1. **What are the best strategies you are putting in place to address the needs for children with specific learning difficulties?**

   Students with additional needs are best supported in the classroom through a) high quality teaching and b) small groups and one to one interventions.

   High quality teaching is teaching which is based on evidence-based classroom practices such as explicit instruction, mastery learning and formative assessment. More information about high quality teaching practices can be found in AERO's Tried and Tested guides. High quality teaching practices have been shown to work for the vast majority of students irrespective of context or whether or not students have additional needs. More information about the evidence which shows that these practices work for the majority of students irrespective of individual need, can be found here.

   High quality teaching also needs to be complemented by carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions. Teachers need to know how to provide early and proactive support for students to improve their academic performance and prevent the formation of a performance gap. The evidence shows that the way to do this effectively is by using a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) approach. This approach has three 'levels' of support, which provide additional instruction in smaller, more targeted settings depending on the student's need. The first tier, Tier 1, is typically general classroom instruction, while Tiers 2 and 3 involve more targeted interventions and higher-intensity support for students who are struggling.

   Further information about special education needs in mainstream schools can be found here: UK Education Endowment Foundation report.

2. And what best practices would be applicable in the East, Central and Southern Africa context in your response above (Question 1)?

The practices outlined above have been found to work across most contexts to the extent that they have been studied in different contexts. In [AERO's study](#) of the impact of formative assessment, explicit instruction and mastery learning on student achievement, AERO found that meta-analyses showed similar findings irrespective of which country the study was located in (and seemingly irrespective of whether it was a high, middle or low income country). Similarly AERO found these practices worked for the vast majority of students irrespective of stage of learning (i.e. primary or secondary) or irrespective of whether students had additional learning needs or not.

3. What is your advice in addressing the low proficiency of learners in Reading and Numeracy and combat illiteracy?

Contemporary evidence identifies five specific sub-skills that are essential to the acquisition of reading skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language. These skills should be taught to all students in order for students to learn to read. More information about this can be found in AERO's report [here](#). The focus of numeracy teaching should be on students achieving automaticity. Automaticity (or math fact fluency) is the mastery of the basic facts for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to a point in which these 'facts' are moved to long-term memory, freeing up working memory for more complex mathematical problem solving. Both literacy and numeracy outcomes are best supported by high quality teaching practices in the classroom. For more information about these high quality teaching practices, see [AERO's Tried and Tested guides](#).

Additionally, it is important that high quality teaching is complemented by carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions. Teachers need to know how to provide early and proactive support for students to improve their academic performance and prevent the formation of a performance gap. The evidence shows that the way to do this effectively is by using a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) approach. This approach has three 'levels' of support, which provide additional instruction in smaller, more targeted settings depending on the student's need. The first tier, Tier 1, is typically general classroom instruction, while Tiers 2 and 3 involve more targeted interventions and higher-intensity support for students who are struggling.

AERO will be publishing a report shortly on 'Supporting students significantly behind in literacy and numeracy'. Stay tuned to [AERO](#) to find out more.

4. **About POM: what is the role of the parents (and communities) in the method?**

   Once teachers are aware of their students' levels of wellbeing and involvement, they are encouraged to discuss these levels with the child's parents or caregivers. This can give teachers more insight as to why levels of wellbeing and involvement might be low and together they can brainstorm what changes the teacher can make to increase these

   levels. Parents offer additional information for the teacher during the analysis of the welling and involvement and the decision on which action steps are likely to best support the child. Often, POM can help teachers have constructive conversations with parents, where parents see that teachers are actively taking into account their child's specific needs and using the parents as a resource for information about the child to increase their wellbeing and involvement.

5. **POM measurement of wellbeing is very interesting. It seems to focus on social and emotion which is good for teachers to assess. Can these social and emotional measurements be connected with physical wellbeing determinants (i.e. eyes, dental health, etc.)?**

   While this is not something that we have explored with POM, it is very possible! Physical wellbeing determinants often have an impact on social and emotional status as well. It would be very interesting to explore! POM is based on classroom observation, so to take into account the aspects that you mentioned (dental health, eyes, etc.) likely a different specialist would need to be brought in and this would lend itself more to an evaluation outside of the classroom versus an "in classroom" observation. It would be interesting to compare physical wellbeing determinants' impact on the wellbeing and involvement levels of the children.

6. **How do you change the assessment to go with the new Model of teaching?**

In Vietnam, the new model for teaching is a shift towards a "child-centered approach." This goes hand in hand with the approach and goals of POM. POM allows teachers to notice the specific needs of children and redesign their lessons and activities, putting the child in the center. We have noticed that teachers in Vietnam are aware of the need to change to a child centered approach but are unsure of exactly how to do that or what it would look like. POM is a first step towards that process by starting with observation and reflection and then taking action based on those observations. The action steps then lead to the new model of teaching, being a child centered approach.

7. **Is it that they are prioritizing their learning of Vietnamese? Is there any talk of reviving the UNICEF mother tongue-based multilingual education program (around 2010-13) which proved to be highly successful in developing mother tongue AND Vietnamese literacy skills (but was abandoned in favor of ineffective monolingual education/assimilation and problematic boarding schools).**

Despite promising evidence from the UNICEF mother tongue-based multilingual programme, the Ministry of Education in Vietnam is currently opting for a programme called "Strengthening Vietnamese based on the mother tongue." This is not a multilingual programme, but rather focused on improving Vietnamese language outcomes for ethnic minority students. There is an attention to ethnic minority languages by allowing them to be used in the classroom, training for teachers on second language acquisition, and additional teachers in the classrooms that are able to speak children's mother tongue languages. In VVOB's "TALK" programme, we work alongside the Ministry of Education to capacity teachers, school leaders, and government officials on creating language rich learning environments (LRLE) which promotes the use of both home language and language of instruction (Vietnamese) without being specifically a multilingual programme. This allows teachers to develop transferable skills in creating language rich environments that support all students in the classroom even through changing language policies. In this programme, we use POM as the foundation before building capacity on LRLE as POM allows for teachers to see what barriers children are facing in the classroom. Students from ethnic minority communities may have lower wellbeing and involvement due to language and cultural differences than the teacher or classroom environment. Using POM, teachers become aware of these specific barriers and then are able to implement LRLE as an effective action step to improve wellbeing, involvement and holistic outcomes of their students.

8. For VVOB, an amazing program that you work with Vietnam's ministry of education. How do you engage with Vietnam's Ministry of Education? And. Do you work for primary or secondary students?

We engage with the Ministry of Education at every stage of our programme development and implementation. Before beginning a programme we review government priorities and engage in discussion with relevant officials to ensure our new programme is aligned with government priorities and needs. We look for where there is a gap or need with the education system, policies, or implementation that aligns with our interests and expertise. Throughout our programmes, we include officials from the Ministry of Education in experts groups for material development and as trainers during the capacity development trajectories. This ensures higher buy in as well as making sure we remain in line with their interests and needs. In Vietnam, we work in early childhood and primary sectors. In other VVOB country offices we have secondary and TVET programmes.

9. What are key components that teachers are trained for apart from well-being and involvement?

Teachers are also trained in observation skills, analyzing data, reflective skills, and differentiation. To effectively use the POM tool, teachers must be skilled in child observation. As part of the training, they practice what to look for while observing, how to be a neutral observer, and how to document their observations. From there they are taught how to analyze that data, looking at trends with one particular child or making conclusions about groups of children. This analysis is brought to reflection through teacher professional development meetings. After they have reflected on the data collected, teachers are taught the basics of differentiation through POM's action steps.