

Name of Head Teacher: SL-2

Age: Under 30 years

Qualification: Masters, with Bachelors in Education

Years of Experience as a Head Teacher: Less than 1 year

Years of regular Teaching Experience: 1-5 years

School Type: Rural Islamabad, Primary School

Professional training and Certifications: Has received no professional training or certification.

NIC Group: NIC Group 1

Background:

SL-2 was a Head Teacher at a Primary school in Islamabad (Rural). It is a girls school with 12 teachers and around 294 girls enrolled. The school has basic facilities like electricity, internet, computer lab and a library but with no dedicated facilities for children with special needs.

Understanding of Inclusion

During the initial phase of the interaction with the team his understanding towards inclusion was for the inclusion of all children in mainstream education systems instead of just being limited to special schools:

“Inclusion means every student should be the part of education system, so in the survey I already informed you that we have some times more than 10% students with special needs so what I learned from this course is to include all the children, whether they have disability, they having social economic differences, they’re living in a rural area, their parents are poor, so this course gives me experience and knowledge that we include every child in our education system so that’s not important for the special school but for the normal schools these children should also have equal status and opportunity”

SL-02-2nd

When asked if the head teacher had done anything to address inclusion in their respective school, they responded positively. Firstly, the School Leader collected much more data than before that allowed them to identify some inclusion issues:

“We collected the data as per the students’ issues problems needs so that it can help to identify the student issues and problems and then to suggest the solutions according to the students need, for example one of our student having problem of social psychological issues and that was link with the parents that I have in issues and problems at home so when we apply information that the students having social psychological issues because of the parents internal matters at home so the data is not limited to the attenders so we should consider the information and data on other issues and aspects and categories.” SL-02-2nd

Later on, the head teacher gave an example of a girl who was struggling in the school and the problem tree was used to identify the problem and there was a significant attitude change from the School Leader :

“There was a girl who was not doing good in grade 4 but she had excellent marks in grade 3. We found out that she was having problems at home due to her parents. So, we talked to them to give her a positive environment at home. OK then we noticed that her performance and her marks began to increase again. I think she is doing excellently which is one of the great successes of this project. By using the project problem tree we were able to find out the herd problem and explore her issue which helped us. Normally we would have told ourselves that she is not studying at the same level but this project encouraged us to help the students and understand their problems and I think this is the success.” SL-02-3rd

Course completion: Completed 100% of the course with all activities

Course Participation

Initial Condition: The Head teacher was moderately aware of ICT and

Head Teacher in NIC Interaction: The Head teacher shared their problems with other Head Teachers and was quite active in the discussions on the WhatsApp group and face-2-face discussions.

Feedback on Course and nature of NIC meetings: The Head teacher enjoyed the course and wanted a blend of online and face-2-face meetings on a monthly basis. The Head teacher admired the action-based approach of the course away from theoretical but main issue the HT faced was understanding inclusion as a concept

In Course Activities:

Data Collection: Started detailed data collection beyond just attendance

Interaction with Teachers: greater collaboration with the teachers

Interaction with Students and Parents: Increased meeting with parents and very determined to address core problems of inclusion.

Issues Identified: Identified several mildly disabled children in the school dealing with social/psychological issues related to matters at home.

Issue taken for Problem Tree: Used it to identify problem with girl underperforming in grade 4

Success: Engagement with the parents of the girl to improve her condition

Outcome: Was able to improve academic performance of the girl and her social well being in the school as she was able to make more friends and felt happier.

Headline:

Engagement with the online course and the NIC: The course was different from any that the Head teacher had previously done as they hadn't participated in any online or blended course previously. This was also the first time they were exposed to action research. Moreover, the HT found the NIC meetings "wonderful" and actively discussed problems faced by students. They mentioned:

"It was a good experience because I got to share my thoughts with them and they did the same and I interacted with different groups and different teachers and we discuss the problems that we were facing at our schools. We exchanged thoughts about our solutions and what we can do in certain situation. I got to learn about the problems that they were facing and how they solved it so overall it was a very helpful and learning experience." SL-02-3rd

Understanding inclusion issues over time: The head teacher had very little knowledge on inclusion prior to the course with no academic background related to the problem. But overtime he developed an understanding that inclusion means student from all kinds of backgrounds and difficulties deserve to have equal opportunities as the rest. The HT mentioned about their understanding here:

"I did not know about the inclusive issues (previously) because I was not aware that this problem could exist because of personal reasons or any disability but now after applying the PDSA I have seen that inclusive issues are from disabilities to even psychological issues. I am not a special needs experts so I did not know about these before but now I know there are many problems that children can face which effects their education." SL-02-3rd

What they learned about their own leadership: The Head teacher greatly increased their interaction with other head teachers and learned a lot more about the pervasive problems in their own school as they said:

“The course has allowed me to discuss many things with my fellow teachers and so they can share many things with me without any hesitation. I have learned a lot about their experience which help me to understand a lot of things a lot of problem and help. I can find out their solution and taking part in meeting increase my confidence. I think I become more effective because of these meetings because I understand and observe these problems more.” SL-02-3rd