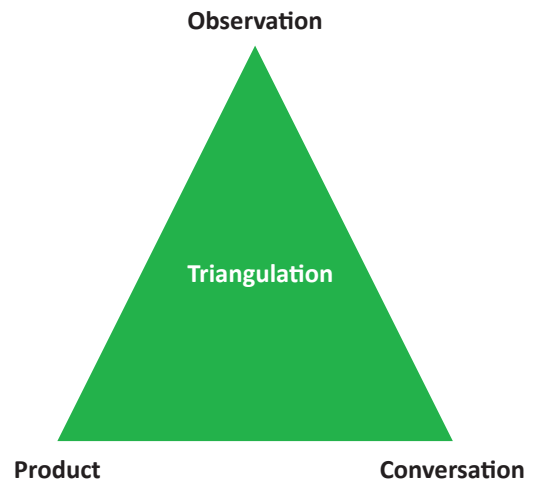
This section considers ways in which clusters can develop teachers' understanding of formative assessment practices in schools across the cluster. A cluster-wide professional learning community of teachers helps to develop and spread good practice in relation to assessment. As a result, progress of all learners is accelerated and all achieve better outcomes.

This is also an opportunity for teachers to start a wider dialogue about the approaches to learning and teaching that the New Curriculum requires and to consolidate their understanding of the interdependence of the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy.

This section draws upon the assessment guidance.

Formative assessment takes place on a daily basis, providing evidence teachers need to be able to deliver inclusive and effective teaching that moves learners on using a learning-centred approach.

Section 4 (page 8) of the Assessment guidance: *How do we find the opportunity to make formative assessments?* explains this in more detail.



- **Observation** – watching students working (good for assessing skills)
- **Conversation** – asking questions and talking to students (good for assessing knowledge and understanding)
- **Product** – appraising the student's work (writing, science report, maths calculation, presentation, map, diagram, model, drawing, painting etc). In this context, a "product" is seen as something physical and permanent that the teacher can keep and look at, not something that the student says.

When all three are used, the information can be checked against the other two forms of assessment opportunity. This is often referred to as "triangulation".

School-based formative assessment is a part of the normal teaching and learning process, and so the assessment opportunities will also occur during this normal process. It is not something that needs to be added on after learning; it is an integral part of it.

Example 1: Focus

Discussion of assessment judgements teachers make when interpreting learning outcomes in the context of actual learning that is taking place.

This example shows how teachers can work together to discuss learner-centred approaches and their assessment judgements and so verify the consistency and accuracy of their judgements.

For this example, it would be good for teachers to bring agreed samples of learners work and the discussion could be focused around how the judgement was arrived at. Was there evidence of observation, discussion and careful questioning by teachers that built an accurate a picture of student learning? Did this reshape their teaching to meet all learner needs?

Further questions that could form part of this discussion could explore:

- What the focus of the lesson was and how the planning supported developments for this focus;
- What learning was planned for each pupil;
- What actually happened;
- What accounts for any differences between these;
- How much progress was made by each learner;
- What aspects of the teaching technique could be revised to improve the progress of each pupil;
- What might be considered the next time this teaching approach is tried by members of the group.

This example leads to key discussions around a shared understanding of good progress, how learning is organized and moves the teacher away from a teacher-centred approach and in doing so verifies the reliability of teacher judgements within schools and across the cluster.

Example 2: Moderation

The purpose of moderation is to check the consistency of teachers' judgements after they have made their assessments. It also is a good way to benchmark and this work could lead to the cluster contributing to nationally agreed standards of learning and to further development of the expertise of the teaching profession.

A key way to organise this for cluster meetings could involve subject leaders coming together to look at work produced by children in their own school for either a specific unit or across units for a subject. This could be cross-phase or same-phase and could address transition as learners move from grade to grade or to the next school. Outcomes of the meeting could lead to standards files being produced that can be used as a reference point to moderate judgements.

Clusters can work together to produce standardised materials in support of the new national curriculum.

A cluster lead teacher could be identified to lead each meeting.

At meetings the following questions could be addressed:

- Do (individual) teachers feel that the range of evidence provided, supports the assessment judgements given for a pupil? If not, what consensus was come to when evidence for a pupil was reviewed by the group?
- How do assessment judgements made by teachers compare to standards files?
- Is there clear differentiation between pupils working at different levels within the group?
- From this standardisation exercise, is there anything you think schools need to learn? (eg. accurately recording on the assessment records for subject units; providing opportunities throughout the year for teachers to moderate with other grades?)

Section 8: School self-evaluation

We know school self-evaluation is a powerful tool in driving improvement.

The **purpose of self-evaluation** is to enable **schools** to have a deep and accurate understanding based on evidence of their strengths and weaknesses so they can tackle areas for development rigorously and improve the quality of provision and the standards learners achieve.

The process of self-evaluation is not new and working within a school cluster supports schools to articulate their evidence base for the judgements they have made and to check these out for the key questions:

- How well are we doing?
- What do we need to do to be better?

Furthermore, cluster working will create capacity for change to take place.

This will be more effective if the culture is characterised by openness and honesty; strong mutual support with a commitment to professional development and sharing of ideas and learning from each other within the cluster.

The template below that has been introduced is a good starting point for clusters and will prepare all leaders with effective implementation of the new national curriculum.

School Self-evaluation Form Implementing the new National Curriculum

Area	Item	Yes	Some	No
Compliance with the new curriculum	Are National Languages being used in P1-3?			
	Is English now the main medium of education from P4 onwards?			
	Are National Languages being taught in P4-8?			
	Is Arabic being taught from P5-P8?			
	Has the new ECD curriculum been introduced?			
	Are the new textbooks being used?			
	Are teachers basing their planning on the learning outcomes of the new curriculum?			
Competencies	Critical & Creative Thinking: are learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning their own investigations • Being given problems to solve • Being given information to sort & analyse • Being asked to evaluate ideas or problems 			
	Communication: Are all learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being give opportunities to talk to others in pairs, groups and to the class? • Being given opportunities to listen to others in pairs, groups and to the class? • Being asked to present in a variety of forms? 			
	Co-operation Are learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in groups on a specific task? • Working in pairs at times? • Put in situations where they need to negotiate to arrive at decisions? 			
	Culture and Identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is learning is put into a South Sudanese context? • Are opportunities taken to relate this context to the wider world? • Are opportunities created to refer to the diversity of people, faiths and culture and the need to value and respect these? 			
Assessment	Are teachers using the new assessment recording forms?			
	Are these giving the school useful information?			

Tick the appropriate box on the form.

Good practice	Are there examples of good practice at school or classroom level that could help other schools and teachers?
Issues	Are there problems in implementation?
	What have you been able to do about these?
Perceptions	What do learners think about the new curriculum?
	How are you supporting teachers in implementing the new curriculum
	How are you keeping parents informed about the new curriculum?

Individual schools can start by completing this form within their own school in their regular meetings.

This will capture effective practice across the school and be a starting point for discussions at the cluster meeting. Schools could discuss their strengths within these areas and specific areas for development.

This process will focus the school, providing clear and concise information to take to the cluster for further discussion. As all cluster schools feed into this discussion, a collective cluster approach can be developed leading to enhanced capacity in all of the schools.

More specific questions that could be discussed as a cluster could include:

- Where are we now with regards to the implementation of the National Curriculum against the individual areas on the form?
- How do we know? What evidence do we have to support our judgements?
- What do we need to do next? What are our clear priorities for the school development plan?
- What do we feel we need further support with?

As a cluster all stakeholders could begin to shape a joint plan of how to support each other, building capacity for sustainable improvement. By taking joint ownership of this improvement agenda, schools begin to work together, share good practice and ideas and accelerate the effective implementation of the new curriculum. There will be a coordinated approach to developing deeper learning, higher order thinking and competencies. Local education officials could further enhance cluster working by evaluating the impact of the shared support and by helping to transfer effective practice within the schools and across cluster schools.



The following examples consider more specific areas identified by individual schools for development and cluster actions to support this development.

Example 1: Area to develop: Communication skills

This area was identified as a priority. School leaders felt that learners did not a) express themselves clearly during group work b) demonstrate good listening skills taking account of what was being said and using this information to further extend their own thinking and their contribution to the discussion.

The head, subject teachers and school supervisor were involved in the self-evaluation process.

Key actions

Good practice was identified across the cluster with the identified need.

A lead practitioner was identified, a specialist to lead on the development of competency with teachers of English in the school through a planned professional development program. This focused on planning together, team teaching and modelling good practice in the teacher's own school and schools across cluster with the identified need.

An intensive course on the development of communication skills was set up for all schools within cluster.

All schools contributed to shared resources for the cluster.

Example 2: Area of focus: Culture and identity

School supervisors identified that some of the national languages had not been fully developed in a school with some excluded due to the lack of linguistic expertise. In particular, some aspects of South Sudanese culture were not reflected in the curriculum as a result of some languages not having been developed.

Key Actions

Discussion amongst cluster schools led to good practice being identified.

It was agreed that all national languages should have high status and that teachers should be supported by cluster colleagues to develop their competence.

A plan was developed to encourage community involvement and engagement and to increase understanding of the expectations of the new national curriculum.

Support was engaged from the local community in using and celebrating South Sudanese and African traditions and culture through story telling, cultural events and heritage days.

Follow up monitoring of actions through the cluster

A key cluster leader was identified to monitor and evaluate the learners' performance and the progress made by the teachers in cluster schools

Findings were reported at cluster level to follow up.

Follow up monitoring of actions through the cluster

Implementation was carried out in all cluster schools. Successes and challenges were reported at cluster meetings in order to work out future courses of action.

The understanding of learners and the community regarding culture and identity was regularly reviewed.



