

Inclusive education



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The situation

Inclusive education means creating conducive learning and teaching environments for all children in regular schools, regardless of differences in socio-economic background, (dis)ability, race, colour, sexual orientation, religion and ethnicity, among others.

Inclusive education is where the impact of inequality in Namibia is most evident. The country has almost achieved universal primary education but around 9 per cent of children between 6 and 16 have never attended school.

Almost half of all primary school children that enrol in secondary school do not complete Grade 12, and less than 50 per cent of learners who enter Grade 1 pass their Grade 12 examinations. The situation is worse among children with disabilities or those with other special educational needs, including children from the most disadvantaged communities and minority groups such as the Himba and the San.

Mobile and satellite schools have been established for Himba and San children, and there are 11 schools for children with disabilities countrywide. There is limited space in these schools and with 32,404 learners registered with disabilities, waiting lists for admission are long. Namibia has, however, integrated learners with disabilities into the public school system - they are integrated into mainstream schools as appropriate.

Another critical gap is the capacity of professionals. Teachers, principals, teacher trainers and ministry officials need to be trained to implement inclusive education effectively.

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72% of children of the right age attend primary school in Kunene region (home of the Himba people) compared to 90% of children of school age nationally



30% of children of secondary school age attend secondary school in Kunene region compared to 50% of children of secondary school age nationally

16.9%
of children under 10 years have a disability

Source: Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2013

UNICEF in action

UNICEF is working with the Government and its partners to strengthen inclusive education. Work is being done to collect and publish data on children with disabilities and children who are out of school, and identify the barriers that exclude children from accessing quality education. UNICEF also helps address the underlying causes of stigma and discrimination that perpetuate exclusion of children with disabilities from society in general and educational opportunities in particular. Engaging with communities to change attitudes towards children with disabilities and creating positive parenting practices are also priorities.

Results for children

UNICEF has provided financial and technical support to the Government of Namibia to implement inclusive education. Good progress has been made in implementing the sector policy on inclusive education, advocating for integrated early childhood development and strengthening inter-ministerial coordination, promotion of mother tongue education and addressing human resources within the education sector.

UNICEF supported a study on out-of-school children in 2014 to get a better picture of children who are excluded from education and to inform programming. The findings show that just over 21,000 Namibian children aged 6 to 19 have a disability, 3.3 per cent of the population in that age group. Of the children in this age group with disabilities, about 65 per cent attend school compared to 79 per cent of those without a disability. This means that around 4,600 more children with disabilities are not in school. This differential in school attendance between children with and without disabilities does not vary much by age. A substantial part of the difference in school attendance arises because the proportion of children with disabilities who never attend school is high, at 16 per cent, whilst this proportion is only 6 per cent amongst other children.



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UNICEF partners in inclusive education

- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
- Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
- Ministry of Health and Social Services
- Namibia Institute for Democracy
- National Disability Council
- National Federation of the Visually Impaired
- PACT
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

What more needs to be done?

UNICEF will continue to support the Government and its partners to address the rights and needs of all children, including children and adults with disabilities. This will entail:

- Supporting awareness-raising of the Child Care and Protection Act, Act No 3 of 2015 and the proposed new Education Act,
- Monitoring the implementation of the sector policy on inclusive education,
- Advocating for pre-service and in-service teacher education to ensure that teachers are adequately trained in inclusive approaches,
- Advocating for the availability of assistive technology, devices and materials for use in schools by learners with disabilities,
- Supporting the implementation of the school health manual with a focus on early identification of and response to children with disabilities,
- Promoting quality and access to services through research and innovation.