# **MODULE 2. SENSITIVITY**

# **PLANNING FOR ACTION. THINKING ABOUT EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

**Aim of this exercise.**

To start thinking about what groups you might want to focus on, if you were to plan advocacy on the sensitivity of the budget – to start thinking/planning/action plans. This will likely throw up more questions than answers and so the last section aims to help you identify where knowledge gaps are which require more work.

**Activity**

**Step 1**: **Who is missing out and why**

Explore the key equity issues. Try to review the questions below and answer as many as you can.

1. Identifying inequalities in education:

* Which groups are most systematically marginalised in terms of access to quality education? For example: Do children with disabilities have equal access to quality education? What about specific ethnic groups?
* Are there gender gaps at the different levels of education?
* Are there big differences in access to quality education in different geographical areas? What about between urban and rural areas? Are people in specific geographic regions particularly disadvantaged?

2. Reviewing government policies, programmes and budgets:

* Does the government have policies, plans and programmes in place to address and alleviate the effects of historic and/or systemic discrimination experienced by the above groups?
* Which groups does the government identify for equity measures? Do any of these measures, despite being intended to address equity challenges, create more discrimination, inequity and social injustice overall? Why? How can that be avoided?

**Decide**: one group you would like to focus on and who are a priority in government plans

**Step 2.** **How can spending help address inequalities**

**Firstly,** check what you know about what government spending is currently doing to support the group you identified above? Can you find any information in budgets/budget commitments/budget speeches?

**Secondly,** think about what you might want to advocate for in government spending - what do you think is important?

**Thirdly,** based on the questions you were unable to answer, identify your knowledge gaps. What additional information do you need in order to decide the focus of your advocacy programme? Is there enough information in your budget documents? If not, where else might you get this information? Who might help you? Are there experts in financing who might be able to help you? Draw up a plan identifying the additional information needed, who will do the research and when.

**Fourthly,** try identifying who has voice and power, and who doesn’t for advocacy planning. Given marginalised groups often have little voice think about how has power and who doesn’t, ie

* Which groups are able to influence policy or budget decisions and are most vocal? Is there an imbalance of power which needs to be addressed? Is there any ‘hidden’ power to target, such as culture or customs?
* Are there any groups without power which you might want to work with to help build their voice to improve equity in education?
* Are there effective mechanisms in place to ensure that parents and community members have a voice in education, for example Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Committees (SMCs), education coalitions? Are people from marginalised groups adequately represented?

**What to do in a workshop setting**

**Time allowed:** approximately 1 hour in small groups/alone and feedback in plenary (20 minutes per group).

Participants should discuss the questions in small groups and do steps 1-3, developing a short plan for and then give feedback on key points and issues for advocacy.

In addition, a variety of participatory tools could be used to introduce this topic and get participants thinking about issues of equity and marginalisation. For example, you might ask participants to create a map of the country or region in which they are working and to identify areas in which there are particular problems in equal access to quality education. Alternatively, you might use a body map tool ([ActionAid Networked Toolbox](https://www.reflectionaction.org/tools_and_methods/)) to support participants to explore the factors which help and hinder children from different groups to access quality education.