Schools for All

Including disabled children in education

Experience from Save the Children and partners globally demonstrates that improvements in education quality go hand-in-hand with inclusion and access, Flexible, quality, responsive learning environments will benefit all children and are fundamental to including marginalised groups like disabled children in education.

These guidelines are primarily aimed at education staff trying to develop inclusive education practices, focussing on including disabled children in schools. While this book focuses on disabled children, we hope it will be useful for developing general inclusive education practices. Community groups and non-governmental organisations, as well as people working in community-based rehabilitation(CBR) and the wider disability context, could also use these guidelines to provide input into inclusive education work.

While the guidelines focus primarily on schools, much of the information is still relevant to readers working in out-of-school situations.

You can download this publication at
www.savethechildren.org.uk/development

Save the Children

Schools for All

Including disabled children in education

Save the Children

Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Who are these guidelines for?

These guidelines are aimed at Save the Children UK (SC UK) education staff and partners who are trying to develop inclusive education practices and, in particular, the inclusion of disabled children in education. They are also aimed at staff and partners working in disability, community-based rehabilitation (CBR), and other sectors, who are developing links with education programmes – or who may be called upon to provide input into inclusive education work.

What do they cover?

These guidelines take a holistic view of the educational needs of disabled children by examining the environment in which all children learn. The central message is that mainstream learning environments can include children who may have particular learning needs due to developmental delay or impairment. Inclusive education involves **child-centred** (rather than curriculum-centred) learning approaches.

These approaches are based on a recognition that individual children learn, and develop, in different ways and at different rates, and they seek to create a learning environment which responds to the needs of each child, including those with disabilities.

> The priority needs of disabled children are not special, they are basic. Disabled children need food, shelter, love and affection, protection, and education.

The aim of the guidelines is to support a process whereby schools become more **accessible** to disabled children and **responsive** to their needs.[1] 'Accessibility' is not simply about disabled children attending school – it means they should also be able to benefit from schooling, and access the curriculum. At the same time, the school environment needs to be flexible and supportive so that it can respond to the

needs of individual children, rather than assuming that the child should adapt to the education provision available.

The guidelines underline that improvements in **quality of education** go hand-in-hand with inclusion: accessible, quality, responsive learning environments will benefit all children, but they are particularly crucial for disabled children. It is important, for example, that children with hearing difficulties sit in positions where they can see best, and for teachers to use large, clear writing on blackboards and to eliminate background noise. These measures will help all children's learning, but they are critical in enabling children with hearing difficulties to access the curriculum.

We explore the **barriers** which prevent disabled children from learning, emphasising the importance of creating a barrier-free, and welcoming, environment for all children, while taking proper account of individual children's needs and abilities.

We focus on the importance of challenging prevailing perceptions and **attitudes** to disabled children, which often present the biggest barrier to disabled children accessing mainstream education, but we also acknowledge the need for practical guidance on how to include disabled children at different levels.

While the guidelines focus primarily on **schools**, much of the information is still relevant to readers working in **out-of-school** situations. The same basic principles can be applied to both school-based, and non-school-based, educational programmes.

Finally, we do not claim that developing inclusive education is an easy process. It is important to stress that this is often a **demanding and challenging** task for schools, and teachers – who need to challenge their own assumptions, build their capacity and develop new skills in order to include ALL pupils from the community.

How are the guidelines organised?

The guidelines are divided into six chapters, with some practical tips and tools at the back.

In Chapter 1, we define key terms such as 'inclusive', 'special' and 'integrated' education. We then outline the reasons for SC UK's support for inclusive education, in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 explores international documentation, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (UNCRC) and what it says about education and disabled children. We then examine, in Chapter 4, some of the barriers we can expect to encounter when promoting and developing inclusive education. Ways in which SC UK can support the development of inclusive education are outlined in

Chapter 5 and, finally, in Chapter 6, we summarise the key principles and activities involved in making inclusive education a reality.

Throughout the guidelines there are case studies. These are not necessarily intended to represent 'best practice', but to illustrate some of the issues and challenges, and give examples of some approaches used which may be helpful to other readers.

How to use the guidelines

Workshop tools
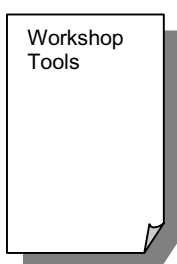
Workshop Tools

At the end of each section, you will find a workshop tool. This includes questions and activities to help you and your team think through some of the issues raised, considering how they apply in your specific context. Whilst these tools are designed to be used by teams (project officers, country/regional managers, or in joint work with partner organisations) they can also be read, and used, by individual readers.

Practical tips and tools

At the end of the guidelines, you will find a number of pages containing additional information which some readers may find helpful. These give advice and practical tools for including disabled children in mainstream schools. However, these pages and the main guidelines are **not** intended to be used as a 'recipe book' – such an approach would not work!
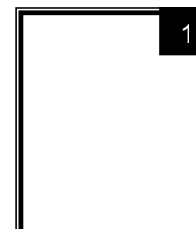
It is up to you how you use these pages. For example, some may be useful to photocopy for hand-outs if you hold meetings or training on inclusive education. Some may simply provide you with additional information, or checklists, to expand on what you have read in the booklet.

Poster

This booklet also has a poster attached. SC UK's disability staff and partners initially asked us to produce a poster, with some short, snappy messages about inclusive education. We soon realised there was a need for a more in-depth resource, but have also followed the original idea and produced a poster to complement the booklet, by highlighting a few of the key messages. You may choose to display it in your office, distribute copies to other agencies, or use it during training or awareness events.

The future

These guidelines do not set out to be the definitive guide to inclusive education. They represent an ongoing process of learning and sharing within SC UK. We hope that they will be updated, improved, added to and re-issued.

Please let us know what you think of this resource. Let us have your suggestions for improvements or additions, and tell us if you have other experiences or case studies which could illustrate particular issues.

See *practical tip and tool number 7* for suggested feedback questions
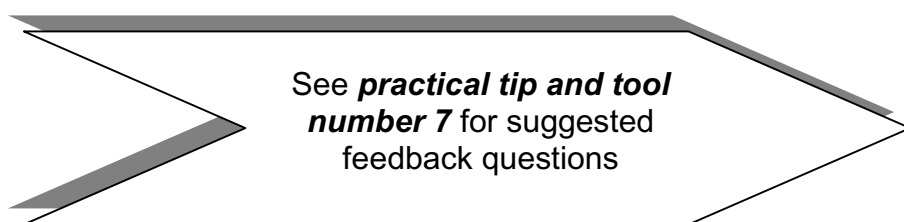
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What is inclusive education?

In this chapter, we will explain the concept of 'inclusive education' and how it applies to disabled children, and how this is different from 'special education'.

Inclusive education is a process of increasing the participation of all students in schools, including those with disabilities.[2] It is about restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality. It has the following characteristics:[3]

Inclusive education
- Acknowledges that all children can learn
- Acknowledges and respects differences in children: age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV and TB status, etc
- Enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children
- Is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society
- Is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving.

Inclusive education is different from **special education**, which takes a variety of forms including special schools, small units, and the integration of individual children with specialised support. Before going on to explore these different approaches to education for children with disabilities, it may be useful to clarify what we mean by the term 'disability'.

What do we mean by 'disability'?

There is no single agreed definition of the term 'disability'. SC UK believes that it is not just an individual child's impairment which 'disables' him or her. The way in which society responds to a child's

impairments is 'disabling', creating discrimination and barriers to participation (including participation in education).[4]

Understanding disability in this way has been described as the **'social model'**. It differs from the **'medical model'** by placing the responsibility for change on society, not on the individual who has an impairment.

What is 'special education'?

Special education evolved as a separate system of education for disabled children outside the 'mainstream', based on the assumption that disabled children had needs which could not be addressed within mainstream schools. Special education exists all over the world in the form of day, or boarding, schools, and small units attached to mainstream schools.

- **Special schools**

Special schools are usually organised according to impairment categories, such as schools for blind or deaf children, for children with learning difficulties, behaviour problems, physical and multiple impairments. Separate education for disabled children has resulted in separate cultures and identities of disabled people, and isolation from their homes and communities. 'Specialist' teachers are also divided into categories. They have additional training, or experience, of Braille, Sign Language, etc. Further separation exists in universities, in government bodies, parents' associations and disabled people's organisations.

Most poorer countries are only able to provide education for a tiny minority of disabled children. This generally takes place in institutions located in cities, or other places where children may be far from home. This weakens family bonds, alienates them from family life and future employment in the community, and can lead to abandonment. Disabled children, especially girls, are more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. This vulnerability is increased if they are educated in residential institutions.

There are, however, some advantages to special schools attended on a daily basis (usually in urban areas). The following table outlines some of the advantages and disadvantages of non-residential, segregated special schools.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Special schools can be developed as centres of excellence.	Special schools are usually not available in the child's immediate environment.
Concentration of expertise on specific impairments.	Expertise is only available for a small group of children.
Student–teacher ratio enables each child to have more attention.	System of teaching is very expensive. It is therefore not affordable, or sustainable, for all children.
Children grow up with their disabled peers and develop a common culture.	Children find it hard to re-adapt to life with their families, peers and communities.

The cost of special education per child is too high for most countries. Governments are recognising the need to develop a more affordable system which will provide quality education for all children. Increasingly, those working in special education are seeing the need to make links with the mainstream in order to move towards more inclusive practices.

- **Small units**

Small units for special education are sometimes attached to mainstream schools. These are usually staffed by a special teacher, who teaches a class of children, of mixed ages, in a separate classroom on the school campus. The children may spend all their time in the unit, or may be integrated into mainstream classes at particular times, for example for sport, or for some academic subjects.

The advantage of a school system which has special units is that services can be provided closer to a child's home, and in various locations. Children are, therefore, more likely to be able to attend school with their friends and be part of the community.

The disadvantage is that it can increase segregation for children who may have previously been included in mainstream classes. It may also limit children's learning opportunities due to a wide range of ages, impairments and learning needs sometimes being grouped together.

In Zambia, a child-to-child project was set up to break down the barriers created by the building of a unit. Disabled and non-disabled children were 'twinned' to help overcome the divisions between the unit and the mainstream school. The unit is now used as a resource base, the children are fully included in the main school, and the specialist teachers work within the main school. *(See Zambia case study, in Chapter 4, for further details.)*

- **Support teachers**

Teachers in special schools use specialised methods and skills to teach groups of disabled children. Unlike the role of these 'special teachers', the role of support teachers is to ensure that all children are included in mainstream classes, by supporting class teachers. Support teachers operate at many different levels: they can be volunteers based in the community, parents, hands-on trainers, or highly qualified advisers who support a number of schools in a district.

A support teacher may be an extra helper in the classroom, assigned to work with one particular child or class. At another level, supervisors may work flexibly with schools to adjust and improve teaching methods (where necessary), so that all children benefit equally. For example, they can help teachers to change the way they communicate, so that children are enabled to speak out and participate in class, despite their limitations in hearing, expression or understanding.

Support teachers can play an important role in rewarding, motivating and stimulating teachers by giving practical support and advice, identifying training needs and in securing additional support. This can help to change persistent negative attitudes to disability. But the cost of employing support teachers is often too high for many countries. Where this is the case, community members can be encouraged to volunteer their services.

What is the difference between integrated and inclusive education?

The terms 'integrated' and 'inclusive' are often used interchangeably, as if they mean the same thing. However, they represent major differences in philosophy. It is helpful to clarify their different meanings, and for practitioners to use the same language.

We recognise that, in some languages, it is not always possible to make the distinction between integration and inclusion. However, we

feel that an understanding of the distinction in English is helpful, and is important in promoting more inclusive practices. A simple distinction is:

> *Integrated education* is about disabled children going to mainstream schools (ie, the focus is on attendance rates).
>
> *Inclusive education* is about disabled children learning effectively once they are in mainstream schools (ie, the focus is on quality of learning).

• In integrated education the child is seen as the problem

The individual, or medical, model of disability determines that the child has to be changed, or rehabilitated, to fit the school system and society. For example, a deaf child may wear a hearing-aid and be expected to learn to talk in order to fit in. But the teachers and other children are not expected to learn sign language, or other forms of communication. A child with learning difficulties is expected to pass standardised tests in order to progress through school, otherwise s/he will repeat the class, or be forced to drop out.

• In inclusive education the system is expected to change, not the child

Inclusive education has grown out of the social model of disability. It recognises that all children are different, and that the school and the education system need to change in order to meet the individual needs of **all** learners – with and without impairments. Inclusion does not, however, mean assimilation – or making everyone the same. A key ingredient is flexibility – acknowledging that children learn at different rates, and that teachers need skills to support their learning in a flexible way. In the majority of cases, children simply need good, clear and accessible teaching. This includes the use of different methods to respond to children's different needs, capacities and rates of development. *(See diagram, at the end of this chapter.)*

• Can integrated education lead to inclusive education?

Integrated education is often accepted as a stepping-stone to inclusive education. However, the major limitation of integrated education is that as long as the school system remains rigid, only certain disabled children can be integrated. Some disabled children can never be 'prepared' or 'rehabilitated' enough to be accepted in a traditional mainstream classroom.

> Individual differences
> should be recognised
> and welcomed as part of
> the inclusion process.

Building on children's development
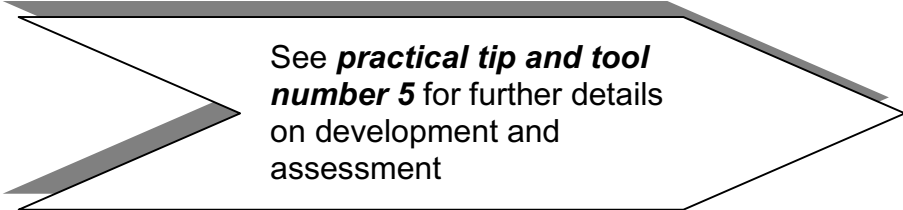
Inclusive education seeks to support, and build on, the process of development of each child. All aspects of child development (emotional, intellectual, creative, social and physical) need to be addressed if children are to achieve their full potential. To do this, it is fundamental that teachers have a good understanding of how children learn and develop.

- ### How can you measure child development?

Although there are some milestones in child development that can be used cross-culturally (especially physical ones), it is impossible to examine children's development without reference to the culture and context in which they are growing up. What is more, the pace and sequence of development is different for each child: children learn the same things in different ways and at different rates. Short-term delays in development can be caused by various factors, and this can sometimes make it difficult to identify disability-related, developmental delay.

- ### Developmental delay

There can be several causes for developmental delay, such as lack of security in the family, violence, lack of attention, malnutrition, disease or impairment. Where developmental delay is obvious and persistent – hampering a child's ability to cope with daily life – extra attention may be needed, either by improving the teacher's knowledge and skills, or by referring the child to an experienced organisation or individual.

> See *practical tip and tool number 5* for further details on development and assessment

Changing the education system

Positive teacher attitudes

Alternative methods of teacher education

Child-centred curriculum

Appropriate teaching aids and equipment

School improvement for all

Flexible teaching methods

Parent and community involvement

Reduction in drop-outs and repeaters

Well-supported teachers and schools
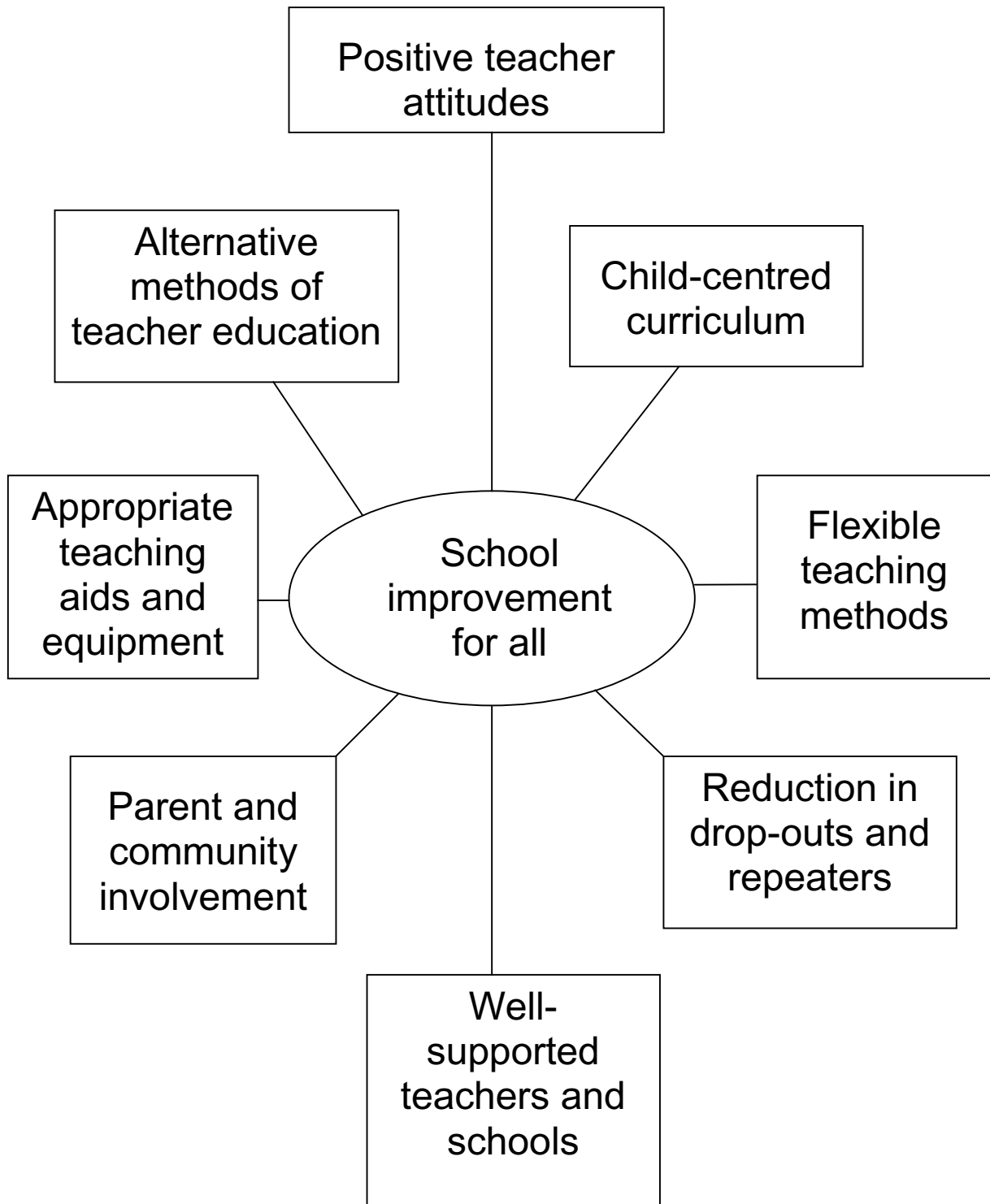
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Why does Save the Children promote the inclusion of disabled children in education?

In this chapter, we look at:
- Shifting attitudes within SC UK
- SC UK's education strategy
- What are the benefits of inclusion?

Shifting attitudes within SC UK

SC UK has a long history of supporting work with disabled children[5], but the organisation's promotion of inclusive education is relatively recent. Until the late 1980s, SC UK supported special education in a number of different country programmes.

• Questioning special education

It was through questioning support to a special school in Khemisset, Morocco, that SC UK's community-based disability policy was developed. The school was set up by SC UK in response to the needs of children who had post-polio paralysis. It was a boarding school, serving the whole of Morocco, and had high academic standards. But, a review concluded that disabled children's best interests were not being served by this approach, and a decision to phase out support was taken in 1986.

• Developing a community-based approach

In 1987, SC UK's first Global Disability Adviser was appointed to the London office with a remit to develop a disability policy for the organisation, by reviewing its history of support to disabled children,

and considering current changes in practice. A policy was developed encouraging the adoption of **community-based rehabilitation (CBR)** and integrated education (the term 'inclusive education' was not introduced until the mid-1990s).

This new policy brought SC UK's approach to disability into line with the principles of *primary health care* (on which much of SC UK's work is based), and *child rights*, which underpin all the organisation's work. All disabled children have a right to health, education and social welfare services, and to remain with their families.

- **The importance of education within community-based approaches**

The education of disabled children was seen as a priority within the context of CBR programmes. CBR workers were encouraged to promote the integration of disabled children into their local schools. The next stage was to encourage change *within* schools to support the inclusion of disabled children, and this shift from integration to inclusion was underpinned by the Education for All (EFA) Conference, which took place in Jomtien, in 1990.

The focus on inclusive education was strengthened during the 1990s, with review and documentation of integrated education programmes in Southern Africa and South-East Asia. This led to the adoption of inclusive approaches within Ministries of Education – as an alternative to special schools, or the creation of special units attached to schools. Inclusive education is now regarded by many Ministries of Education as being part of school improvement and EFA initiatives.

SC UK's education strategy

SC UK's education strategy emphasises the importance of ensuring that provision of quality education reaches vulnerable and marginalised children – including disabled children:

SC UK Education Strategy
Objective No 2: Inclusion
To ensure that education provision reaches children marginalised by poverty, social status, language, gender, disability, ethnicity, and the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Disabled children constitute a particularly vulnerable group, and are amongst the most disadvantaged educationally. Although statistics are unreliable, we know the majority of disabled children in poorer

countries do not attend school. National data reveals that only one to three per cent of disabled children are enrolled in special schools.[6] Little is known about the numbers attending mainstream schools. SC UK opposes all forms of discrimination and aims to promote the right to life, development, education, health and protection of all children, disabled or non-disabled.

At the same time, the education strategy emphasises that quality of education is as important as access:

SC UK Education Strategy
Objective No 1: Purpose and quality of education
To equip children with knowledge, skills and understanding to help them deal with real life challenges and to become active members of society.

SC UK believes that good quality education is responsive, relevant, developmentally appropriate and participatory – and these are all characteristics, too, of inclusive education. The *'Education Quality Guidelines'* series (of which this document is a part) outlines in more detail various aspects of education quality. Throughout the series, we emphasise the importance of including all children, challenging discrimination and prejudice, building on children's strengths, and using child-centred approaches.

Education cannot be inclusive without being good quality, and the reverse is also true: education cannot be good quality without being inclusive.

What are the benefits of inclusion?

- **Inclusive education can help to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion**

Disability and poverty are closely interlinked. Poor children are less likely to receive early intervention and support, and more likely to suffer lasting impairments. The reverse is also true: families struggling with disability are more likely to be trapped in poverty due to a range of challenges including negative attitudes, problems with mobility, earning power, child-care problems, etc. Children and families struggling with disability are systematically excluded, and the poorer they are, the greater that exclusion is likely to be.

Education can offer the practical skills, and knowledge, needed to break out of the cycle of poverty. But inclusive education goes further by giving an opportunity to disabled children and adults to challenge

prejudice, become visible, and gain the confidence to speak for themselves and build their own future within the mainstream of society.

• Inclusive education enables disabled children to stay with their families and communities

The placing of children away from their homes and families to attend residential special schools is a contradiction of their rights to home, family and their involvement in the community. Although there may, sometimes, be educational benefits to attending a special school, the separation of disabled children from their families and communities often confirms society's prejudice towards disabled people.

> *'Disabled children are particularly vulnerable to abuse in the very institutions that are designed to protect them. There, they are more dependent on larger numbers of adults, often for quite intimate forms of care.'[7]*

Disabled children living in institutions are particularly vulnerable to neglect, and to physical and sexual abuse. Those children who are totally dependent on carers in daily life will be most at risk – very young and female disabled children in particular. When abuse takes place, children isolated in institutions have no one to help them complain or defend themselves. (*See Chapter 4*, *for more details on the issue of dependency*.)

SC UK is committed to promoting community-based inclusive practices. Previous experience of supporting residential special schools has reinforced the importance of enabling children to remain with their families, wherever possible. Attempts to influence change from within institutions have all failed. SC UK's current policy is therefore to support alternatives to institutional care.

• Inclusive education can improve the quality of education for all

Inclusive education can act as a catalyst for change in educational practice, leading to improved quality of education. Including disabled children in mainstream schools challenges teachers to develop more child-centred, participatory, and active teaching approaches – and this benefits all children.

Teachers often think they need 'special skills' to teach disabled children, but experience has shown that in most cases disabled children can be included through good, clear and accessible teaching which encourages the active participation of children. These are all

skills which teachers need to deliver quality education to all children, disabled or non-disabled. In addition to these skills, teachers may also need some specific technical help and/or equipment to meet certain children's impairments.

Inclusive education has been introduced in many countries with modest education budgets, and relatively little technical help. Improvements in teaching quality and student achievement (as well as reduced drop-out and failure rates), have been some of the positive outcomes.

• Inclusive education can help overcome discrimination

Discriminatory attitudes towards disabled people persist in society because of lack of awareness and information and little, or no, experience of living closely with disabled people. It is difficult to break down these attitudinal barriers, but experience has shown that, within the right context, children can be more accepting of difference than adults. Children are our future parents, teachers, lawyers and policy-makers. If they go to school with disabled children they will learn not to discriminate – this is a lesson for life.

> *'…the programme benefits everyone. The non-disabled benefit from interaction: they learn a lot from disabled children such as social responsibility. We have been asking the question: "How can we cater to individual needs?" for a long time, but it was not until this programme that we understood how to do it … to stop this programme would be like asking a repentant sinner to return to their sins! Education is for all!'*
> *District Education Officer, Lesotho*

• Inclusive education promotes wider inclusion

Inclusive education is in keeping with SC UK's global disability policy, which reflects a twin-track approach to disability programming:

1) *Supporting targeted initiatives* which strengthen the capacity of disabled children, and their families, to assert their rights and address their own priorities (eg, support to disabled people's organisations, community-based rehabilitation, etc).
2) *Integrating a disability perspective* into all areas of SC UK's work in order to challenge discrimination and exclusion, ensuring that the rights and needs of disabled children are taken into account in all programmes.

Inclusive education responds to both these aims: it promotes activities which help disabled children to develop their full potential, become self-reliant and participate in their own communities. At the same time, it challenges discriminatory attitudes in the community, helping parents to think positively about their disabled children and promoting wider social inclusion.

> Inclusive education is a strategy contributing towards the ultimate goal of promoting an inclusive society.
>
> *Sue Stubbs, Disability Adviser*
> *SC UK 1991–2001*

Workshop tool

Education opportunities for disabled children

Summary

SC UK believes that inclusive education:
- Can help break the cycle of poverty and exclusion
- Enables children to stay with their families and communities
- Can improve the quality of education for all
- Can help overcome discrimination
- Promotes wider inclusion.

Activity

- How well known and/or used is inclusive education in your context?
- What other educational opportunities are currently available for disabled children in your context (eg, special schools, informal education at home, etc)? Write down each example on a card.
- Divide into small groups, each taking one example and discuss the following questions:

    a) To what extent does this approach impact on the right of children to stay with their families and communities?
    b) To what extent does this approach strengthen teaching methods, improving the quality of education for all?
    c) To what extent does this approach impact on discrimination?
    d) To what extent does this approach promote inclusion of disabled children into the wider community?

- Join up with someone from another group and compare your conclusions

3
Inclusive education and rights

In this chapter, we explain the main international conventions relevant to education and disabled children.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) – what does it say about disabled children and education?

SC UK is committed to making a reality of children's rights and its work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (UNCRC). The UNCRC protects and promotes the rights of all children, including disabled children. Articles 2, 23, 28 & 29 are particularly relevant to the rights of disabled children.

> Disabled children have a **right** to education.
> Schools have a **responsibility** to educate all children.

Article 2: Non-discrimination

> *All rights apply equally to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.*

Article 2 is the key Article for disabled children. It states clearly that every Article applies equally, and without exception, to all children, irrespective of race, colour, sex, disability, birth or other status.

Disabled children, therefore, have the same rights as other children. This includes, for example, the right to education, to survival and development, to know and be cared for by their families, to participate in leisure activities, and to have their opinions heard.

However, disabled children routinely face discrimination and many, such as disabled girls or disabled children from other minority groups, face multiple forms of discrimination. In many cases, disabled children do not attend school because of discriminatory attitudes or a lack of awareness as to how they should be included.

Articles 28 & 29: Education

> *The child has a right to education, and the State's duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education accessible to every child and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity.*

Article 28 reinforces that all children, including those with impairments and difficulties in learning, have a right to education. However, there is no specific mention of the importance of early intervention and pre-school education, which can help to reduce the impact of impairments.

The Committee on the UNCRC has further discussed key issues arising from some of the articles. This is to help with their interpretation and implementation. The Aims of Education have been further elaborated in General Comment No 1.[8]

Article 23: Disabled children's rights

> *A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration possible.*

Article 23 emphasises that, in order to implement the principle of non-discrimination, disabled children have the right to have their individual needs met. The article suggests that disabled children may need 'special care'. This implies that the only problems facing disabled children are to do with their own impairments. No mention is made of the barriers children face in society.

Unfortunately, Article 23 can easily be misinterpreted. It could justify the segregation of disabled children because they are seen as needing 'special care'. It also implies that disabled children can only

have access to their rights 'where resources allow', since 'special care' is usually expensive.

The overall emphasis in Article 23 is on welfare rather than rights. It does not promote inclusive education or inclusive social policy. However the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities make it very clear that the rights of disabled people are to be achieved through a policy of inclusion. It is the combination of this principle, and the rights provided by the UNCRC, that determines the rights of children with disabilities.[9]

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994)

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action provides more detailed guidance on inclusive education internationally. It came out of the Salamanca Conference, organised by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Special Needs Education department, in 1994, in order to further the objective of Education for All (EFA). The conference considered the policy shifts required to promote inclusive education. Participants were concerned to develop ways for schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs, rather than to create separate facilities. The following quotes are taken from Part 2 of the Salamanca Statement. They clearly state that all children have unique learning needs, and have the right to attend their local school:

- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those who have special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.

A proposed UN Convention on the Human Rights of People with Disabilities

Disabled people's organisations are campaigning for a Convention to protect the specific needs of disabled children and adults. They feel the current UN Conventions are inadequate, in view of the continuing gross violations of disabled people's human rights.

See *practical tip and tool number 5* for details of the international documents mentioned above
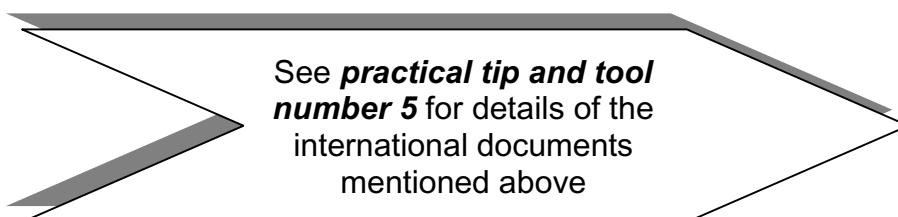
Workshop tool

Child rights and inclusive education

Summary

The following articles of the UNCRC deal with disability and education:

- Article 2: Non-discrimination
- Articles 28 & 29: Quality education for all
- Article 23: Disabled children's rights

Discussion

With your context in mind, discuss these questions:

- How well known and/or accepted are these rights?
- Which one would you say presents the greatest challenge?
- How can inclusive education promote and defend these rights?

4
Addressing barriers to inclusive education

In this chapter, we consider the following barriers:
- Negative attitudes
- Invisibility in the community
- Invisibility in school
- Cost
- Physical access
- Class sizes
- Poverty
- Gender discrimination
- Dependency
- Emergency and refugee situations.

Negative attitudes

Negative attitudes to disability are, arguably, the single biggest barrier to disabled children accessing and benefiting from mainstream education. Negative attitudes can be found at all levels: parents, community members, schools and teachers, government officials and even disabled children themselves. Fear, taboo, shame, lack of knowledge, misinformation and socio-economic values about human life, respect and dignity all encourage negative attitudes towards disability. The impact of such attitudes is evident in the home, school, community and at the level of national policy-making in terms of planning, budgeting and programming.

At the household level, disabled children and their families often develop low self-esteem, hiding away and shunning social interaction, which can lead directly to their exclusion from education.

In all societies, there is a need to raise awareness of the fact that disabled children have the same rights and needs as other children.

Overcoming negative attitudes presents an enormous challenge, but it is the key to providing inclusive education.

Invisibility in the community

Disabled children who do not attend school are often invisible in their communities. Parents tend either to over-protect or overlook their children. Fearing for their safety, or for the respect and honour of the family, parents sometimes lock their disabled children in the house when they have to go out, or hide them completely so that neighbours may not even know they exist. When conducting home-surveys or population censuses, families may not include their disabled children in the counting, unless the researcher asks enough of the right questions to make families realise they have overlooked these children.

Changing community attitudes, Nepal

In Nepal, SC UK has been working with disabled children on the issue of access to education. Success stories of disabled children from all over Nepal who have managed to begin attending school have been publicised. Their parents are now proud, not embarrassed. Advocacy groups of disabled children have been formed independently, by children becoming active in their communities. Here is the story of one child, Sangita Sony:

"When I started attending the group set up by SC UK, I realised that I wasn't the only blind girl in Nepal. I'm now taking part in a project where disabled children like myself try to convince parents to send their disabled children to school. We've also started our own blind children's group, and I'm the secretary. I've learned that we have to raise our voices so that other children won't be exploited and denied their rights."[10]

In many countries, child-to-child methodology has been very successful in supporting children to conduct surveys in their communities, to find and engage with these invisible girls and boys. This survey technique has also been used to challenge negative attitudes to disability in their communities. In Lesotho, a disabled girl was taught at home by her friends, unknown to their parents and teachers.[11] In the following example from Zambia, children use this

survey method to further their understanding of maths, English and geography. The village schoolteacher described has received small amounts of funding over many years from the London-based, Child-to-Child Trust.

Children's participation in community surveys, Zambia

A village schoolteacher in Zambia gave his class the task of identifying those children who were excluded from school. This was part of his strategy to democratise his classroom and encourage more active-learning techniques.[12] It was also an effort to identify the invisible disabled children in the local community.

A foreign donor funded the building of a special unit for children with intellectual impairments, attached to the village school. The government provided a specialist teacher who was qualified to teach a maximum of five children with such impairments. However, the children identified thirty more children who were not attending school and who needed extra help. After some difficult negotiations, all thirty children were allowed into the school. Gradually, the barriers that had developed between the special unit and the rest of the school are being broken down.

The opening of the unit highlighted the needs of those children who had already been identified as 'slow learners'. They began to play a significant role in making teaching aids for those with more severe difficulties. The children have played an active role in making friends with the disabled children through a 'twinning' scheme, in order to lessen the isolation and discrimination they were facing. The specialist teachers are now working as support teachers within the main school, and disabled children are no longer taught separately in the unit. It was the children's participation that brought about the most significant changes in the lives of those children who were previously invisible.

Invisibility in school

A lack of child-centred approaches in education is often at the heart of 'invisibility in school'. Where the focus is on the curriculum and on what is taught, rather than on individual children's needs and the process of learning, children's individual potential tends to be overlooked, under-stimulated or approached in a negative way.[13]

Many children are delayed in their development and these delays may be overlooked, or misunderstood. They may only have a short-term impact, but they can affect a child's ability to learn at any point

during their school life. Some may simply be behind in a particular development area (eg, speech), while others may actually have impairments (eg, hearing) which have not been – and may never be – recognised. If developmental delays or impairments are not recognised and addressed appropriately, children are likely to have difficulty in learning key skills such as reading and writing. In many countries, such children are labelled 'slow learners' and, with no encouragement to learn at their own pace or in an alternative way, they are likely to 'drop out' before completing primary school.

When teaching is not in the mother tongue but in a second or third language, children with developmental delays or impairments are likely to find things even more difficult. Similarly, negative responses towards (or even physical punishments for) poor performance at school are likely to make the problem worse. Indeed, some difficulties in learning are created as a direct result of misunderstanding the child, and an unwelcoming school system or poor teaching. In South Africa, these have been called 'system-created' delays in learning.

In Lesotho, a feasibility study was conducted before the inclusive education programme started. This showed 17 per cent of children in primary schools had some sort of difficulties in learning, either temporary or permanent.[14] The extent to which these conditions become disabling depends upon how the children are treated by others in school and at home, and how this affects their self-esteem.

Cost

It is common to hear policy-makers and donors say that Country X cannot afford to educate its disabled children: 'Special education is a luxury we cannot afford.' This is based on the assumption that disabled children should be educated separately, and that this is both expensive and labour-intensive.

In richer countries, regulations state that class sizes in special schools should be small, usually less than ten children, and sometimes classes are as small as two. All classes have support assistants as well as a teacher. Those children who are placed in mainstream schools often have their own personal assistant. Such small class sizes and staff–pupil ratios are clearly not replicable in poorer countries, nor are they necessarily desirable.

Lao PDR is an interesting example of a country where inclusive education was introduced at a modest cost. When SC UK was invited by the government to assist in the process of school improvement, there was no educational provision designed to cater specifically to

the needs of any of its disabled children. The system introduced had to be affordable, and replicable, throughout the country.

An affordable national Inclusive Education Programme in Lao PDR
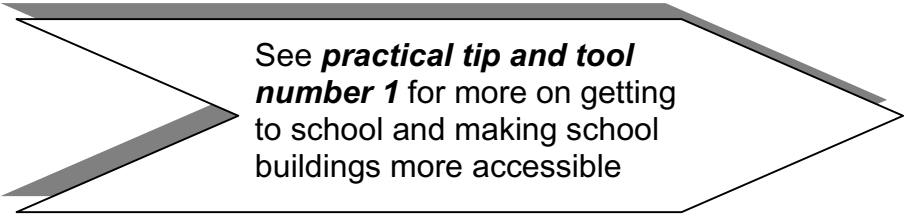
Access to education for Lao PDR's scattered and ethnically diverse population of 4.5 million improved enormously following the revolution in 1975.[15] However, access did not match quality and there was great concern about how to improve standards in schools. In 1989, SC UK was invited by the government to help improve the pre- and in-service, teacher-training courses. The 'integrated education' programme, as it was known then, grew naturally out of this school improvement initiative.

Beginning with a pilot primary school in 1993, the programme had spread to 78 schools and kindergartens in 12 of the 17 provinces by 1998. A maximum of 3 children with 'special educational needs', or impairments, are integrated into classes of no more than 45 children. This is in addition to any children who have difficulties with learning.

The Ministry of Education plans to have at least one inclusive school in each district by 2005. This has all been achieved on an initial annual budget of about US$25,000. In addition, SC UK provided technical assistance for three years, and has continued to play a supportive role. Costs have risen as the work has expanded, but they are still modest for the amount of output.[16]

Physical access

Travelling to and from school can be very difficult for all children, and is often used as an excuse for not sending disabled children to school. Once children have reached school, there are other physical access issues to consider as regards entering the school buildings, and ease of movement around the teaching and recreation areas. The physical safety and comfort of children should also be a major concern in all schools if learning is to be accessible.

See *practical tip and tool number 1* for more on getting to school and making school buildings more accessible

Class sizes

Large class sizes are seen as a barrier to the inclusion of disabled children in all countries. In economically wealthy countries, class sizes of 30 are considered too large, yet in poorly resourced countries, class sizes of 60–100 are the norm.

Small, well-managed classes are, of course, more desirable than large classes with inadequate resources. However, the size of the class is **not** necessarily a significant factor for the success of inclusion, where attitudes are **positive and welcoming**. There are many examples of disabled children being successfully included in large classes. Attitudinal barriers to inclusion are arguably greater than the barriers posed by inadequate material resources.

Inclusion … despite class sizes of 115, Lesotho[17]

A study was carried out, in 1994, in Lesotho in two schools, which were both part of the Ministry of Education's pilot inclusive education programme. One school, situated relatively close to the capital, Maseru, had average class sizes of 50, and had a history of integrating children with physical impairments only. The other school was situated in the mountains, 8 hours' drive from the capital, and had class sizes of over 115 girls and boys.

The teachers in the first school had been negative towards the inclusive education programme from the beginning. The school had a good academic reputation and they feared that this would be threatened by spending time on 'slow learners'. They regarded the hostel for disabled children as the mission's responsibility, and one that had been imposed on the teachers.

The teachers in the mountain school were so highly motivated that they were using their spare time in lunch breaks, at weekends and in the evenings to give extra help to those children who needed it, visit families, and even take children to hospital appointments. The fact that they had such large class sizes was not a barrier to educational inclusion. The teachers were coping with the large classes in ways they found acceptable but, when asked their opinion, said that of course they would have preferred class sizes of 50-55.

Teachers in Lesotho have shown tremendous goodwill in devoting themselves to the success of inclusion in their schools. This is an inspiring example, but it would be unreasonable to expect teachers to give up their free time routinely. It is a bonus if they do. Managers should try to build any extra responsibilities into the teachers' workloads and responsibilities.

A parent's perspective

Excluding a disabled child from the school will not significantly reduce the size of the class, nor address the problems associated with large class sizes. A parent member of the Lesotho Society of Mentally Handicapped Persons (LSMHP) makes the point that large classes are not a justification for discrimination:

> 'Why should it be my disabled child who misses out just because the class size is too big?'

Poverty

There is a strong correlation between poverty and low levels of schooling and educational opportunity generally. In the case of disabled children, poverty exacerbates and deepens the extent of their disability and social exclusion. Disability may be both a cause and a consequence of a family's poverty.

Education programmes aimed at the poorest children may still exclude disabled children, with excuses about expense and lack of expertise being used. But with a little effort these attitudes can be successfully challenged:

Community schools, Mali

SC UK has supported a community schools' project in two villages in a remote and very poor district in Mali, where only eight per cent of all children attended school. One of the aims of this initiative was that the community schools would include disabled boys and girls. Activities to raise awareness of disability were carried out in the community prior to recruiting children for the school, and members of the school committee were dedicated to recruiting disabled girls and boys. Poverty is a major issue here, but at no time did the community see this as being a barrier to including disabled children.

Gender discrimination

When schools and education systems become more aware of gender discrimination and inequalities, they do not automatically focus on

disabled boys and girls in their gender analyses. The extent to which opportunities for disabled girls and boys differ will depend on the cultural, and socio-economic, context. Disabled boys may be prioritised over disabled girls for family expenditure on education, while, in some contexts, fixed ideals of masculinity may compound negative attitudes towards disability in boys even more than in girls.

Disabled girls face particular problems:

- **Security and safety issues:** Disabled girls are more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. In addition to abuse at home, it can happen in school, or on the way to school.
- **Lack of privacy:** This can be a problem if the girls need help with using the toilet or changing clothes.
- **Domestic work:** Anecdotal evidence suggests that disabled girls may be more exploited in the home than non-disabled girls. The 'pointlessness of education' argument further reinforces this.

A great deal has been written about the 'double discrimination' or 'multiple discrimination' faced by disabled girls and women, or by girls and women who care for disabled family members. Girls are discriminated against from birth, have lower life expectancy and receive less care, especially if they are disabled. They may be considered an extra burden or cause of despair, and their rights are less likely to be upheld. These problems are compounded if they are refugees, street or working girls, or from minority ethnic groups

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Gender discrimination in special schools, India

There is a higher rate of blindness among women in India: 54 per cent of blind people are women and 46 per cent are men. Yet there are fewer schools for blind and visually-impaired girls. In New Delhi, of the ten schools for blind children, only one is for girls, and a second is for girls and boys, while eight out of the ten special schools cater specifically for blind boys.[18]

Dependency

Dependency, or inter-dependence, is a normal part of daily life. However, the high level of dependency of some disabled children on their carers can be a barrier to inclusion in education and, in some cases, can leave disabled children vulnerable to abuse.

Article 23 of the UNCRC *(see Chapter 3, and practical tip and tool number 5)* states that disabled children have a right to live 'in dignity' and to 'achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance'. However, a significant number of disabled children will always be dependent upon others in daily life, and for their inclusion in groups. Their dignity can be threatened because they depend on others for all routine activities, such as going to the toilet. This can become a problem for both the children and their carers.

Children rarely depend on one carer. They may have many, who each perform a variety of roles. Carers in the home are usually relatives, while at school they might be teachers, siblings or classmates – the many different changes of carer can be a problem in itself.

Relying on friends for practical help

'Sometimes other children, who were not my friends, took me to the toilet and helped me on to the wheelchair. In 1998, I had a problem with my friend who was taking care of me. She became pregnant and left school. But I had another friend, who is also disabled, and she did the same things that my first helper did. I also had a problem with her. She could not finish her schooling because she did not have enough money to pay the boarding fees.'

The words of Mamello, a disabled girl in a mainstream school.
Excerpt from EENET newsletter Issue 5, p.10.

Without help in feeding, toileting and communication, many children would be unable to attend school. If this help is refused, or becomes abusive, there will be a direct impact on the child's education. Teachers need to be aware of the potential violations of child rights, which can take place when children are dependent on others within the school environment. Even where the relationship between the disabled child and his or her carer is good, the bond of dependency which develops can limit them both from speaking out or acting freely.

The more dependent children are, the more vulnerable they are to neglect, mistreatment and abuse. Transparency in care relations is, therefore, important for enabling children to complain, ask for confidentiality, or assistance in preventing or dealing with

mistreatment. This will be the case in any situation, whether the child is at home, in school, in an institution or a refugee camp.

Emergency, conflict and refugee situations

Conflict and emergencies not only lead to children becoming disabled: they also increase the vulnerability of those children already disabled.

Maintaining education systems in emergency or refugee situations is always a challenge, and it is important that disabled children's needs are recognised and supported in these situations as in others. The basic principles of disabled girls' and boys' right to education and non-discrimination should be applied in emergency and refugee situations.

Educational inclusion can work even in particularly difficult situations, such as a refugee camp. In fact, providing education in such challenging situations – where staff may be able to make policy themselves without waiting for Ministry directives – can give rise to responsive, innovative and flexible education policies and learning practices. Furthermore, the valuable skills they have learnt can be used in more peaceful times, or on returning to their home country or area.[19]

Bhutanese refugees, Jhapa, Nepal

In the Jhapa refugee programme in Nepal, disabled girls and boys were identified as a particularly vulnerable group whose needs were not being met. The manager appointed a full-time, disability co-ordinator, who piloted some participatory, action-based research to provide a basis for a programme. SC UK's London-based, disability adviser provided some technical support, including access to key texts.

During the course of the action research, disabled children spoke about how they could help their families, but felt excluded because they were teased if they went outside their homes. Education was the first priority identified by both parents and children. After the first 18 months, over 700 children had been integrated into schools and sign language training had been carried out in all camps with both deaf and hearing children.

'There is no reason why we could not have included the needs of disabled children and adults from the start … It is not necessary to know "scientific names with classification and categorisation" in order to incorporate disabled people's concerns into food distribution, health and education programmes.'[20]

Bhutanese Refugee Camp Programme Officer
Jhapa, Nepal

Workshop tool

Barriers to inclusive education

Summary

Perceived barriers to inclusive education may relate to:
- Negative attitudes
- Invisibility
- Cost
- Physical access
- Class sizes
- Poverty
- Gender discrimination
- Dependency
- Emergencies.

Activity

- Imagine you are a disabled child in your context.
  What is your name? Age? Gender?
  What is the nature of your disability?
  Where do you live, and with whom?

- Think about what opportunities you may have for accessing existing education systems, and what the obstacles might be. Refer to the list above.

- On a flip-chart, draw five circles inside each other. The smallest circle in the middle represents the child, the next represents the family, then the community, the school and the largest circle represents systems (eg, economic system, education system, etc). Label the circles.

- Are the opportunities/obstacles at the level of the child, family, community, school or wider social systems? Plot your thoughts on the chart, using differently coloured pens to show opportunities and obstacles.

- Look at the chart you have drawn: are the opportunities and obstacles evenly spread? Or do they focus on one level more than another?

5

How can we support inclusive education?

In this chapter, we explore ways of supporting inclusive education by promoting:
- Positive attitudes
- Inclusive learning environments
- Early intervention
- Positive role models
- Appropriate policy development
- Change of system in education.

By promoting positive attitudes

Society's lack of knowledge, misinformation and negative attitudes lead directly to the exclusion of disabled girls and boys from education. Furthermore, where disabled children's capacities, rights and needs are constantly underestimated, they are likely to develop low self-esteem and negative attitudes about themselves and their abilities.

In all societies, there is a need to raise awareness that each child is unique and different, and that disabled children have the same rights, needs and aspirations as all children. Awareness work is important at all levels in society – child, family, community – to counteract fear, misunderstanding and negative attitudes. The most effective way to do this is through participation by disabled people and children.

The impact of negative attitudes is also evident at policy level, in legislation, and in school practice. Education officials, teachers and NGOs need to develop a sound understanding of disability as a social challenge – it is about lack of opportunities for disabled children to develop their full potential and participate in society – rather than seeing disabled children as children who 'lack' some skills or abilities. Only when this concept is grasped will individuals

and organisations involved in education recognise their responsibility for helping to break the cycle of negative attitudes and segregation.

Challenging exclusion in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam [21]

Vietnam was the second country in the world to sign the UNCRC and, in 1991, drew up a seven-point National Action Plan. In 1993, two seminars were organised by the Department of Education, with SC UK support, to demonstrate the UNESCO *Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom*. Several District Education Service officials realised, through this workshop, that many children with mild impairments were already integrated into mainstream schools, and that this was something they should be proud of.

Prior to enrolment in kindergarten, children are required to have a medical check-up to certify they are in good health. This can be used as an excuse to refuse admission to a disabled child by teachers who are concerned that their salary bonus points may be deducted if a child does not make progress. While many disabled children are accepted unofficially into kindergartens, their teachers can face criticism for doing so.

As part of the programme, workshops were conducted in the school and in the community, for parents and local ward and district cadres to build more positive attitudes towards disabled children. Newspaper articles also contributed to public awareness about the programme. As a result, parents showed more interest in enrolling their disabled children, the parents of non-disabled children became less afraid and local people offered donations. A visit from a group of foreign teachers helped to raise the local teachers' confidence in what they were doing.

Programmes like this can make a significant difference but, in the long term, negative attitudes are a reflection of society's values and it is only when disabled people are empowered through education to take part in society on an equal basis as teachers, lawyers, architects, etc, that society's attitudes will become more positive.

By promoting inclusive learning environments

Creating a welcoming and accessible environment in which children can learn is a major part of inclusive education. Children need to be able to travel safely to school, and be in a safe physical and social environment.

See *practical tip and tool number 1* for more on the physical environment
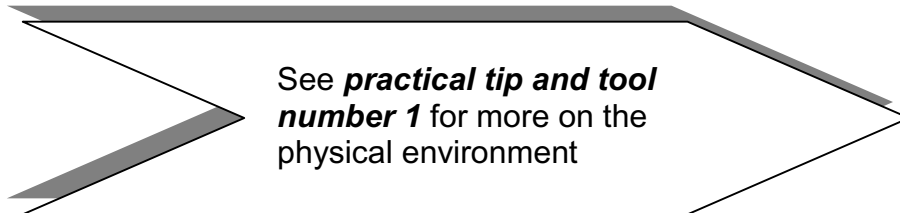
They also need a caring and stimulating learning environment to understand what is being taught, and be able to interact with their peers and teachers. This may require the adjustment of teaching methods, materials, settings and timetabling, rather than adjusting the children to existing methods. Such adjustments will benefit education quality for all children – not only those with a disability.

See *practical tip and tool number 2* for more on the learning environment
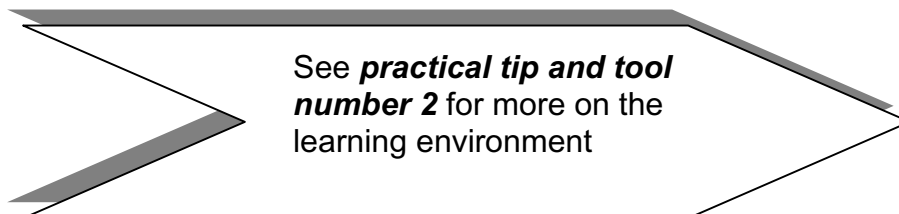
The following example, from England, focuses on key issues in developing more inclusive learning environments:

A framework for improving teaching and learning, Lewisham England [22]

The Local Education Authority in Lewisham, London, contracted an educational researcher at the University of Manchester to work with teachers in several schools to develop a framework for encouraging more inclusive classroom practices. Teaching techniques were studied and developed collaboratively. They found the following skills to be critical:

- Use of questions during lessons to encourage the active participation of class members
- Monitoring the responses of the individuals in the class
- Use of intuition and developing a good relationship with their class
- Maintaining a lively pace while teaching.

The quality of the relationships in the class, and the teachers' communication skills, are central to the development of an inclusive learning environment where all children participate. Three methods of supporting learning were highlighted in Lewisham:

- Child-to-child techniques, which use the students as a resource within the classroom
- Team-work among all teachers and other adults, demonstrating a shared commitment to more effective practice
- Home-school partnerships, to provide additional support where required.

By promoting early intervention

It is widely recognised that the greatest impact in improving a disabled child's life can be achieved in early childhood (0-6 years). Appropriate early intervention will have a much greater impact, and be more cost-effective, than prolonged interventions later in life. This is especially the case in preventing an impairment from becoming more severe. In other words: the earlier the intervention, the greater the impact on the child's future development.

In Papua, New Guinea, early intervention and family support were prioritised as part of the development of more inclusive teacher education.

Inclusive early intervention, Papua New Guinea [23]

In 1991, the government of Papua New Guinea, decided to introduce changes in the pre-service training of teachers. Special educational needs were incorporated into the existing three-year, training programme. To support the government's inclusive education programme, Callan Services for Disabled Persons established a community-based 'home contact' scheme, and an inclusive kindergarten and pre-school. Callan Services were, in turn, supported by Christoffel Blinden Mission, who appointed an expatriate adviser.

As a result of this initiative, hearing and deaf children learned to communicate with each other from an early age, without fear or prejudice. The hearing children then acted as interpreters for the deaf children when they moved up into primary school, and met teachers who had not received training in sign language. In addition, families and communities were exposed to deaf issues, and educated about the needs of deaf children.

(See also the case study below from Anhui, China)

By promoting positive role models

All girls and boys need positive role models. Positive adult role models are essential for the development of self-esteem and self-worth in children. Many disabled children, however, grow up never having met a disabled adult and so do not understand what growing up will mean for them. Disabled children may grow up more isolated than children in other groups facing discrimination (for example, girls or children from ethnic minorities) because most disabled children are born to non-disabled adults, and most disabled adults give birth to non-disabled children. Disabled children do not, therefore, naturally come into contact with disabled adults or, necessarily, with other disabled children, and this needs to be addressed as part of the inclusion process.

Ideally, disabled men and women should be involved, in some way, in the education of disabled children. This could be done initially through home visits and CBR. Disabled adults could help prepare children for school, while encouraging the parents that education is worthwhile. Disabled men and women could be invited to give talks to the school about their lives and achievements. Disabled adults have an important advocacy role to play in education, whether they are parents, school committee members, teachers, or simply members of the local community. In the case of deaf children, it is considered essential that they have the opportunity to interact with

deaf adults and other deaf children so they can develop their sign language skills.

By supporting appropriate policy development

Society's negative attitudes can often be translated into inappropriate national policy. It is rare that any effort is made to include disabled children in developing policies relevant to their needs. Such inappropriate policies can often be more disabling than the complete absence of policy, for example, policies (common in central and eastern Europe) which support automatic institutionalisation to meet a disabled child's needs.

The right of all disabled girls and boys to have access to education has been endorsed by those countries which have signed the UNCRC. However, very few countries have formulated their own distinct policies on the education of disabled children. Currently the most notable examples of progressive education policies which *do* include disabled children are those in South Africa and in Uganda.[25] In Lesotho, a policy was developed many years ago, but the government faced the problem of a lack of confidence or expertise to implement it. SC UK acted as a catalyst in bringing together the key

stakeholders, including disabled people, and helping the Ministry of Education put policies into practice.

Policy Development in Lesotho [26]

The Ministry of Education's policy to include disabled children in their local primary schools was informed by a study carried out by a consultant, in 1987. The study was commissioned by the Ministry, with USAID's financial support, and highlighted the fact that institutional care of disabled children was detrimental to the child's emotional and psychological well-being, violated traditional care-taking practices, was very costly and only reached a minority.

A lengthy consultation process took place with key stakeholders in order to turn an inclusion policy into action. This was led by SC UK's Regional Disability Adviser, in partnership with the national disabled people's organisation. It was a slow process, requiring a huge change in thinking – away from the unquestioned practice of institutional care for a minority of disabled children, to the right to education for all disabled children in their local schools. The government's Special Education Unit was founded in 1991, with the support of a SC UK adviser, and inclusive education was introduced into ten pilot schools. The strength of the programme lay in its strong body of supporters. They were drawn from a wide cross-section of the community and had been involved, from an early stage, in discussions about how to put the new policy into action. There was a much more co-ordinated response to the needs and rights of disabled children as a result of this new policy.

By supporting change of system in education

The introduction of more inclusive practices in education necessitates change in curriculum, teacher-training, teaching methodology and teacher attitudes. Ideally, changes would take place prior to the inclusion of disabled children. But it would be unrealistic to wait for such changes to happen before introducing inclusive education. In Lesotho, it

School improvement may be the result of the introduction of integrated education or it may provide the opportunity for integrated education to happen. But whichever route is taken, school improvement must take place.

was, in fact, the introduction of an inclusive approach that led to the changes in teacher-training and teacher attitudes.

In many countries, the training of special education teachers is organised separately. If all teachers are to be expected to teach children with a range of abilities and impairments, their training should reflect this. Similarly, if the role of specialists is to change within an inclusive system, they also need more appropriate training to enable them to take on the role of supporting local schools in developing more inclusive practices.

The example below, describes an approach to training, adapted to suit the particular conditions of a poor province in central China.

Training kindergarten teachers, Anhui, China [27]

The Anhui Provincial Education Commission (APEC) was concerned about new legislation requiring provincial education commissions to work towards Education for All, which included making provision for disabled children. Their research had suggested that integration might be a way forward, by reducing the need for special schools and taking their experiment with special classes in primary schools further forward. SC UK expressed an interest in focusing on early childhood development and disability through pre-school education. APEC felt that early intervention should make their work easier and so were interested in starting in kindergartens, but their ultimate goal was to work in the primary sector, according to their legal obligations.

The Integrated Education programme, as it was then called, began with the development of one kindergarten in a rural town in 1988, and a second in 1990. **Changes were brought about in the general teaching methodology from a formal teaching system to one in which learning was based on play (active learning) and small group activities**. There was no model of active learning for them to observe in Anhui, so small groups of teachers and administrators spent short periods in Hong Kong, working alongside teachers in the integrated kindergartens run by the Salvation Army.

In 1993, the programme was scaled up to cover fifteen more kindergartens and the help of a SC UK adviser was requested. Training was given to the principal teacher and up to two classroom teachers. The scaling-up was accomplished using short initial training courses, monitoring and supervision visits, demonstration lessons, annual seminars and a newsletter. Schools were instructed to admit at least two children with mild-to-moderate learning difficulties, preferably aged three to four years old, so that they could have three years in kindergarten before starting primary school. These children would not otherwise have been admitted to school.

Workshop tool

Mapping areas for support to inclusive education

Summary

We can support the development of inclusive education in many ways:

- Promoting positive attitudes
- Promoting inclusive learning environments
- Promoting early intervention
- Promoting positive role models
- Supporting appropriate policy development
- Supporting change of system in education.

Activity

1. Draw a table on a large sheet of paper with six columns. In the first column, list the above approaches to supporting inclusive education (plus any others you would like to add).
2. In the second column, *prioritise* the approaches according to which would be least/most challenging in your context – 1 for least challenging, through to 6 for most challenging.
3. In the other columns note the following:

   - Any *local initiatives* you know of
   - *Direct experience* you/your team have of each approach
   - Any *skills or experience* in other programme areas which could be useful in developing each of the approaches in our list
   - Any *comments or conclusions* in terms of areas for possible action.

	Priority	Local initiatives	Direct experience	Other relevant experience	Comments/ conclusions
Attitudes					
Learning environment					
Early intervention					
Role models					
Policy development					
Change of system					

6

Making it work: principles of implementing inclusive education

In this chapter, we summarise key principles of inclusive education – what is needed to make it work well:

- Change in system
- Schools
- Changes in managing schools
- Teachers
- Children's participation
- Community participation.

Change in system

• Analysis: where is change needed?

Before planning and implementing an inclusive education programme, it is important to gain an overview of the whole education system – to identify where change is needed. Change in one area could be made ineffective by the absence of change in another area.

• Gather baseline information

Relate any existing policy on the educational inclusion of disabled girls and boys to the situation and practices 'on the ground'. But, beware of spending too much time and money gathering data. Using international estimates is often a sufficient starting point, which can then be complemented with well-targeted, local information gathering.[28]

> Successful inclusion depends upon the careful and planned allocation of existing human and material resources.

- ## Inclusive policy-making
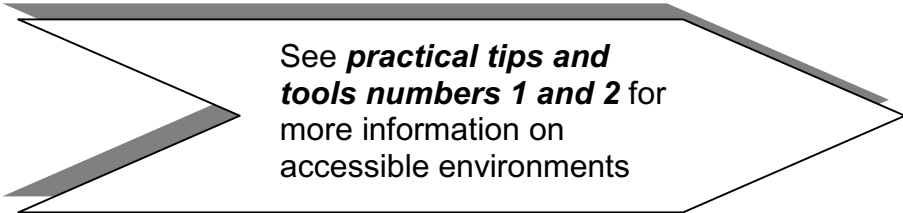
Planners need to realise that an inclusive education system benefits girls and boys from **all** groups in society, not just disabled girls and boys. Education policies addressing the needs of all marginalised groups in society are likely to be more successful. Creating policies for separate categories of children is time-consuming, expensive and divisive.

- ## Accepting responsibility

In traditional systems, it is seen as being the fault of the children and the families if children do not come to school, or do not learn. By contrast, in an inclusive system it is recognised that schools have an important part to play in children not attending, and not learning. School systems need to accept responsibility for children's learning, by making their systems and methodologies more relevant and responsive to children's needs.

- ## Accessible learning environment

The accessibility of the learning environment is crucial for all children to participate equally, and be fully included. Families, and the children themselves, need to be closely involved in discussing accessibility issues. These could include: mobility and transport issues, the physical accessibility of buildings, attitudes, teaching methods, the language of instruction, the relationships between teachers and children.

See *practical tips and tools numbers 1 and 2* for more information on accessible environments

- **Curriculum flexibility**

The curriculum and exam system need to be relevant to all children. Where there is a flexible curriculum, all children have a chance to learn and benefit from education, and their achievements can be recognised.

Schools

- **Adopt a whole-school approach**

Schools need to be encouraged to become self-sufficient in responding to children who are marginalised, for whatever reason. In the 'whole-school' approach, all staff members (all teachers, assistants, caretakers, etc) are involved in promoting inclusive practices. Too often in schools, this is the responsibility of only one or two particular members of staff.

Promoting a whole-school approach is particularly important in rural areas, which are more likely to be isolated from additional support systems. All members of staff within the school need training and awareness-raising about the inclusion of disabled children, and good leadership is needed from education managers.

- **Pilot schools**

Many countries trying to establish an inclusive system have found that the development of a pilot school is useful. The pilot can be used to demonstrate the benefits of inclusion to other schools, education managers, head teachers and communities. It can also serve as a resource base for the practical training of teachers. Once the pilot proves to be effective, the methods used can be introduced on a wider scale. Pilot, or model, schools have proved very useful in training teachers. Each region, ideally, would have its own pilot school. *(See the examples from Lao PDR in Chapter 4, and Anhui, Chapter 5.)*

- **Additional support**

If additional support exists within the education system, it is advisable that this is based at district or provincial level, not in individual schools. This is to ensure that schools accept their whole-school responsibility for all the children in their care, and do not rely on advisers. Additional resource persons can provide support from the district, or national, level.

Managing schools

Good management is essential when educational changes are introduced. Local education managers, and headteachers, can ensure that schools are well supported, and can help develop networks between schools. To promote more inclusive practices in schools, education managers can:[29]

• **Ensure that teachers are not overloaded**

Careful planning by managers ensures that teachers have manageable workloads. This includes issues such as class size, and number of children identified as having impairments or difficulties in learning.

• **Reward good teachers**

Reward systems for teachers who show extra skills can be put in place by managers. This can be done through existing promotion or grading systems, not through a parallel 'special' system.

• **Allocate time for teachers to observe each other**

One of the most effective ways of improving teachers' practice, and encouraging them to be more flexible and creative, is to enable them to observe each other. Managers need to prioritise this in their planning, and ensure that teachers have opportunities to reflect upon their experience. This is a valuable form of in-service training. They also need to provide ongoing support for teachers who are beginning to work in new ways.

• **Identify out-of-school children**

Managers need to ensure that all local girls and boys are tracked, admitted to school, and helped to continue in school if difficulties occur.

• **Promote multi-sectoral collaboration**

Co-operation with other relevant sectors is an essential part of the management of inclusive education (eg, health or social services). It is possible that disabled children and their families may be receiving services from a variety of sources.

Teachers

• Teacher-training

Teachers need training about inclusive principles and the basics of disability, to ensure that their attitudes and approaches do not prevent disabled children from gaining equal access to the curriculum. Training should be ongoing, provided in short courses (or modules) and should take place within a local school environment, preferably their own school. Training should take place at both pre-service, and in-service, stages. Problem-based, on-the-job training is more effective than theoretical pre-service training. In fact, encouraging teachers to meet on a regular basis to discuss their problems, and develop confidence in their own abilities, is arguably the most effective form of staff development.

• Teachers' responsibilities

Teachers need to understand, and accept, that it is their responsibility to teach all children, since all children have a right to education. **Motivating teachers to take on this responsibility can be the key to success**. Once they are motivated, they will need regular practical support and constructive feedback. Reward systems can be useful to sustain the commitment of teachers who show additional skills, but this should be through existing systems of promotion and grading. Being recognised as a creative teacher, and seeing disabled children achieve results will, in itself, be rewarding for a teacher. Awarding additional payments for teaching disabled pupils tends to be divisive.

• Teaching methodology

Teachers with experience only of rote teaching and learning methods are likely to find it difficult to adapt their style to one that promotes more active, child-centred methods. Changes in teaching methods could include rearranging the classroom, so that children can work in small groups; encouraging a 'buddy' system where older, or more academically able, children are assigned to work with those experiencing difficulties; introducing locally available materials for play activities, or teaching maths and new vocabulary. Teachers need opportunities to try out new methods, share ideas, and observe other teachers using different methods.

- **Access to information**

Teachers need access to easy-to-read information about international documentation, and how to implement more inclusive practices. Reading about the experience of other teachers working in a similar context helps teachers to reflect upon their own experience and gain confidence to try out new ideas.

Children's participation

- **Child-to-child methodology**

Children are a valuable and often under-used resource in education. They are, usually, far more accepting of disability than their teachers and parents. The child-to-child approach is an extremely effective way of mobilising children's participation. Children have been actively involved in challenging negative attitudes in their communities towards disability, identifying children who are excluded from school, carrying or pushing physically disabled children to school, writing notes for deaf children in class, tutoring disabled children in their homes. In Zambia and Lesotho, children have conducted surveys in their communities with the specific aims of identifying disabled children, and influencing their parents to allow them to attend school.

- **Disabled children's groups**

It can be very helpful in some contexts to encourage disabled children to meet in groups in order to develop a positive self-identity, to be exposed to disabled role-models, and to share experience about the particular difficulties they may be facing. In the case of deaf children, they need to have the opportunity to develop their sign language skills. Disabled adults and disabled people's organisations can be very helpful in supporting the development of such groups. In Nepal, a group of disabled children have campaigned on a national basis to influence parents to send their disabled children to school. *(See Sangita's story from Nepal, in Chapter 4.)*

Community participation

- **Community involvement in education**

There are many community members who can contribute to the development of inclusive education: CBR workers, community elders, religious leaders, parents, disabled adults and children themselves.

Making use of locally available human and material resources helps to develop links between schools, families and communities, as well as promoting community ownership of inclusive education programmes. The long-term goal is to promote inclusion in society as a whole.

- **Involvement of parents**

Parents of disabled children are often the strongest advocates for the rights of disabled children to access education. They deserve support to achieve their objectives. However, many parents are unaware that their disabled children have a right to attend their neighbourhood schools. Indeed, the interests or objectives of parents may not always correspond with the needs and interests of their children. Parents may need help to organise themselves as a group, and to challenge exclusionary practices in education. Where possible, parents of disabled children should be supported to work in partnership with disabled people's organisations, and other community-based groups, in advocating for these rights.

- **Participation**

The involvement of disabled children, young people and adults in the formulation of policy and practice is crucial. Involving small groups of disabled children and young people, and supporting them to speak out about their priorities and needs, is a first step towards making education child-centred and more useful for their daily lives. Their involvement can often speed up the development of more inclusive practices. Their knowledge, and expertise in disability, should be respected at all levels.

> ## Take it slowly!
> The pace of development should be slow so that those involved feel comfortable with the changes.

Workshop tool

Action planning

Having read this booklet, you may like to draw up a plan of action for promoting inclusive education in your own context.

Activity

Discuss the following questions and agree on practical action you can take in your context. We suggest you do this as a team activity, but it may also be useful for individuals to consider some of the questions.

- What have you learned from this booklet?

- What are the key lessons for your context?

- What might be the main threats to developing inclusive education in your context?

- What are the main challenges facing you and your team?

- What steps are you going to take?

- What will be your indicators of performance or success?

- What specific activities could you plan for the next (school) year?

- When and how will you evaluate the progress that has been made – with SC UK staff, school staff, children, families, etc?

Notes

[1] See Save the Children (1999) *Towards Responsive Schools*, for a more detailed analysis of the links between education quality and being responsive to children's needs.

[2] Adapted from: *Index for Inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools* (2000), Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education, Bristol, United Kingdom.

[3] This definition of inclusive education was used during the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) seminar on Integrated Education, Agra, India, in 1998. It has since been incorporated, almost word-for-word, into the South African White Paper on inclusive education, in March 2000.

[4] Adapted from: *SC UK Disability Policy*, 1998.

[5] The needs and rights of disabled children were included as one of seven articles of the Children's Charter, drafted by Save the Children founder, Eglantyne Jebb, which later developed into the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

[6] Savolainen, H, Kokkala, H and Alasuutari, H (eds) (2000), *Meeting Special and Diverse Educational Needs: Making inclusive education a reality,* p.5, Department for International Development Co-operation, Finland.

[7] Jones, H (2001), *Disabled Children's Rights – a practical guide*, p.44, Save the Children, Stockholm, Sweden.

[8] General Comment No 1: The Aims of Education, Article 29 (1) 2001. Http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/CRC.GC.2001.1

[9] Jones, M and Basser Marks, LA (1997), 'Beyond the Convention on the Rights of the Child: The rights of children with disabilities in international law', *The International Journal of Children's Rights, 5*, 177-192, Kluwer Law International, Netherlands. Quoted in *Disabled Children's Rights* (see [8] above).

[10] *World's Children,* Autumn 2001, p.11, Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

[11] 'Mamello's Story', (2001), in *Enabling Education*, Issue 5, EENET, Manchester, United Kingdom.

[12] Mumba, P (2001), 'Democratisation of the Classroom', in *Enabling Education*, Issue 5, EENET, Manchester. United Kingdom.

[13] For further information on child-centred learning, please refer to Save the Children's Education Quality Guidelines on 'Active Learning' and 'Indicators of Education Quality', Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

[14] Mariga, L and Phachaka, L (1993), *Integrating Children with Special Educational Needs into Regular Primary Schools: Report of a feasibility study,* Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

[15] Holdsworth, J and Thepphavongsa, P (1997), 'Experiences in Provision for Children with Disabilities using the Kindergarten Sector', in *First Steps: Stories on inclusion in early childhood education,* UNESCO, Paris, France.

[16] Holdsworth, J (2000), *Getting It Right: Children with disabilities in Asia,* Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

[17] 'The Lesotho National Integrated Education Programme', a Masters Thesis, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
http://www.eenet.org.uk/documents/sthesis/contents/shtml

[18] Jones, H (2001), *Disabled Children's Rights – a practical guide,* p.28, Save the Children, Stockholm, Sweden.

[19] Gauri, Giri (2000), personal communication.

[20] Stubbs, S and Ghiasuddin, Q (1999), *Case study: Jhapa refugee camps*, p.5, Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

[21] 'Case study: Vietnam' (1995), in *Towards Inclusion: SC UK's experience in integrated education,* South East Asia Programme Office (SEAPRO). Documentation Series, Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

[22] Ainscow, M and Brown, D (1999), *Guidance on Improving Teaching,* Lewisham Education Place, Lewisham Professional Development Centre, London, United Kingdom*.*

[23] 'Developing an Inclusive Education Service in Papua New Guinea' (1999), paper presented to an EENET seminar, Inclusion and Deafness, Manchester, United Kingdom. http://www.eenet.org.uk/deaf/incdeafrep/repindex.sthml

[24] Personal e-mail communication with SC UK's Educational Project Officer, Tajikistan, (2001).

[25] See EENET's web site for information about these policies: www.eenet.org.uk
'Focus on Policy: South Africa', in *Enabling Education*, Issue 2 (1998),
'Focus on Policy: Universal primary education in Uganda', in *Enabling Education*, Issue 4 (2000), Manchester, United Kingdom.

[26] Khatleli and others (1995), 'Schools for All: National planning in Lesotho', in B O'Toole and R McConkey (eds) *Innovations in Developing Countries for People with Disabilities,* www.eenet.org.uk/documents/book/bookcontents.shtml

[27] 'Case study: Anhui Province, China', (1995), in *Towards Inclusion: SC UK's experience in integrated education,* SEAPRO Documentation Series, Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

[28] Miles, S and Saunders, C (1990), *The Use and Abuse of Surveys in Service Development Planning for the Disabled – the Case of Lesotho*
www.eenet.org.uk/documents/scuk/surveys.shtml

[29] Holdsworth, J (1990), *Getting it Right: Children with disabilities in Asia,* Save the Children UK, London, United Kingdom.

Practical tips and tools

The following pages give advice and practical tools aimed at enabling education staff to actively involve disabled children and to plan accessible, quality education. Inclusive education requires both a change in education systems, and a recognition of different children's capacities and needs. These pages provide practical guidance and suggestions for achieving both.

It is up to you how you use these pages. You may find it useful to photocopy them for hand-outs if you hold meetings, or training, on inclusive education. Or, they may provide you with additional information or checklists to expand on what you have read in the booklet.

Practical tips and tools

1. **The physical environment**

2. **The learning environment**

3. **Observation and Assessment**

4. **Advice and referral**

5. **International documentation**

6. **Further Reading**

7. **Feedback**

The physical environment

Transport

Travelling to and from school can be very difficult for all children. It is often used as an excuse for not sending disabled children to school.

Issues that should be considered are:

- Long distances and poor roads
- Accessibility of public transport
- Road safety
- Vulnerability to abuse (eg, rape in isolated areas).

Local solutions could include:

- Road improvement
- Wheelchair
- Wheelbarrow
- Horse/donkey
- Being carried
- Adult supervision of safety issues.

If transport difficulties cannot be resolved, schools may want to consider home-tutoring, possibly using child-to-child methodology, or through a CBR programme.

School buildings

Once children have reached school, there are other physical access issues to consider in regard to entering the school buildings, and ease of movement around the teaching and recreation areas. The physical safety and comfort of children should also be a major concern in all schools. Learning will be more accessible for all when the children feel safe and comfortable.

The changes suggested here have all been tried, and are not expensive.

1

- When building new schools, avoid steps – gentle slopes are better for everyone.

- Simple ramps and handrails can be built to overcome the problem of steps that already exist.

- Doorways have to be wide enough to take a wheelchair, if necessary.

- Doors have to open easily and need handles fixed at appropriate levels, not too high.

- Toilet arrangements should be made accessible and safe. Privacy and respect are particularly important for children who may need help with toileting.

- Dining areas should be accessible and have suitable seating.

- Classroom seating should enable children to move, when necessary, and to sit with sufficient support. Some children may benefit from a double seat so that they can sit with a friend.

- Try to invent simple seating solutions attractive to children, rather than separating them from their place of learning and play.[1] For example, flexible arrangements using mats, cushions, wooden blocks or old car tyres could enable children to work in small groups. Try to limit the use of seats which cannot be moved around.

- Blackboards need to be fixed at appropriate heights for children seated on the floor, on seats and in wheelchairs.

- Create more light with white walls, sufficient daylight and extra lighting, where necessary.

- Ensure there is sufficient ventilation and suitable temperatures for concentration. Avoid dampness and noise, which can distract children from learning.

- Develop play areas which enable children with different impairments to engage in play with others.[2]

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[1] People Potential run tailor-made courses on demand. They specialise in Appropriate Paper-Based Technology. See website http://www.apbt.org.uk
[2] See Chapter 46, 'Playgrounds for All' in Werner, D (1988), *Disabled Village Children: A guide for community health workers, rehabilitation workers, and families,* Hesperian Foundation, Palo Alto, USA.

The learning environment

<div style="float:right;">2</div>

Teacher attitudes[1]

Teachers need to learn how to listen, be consistent, patient, and respect children's individual learning styles.

They also need to:

- Accept that children learn at different rates, and in different ways, and so plan lessons with diversity and difference in mind
- Plan activities according to the learning taking place, rather than according to a fixed interpretation of the curriculum
- Co-operate with families and community members to ensure that girls and boys are in school and that their learning is optimised
- Respond flexibly and creatively both to the individual needs of particular children, and to the needs of all children in the classroom
- Be aware that a proportion of all children in all classes will experience some difficulties in learning.

Teaching methods

Teachers can help to make classrooms more inclusive by using active, child-centred teaching methods.[2] These methods can:

- Encourage all children to play and learn together, and share responsibilities
- Reduce the impact of learning difficulties
- Prevent the development of difficulties in learning
- Identify those children who are often labelled as 'slow learners', but who in fact have a disability
- Address difficulties with behaviour
- Incorporate the skills needed for everyday life into the curriculum
- Make learning fun
- Relate what is learnt at school to daily life and home situations
- Vary the method and pace of teaching in order to maintain children's interest and enable them to learn at their own speed
- Improve the quality of relationships in the classroom
- Help teachers to improve their teaching skills.

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[1] Holdsworth, J (2000), *Getting it Right: Children with disabilities in Asia*, SC UK, London.
[2] Active learning is a methodology that SC UK promotes in all its education work. For more detailed advice please refer to *Education Quality Guidelines: Active learning*

Communication in the classroom

Good, clear communication is crucial to the success of teaching and learning for all children. Teachers should try to:

- Use simple, clear and consistent language
- Be aware of non-verbal communication, body language, tone of voice, facial expression, etc
- Use welcoming and empowering forms of communication, rather than those which seek to control
- Be flexible in their communication methods for the benefit of those who cannot use spoken language, who cannot hear, or whose mother tongue is different from the language of instruction
- Create regular communication breaks to accommodate short concentration and attention spans
- Ensure that all children can see, hear and listen properly.

Regular breaks

For most children who have developmental delay and disabilities, activities need to be structured, yet flexible. This includes provision for regular breaks.

Taking regular breaks may prove useful for children who have learning, sensory and behaviour difficulties, and children who experience chronic pain. It enables them to maintain concentration and to persevere, and means they have an increased chance of benefiting equally from the teaching.

Children with mobility and co-ordination difficulties may also benefit from regular changes of position.

Flexible teaching methods should provide the opportunity for children to have the necessary breaks and, perhaps, change to a quieter activity at appropriate points in the day.

Hearing and listening

To improve inclusion for children with hearing difficulties, or
whose home language is different to the language of instruction:

- Seat children in a circle so they can see each other's faces; this will help listening and understanding

- Ensure that children have a good view of the teacher's face and nothing obscures his/her face (eg, a hand, untrimmed beard)

- The speaker's face should never be in shadow, so stand facing the source of light (eg, a window) to make lip-reading as easy as possible

- Ensure that children are paying attention before you speak

- Use visual clues, such as a picture, object, or key word to introduce the lesson

- Keep background noise to a minimum

- If hearing-aids are used, be aware that they amplify all sounds, including background noise; it can also be hard to distinguish between voices if several people speak at the same time

- Encourage children with hearing difficulties to sit with a friend who can take notes for them – so they can concentrate on lip-reading.

Deaf children

Children learn about their environment from overhearing people talking.[3] Deaf children need to be spoken to directly if they are to learn. Many deaf children will never learn to talk. Signed languages are the natural languages of deaf people. They need to meet other deaf people to learn the language. There are several ways that local education managers, schools and teachers can promote the development of sign language:

- Ask for guidance and support from the national association of deaf people

- Identify deaf adults in the community who have sign language skills

- Encourage deaf adults to become involved in the education of deaf children

- Support the family in learning sign language

- Provide basic sign language and deaf awareness training for teachers

- Encourage all children in the school to learn and practise sign language.

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[3] UNESCO (2001), *Deafness: A guide for parents, teachers and community workers.*

Visual clarity

Many of the practical tips for children with hearing difficulties will also apply to those with visual, and/or learning, difficulties (and all children generally). In addition:

- Allow pupils to sit in positions where they can see (and hear) best

- Identify yourself before speaking for the benefit of children with visual difficulties, for example, 'It's Maria', or 'My name is … '

- Use large, clear writing on blackboards

- Read out instructions; never assume that everyone can read them from the blackboard

- Specify what is depicted on visual aids (eg, 'on the left side is...', 'at the bottom is...'

- Reduce/eliminate background noise to enable full concentration on what the teacher says, and to avoid distraction from other sounds

- Allow the children to feel teaching aids if they cannot see them, for example, maps can be outlined with string.

Children with low vision (severe visual difficulties) can benefit from:
- Large print
- Magnifying glasses
- Careful use of lighting
- Reading stands or clip boards
- Colour coding of furniture, school books, etc.

Blind children
Very few children are born blind. A much greater number have visual difficulties, or low vision.[4]

Ideally, blind children should have access to:

- Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training – to move about safely and independently, preferably with a white cane

- Braille – the length of time it takes to learn Braille will vary according to age and ability

- Tape recordings of lessons – this can be a useful way to reinforce learning, if the equipment is available.

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4 SightSavers, http://www.sightsavers.org.uk

Observation and assessment | 3

In all learning processes, it is essential the teacher recognises each child as an individual – with a unique set of skills, interests, needs and characteristics. This is particularly important in including disabled children in mainstream education.

A quick assessment of each child's capacities, needs and preferences will help to make teaching more child-centred, and responsive to individual needs. It will also enable teachers to develop individual learning objectives appropriate to each child's needs and capacities.

Teachers are in daily contact with their pupils and, therefore, able to observe the development milestones of each child. All children develop differently, and delay in one aspect of development may be necessary to make progress in another. Where teaching is too advanced for the level of development and capacity of a child, s/he may fall behind. Equally, if a child is not challenged and stimulated, s/he may lose interest and, again, the impact of education will be limited. Varying methods, and pace, can help each child to learn at his/her own speed.

By recognising significant delays in development, we can identify a special need, which has to be met so that the child can learn and socialise in school. Questions can be asked relating to a child's movement and communication skills, perceptions and thought processes, dexterity/co-ordination and daily living skills.

The sections below represent _sample tools_ for individual child observation, and identification of significant developmental delay. Many of the details are culturally specific, and may need to be adapted before being used in a given context.

Observing a child

Observing a child means watching her in action to get to know and understand her, so as to better help her grow and progress. *Adults in charge of children should always be observing*. Certain times (as when children are freely playing) are good for observation. Also good is to observe the child in several places, at various times, and in different situations (eg, playing, eating, when alone, with others). Observation is like good detective work – it gives you clues, but you usually also have to add other information for a clear understanding of what is happening to a child. It is important to keep one's own prejudices/biases out of observations. Observing a child means seeking to understand that child, in order to better plan for her/his needs – not making a judgement of good or bad.

Some tools for observation

The following table lists some of the skills which can be learned
by children from birth to eight years. *Please adapt this table according to your context and needs. Think of at least five more things that children in your country learn from the ages of one to eight, and add them to the table.*

Steps for using the table

- Think about the approximate age at which you feel children should be able to have these skills/learn these activities?
- Fill this in the middle column, 'average age'
- Now observe the individual child and, immediately after your observation, fill in the form below to ascertain the developmental level of the child.

It is important to remember that children are individuals, and that each child develops in a different way and at different rates. In addition, the way in which children develop, what they learn (and at what age), depends very much on their culture, context and the expectations of the adults looking after them.

Activities	Yes	Average age	Comments
Physical skills			
Sit, turn around, get up and stand alone without help			
Walk 5-10 steps			
Answer to their name being called			
Carry items whilst walking			
Pour water into a container without dropping water			
Run for one minute			
Balance on one foot and hop on his/her own			
Jump back and forth, up and down, climb up and down			

Activities	Yes	Average Age	Comments
Personal /Social Skills			
Express emotions non-verbally			
Express emotions verbally			
Listen, speak in small sentences and answer concrete questions clearly			
Express concerns, communicate and pronounce clearly			
Share their toys and take turns at playing			
Practical skills			
Eat and drink independently			
Use the toilet			
Wash and bathe independently			
Look after animals			
Help with household chores like cooking, cleaning, etc			
Cognitive skills			
Draw a circle			
Say a single word, eg, mummy, speak in sentences			
Sing a song or nursery rhyme			
Begin to read			
Write their name			
Write a paragraph to describe their weekend activities			

Activities	Yes	Average Age	Comments
Understand basic concepts such as size, location, amount			
Recognise colours			
Add two numbers			
Multiply by 3			
Concentrate in play			
Draw a simple picture			

Note on communication/perception skills

Listed above are some of the communication (hearing, listening, talking, expressing thoughts, etc), and perception skills (touch, hearing, seeing, etc) vital to a child's well-being and learning. Communication is the ability to relate to others in different situations. Communication can be hampered when children can't hear, or can't express or make themselves understood sufficiently to develop relationships – or even to survive.

Perception is the interpretation of impressions of the senses (touch, hearing and seeing). A child is normally exposed to stimulation (carrying, singing, rocking, etc) and develops impressions from the very first days of its birth. A baby's brain develops the capacity to select, focus and interpret impressions, which is essential for learning – for example, a baby recognising its mother's smell or voice. A lack, but also an overload, of stimuli can hamper the interpreting capacity of the brain and thus the ability to learn.

A lack of recognition of the communication and perception needs of a child often leads to mutual misunderstanding, frustration, exclusion and – eventually – isolation of a child by others. Children with communication, and/or perception, problems are often assumed to be mentally retarded, and this diagnosis can deprive and, finally, isolate the child, even when simple solutions are at hand. It is, therefore, really important to try to understand and address these needs early on to avoid a cycle of stigmatisation, negative attitude and behaviour.

Observing play

Play is very important for young children to learn. It allows them to explore the world, relate to others, express themselves, and develop skills and talents. How children play gives teachers an insight into their various developmental abilities and needs (as previously listed), and the ways in which they learn.

Activities	According to age	Below/above age	Comments
Games/sports			
• Walk and run			
• Throw and catch a ball			
Playing together			
• Playmates			
• Role of each child in group			
• Initiative			
• Concentration			
• Confidence			
• Interaction			
• Taking turns			
• Winning and losing			
Creative play			
• Drawing, painting and building			
• Making things			
• Music and dance			
• Dressing-up and acting			

3

Activities	According to age	Below/above age	Comments
Solitary play			
• Imagination			
• Reality play			
• Experimenting			
• Constructing			
• Organising			

Assessing the child

If you are worried about a child's developmental progress (eg, if they behave in a way much younger than expected for their age and context, or they do not respond to physical stimuli, such as loud noises), you need to think about why this is – and what you can do to help.

Remember, these lists are designed to help you pick up clues that something is not right. If you see a warning sign:

1. First, collect additional information by talking to the parent. It is important to talk to parents to check your own observations. Any behaviour may have multiple causes. A child who cannot talk much may have learning difficulties, a hearing impairment, be emotionally disturbed/scared or have an extremely disturbed parent. Or they may simply not understand the language you are speaking! Try and keep the questions specific. Remember that parents are often the best source of information.

2. After interviewing the parent and observing the child, the next step is to determine the source of the problem. Is it because:
   • The child's nutrition is poor
   • There is a biological problem
   • There is a lack in the child's environment
   • There is a difficulty in the child's relationship with the adults who look after her?

3. In planning what to do, you will need to consider the following questions:
   • What changes can you make in your teaching and communication to specifically help the individual child, whilst also benefiting all the children?

- What changes can you make in the school environment including aids, which might support the child's inclusion?

- Who else can you ask for advice or support in including the child successfully? Another teacher? A supervisor? The parent?

It is worth noting that mild and moderate developmental delays can be addressed by working with parents in low cost, add-on programmes.

Another tool is *The Ten Questions Instrument*, designed to detect serious developmental disabilities in children from birth to six years (Belmont [1986], Durkin and others [1989]), and successfully used in many developing countries.

Developing a practical guidance plan for teachers and parents

Based on the observation and assessment outlined above, the teacher can draw up a basic guidance plan to address each child's needs (learning, social and practical). Input from both child and parents is essential in completing and evaluating the plan.

Guidance plan

Prioritised needs (learning, social, practical) to make progress at school
1.
2.
3.

Objectives (learning, social, practical) to achieve in the next six months
1.
2.
3.

Progress indicators
1.
2.

3

Activities to achieve the objectives in six months		
By the child	By the teacher	By the parents
1.		
2.		
3.		

Expected results after six months
Learning:
Social:
Practical:

Evaluation of results and adjustment of objectives	
What has been achieved	
1.	
2.	
3.	
What has not been achieved	For what reason?
1.	
2.	
3.	

What are the next steps to take?
What problems remain?
Reprioritize the main problems –> objectives –> indicators –> activities –> expected results in a new guidance plan for the next six months

Advice and referral

In some cases the child, parents, and teacher may seek additional advice and support in order to sustain the child's inclusion in mainstream education. Advice may be available from a number of different sources. We give some examples here, although we recognise that not all of them are available in each context.

- **Disability movement or parent-association**

Advice on how to understand, accept and cope with limitations and how to challenge society to take a more positive attitude to disability.

- **Support teacher, or teacher-resource, centre**

Advice on how to develop effective child-centred and inclusive teaching methods, materials and activities in the classroom.

- **Social worker or child psychologist**

Referral in cases of possible trauma, or where complex learning, social or behavioural issues result in a breakdown of relations between the child and his/her family, and/or peers.

- **CBR worker/ occupational therapist/ speech therapist**

Practical understanding of key skills (daily/play/communication/learning skills) in the individual child, and basic support to make and evaluate a child-guidance plan.

- **Primary health-care worker, medical doctor or nutritionist**

In cases of stunting, lack of sight/hearing/concentration, or unidentified causes of behavioural and learning problems.

International documentation

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (UNCRC)

Article 2: Non-discrimination

States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status … [and] shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination.

Article 28: Education – a basic human right

States Parties recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: make primary education compulsory and available free to all.

Article 29: Aims of education

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities, preparing the child for an active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national values and those of others.

Article 23: Disabled children – rights to special care and assistance and to be treated with dignity

States Parties recognise that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance, and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

Recognising the special needs of a disabled child … ensure that the disabled child has access to and receives education, training, health-care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.

5

UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)

The Standard Rules were adopted by the UN General Assembly as a result of the Decade of Disabled Persons. It is not a legally binding instrument, but represents a strong moral and political commitment of Governments to take action to attain equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Standard Rules continue to be used internationally as a way of ensuring that the rights of disabled people in all aspects of life are respected and upheld.

Rule 6: Education

States should recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings. They should ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the educational system.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994)

5

'We believe and proclaim that:
- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs
- Those who have special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs
- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.'   *(Salamanca Statement, Para 2)*

The guiding principle that informs this Framework is that:
'Schools should accommodate *all children* regardless of their physical, intellectual, social and emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote and nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or religious minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.'   *(Introduction to Framework, Para 3)*

A separate paragraph highlights the specific issues of the education of disabled girls:
'Girls with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged. A special effort is required to provide training and education for girls with special educational needs. In addition to gaining access to school, girls with disabilities should have access to information and guidance as well as to models which could help them to make realistic choices and preparation for their future role as adult women.'   *(Framework, Para 55)*

The Framework acknowledges the differences in learning needs and speeds which are evident in all classrooms all over the world:
'Special needs education ... assumes that human differences are normal and that learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to pre-ordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process.'   *(Introduction to Framework, Para 4)*

The Dakar Framework for Action (2000)

5

The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) was very weak on the issue of disabled children and those with so-called 'special' educational needs. However, the extensive notes on the Framework include references to 'children with special needs' as one of many groups of children identified as being marginalised from education.

> 'The key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All … must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs …' **(Para 19)**

> '… [Early childhood care and education programmes] should … help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs …' **(Para 30)**

This is particularly important for disabled children. Early intervention is widely recognised as vital in enabling disabled children to have the best possible opportunity to lead full and active lives as members of their communities. Early intervention is highlighted in SC UK's disability policy:

> ' … The inclusion of children with special needs, from disadvantaged ethnic minorities and migrant populations, from remote and isolated communities and from urban slums, and others excluded from education, must be an integral part of strategies to achieve UPE [Universal Primary Education] by 2015.' **(Para 32)**

> ' … In order to attract and retain children from marginalised and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly … Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners …' **(Para 33)**

> *Education for All: Meeting our collective commitments*
> *Notes on the Dakar Framework for Action*

Further Reading

6

Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs in Inclusive Classrooms: A guide for teachers (2001)

This guide can be used in addition to the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack. It repeats some of the messages contained in the Resource Pack, but it also gives practical advice to teachers in coping with children who have particular learning difficulties.

Including the Excluded: Meeting diversity in education – Uganda and Romania (2001)

These in-depth case studies, developed by UNESCO, provide useful examples of the implementation of inclusive education.

Deafness: A guide for community workers, teachers and parents (2001)

This UNESCO publication is accompanied by a video. The publication is relevant to all cultures and settings, and has an excellent section on education. The video is set in Uganda with some footage of the Lesotho inclusive education programme, supported by SC UK.

UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special needs in the classroom (1993)

These materials were produced as part of a UNESCO project to help schools and teachers respond to pupils with special needs. They can be used as part of an initial training course for teachers; an in-service workshop; or school-based staff development.

For UNESCO publications contact:
Inclusive Education, Division of Basic Education
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris
07 SP, France
Fax: +33 1 45 68 56 26
Http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/sne

Welcoming Schools: Students with disabilities in regular schools (1999)

This short publication is accompanied by a video. It is about communities, teachers and children working together, to minimise barriers to learning and promote inclusion of all children in school. Teachers from 15 schools, each in a different country, share experiences and classroom practices.
Available from UNESCO (see above)

Index for Inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools (2000)

This is a set of materials to guide schools through a process of inclusive school development. It was produced by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), Bristol, in collaboration with the Centre for Educational Needs, Manchester, and the Centre for Educational Research, Canterbury, and is the result of three years of action research. It has been translated into many different languages.
Price: £24.50, including p&p. in the UK

Available from:
Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE)
Room 25 203 S Block, Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QU
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 117 344 4007
Fax: +44 (0) 117 344 4005
http://inclusion.uwe.ac.uk/csie/

Meeting Special and Diverse Educational Needs: Making inclusive education a reality (2000)
Hannu Savolainen, Heikki Kokkala, Hanna Alasuutari (eds)

This book is based on the papers presented at the World Education Forum Strategy Session on Special Needs Education, which was facilitated by the Niilo Maki Institute, Finland.

Available free from:
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland
The Department of International Development Co-operation
PO Box 176
00161 Helsinki, Finland

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Including Disabled People in Everyday Life (1999)
Hazel Jones

This practical video and publication is based on a series of workshops developed by SC UK as part of its community-based disability activities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
Published by Save the Children UK
Price: £9.95 plus £1.50 p&p.   ISBN: 1 841870 08 0

Available from:
Plymbridge Distributors
Estover Road
Plymouth PL6 7PY
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1752 20 23 10
Fax: +44 (0)1752 20 23 33
Email: Orders@plymbridge.com

Access for All: Helping to make participatory processes accessible for everyone (2000)
Ingrid Lewis

This document was produced following SC UK's Global CBR Review. It gives a comprehensive overview of accessibility issues before, during and after seminars. It is available in French, Portuguese, Spanish and Arabic, audio-cassette (English) and Braille.

Available from:
www.savethechildren.org.uk/development/global_pub/index

or

Development Dialogue Team
Save the Children UK
17 Grove Lane
London SE5 8RD
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)20 7703 5400 ext.2565
Fax: +44 (0)20 7793 7630

Disabled Children's Rights –
a practical guide (2001)
Hazel Jones

This book and CD-rom database is a tool for use by everyone, whether governmental, non-governmental, local or international, disabled people's, children's or parents' organisations, in becoming more aware of the situation of disabled children's and in taking action to promote the rights of disabled children everywhere.
ISBN 91-89366-77-8
Price: Book SEK120; Order code no 2001-2644
        CD-Rom SEK 80; Order code no 2001-2495 (plus postage).

Available from:
Publishing
Save the Children Sweden,
107 88 Stockholm
Sweden
Fax: +46 8 698 90 25.
http://www.rb.se/bookshop.

Enabling Education Network (EENET) website
http://eenet.org.uk

EENET provides access to a unique, and broad-based, body of expertise and experience on inclusive education worldwide. It is committed to prioritising the needs of countries/organisations/individuals who have limited access to basic information and resources. It recognises that education is much broader than schooling. EENET is contributing to the development of inclusive and sustainable education policy and practice by sharing relevant information and experience.

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Feedback

We hope this resource has been helpful to you and your team, in thinking about some of the issues involved in including disabled children in mainstream education.

This publication represents an ongoing process of learning and sharing within SC UK. We hope that these guidelines will be improved, added to and re-issued.

Please let us know exactly what you thought of the resource, and how it might be improved and used in the future. You may like to consider the following questions:

- Is this resource useful and relevant in your context?

- How has it been used/ will it be used by your team?

- Does it offer plain explanations and suggestions for non-experts?

- Are there any points/ areas which are still unclear to you?

- Are there any points on which you disagree?

- Are there any gaps?

- How would you improve this resource?

- Do you have other experiences or case studies which could illustrate particular issues?

Please send any comment to:

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17 Grove Lane
London SE5 8RD
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