part B

DISABILITY INCLUSION: EDUCATION

“I want to go to school because I want to learn, and I want to be educated and I want to define my life, to be independent, to be strong, and also to live my life and be happy.”

Key facts

- Children with a disability are less likely to attend school than children without disabilities.
- Children with an intellectual or sensory disability are the least likely group to attend school.
- One-third of all children not enrolled in school have a disability.
- Disability has a stronger impact on school attendance than gender.
- An increasing number of siblings and children of people with a disability, especially girls, are removed from school to fulfil caregiving responsibilities.
- People with a disability who do not attend school as a child are more likely to live in poverty as an adult.
- People with a disability who do attend school are more likely to be educated in targeted specialised settings that may reinforce their marginalisation.
“Inclusive education seeks to address the learning needs of all children, young people and adults, with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion.”

Reasons for disability inclusion in education

- Where education opportunities are made accessible, people with a disability have greater access to further learning and employment and in turn are more likely to engage in social and economic opportunities.

- Inclusive education acts as a broad strategy to address marginalisation and promotes the rights of all children to participate in mainstream education.

- Inclusive schools create an improved learning environment for all.

- Inclusive education approaches ensure representation from all members of society allowing for experiences of people with a disability to be embedded into the broader social context.

- People with a disability have the right to access the most relevant education option. This could be inclusive education at their local school, mainstream education with specialist support, a specialist unit connected to a mainstream school, partial integration or learning in a specialised setting.

- Addressing barriers such as poor teacher training, inaccessible school buildings, discrimination and exclusionary policies enable improved access to education for all.

- In resource poor communities, especially remote settings, children with a disability who are not included in their local school tend not to attend school at all. Exclusion from school greatly impacts further opportunities as an adult.

- When specialist school settings are harnessed as support to inclusive education (such as in inclusive-education resource facilities), limited resources go further as they frequently service a cluster of schools and not just one setting.

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in particular Article 24, confirms the importance of education for all.

- Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 aims for access to primary education for all children. This will not be reached without addressing inclusion of children with a disability.

- Inclusive education promotes access for children with a disability to broader community development activities such as immunisation programs, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and disaster preparedness training.
“Please do not hide children with [a disability] at home. You should bring them to school because when children have an opportunity to go to school, they will develop skills, they will develop life skills.”

How to include people with a disability in education

There are numerous approaches to ensure people with a disability participate in education. No one single approach will be correct for every child as they are dependent on many factors including community capacity, attitudes to disability, education policies and funding. Inclusive education is frequently promoted as the most appropriate option for students with a disability along with other marginalised groups. Such an approach requires specialist support and is often linked with inclusive education resource facilities and requires development of local skills and capacity. Therefore, recognition of complementary or alternative models which support in the journey towards inclusion also have a place. Partial integration and specialist school settings can be considered as the most relevant place of learning for some students with a disability.

The following principles, which adhere to a human-rights approach to disability are used to demonstrate inclusion of people with a disability in all development programs and sectors.

- **Awareness** of disability and its implications.
- **Participation** and active involvement of people with a disability.
- **Comprehensive accessibility** through addressing physical, communication, policy and attitudinal barriers.
- **Twin track** identifying disability specific actions combined with mainstream approaches.
Awareness

- Identify the number of people with a disability within the community. This information can be gathered, for example, through meeting local people with a disability and DPOs, census data, household surveys, Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and disability services and facilities for inclusive education.

- Build awareness among teachers and education providers on rights and inclusion strategies to improve mainstreaming capacity for local schools.

- Use local media campaigns promoting inclusive education to assist parents, teachers and the community to be more inclusive of children with a disability.

- Use billboards, posters or other information that depicts people with a disability in their mainstream school environment as a part of the general population.

- Highlight capacity of people with a disability in education, showcasing diverse tertiary, vocational and employment pathways including access to scholarships as viable opportunities.

- Deliver practical awareness raising activities with teachers, parents and students using role plays, theatre and stories focusing on inclusion and capacity of children with a disability.

- Advocate for the right to an education, and support others such as parents and community leaders in this role.

- Understand that education is a basic human right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the CRPD, the ‘education for all’ (EFA) platform and MDG 2 all identify education as a priority for all.
Participation

- Highlight talents and abilities of people with a disability and promote their participation in education programs.
- Work with early childhood educators and providers on identification and inclusion of young children with a disability as these maximise inclusion from an early age. Mainstreaming in such settings increases acceptance of children with a disability and improves their pathway into formal schooling.
- Share program information at all stages with people with a disability including DPOs, parents of children with a disability, and children with a disability themselves.
- Consult with people with a disability, Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) and parents of children with a disability to seek their active input at key stages of the program, especially during design and evaluation.
- Allocate a budget to cover travel and participation expenses along with attendance time for people with a disability and DPOs to actively be involved in consultations.
- Invite someone with a disability or a parent of a child with a disability to be on program reference committees.
- Identify local DPOs and consider working in partnership with them.
- Develop inclusion strategies in collaborative partnerships using local resources.
- Work with class mates without a disability in developing their capacity for fostering participation through student-to-student inclusion strategies.
- Employ people with a disability or a parent of a child with a disability to work within the project (e.g. on the project team or as a teacher or teacher’s assistant).
- Consider programs that connect existing special schools with mainstream schools to support disability awareness, further education opportunities and transition pathways.
Comprehensive accessibility

Comprehensive accessibility = physical, communication, policy and attitudinal access

- Identify the preferred communication mode for individuals with a disability. Note that not all people who are blind will have been taught Braille, likewise, not all individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing will have sign language skills.

- Be prepared to source alternative communication options including large print, Braille, pictorial, audio and sign language based on individual requirements. These may be arranged through local partners, inclusive education services, CBR and disability organisations.

- Connect with CBR programs to increase access to education and improve linkages to other sectors.

- Ensure classroom, toilet and playground facilities are accessible to people with a disability including physical and sensory impairments.

- Link with a DPO to identify barriers and to advocate for accessible school environments.

- Apply principles of universal design to ensure inclusion for all.

- Identify and overcome barriers in travelling to school for people with a range of disabilities. Look at terrain, transportation, and safe and accessible walking paths.

- Review policies and legislation through identifying existing country, local and Ministry of Education policies regarding inclusive education or anti-discrimination laws.

- Link with a DPO to advocate for more inclusive legislation, using existing international conventions such as the CRC and the CRPD to support advocacy efforts.

- Identify and combat local attitudes towards children and adults with a disability. It is important to dispel myths such as curses that can be inaccurately perceived as causes of disability.
## Twin track

Twin track enables full inclusion through mainstream access working alongside disability specific supports

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mainstream</th>
<th>Disability specific</th>
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<tr>
<td>Build teacher capacity to ensure confidence in including children with a disability in education programs.</td>
<td>Facilitate access to specialist staff and resources such as sign language, plain language, Braille training and transcription where required, ensuring such supports remain within the mainstream setting where possible.</td>
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<td>Encourage Ministry of Education and school governance to train teachers in inclusive education using universal design principles.</td>
<td>Initiate Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to maximise student capacity in conjunction with specific modifications to enhance learning.</td>
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<td>Encourage universal design for school buildings and equipment such as using ramps instead of steps into classrooms.</td>
<td>Facilitate opportunities for students with a disability to develop independent disability management strategies such as advocacy, mobility skills and communication techniques.</td>
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<td>Highlight strengths and capacity of people with a disability to demonstrate contribution and raise aspirations.</td>
<td>Identify disability-related barriers as early as possible and facilitate linkages to early intervention services so as to maximise the child’s potential and minimise the impact of a disability.</td>
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<td>Deliver disability awareness training for classmates and all school staff to build a culture of support and inclusion.</td>
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<td>Encourage child-friendly learning environments in schools.</td>
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**Twin track (cont’d)**

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<th>Mainstream</th>
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<td>Advocate for laws and policies to reflect disability inclusion in mainstream schools.</td>
<td>Be mindful that there is no one-size solution. All disability groups will have unique requirements and even people with the one disability will manage their impairment differently.</td>
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<td>Encourage creative teaching strategies that focus on diverse strengths and different learning styles to foster inclusion for all.</td>
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<td>Raise aspirations of students with a disability to ensure diverse education and employment pathways are encouraged.</td>
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Plan Ethiopia

Program summary
The goal of Universal Primary Education can be challenging to attain in countries where formal primary education is not reaching all children, especially the most disadvantaged. Access to school is affected by a range of factors including distance, overcrowding, low teacher–student ratios and lack of learning materials.

In Ethiopia, Plan International Ethiopia is expanding primary education in rural areas through establishing low-cost Alternative Basic Education (ABE) centres with community members, local NGOs and local district education offices. The ABE centres are designed so that students gradually move into formal primary schools and provide opportunities for out-of-school children in Grades 1 to 4. Through a process of community consultation, communities and children decide on a location for the centres. Plan also trains the ABE teachers and covers salaries until the community is able to mobilise resources. The program provides appropriate learning materials and, where necessary, school feeding programs. Plan’s ABE program assists the Ethiopian government to provide education to the most disadvantaged children who cannot attend school due to distance and disability.

How disability has been included
Irtiban lives in a rural community with his mother. Irtiban lost his sight at the age of six. His single mother works on a farm to support the family and used to lock Irtiban in their home for long hours. Irtiban saw his future as limited to begging – “Like many other disabled children of my village, my fate was to sit on a roadside to beg to feed and dress myself.”

Plan introduced an ABE centre in Irtiban’s community in 2009. Irtiban and other children with a disability were included in the centre. They were given Braille and learnt how to use the different learning materials available. Irtiban says: “It is very easy to use and made learning easier so that I can practice writing and reading skills. I will stay focused on my study and keep up my performance so that I will realise my dream of becoming a teacher.”

Lessons learned
- Plan’s experience shows that community-based alternative education centres can provide pathways into formal education. Access to education was increased with improved attendance and decreased number of dropouts, particularly of girls.
- The ABE centres have also proven to create access to primary education for children with a disability and other marginalised children.
Checklist for disability inclusion in education

■ Are children with a disability attending school? If not, why not?
■ What is being done already for children with a disability?
■ Are there local success stories to learn from and community mentors to use?
■ Are the voices of girls with a disability being heard when promoting access to education?
■ Is data being collected for students from different disability groups for advocacy and program-monitoring purposes?
■ Have people with a disability/DPOs been involved in the design process? Is their ongoing participation in the project planned?
■ Is there budget allocation to cover participation expenses and attendance time for consultations with people with a disability and DPOs?
■ Is disability included in all phases of the program cycle?
■ Are disability measures included in design for budgeting and measurement purposes?
■ What opportunities will be provided to women and children with a disability to take an active role in decision-making processes?
■ What strategies are there to ensure the needs and rights of women and children with a disability are adequately addressed?
■ Have mainstream teachers received training in inclusive education to foster successful participation by children with a disability?
■ What program initiatives have been implemented to ensure effective communication between teachers, children with a disability, their parents, DPOs and disability services?
■ Has awareness-raising and capacity-building occurred within the community and among classmates to foster participation in education for children with a disability?
■ Have pathways from early childhood to primary, secondary and tertiary education opportunities been highlighted and supported?
■ Have education and training requirements of adults with a disability been considered?
■ Have disability inclusive education models such as inclusive education resource facilities been identified in similar country contexts?
■ Are resources being used such as those available through the UNESCO website and the Enabling Education Network?
Useful resources for disability inclusion in education

All Equal All Different. (2005). Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development: http://www.dcdd.nl/default.asp?action=article&id=3643

Inclusive Education Resource List: http://asksource.ids.ac.uk/cf/keylists/keylist2.cfm?topic=dis&search=QL_IE05


References


