**

# Pupils coming from remote areas

# Deprived backgrounds

## Pupils coming from remote areas

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| classroom_tip | Classroom-based tips (focus on instructional methods) |

**1. Make an effort to get to know your pupils** so that you understand their living conditions, family backgrounds, and the expectations they hold of the school. Such information can help you find the best possible ways to manage your classroom and shape an environment that facilitates learning for all (UNESCO, 2015).

**2. Develop activities in the classroom that promote empathy** and understanding of different living conditions (Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).

**3. Adapt the curriculum,** if necessary, in order to include references to families and communities in remote areas, challenging stereotypes about them and implementing methodological approaches such as projects or research about specific areas (UNESCO, 2015).

**4. Take advantage of the talents and strengths of pupils living in remote areas.** For example, if a pupil is talented in theatre, introduce more role-playing activities into the lesson (UNESCO, 2015).

**5. Use technology to facilitate the provision of support materials** and to improve pupil participation, access and outcomes (NSW Government, 2013).

**6. Stay in touch with the pupils living in remote areas using online forums,** email and telephone calls (Macintyre & Macdonald, 2011).

**7. Provide a supportive relationship with each of your pupils,** irrespective of their residence area (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).

**8. Enable pupils to link their curriculum knowledge to the world they know** outside school and their daily lives (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).

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| school_tip | School-based practical tips (focus on instructional methods) |

### **Class Divisions / Arrangements**

**Create materials for practice and spare time activities.** Organise pupils in mixed groups in order to produce the materials. Involve them in developing ideas for other resources e.g. designing and adapting a “local” reading book for younger pupils; inventing mathematical practice games for use by individuals, pairs and groups (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).

### **Community**

1. **Encourage the community to be involved in school life and activities.** Ask people from different groups how they would like to be involved, and ensure that activities are fun, social and held at a time of day and in locations that are convenient for people (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).
2. **Develop Educational visits** – provide study visits to historical centres, museums, the cinema and the theatre, in order to mitigate the lack of opportunity faced by pupils living in remote areas (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).
3. **Develop school projects mainly from community funds,** including events such as science fairs, aimed at enhancing pupils’ learning, opportunities and quality of life.
4. **Generate mutually educative activities that involve the school and the community,** such as developing shared facilities like community libraries and online facilities. (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001; Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).
5. **Develop community support groups** to provide teachers with information about the community customs and traditions (Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).

### **Curricular Adaptations**

1. **Encourage the community to be involved in school life and activities.** Ask people from different groups how they would like to be involved, and ensure that activities are fun, social and held at a time of day and in locations that are convenient for people (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).
2. **Create materials for practice and spare time activities.** Organise pupils in mixed groups in order to produce the materials. Involve them in developing ideas for other resources e.g. designing and adapting a “local” reading book for younger pupils; inventing mathematical practice games for use by individuals, pairs and groups (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).

### **Educational visits / Field trips / Camps / School exchanges / Trips abroad**

1. **Develop Educational visits** – provide study visits to historical centres, museums, the cinema and the theatre, in order to mitigate the lack of opportunity faced by pupils living in remote areas (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).
2. **Enable pupils living in remote areas to participate** in excursions to experience sports activities not available in their residential areas (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).

### **Other (Transport)**

**Ensure free access to school buses** for pupils living in remote areas, and more vehicles and direct routes to reduce travel time (Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).

### **Parents / Parents’ Associations**

1. **Arrange meetings between the parents and the school staff** to discuss children’s progress, and to enhance the collaboration between home and school. This will help to monitor progress and to discuss issues such as those related to pupils’ social life, social interactions with peers, behavior at home and self-esteem (UNESCO, 2015).
2. **Establish a free call number for parents** to enable them to talk more easily with teachers and the school community (Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).

### **School Celebrations / Events / Activities**

**Encourage the community to be involved in school life and activities.** Ask people from different groups how they would like to be involved, and ensure that activities are fun, social and held at a time of day and in locations that are convenient for people (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001).

### **School Projects**

1. **Create a toolkit with information about working with pupils living in remote areas** (Queensland Government, 2011).
2. **Develop school projects mainly from community funds**, including events such as science fairs, aimed at enhancing pupils’ learning, opportunities and quality of life.
3. **Generate mutually educative activities** that involve the school and the community, such as developing shared facilities like community libraries and online facilities. (Sigsworth & Solstad, 2001; Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).

### **Pupil Support**

1. **Arrange meetings between the parents and the school staff** to discuss children’s progress, and to enhance the collaboration between home and school. This will help to monitor progress and to discuss issues such as those related to pupils’ social life, social interactions with peers, behavior at home and self-esteem (UNESCO, 2015).
2. **Ensure free access to school buses** for pupils living in remote areas, and more vehicles and direct routes to reduce travel time (Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).

### **Teacher Professional Development**

1. Provide training for teachers, school leaders and administrative and support staff about the main difficulties that pupils living in remote areas may encounter at school (Queensland Government, 2011).
2. Create a toolkit with information about working with pupils living in remote areas (Queensland Government, 2011).

### **Technology**

1. **Equip classrooms with computers for each pupil** so that they can create email addresses, access online support materials, and participate in forums (NSW Government, 2013).
2. **Establish a free call number for parents** to enable them to talk more easily with teachers and the school community (Stokes, Stafford & Holdsworth, 2000).

### **Supportive Literature**

There are many different and potentially conflicting definitions of ‘rural’, using criteria of population density, economic factors, socio-cultural characteristics and location or remoteness from larger cities.

While the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines rural as all residences and settlements of less than 1000 people, the Commonwealth Government recently defined the term as all non-metropolitan places with fewer than 100,000 people.

‘Remote’ is similarly subject to different interpretations. Its link in the Remote, Rural and Metropolitan Classification (DPIE and DHSH, 1994) to “Aboriginal communities and very low population densities”, also locates it within economic activity, specifically mining and broadacre farming. The term also implies: distance from neighbours and distance from large towns and cities and the goods, services, facilities and opportunities offered by large towns and cities (DPIE and DHSH, 1994: 6).

The classification then uses distance from large towns and cities, and distance from other people (i.e. population density) to develop an ‘index of remoteness’. It draws on both distance to urban centres and “personal distance”, i.e. the average distance between residents.

The terms ‘rural’ and ‘remote’ therefore have very different meanings in different contexts. Decisions about location are neither solely economic nor work related, nor are they seen as definitional in terms of disadvantage. “Remoteness can bring advantage”, says the DPIE and DHSH classification report (1994: 6); many people strive to maintain a “rural” lifestyle and will argue strongly about the advantages of such a lifestyle in terms of closer community links, increased safety, a more friendly, sharing and supportive community and so on. Access to rural schooling is part of this intention, and is often linked positively to the closer relationships between pupils and teachers that are attributed to smaller rural schools.

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