

A study on children with disabilities and their right to education: Republic of Rwanda



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Preamble

Between December 2014 and August 2015 the Education Development Trust and UNICEF's Eastern and Southern African Office (UNICEF ESARO) commissioned and conducted a research programme to investigate the extent of fulfilment of the right to education of children with disabilities. The research programme was composed of three strands: a desk-based regional study, three detailed country studies (Rwanda, Comoros and Madagascar), and a paper documenting the methodology and tools for use by others.

This report documents the country study conducted in Rwanda with the assistance of the Ministry of Education in Rwanda (MINEDUC).

About the researchers

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- the schools and the many respondents who so willingly gave their time and openly shared their knowledge and experience.

List of abbreviations

9YBE	Nine-Year Basic Education
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
EFA	Education For All
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FGD	Focus group discussion
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
NCC	National Council for Children
NCPD	National Council of Persons with Disabilities
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
REB	Rwanda Education Board
TTC	Teacher Training College
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Foreword

Every single child has the right to education, as stipulated in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. That universal principle applies to children with disabilities. The Convention of the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities affirms the rights of persons with disabilities to education and specifically outlines that persons with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability.

However, a number of children with disabilities remain excluded from the education system. As education is closely associated to better jobs, healthy life, social and economic security and opportunities for full participation in society, those children with disabilities whose right to education is denied are likely to remain excluded from the society.

The Government of Rwanda is committed to enhancing the rights to schooling for children with disabilities. The country's legal framework outlines the rights of people with disabilities to education and supports the provision of education to children with disabilities. This study supports the Government of Rwanda and the Ministry of Education as well as relevant stakeholders further develop their programming and policies for children with disabilities, by providing information on the current situation on education for children with disabilities.

Furthermore, the findings and recommendations from the study are timely, as they fit into the newly agreed Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 4 on Education that ensures equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. In addition, the study findings are relevant to SDG Goal 8 on inclusive economic growth, as it is about achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including persons with disabilities, as well as SDG 10 on reducing inequality that emphasizes the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with disabilities.

This study furthers the GoR and stakeholders commitment to work together and bring other partners to this joint mission to realise inclusive education to children with disabilities.

MINEDUC and UNICEF, Rwanda

Executive summary

Introduction

Despite the efforts and achievements of Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), children with disabilities remain one of the main groups that continue to be excluded from education around the world; those who do attend school are more likely to be excluded in the classroom and to drop out (UNESCO 2015). This study – which was commissioned by the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and Education Development Trust, UK and conducted in Rwanda through UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) – is part of a broader regional study on the right of children with disabilities to education. It is one of a series of three case studies conducted in Madagascar, Comoros and Rwanda in early 2015.

Rwanda has made significant progress in increasing access to nine years' fee-free and compulsory education. Pre-primary is a growing sector and primary schooling boasts one of the highest enrolment rates in Africa. Data indicate that access to primary education has increased most significantly amongst the poorest and most rural sections of the population. In lower secondary education the provision of more classrooms has supported growing numbers of students.

The country has made a significant commitment to the right to education for children with disabilities, including ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008 and establishing the National Council for People with Disabilities (NCPD) to act as an advocacy body and coordinate activities and monitor progress towards this commitment. Rwanda has laws and policies to allow for the inclusion of children with disabilities in education, which are reflected in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2013/14–2017/18. One of the plan's priorities is increasing equitable access to education for students with special educational needs within mainstream and special schools.

The study

The fieldwork in Rwanda took place from 20 April to 1 May 2015. The UNICEF country office set the meeting and visit schedule, which included:

- a total of 41 interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders at all levels, including representatives of government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations – and in selected schools and communities, with parents and children
- seven visits to a selection of special centres and government schools in three districts
- consideration of barriers and bottlenecks in four domains: enabling environment, supply-side factors, demand-side factors and quality of care/provision
- analysis of relevant documentation and literature.

Findings

The study's findings are described below in relation to four domains:

- Enabling environment
- Supply-side factors
- Demand-side factors
- Quality of care and provision

Enabling environment

- Rwanda has a strong legal framework of laws and policies ensuring the rights of people with disabilities.
- There is no formal system of identifying children with disabilities. Respondents at all levels recognised the need to clarify terminology to ensure the same terms apply across the country.
- The main source of data informing the education system is collected through the school census as part of Education Management Information System (EMIS.) There are other sources of information, but data vary across all sources, reflecting the lack of clarity regarding the identification of children with disabilities and the methodology used to collect the data.
- The 2014 school census shows a total of 24,862 children with disabilities in pre-school, primary and lower secondary schools across all categories specified. This represents just 0.5 per cent of the population under 17 years and 0.85 per cent of the population enrolled in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary schools. This means there are many children with disabilities who do not attend school.

Supply-side factors

- Although the general policy is for children with disabilities and special educational needs to be educated in regular inclusive schools wherever possible, many respondents acknowledged that mainstream schools may not always be willing to enrol children with disabilities. Inclusive schoolteachers reported difficulties in ensuring the participation of children with disabilities as they have large classes, and many felt more teacher training is required.
- The special schools and centres are not evenly spread throughout Rwanda, and are insufficient in number to provide placements for all children with disabilities. There are approximately 92 identified inclusive schools in Rwanda (UNICEF; 2014), and a number of districts do not have any. Demand also exceeds supply in special schools. Inclusive schoolteachers reported difficulties in ensuring the participation of children with disabilities as they have large classes, and many felt more teacher training is required. As these centres are private institutions they do not have an obligation to support other schools, even though the government pays the teachers' salaries.
- Respondents mentioned difficulties for children with disabilities in getting to school. Most children have to walk to school, which can involve long distances for those with disabilities who do not attend their nearest school.
- An assessment system is set out in the approved National Policy on Inclusive and Special Education of 2015 which also provides the basis for placement, but there is currently no standardised system in place. It is up to the parents to decide where to enrol their child.

- New courses and programmes have been implemented to address teacher training for special needs and inclusion, but respondents identified further commitment to the specialist (pre-service and in-service) training of teaching staff as a priority for the future.
- There is a shortage of specialists to support children with disabilities in schools. Most are employed by special schools and do not work in the mainstream sector.

Demand-side factors

- The legacy of provision in special schools and centres being provided by the church means that the medical model (based on physical or intellectual impairments) persists. This tradition also reinforces a reliance on charity and a need for care rather than developing a culture of inclusion and equal opportunity.
- Attitudes are embedded in the culture, and stakeholders at all levels mentioned that it remains culturally difficult for a parent to admit they have a child with disabilities.
- Officials mentioned that there is no incentive for schools to accept children with disabilities, or any penalty if they do not.

Quality of care and provision

- There are wide disparities between the different types of schools; unsurprisingly, those in the private sector tend to be better resourced.
- The lack of awareness in schools and classrooms about the barriers to learning that children face means that learning difficulties tend not to be recognised. Even in inclusive schools, it was apparent that teachers had little understanding of applying differentiation in teaching or learning outcomes. In addition, little support is provided to help teachers to be inclusive.
- Many respondents stressed a general lack of materials and assistive devices, which was also observed in school visits. Specialist teachers also highlighted a lack of adapted textbooks for students with visual impairments, especially with descriptions of diagrams and pictures.
- The different projects and initiatives have monitored their programme outcomes according to their own requirements. There was no mention of adopting a standardised evaluation system at the district level or higher.

Recommendations

In line with findings in the regional study (published separately as part of this series),¹ it is hard to prioritise or order the recommendations – instead what the evidence suggests is that a comprehensive and multidimensional approach is required which acknowledges the multiple barriers to the education of children with disabilities as well as the multiple bridges that can help overcome these barriers. This approach has been applied in the creation of full recommendations later in the report. At the same time we recognise the difficulty of implementing wide-scale systemic reform, so have highlighted first steps in the recommendations listed below.

¹ See Riggall & Croft, 2016

Key, immediate recommendations:

- 1.** Review data collection on children with disabilities, moving away from focusing on visible impairments to provide information that is more useful in planning responses to the educational needs of children in schools.
- 2.** Expedite the implementation of the strategic plan for the revised Policy for Inclusive and Special Needs Education and establish a desk responsible for inclusive and special needs education in the Rwanda Education Board (REB).
- 3.** Ensure the accessibility building code is applied to all new school construction, and allocate resources for modifications to be made to existing buildings on a needs basis.
- 4.** Ensure all children can access national exams, and provide clear guidelines regarding entitlements to support (readers, sign interpreters, Braille translation, computers, etc.) and any additional time allowances.
- 5.** Develop a simple toolkit for all teachers to provide an interim measure of support and guidance on how to make their classrooms more inclusive and child friendly, together with a checklist for assessment or simple strategies to identify children experiencing difficulties in learning, and practical initiatives that can be applied in the classroom to overcome these. This would require some introduction to the toolkit and support for teachers in its use, potentially by orienting the headteacher or another resource person identified in the school.



Introduction

Despite the efforts and achievements of Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), children with disabilities remain one of the main groups that continue to be excluded from education around the world; those who do attend school are more likely to be excluded in the classroom and to drop out (UNESCO 2015). This study – which was commissioned by the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and Education Development Trust (formerly CfBT Education Trust) and conducted in Rwanda through UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) – forms part of a broader regional study on the right of children with disabilities to education. It is one of a series of three case studies conducted in Madagascar, Comoros and Rwanda in early 2015.

Rwanda has made a significant commitment to the right to education for children with disabilities, including ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008 and establishing the National Council for People with Disabilities (NCPD) to act as an advocacy body and coordinate activities and monitor progress towards this commitment. The country has laws and policies to allow for the inclusion of children with disabilities in education, which are reflected in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2013/14–2017/18. One of the plan's priorities is increasing equitable access to education for students with special educational needs within mainstream and special schools. The study aims to inform policy discussion and define implementation activities to further inclusive education for children with disabilities in Rwanda. It provides an overview of the general context within which the education of children with disabilities takes place, and presents the findings from interviews and focused group discussions with a wide range of stakeholders and school-level observations regarding education for children with disabilities. Recommendations are made based on these findings, which are supported by the international and national literature.



The Rwanda context

General country background

Rwanda is a relatively small landlocked country situated in Central Africa. It has an area of 26,338 square kilometres. Due to its mountainous terrain, Rwanda is also known as the Land of a Thousand Hills. To the north, Rwanda is bordered by Uganda while Tanzania lies on the country's eastern frontier. To the south of Rwanda lies Burundi while to the west the country is bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rwanda has many rivers, twenty-three lakes and five volcanoes. Rwanda is famous for its mountain gorillas which live in the forests of the volcanic mountains. The country is predominantly rural, with only just over two per cent of the total land area being categorised as urban.

The country is predominantly rural, with only just over two per cent of the total land area being categorised as urban

FIGURE 1: MAP OF RWANDA



The Fourth Population and Housing Census conducted in 2012 showed that Rwanda's population as of 2012 was 10.5 million (roughly 50 per cent female).² Children aged 0-9 account for 29% of the population, with a further 12% of the population in the 10-14 age group. According to the same census, 1,737,684 Rwandans resided in urban areas while 8,778,289 lived in rural areas. This census showed that people with disabilities comprised 4.4 per cent of the population of Rwanda (i.e. 458,306 people, including 228,028 males and 230,278 females). The majority of Rwandans are engaged in agricultural activities. In 2012 agriculture contributed 33 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. The services sector is the largest contributor to Rwanda's economy, but the industrial sector is also growing.

The French language was traditionally used in schools as the medium of instruction, but it is now government policy for Kinyarwanda to be used until Grade 3. English is used thereafter, although a multi-lingual policy provides opportunities for students to learn additional languages including French and Kiswahili.

For the purposes of administration, Rwanda is divided into provinces, districts, sectors, cells and villages. A decentralisation policy transferred many central government powers and functions to local administrative units in 2000. As such, the district is the basic political and administrative unit in the country, while the village is the smallest political administrative unit. Currently, Rwanda has five provinces (including the City of Kigali), 30 districts, 416 sectors, 2,148 cells and 14,837 villages.

An overview of the education system

Education was originally provided by Christian missionaries; at the time of independence in 1962 almost all the 40 secondary schools in the country were owned by either the Roman Catholic or Protestant church (Walker-Keleher, 2006). The education system remained largely unchanged at independence, but many significant changes and improvements have been made since 1994.

The Education Sector Policy (Republic of Rwanda, 2003a:8) states that the aim of education in Rwanda is '*to combat ignorance and illiteracy and to provide human resources useful for the socio-economic development of Rwanda through the education system*'. To realise this goal, the policy outlines the following objectives of the education sector (Republic of Rwanda, 2003a:17):

- to educate a free citizen who is liberated from all kinds of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination, exclusion and favouritism
- to contribute to the promotion of a culture of peace and to emphasise Rwandese and universal values of justice, peace, tolerance, respect for human rights, gender equality, solidarity and democracy
- to dispense a holistic moral, intellectual, social, physical and professional education through the promotion of individual competencies and aptitudes in the service of national reconstruction and the sustainable development of the country

The education system remained largely unchanged at independence, but many significant changes and improvements have been made since 1994

²National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2014) projections suggest that the population would have increased to 11,262,564 by 2015

- to promote science and technology with special attention to information and communications technologies
- to develop Rwandese citizens with autonomy of thought, patriotic spirit, a sense of civic pride, a love of work well done and global awareness
- to transform the Rwandese population into human capital for development through the acquisition of development skills
- to eliminate all causes and obstacles which can lead to disparity in education, including by gender, disability, geographical or social group.

In order to realise these objectives, the MINEDUC has formulated a number of additional policies to direct educational provision.³ Several strategic plans have also been formulated to ensure and guide the successful realisation of the objectives set out in these policies, the most prominent of which is the Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2013/14–2017/18 (Republic of Rwanda, 2013a), which divides the Rwandan education system into four main tiers:

- pre-primary education
- primary education
- secondary education
- higher education.

Secondary and higher education levels have academic content as well as significant technical and vocational training elements. Adult basic education is also an important aspect of the education sector.

There are three types of schools in Rwanda, based on their ownership and management (Republic of Rwanda, 2011b):

- public schools, which are generally built and run using public resources
- government-aided schools, which are private schools supported in some way by the government
- private schools.

Rwanda has made tremendous efforts to increase access to education. Thus, it accelerated the policy of nine years' fee-free compulsory basic education (9YBE) in 2009 to ensure that all Rwandan children have free access to nine years of primary and lower secondary education, usually between the ages of seven and 15 years (Republic of Rwanda, 2015b). For these efforts, Rwanda was awarded the Commonwealth Education Good Practice Award in 2012, according to UNICEF. The government has expanded 9YBE to 12 years' basic education (12YBE) in the current ESSP.

In July 2013 Rwanda began reviewing its educational curriculum at the primary and secondary levels in order to improve the quality and relevance of education. The competence-based curriculum which resulted from this review was made public in April 2015 and began implementation in January 2016.

Rwanda has made tremendous efforts to increase access to education

³ Key policies include the National School Health Policy (2014), Early Childhood Development Policy (2011), Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy (2008), Higher Education Policy (2008), Girls' Education Policy (2008, under review), Teacher Development and Management Policy (2007), Special Needs Education Policy (2007, revised in 2013), Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (2006) and Adult Education Policy (2014)

Pre-primary education

Chapter 4 of the law governing the organisation of education addresses pre-school (or nursery) education (Republic of Rwanda, 2012):

- cycles of nursery schools (Article 28)
- creation and management of nursery schools (Article 29)
- requirements for the creation of a nursery school (article 30)
- requirements for being a nursery school teacher (Article 31).

The law stipulates that a child should be aged at least three before s/he starts attending pre-school. Further, pre-school education is considered to be a single cycle of education lasting three years. According to the ESSP, the cell is mandated to manage and monitor the nursery schools and other early childhood development centres within its boundaries.

Pre-primary education is a young but growing sub-sector in Rwanda. Private institutions initially managed most of the activities in this sub-sector. For example, there were 257 nursery schools in the country in 2000, all but two of which were privately owned (Republic of Rwanda, 2003a). As the sub-sector grew, the majority of pre-primary schools came to be owned by the community and located within public schools. Starting in 2014, nursery schools located in public schools were also designated as public schools. The community is responsible for paying the teachers in pre-primary schools, while the government provides them with teaching/learning and play materials (Republic of Rwanda, 2015b). According to the Ministry of Education (Republic of Rwanda, 2013a), the government plans to build a pilot nursery school in each sector.

In 2014, according to the Ministry of Education (Republic of Rwanda, 2015b), there were 2,431 pre-primary schools in Rwanda, including 416 public schools, 1,004 government-aided schools, and 1,011 private schools (see Table 1 for details on the gender breakdown of pre-primary students). The learner–class ratio for the same year was 44:1 (although some districts had higher learner–class ratios than others) while the pupil–teacher ratio was 34:1. The 2012 census showed that the total number of children aged between three and six was 1.3 million.

Pre-primary education is a young but growing sub-sector in Rwanda

TABLE 1: PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN RWANDA, 2014

	Male	Female	Total
Learners	77,872	81,419	159,291
Gross enrolment rate	17.2%	17.9%	17.5%
Net enrolment rate	13.0%	13.5%	13.3%
Learners in public schools	45,524	47,975	93,499
Learners in private schools	32,348	33,444	65,792
Staff	921	3,750	4,671

Source: Republic of Rwanda, 2015b

Primary education

Rwanda has one of the highest primary school enrolment rates in Africa, and data indicate that access to education has increased most significantly amongst both the poorest and most rural sections of the population (Republic of Rwanda, 2013a). These high enrolment rates have been achieved for both boys and girls at primary level, with 98% of girls enrolling in primary school (ibid). Nevertheless, serious challenges still face the education system, including significant inequalities in access to education, for example by region. In addition, primary attendance rates are 9 per cent higher in the richest consumption quintile than in the lowest quintile (Republic of Rwanda, 2013a). A child from a household in the poorest wealth quintile is four times less likely to start school at the appropriate age of seven years than one from the richest quintile. Many children do not start school at the right age (primary school age 7-12), leading to a high gross enrolment rate in schools and the costs associated with catering for such large numbers of learners in the school system (Republic of Rwanda, 2013a).

According to the Ministry of Education (Republic of Rwanda, 2015b), in 2014:

- The total number of primary school learners was 2,399,439, including 1,181,715 boys and 1,217,724 girls.
- There were a total of 2,711 primary schools: 65.2 per cent were government aided, 25.6 per cent were public and 9.2 per cent were private.
- The net enrolment rate was 96.8 per cent, while the gross enrolment rate was 134.3 per cent, with girls slightly outnumbering boys.
- The school completion rate was 61.3 per cent, again with girls outnumbering boys.
- In 2013, 73.4 per cent of children (including slightly more boys than girls) transitioned from primary to secondary school.
- The pupil-to-classroom ratio varied between 62:1 and 94:1, depending on the district (national average 80:1).
- The learner-to-teacher ratio was 58:1, while the learner-to-qualified-teacher ratio was 61:1.
- The average number of pupils per class in private schools was 31, and 44 in both public and government-aided schools.
- There were 39,370 qualified teachers, including 18,341 males and 21,029 females; 95.6 per cent of all teachers in primary schools were qualified.

A child from a household in the poorest wealth quintile is four times less likely to start school at the appropriate age of seven years than one from the richest quintile

TABLE 2: PRIMARY SCHOOL PROMOTION, REPETITION AND DROPOUT RATES, 2014

Grade	Promotion rate			Repetition rate			Dropout rate		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary 1	–	–	–	26.2%	25.2%	25.7%	10.9%	9.5%	10.2%
Primary 2	62.9%	65.3%	64.1%	16.4%	15.4%	15.9%	15.0%	12.6%	13.8%
Primary 3	68.6%	72.0%	70.3%	14.2%	13.5%	13.8%	14.8%	10.5%	12.7%
Primary 4	71.0%	76.0%	73.5%	14.5%	13.9%	14.2%	15.1%	10.9%	12.9%
Primary 5	70.3%	75.3%	72.9%	16.3%	16.2%	16.2%	30.3%	26.6%	28.3%
Primary 6	53.4%	57.2%	55.4%	2.5%	2.8%	2.7%	–	–	–

Source: Republic of Rwanda, 2015b

Secondary education

Lower secondary education (ages 13–15) consists mainly of academic subjects, while upper secondary education (ages 16–18) is divided into five fields of study: sciences; humanities; languages for general secondary education; teacher training education; and technical, vocational education and training (commonly called technical secondary school). Because this study is concerned mainly with children under 16, this section focuses on lower secondary school.

The introduction of the 9YBE programme increased access to lower secondary school education for many children. Many new classrooms were constructed to cater for the increased number of students attending lower secondary school. With the introduction of the 12-year basic education programme, the government is also committed to expanding access to upper secondary education, as stated in the current ESSP. Nevertheless, some sections of the population still have less access to secondary education than others. For example, net attendance rates at the secondary level for children from the highest consumption quintile are five times higher than in the lowest consumption quintile.

Whereas in primary school the country had achieved (or was well on its way to achieving) its stated educational objectives for 2014/2015, most of the objectives set for lower secondary education for the same period had not been realised by 2015. For instance, the target of a 29 per cent net enrolment rate by 2014/2015 was not realised; it was 22.9 per cent in 2014. Likewise, the 46.6 per cent gross enrolment rate in 2014 fell short of the 67 per cent target, and the 11.6 per cent repetition rate in 2013 missed the goal of decreasing it to 3.5 per cent by 2014/2015. Thus the lower secondary school sub-sector is still facing challenges which are preventing it from realising its set objectives.

According to the Ministry of Education (Republic of Rwanda, 2015b), in 2014:

- The total number of learners in lower secondary school was 349,692, including 161,577 males and 188,115 females.
- The student-to-class ratio was 39:1.
- The gross enrolment rate was 46.6 per cent (43.7 per cent for boys and 49.4 per cent for girls).
- The net enrolment rate was 22.8 per cent (20.3 per cent for boys and 25.3 per cent for girls).
- From 2012 to 2014, respectively, 84.8 per cent, 85.6 per cent and 86.6 per cent of all students who sat for the national examinations at the end of lower secondary school passed.
- There were 18,593 qualified secondary school teachers, comprising 68.6 per cent of all secondary school teachers. The student-to-teacher ratio was 21:1, while the student-to-qualified-teacher ratio was 30:1.
- There were a total of 1,521 secondary schools: 842 were government aided, 440 were public and 239 were private.

The introduction of the 9YBE programme increased access to lower secondary school education for many children

In 2013, (Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, 2013), 85.4 per cent of all lower secondary school students moved to upper secondary school and there was minimal difference between boys and girls in the school promotion, repetition and dropout rates (totals 73.6, 11.6 and 14.7 per cent, respectively).

Education provision for children with disabilities

The 2012 census revealed that the number of children with disabilities aged between three and six years was 15,831, or approximately 1.25 per cent of all children in this age range. Children under 17 numbered 5,015,128, including 85,498 children with disabilities (approximately 1.7 per cent).

Educational provision for children with disabilities in Rwanda is part of the provision for children with special educational needs. This is because special educational needs include disabilities. However, many policy and other documents related to special educational also include specific references to children with disabilities.

Christian missionaries, particularly Roman Catholics, were the first to educate children with disabilities in Rwanda. They built the first centre for children with disabilities, HVP Gatagara, in 1962. In 1997 the government first demonstrated its interest in the education of children with disabilities and other special educational needs by setting up a desk of special education in the Ministry of Education. Since then, it has continued to demonstrate its commitment to the education of children with disabilities by adopting many policies and laws related to special needs education and including it in its general strategic plans. There are also laws and ministerial orders intended to enhance the lives of people with disabilities in general, including their education (see Figure 2).

In 1997 the government first demonstrated its interest in the education of children with disabilities and other special educational needs by setting up a desk of special education in the Ministry of Education

FIGURE 2: POLICIES, LAWS AND OTHER PROVISIONS TO PROMOTE THE EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Policy/law/provision	How it promotes the education of people with disabilities
The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda	Article 40 proclaims every person's right to education and declares, 'The State has the duty to take special measures to facilitate the education of disabled people' (Republic of Rwanda, 2003b).
Law Number 01/2007 of 20/01/2007, relating to Protection of Disabled Persons in General	Chapter 2 deals with the rights of people with disabilities in matters related to education (Republic of Rwanda, 2007).
Special Needs Education Policy (2007)	Guides the provision of education for children with special educational needs, including those with disabilities. In 2013 the policy was reviewed and renamed the Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy. A Special Needs and Inclusive Education Strategic Plan 2015/16-2019/20 was drawn up to guide its implementation. This revised policy and strategic plan are more detailed than the 2007 policy, and provide a framework and strategies for incorporating special needs education into the general activities of the entire education system (UNICEF, 2014).
The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2013/14–2017/18	Has ten key outcomes to be achieved. The second outcome is concerned with increased equitable access to education for students with special educational needs within mainstream and special schools. It also emphasises the need to make schools accessible to learners with disabilities.

FIGURE 2: POLICIES, LAWS AND OTHER PROVISIONS TO PROMOTE THE EDUCATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (CONTINUED)

Policy/law/provision	How it promotes the education of people with disabilities
The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II 2013–2018	Identified disability as a cross-cutting issue which needs to be approached from a multi-sectoral front.
The seven-year government programme 2010–2017, for the second mandate of President Paul Kagame	Includes disability in its plans, for example ensuring that new buildings are disability friendly, increasing the capacity of the NCPD; increasing efforts to train teachers of children with disabilities, and promoting the inclusion of children with disabilities in education by increasing the number of schools which can cater for their needs (Republic of Rwanda, 2014b).
The Rwanda Building Control Regulations	Makes it mandatory for public buildings to be disability friendly (Section 3.3.15). 'Facilities for persons with disabilities shall be included in the design and construction of any public building, hotel, dormitory or any other building where a group of persons are accommodated.'

The government has also subscribed to international conventions and other instruments designed to promote the well-being of people with disabilities, including the provision of educational services. For example, in 1990 Rwanda ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which includes the education of people with disabilities. It also signed and ratified the CRPD and its optional protocol in 2008.

The government also set up the NCPD, which has the mission to *'be a forum for advocacy and social mobilisation on issues affecting persons with disabilities in order to build their capacity and ensure their participation in the national development'* (National Council of Persons with Disabilities, 2013). Its second strategic objective is *'to monitor application of laws and other instruments designed to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in society; and conduct advocacy, with other allies, on issues affecting the development and rights of persons with disabilities. Key priority areas are Education; Health; Livelihood'*.

Children with disabilities are educated in both special schools and mainstream schools. The ESSP 2013/14–2017/18 discusses *'Increased equitable access to education for students with special educational needs within mainstream and special schools'*. However, the general government policy as expressed in a number of documents encourages children with disabilities to be educated in regular inclusive schools wherever possible, except when they cannot due to the nature or severity of their disability.

There are 10 special schools in the country, nine of which are government aided, but there is a tendency to confuse special centres and special schools; sometimes centres label themselves as schools. Data provided by UNICEF (2014) suggest that there are at least 50 centres which are not schools. All of them are owned (and were founded) by religious organisations or parents' associations. Most of these centres specialise in one type of disability, although others include children with different types of disabilities. Some centres provide services other than education, such as rehabilitation services. The government also provides teacher training for pupils with special educational needs, which are detailed in Appendix 2 'Supply-side factors'.

There are 10 special schools in the country, nine of which are government aided

UNICEF (2014) data also indicate that there are approximately 92 inclusive schools, however it is possible that there are additional mainstream schools that include children with disabilities. The development of inclusive schools has been boosted by the support of partners such as Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Handicap International and Voluntary Services Overseas. Table 3 shows the number of children with disabilities (including hearing impairment, visual impairment, speaking, physical, intellectual and multiple disabilities) in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in 2014. While it is not clear if these statistics include learners in both special and mainstream schools, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of learners with disabilities are in mainstream schools.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES, 2014

	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Primary	758	629	1,387
Primary	10,964	8,812	19,776
Lower secondary	1,897	1,802	3,699
Total	13,619	11,243	24,862

Source: Republic of Rwanda, 2015b

The development of inclusive schools has been boosted by the support of partners such as Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Handicap International and Voluntary Services Overseas



The study

This report forms part of a three-country study on the status of the fulfilment of the education right of children with disabilities in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The fieldwork in Rwanda took place from 20 April to 1 May 2015. The UNICEF country office set the meeting and visit schedule, which included:

- a total of 41 interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders at all levels, including representatives of government, NGOs, civil society organisations – and in selected schools and communities, with parents and children
- seven visits to a selection of special centres and government schools in three districts
- consideration of barriers and bottlenecks in four domains: enabling environment, supply-side factors, demand-side factors and quality of care/provision.

A full list of interviews, meetings and school visits undertaken is available in Appendix 1 (page 54). The tools used to guide the fieldwork were developed for use in different country contexts and were therefore tailored to the specific situation in Rwanda. Questions were therefore selected from the guide set accordingly. For example, respondents were asked about the enabling environment, supply- and demand-side factors, and the quality of provision and care that was provided for (and experienced by) children with disabilities. The tools will be reviewed and revised to provide a generic set that can be used to conduct the study in other countries as required. These will be presented in a separate paper discussing the study's methodology. A summary of the data collected during the fieldwork is provided in Appendix 2 (page 55).

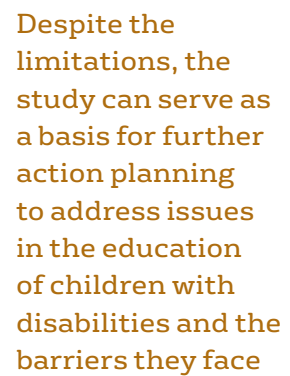
The study examined the systems available to support the development and education of children with disabilities from both the supply and demand sides to identify current initiatives, any gaps, and what can be built on to provide education and other learning and development opportunities to children with disabilities.

The tools used to guide the fieldwork were developed for use in different country contexts and were therefore tailored to the specific situation in Rwanda

Limitations of the study

The study was naturally restricted by the available time and resources. With just a two-person team in country for ten days, school visits were limited to those identified as being active in providing education for children with disabilities. Fieldwork was restricted to three districts, and focused on schools identified as having taken specific steps towards educating children with disabilities. The findings are therefore not necessarily representative of the entire country. Although the researchers observed the conditions in every school visited, extensive observation of teaching and learning in classrooms was not possible due to the limited time available.

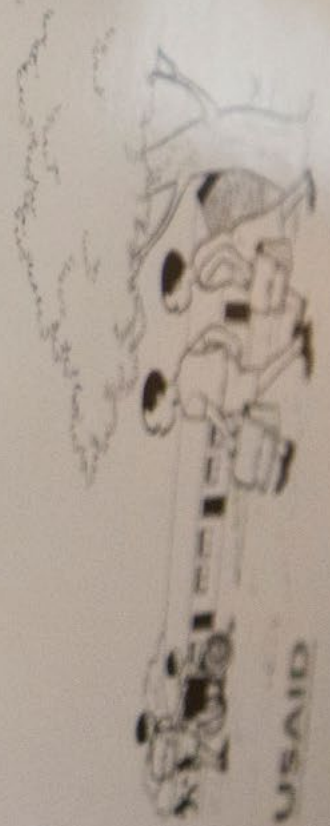
Despite covering a wide range of the different types of education provision for children with disabilities in Rwanda, it was not possible for the study team to visit examples of all the pilot projects that have been initiated. The data collected should therefore be considered as a snapshot rather than a comprehensive representation of the various initiatives across the country. Despite the limitations, the study can serve as a basis for further action planning to address issues in the education of children with disabilities and the barriers they face.



Despite the limitations, the study can serve as a basis for further action planning to address issues in the education of children with disabilities and the barriers they face

REB
Rwanda Education Board

English
Primary 3
Pupil's Daily Reader



USAID

Primary 3

Pupil's Daily Reader

Findings

Enabling environment

Knowledge of laws and policies

As noted in the Executive summary, Rwanda has a strong legal framework ensuring the rights of people with disabilities. The CRPD was ratified in 2008 and the NCPD has been working since 2011 to monitor achievements and progress towards ensuring the implementation of the convention. It reports to the UN on its progress every four years. NGOs also mentioned their role in raising awareness of rights of people with disabilities and advocating the implementation of the CRPD. Another government body, the National Council for Children (NCC) – established in 2011 to coordinate and advocate children’s rights – monitors the implementation of the CRC. Very few respondents referenced or demonstrated knowledge of these conventions, however.

The government has demonstrated strong support for the education of children with disabilities and those with special needs through its policies and laws, and is clear in its intention that all schools should become inclusive for children with disabilities and be able to respond to all learners’ needs. The government also recognises that some children are better placed in a specialist setting due to the severity of their disability. The Policy for Special Needs Education was revised in 2014 and re-named the Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy, which was approved in 2015. At the school and community levels, respondents understood government policy to be that all children should be in school; there were some references to government commitments to EFA and the MDGs. District-level officials particularly mentioned that although policies are set at the central government level, they are implemented at the district level. Therefore there are differences between the districts in setting priorities and interpreting and implementing the policies.

Definition and identification of disability

There is no formal system of identifying children with disabilities, although the existing and revised policies for special needs and inclusive education provide some definitions of terms encompassing different types of need. Respondents

The government has demonstrated strong support for the education of children with disabilities and those with special needs through its policies and laws

at the central level involved in the development of the revised special needs and inclusive education policy mentioned that the procedure for assessment, placement and provision of children is included within the 2015 policy. Respondents involved with Handicap International projects referred to eight pedagogical tools used to assess and identify children with disabilities, but it is not clear if (or how) these will be taken forward for standard use. In practice, it appears that the identification of children with disabilities continues to focus on readily noticeable, visible impairments (particularly hearing, vision, intellectual and physical impairments) rather than on identifying and removing the barriers any children face to learning. This focus would be expected in special schools that provide for a particular type of impairment, but is also the case in those identified as inclusive through various project initiatives. Despite a broader policy, inclusive schools therefore tend to be focused on including children with relatively low-incidence, visible types of disabilities: *'You can see them, so we know who they are easily. They are known in the community'* (district official).

Internationally, the past decade of education policy-making has been marked by an increased awareness and understanding of disability from a social perspective, *'as arising from the interaction of a person's functional status with the physical, cultural, and policy environments'* (WHO 2011). This means many countries are moving away from medically based models of identification based on health conditions and impairments (which located the difference in the individual) towards interactional approaches within education which take into consideration the environment and are more consistent with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. The focus on identification by type of impairment reinforces the medical model of disability rather than the social model. It should be remembered that not all children with disabilities have any difficulties in learning, and that two individuals with the same impairment may have very different experiences and needs, and therefore diverse responses are required. It is therefore more helpful in educational terms to focus on identifying the difficulties learners face in accessing education and participating in learning. This would encourage schools to recognise and identify all children who are having difficulties in their learning (including children with non-visible types of disabilities), and working to remove the barriers or provide support as required.

Respondents at all levels felt that due to various project initiatives in different districts and the different approaches taken, there is a need to clarify the terminology to ensure the same terms apply across Rwanda.

Data collection and availability of information

The main source of data informing the education system is collected through the school census as part of EMIS. This currently includes the number of children with hearing, visual, physical, intellectual, speaking and other/multiple impairments. Headteachers complete the form based on their own (or their teachers') interpretation of the categories listed. The National Population and Housing Censuses also include the numbers of children with disabilities and were last completed in 2012. There are other sources of information, but the data vary across all sources, reflecting the lack of clarity regarding the identification of children with disabilities and the methodology used to collect the data. Cultural influences may continue to prevent some parents from admitting their child

It should be remembered that not all children with disabilities have any difficulties in learning, and that two individuals with the same impairment may have very different experiences and needs

has a disability. Even if the collection methods were reliable, due to the complex relationships between the child and the barriers faced by the physical and social environment, the usefulness of the numbers of children with impairments is limited. Data on all aspects of disability, including contextual factors, are important for constructing a complete picture of disability and functioning to inform planning levels of support and the services required (WHO 2011). UNICEF (2013) highlights the scarcity of data as a major challenge to ensuring the inclusion of children with disabilities in education, as it reinforces and perpetuates their invisibility and restricts an informed approach to planning.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the prevalence of disability (and of different types of disabilities) will vary between countries, it is generally widely recognised that it is under-reported (UNICEF 2013). Unreliable or incomplete census data, varying definitions of disability and data collected using a narrow set of impairments all contribute to the likelihood that total numbers of children with disabilities in countries are underestimated.

As mentioned above, the 2012 census in Rwanda revealed a prevalence rate of approximately 1.7 per cent of children under 17 with a disability. This is very low compared to data from the World Health Organization (2011), which estimates that 5.1 per cent of Rwanda's population aged 0–14 years has a disability. Rwanda's school census from 2014 shows a total of 24,862 children with disabilities in pre-school, primary and lower secondary schools across all categories specified. This represents just 0.5 per cent of the population under 17 years and 0.85 per cent of the population enrolled in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary schools. This means that many children with disabilities are not attending school, or there are children with unidentified disabilities not receiving support in school. Respondents at all levels mentioned these low figures, and it was felt that although there has been an increase in the number of children with disabilities attending school, the change has not been widespread and many challenges persist. Special schools and centres are not represented in this data, and it is difficult to ascertain how many are in operation and how many children are enrolled, as information is not routinely collected from them.

The OECD (1999) emphasises that not all children with disabilities require special provision or support in their learning, and that many children with disabilities could participate in mainstream education with few or minor adaptations if attitudes permitted. The OECD (1999) also estimates that when the focus is on difficulties in learning, up to 20 per cent of learners will have a special educational need at some point in their school career. This would encompass a broader group of learners, some of whom may have a temporary learning difficulty caused by specific events or trauma in their lives. In educational terms, this type of information may be more helpful to planning, as many children with minor physical disabilities have no additional learning needs.

Organisation and coordination of initiatives to support children with disabilities

There is a high-level national task force including NGOs and government to increase awareness on high-level issues, especially regarding policy. The NCPD chairs a disability forum and ensures the collaboration of all stakeholders. All activities by partner organisations are intended to support the implementation of

Data on all aspects of disability, including contextual factors, are important for constructing a complete picture of disability and functioning to inform planning levels of support and the services required

the ESSP, although respondents (both within and outside the system) felt these activities were not necessarily well coordinated. The problems cited included too many different pilots with different approaches to inclusive education. A reliance on NGO support means they each focus on their priority programme areas and districts: *'The criteria [international non-governmental organisations] INGOs use to select their districts is not clear, and some districts benefit more than others... They change their focus according to funding opportunities'* (government officials). MINEDUC is unable to monitor the activities of all NGOs. As the NCC has a mandate to monitor and coordinate activities on children's rights, it claims to work with MINEDUC to ensure that inclusive education policy is implemented. It is unclear how this role is carried out in practice.

The system requires each department of MINEDUC to prepare a strategic plan with a budget for the year's activities based on the progress made and requirements of the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP). This is intended to ensure that all priority activities in the ESDP are conducted, and provides a work plan for implementation. However, a recent restructure has changed the roles and responsibilities of the Rwanda Education Board (REB) and MINEDUC, resulting in the REB using the budget allocated for inclusive education activities for other purposes. Since special needs and inclusive education is seen as a cross-cutting issue in MINEDUC, it has a desk within a team responsible for cross-cutting programmes. The REB has a focal point for special needs education and inclusion, but it is not a dedicated position and the person has other main responsibilities. *A priority would be to have a specified desk or department in the REB to ensure implementation.*

A volunteer group of 40 key players, including representatives of the School for Inclusive and Special Needs Education, sector education officers, and teachers from both special and inclusive schools meets once per term and engages in public awareness for the promotion of inclusive education.

Supply-side factors

Entitlement to placement, resources and support

Although the general policy is for children with disabilities to be educated in regular inclusive schools wherever possible, many respondents acknowledged that mainstream schools may not always be willing to enrol children with disabilities. This forces parents to take their children to special schools directly if they can afford to do so, or to keep them at home because they do not think they can be enrolled. The inclusive schools supported by various projects do not conform to a single model or to the usual idea of inclusive education – i.e. a mainstream school including all children in its locality. There appear to be various models of inclusive education, which impedes clear understanding of the terminology and expected practice. The study identified relatively few inclusive schools (approximately 92); they were not found in all districts. Special schools are also very few in number, and the demand exceeds the supply.

Respondents felt project inputs have resulted in more schools being willing to enrol children with disabilities, although this tendency is limited to schools involved in the projects. Within those project areas, the number of children with disabilities in

Many respondents acknowledged that mainstream schools may not always be willing to enrol children with disabilities

schools has increased. This was considered to be a result of providing orientation to inclusive education to headteachers, together with community involvement and support at the cell and sector levels. As the inclusive schools have had project inputs and are labelled as inclusive, this sets them apart from other mainstream schools. Consequently, they tend to have a higher number of children with disabilities attending from a wide catchment area because parents of children with disabilities choose to enrol their children in these schools if they cannot enrol them in special schools. It must be stressed that the number of schools covered by these projects is relatively small, and some mainstream schools do also include children with disabilities but are not labelled as inclusive. Whilst these project initiatives are a big step in the move towards inclusive education, the focus remains on children with visible disabilities. Whilst project inputs have provided teachers with some knowledge of inclusion, they felt the focus had been on types and causes of disability rather than teaching strategies. They also consider the training to be insufficient to meet the needs of children with severe disabilities and recognise that children with hearing or visual or intellectual impairments require highly specialised teachers to support their learning. Due to the lack of these specialised teachers, there is a danger that children are being placed in school without the specialist support they need for full participation.

A system for assessment is set out in the approved national policy on inclusive and special education from 2015, which also provides the basis for placement, but there is currently no standard system in place. Thus it is up to parents to decide where to enrol their child. In one inclusive school visited, a team is sent by the district to make an assessment if a child with disabilities is brought to a school to be enrolled. This assessment team includes the head of cell, headteacher, parent and two teachers. An assessment tool has been developed to assess the child's needs and a placement is accordingly made in the most suitable setting. It was not clear if this will continue now that the project has ended, but respondents were doubtful that it would be adopted as standard procedure across all schools.

Some special schools require a doctor's certificate for a child to be enrolled, and as private institutions they may also involve fees. As special schools and centres are usually boarding placements, some respondents suggested there is a danger that parents will enrol their child in order to avoid their care responsibilities at home. However, due to the lack of specialist teachers in inclusive settings, some parents of children with disabilities stated their preference would be to send their child to a special school but there are insufficient places and they are expensive and too far from their homes. Respondents at all levels mentioned the need for a referral system to other levels of support and expertise, and a clear system based on a standard assessment of need to ensure the most appropriate placement for every child. Schools do not receive any additional funding for enrolling children with disabilities, but district officials suggested schools may choose to allocate some of the capitation grant to provide materials to support children with disabilities. However, it was agreed that given the overwhelming lack of resources this was unlikely to happen. Due to the large class sizes, some teachers and parents expressed a need to recruit assistant teachers to support children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, as they are not being given the necessary support and attention.

A system for assessment is set out in the approved national policy on inclusive and special education from 2015, which also provides the basis for placement, but there is currently no standard system in place

Disparities in provision by gender, age, geography or type of provision

The special schools and centres are not evenly spread throughout Rwanda and, as indicated above, are insufficient in number to provide placement for all children with disabilities. As these centres are private institutions, they are not obligated to support other schools, even though the government pays the teachers' salaries. Therefore a school's location, and whether there is a nearby special centre that is willing to provide support, determines whether a mainstream or inclusive school has access to specialists for advice.

Special schools also frequently face financial and resource challenges. There is no consistent system for these schools to receive government funding, and they are generally excluded when resources are made available to schools such as the one laptop per child programme. Students and teachers in special schools in this study felt this was discriminatory, and asserted *'we should not be ignored'*. Inclusive schools are also few in number and not evenly spread out. Each project working on inclusive education has been active in only a few districts; some districts have had more than one project intervention, whilst others have had none.

Project-based interventions have only been at the primary level, making it difficult for children with disabilities to transition to secondary schooling. A district-level respondent felt the challenges for inclusion at the secondary level were far greater than at the primary level, with a need for an increased budget for specialist equipment and materials as it is difficult to adapt local materials for teaching at the secondary level and the learning needs of the students are different.

'Very few children with disabilities enrol in secondary school as the situation is too challenging. Participation in learning is a big challenge at the secondary level. Teachers are not trained. Students are more self-aware and therefore more likely to react to teasing and discrimination. These factors mean they tend to drop out.'

Through a pilot under the national employment programme, NCPD are supporting people with disabilities to enrol in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) short courses in two centres. This is especially targeted at people with hearing and visual impairments.

Accessibility to school and within school

Many respondents mentioned difficulties for children with disabilities to get to school. Most children have to walk to school, and those with disabilities who do not attend their nearest school may have to walk long distances. The conditions can be difficult as there are many potholes and the terrain can be very steep and slippery, especially during the rainy season. Respondents felt there is a need for transport to be provided to take children with disabilities to school. If children do need transport, it is very expensive for their parents and takes a lot of time for them to accompany their child to and from school.

Government officers stated that new school buildings in the future will be built to the newly introduced accessibility standards, but most existing buildings are inaccessible. It was noted that where modifications had been made to buildings visited in this study, they were not of consistent quality, and there was some evidence of inappropriate or poorly completed construction – for example, ramps

A school's location, and whether there is a nearby special centre that is willing to provide support, determines whether a mainstream or inclusive school has access to specialists for advice

that had been built too steeply or that did not run to the ground, making them inaccessible or difficult to use. Pathways over drains were not always covered, and pathways to toilets (and the toilets themselves) were often inaccessible. One headteacher explained that adaptations had been made to the school using project funding, but there was no budget to repair and maintain older buildings or to make further adaptations. This meant whilst the school had unused ramps, there were broken windows and leaking roofs in many classrooms.

Inclusive schoolteachers reported difficulties in ensuring the participation of children with disabilities as they have large classes. The class may be split into two shifts to counter overcrowding, but the teachers must still prepare lessons, mark large amounts of work and monitor progress. This does not allow time to follow individual education plans (IEPs) or to provide individual attention. Since larger numbers of children with disabilities attend inclusive schools than would usually be found within a community, this places a further strain on teachers, who are expected to be able to deal with all types of disabilities with no support.

In schools with tin roofs, classes are frequently disturbed by the noise of heavy rain, and may have to stop during the rainy season. This was cited as a particular difficulty in a school for students with visual impairments, where teaching relies heavily on verbal explanations and discussion. In other settings, students with visual impairments are at a distinct disadvantage if the teacher resorts to using the blackboard as a means of instruction during outbreaks of heavy rain.

Although respondents mentioned that extra time was allowed for students with disabilities to complete exams, it was not clear whether this is based on a directive from MINEDUC, or indeed how any such entitlement is decided or set. Nor was it clear whether support such as sign interpreters or readers is allowed in examinations. Respondents reported difficulties for children with visual impairments being compounded, for example because exam supervisors *'do not give the students all the materials because they do not read Braille model and cannot recognise the different parts of the paper'*. It is impossible, for example, for students to answer questions about a text if they are not provided with the text. They also have found there can be problems caused by confusion between different versions of Braille, resulting in misinterpretation of both question and answer papers. Students write their answer paper in Braille model, which is sent to a Braille translator before being sent to the marker. If the translator is not familiar with the version of Braille being used, students can lose marks because of poor translation. This may be as simple as a difference in Braille model versions between capital and lowercase letters, which can cause a big discrepancy, for example, in chemistry where symbols rely on the use of capital letters. Students also noted that translations or explanations were not always provided for diagrams and drawings in question papers, which prevents them from being able to answer the question.

Teacher training and professional development

The importance placed on special needs and inclusive education in Rwanda is reflected in the establishment of the School of Special Needs and Inclusive Education at University of Rwanda's College of Education. The first cohort of 46 students is currently studying for a Bachelor in Special Needs and Inclusive Education. These students are supported by a scholarship from the government to upgrade their teaching qualification gained at teacher training colleges (TTCs).

In schools with tin roofs, classes are frequently disturbed by the noise of heavy rain, and may have to stop during the rainy season

The school has designed four programmes for teacher development at the Bachelor, Diploma, Post-graduate Diploma and Master's levels, and hopes to be able to offer other courses from September 2015, subject to government approval.

The School of Special Needs and Inclusive Education plans to develop the expertise of the trainers within the TTCs to be able to integrate inclusive education into the pre-service training for all teachers. Three colleges have been identified to start this training delivery. It is expected that this will eventually provide a system of different levels of training to ensure that all teachers have a background in inclusive education, others have further knowledge and skills to offer a next level of advice and support, and smaller numbers of specialist teachers can provide advice and support for students with particular needs such as visual, hearing or intellectual impairments. Respondents reported: *'a lack of qualified personnel is a challenge for the school to be able to deliver the courses and develop expertise in the teaching workforce'*.

The plan is for a resource centre to be set up within the school to provide:

- materials and support for trainee teachers
- an active base for supervised practice and reinforcement of training
- multi-disciplinary assessment for students with disabilities
- research
- teacher- and community-based support activities.

This would be the main centre under which local Centres for Educational Assessment and Rehabilitation Services are developed at the sector level eventually. Each centre would then have trained specialists to conduct assessments and support students and teachers.

The internal restructure means that the REB now has responsibility for in-service teacher training, and there is currently no training programme for inclusive education or for teachers of children with special needs. In-service training is mostly provided through the various pilot projects according to the needs of the individual projects. There is no standardisation of content, and many teachers are not included in the coverage. Handicap International has developed four training modules: introduction to inclusive education, visual and hearing impairments, physical impairments, and intellectual impairments. District officials were also trained as trainers to instruct headteachers and teachers, but now that the project has ended there is no budget to do so. It was also stressed that project-based activities reach few districts. The NCPD has also provided some orientation training in inclusive education to some teachers in the Western province. It was reported that a DVD is available for teacher training in sign language, but it is not clear if this is for self-study or for delivery as a face-to-face course. Teachers of the visually impaired within the special school visited are all qualified teachers in the mainstream sector and are provided in-house training to be able to teach the students effectively. There is currently no standard training for specialist teachers of children with visual, hearing or intellectual impairments, but the School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education plans to train such specialists in the future.

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Teachers frequently move around, and those who have been trained under projects may be replaced by untrained teachers from other districts, leaving gaps to quickly emerge in school-based training provided by projects. This means schools are left with untrained teachers, although children with disabilities have been enrolled:

'I joined the school and had no knowledge of inclusive education or the initiatives set up under the project. For example, I did not know about IEP preparation and needed help from other teachers. They try to share their knowledge but we have very little time in school and it is not the same as having the training directly. I need training to include children with disabilities in my class, but now the project has completed there is no chance of this' (teacher in an inclusive school).

Some teachers who took part felt that the training they had received was diluted and lacked relevance to teaching, so they did not think there was sufficient substance to share with others. They reported that much of the content was focused on the nature and cause of different disabilities rather than on teaching methodologies, leaving them with few strategies for inclusion beyond seating the child near the front of the class. An introduction to both sign language and Braille did not allow them to develop sufficient skills to use these as methods of communication, let alone effectively teach using them.

Respondents at all levels suggested that in-service teacher training needs to be a priority. They felt teachers need orientation to general strategies for including children with special needs, as well as using teaching aids and available materials and resources. Ideally this should be a standardised package for all teachers, with those already trained under the various projects being provided a further level of more in-depth knowledge. As the project inputs have varied widely, it was agreed that it would be difficult for follow-up courses to be provided, however, and further training beyond initial orientation should be based on demonstrated skill, experience and need. The need for specialised teachers of children with hearing and visual impairments was also highlighted.

Training and capacity building for non-teaching staff/officials

It is apparent that there has been no systematic capacity building or training for education officials at any level in the system. This means that approaches to inclusion, and to monitoring teaching methodologies and practice, are not yet embedded in the system. There is little recognition that all stakeholders share the responsibility to support schools and teachers to ensure all learners are participating in the learning process. It appears that inclusive issues are not generally considered in any quality assurance or inspection of schools. As mentioned previously, Handicap International did provide training for one district official together with teachers on inclusive education, but only in the districts they were working in. School- and district-level respondents suggested schools were not monitored or assessed against any standards for inclusion, and that this should be incorporated into general requirements of providing a quality education. There is therefore a need to set a standard approach and for officials at all levels to be made aware of the issues and approach that is expected in schools.

The need for training for a designated special and inclusive education desk holder at the REB was also raised.

Respondents at all levels suggested that in-service teacher training needs to be a priority

Availability of technical support and specialists

There is a shortage of specialists to support children with disabilities, and Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) was mentioned a newly introduced approach. In the absence of physiotherapists, speech therapists and other specialists, project-based activities have provided training for parents to conduct some exercises with children in resource rooms set up within the schools. Respondents mentioned the urgent need for assistive devices, and for the training to allow children to use them effectively. This would require increased inter-ministerial collaboration.

Most specialist teachers are within the special schools, and there is very limited collaboration between these and inclusive or mainstream schools, even though the government pays the majority of salaries for teachers in special schools. There is thus little support for children with disabilities in mainstream or inclusive settings. There are currently no existing posts for inclusive education specialists within the mainstream system and no formal system of support for teachers or children.

Several respondents mentioned the lack of sign language interpreters and trainers, and parents highlighted the need for their own training in sign language to enable them to communicate with their child.

Demand-side factors

Cultural issues, attitudes and expectations

The legislative and policy framework demonstrates a government commitment to ensuring the right to education for children with disabilities in Rwanda. However, in practice many challenges remain. The legacy of provision in special schools and centres being provided by the church means not only that the medical model based on physical or intellectual impairments persists; it also reinforces a reliance on charity and need for care rather than developing a culture of inclusion and equal opportunity.

Attitudes are embedded in culture, and stakeholders at all levels mentioned that it remains culturally difficult for a parent to admit they have a child with disabilities. The idea that children with disabilities have little value and cannot learn is widespread, even among parents of children with disabilities. Respondents at all levels referred to the continued discrimination, stigma and shame associated with disability to the extent that some parents will still try to hide their children with disabilities. Further awareness raising and sensitisation programmes were recommended to change attitudes.

Officials mentioned that there is no incentive for schools to accept children with disabilities, or indeed any penalty if they do not. A lack of understanding means that in some cases parents of children without disabilities insist their child is not in the same class as a child with disabilities as they think the disability may be contagious, or that their child's learning will be held back, even if the child with disability does not have learning difficulties. Other children also reflect the attitudes of their parents and wider community, and can subject children with disabilities to verbal and physical abuse.

Attitudes are embedded in culture, and stakeholders at all levels mentioned that it remains culturally difficult for a parent to admit they have a child with disabilities

On a positive note, parents of children with disabilities attending inclusive schools mentioned the changes attending school had brought to their children:

'Now our children are becoming more independent – before they had little self-esteem.....Now they are motivated and want to be like others – they can help themselves to be ready for school and can learn new things. They are no longer at home and we have more time to work.'

Officials and teachers mentioned that disability was not a subject spoken of or mentioned before: *'It is a new issue being discussed and there is a need for advocacy to realise the goals set in policies. There are gaps in people's understanding of what disability means.'*

Participation of children with disabilities and their families in decision making

It is important to note that the study team did not visit any mainstream schools that had not benefitted from inclusive education project initiatives. Respondents suggested, however, that initiatives for parental involvement in education tend to be project based; one initiative formed parent groups to support teachers and children with disabilities in resource rooms:

'Parents support each other now – we learned physiotherapy techniques to help our children and can pass this on to others. We can see the improvement and achievements of our children through inclusive education so we also visit homes and sensitise or help other parents. We also formed a committee and take turns to help teachers in school. We make learning materials for use in the resource room' (parents of children with disabilities).

Also in project-based inclusive schools parents are invited to be part of their child's IEP development. As one headteacher reported: *'attitudes are changing among parents – they no longer hide their children with disabilities. They want to play a more active role in their child's education'.*

In general, respondents reported that children are not included in decision-making about their placement or arrangements for learning. However, the NCC organise a child summit every year to hear children's points of view. This is based on information provided by child forums that are established in every village. Six children are elected to the forum in each village, and one of these places is reserved for a child with disabilities. Each forum gathers information from children in the village about their concerns, problems and priorities. Each forum sends a representative to the cell level and then to the sector level to identify the common issues. These are compiled at the district level and finally presented at the national annual summit. High-level government officials agree on the priorities, and an action plan is developed for implementation. The NCC has a mandate to monitor progress and report on achievements to the next summit.

Teachers and headteachers in special schools visited in this study, however, reported that they found it difficult to involve parents in their child's education partly because of the distance between home and school and also because some parents are reportedly not interested in their child's achievements, or consider them unable to learn.

Officials and teachers mentioned that disability was not a subject spoken of or mentioned before

Community involvement in support of education for children with disabilities

In general, school committees and parent associations are seen as fundraising agents to support infrastructure development and provide additional resources for schools. Beyond this, as with parental involvement, there seems to be a reliance on NGO programmes to encourage community involvement in schools. An example is the development of community education volunteers, who may or may not be parents of children with disabilities, organised by headteachers in some inclusive schools to support children with disabilities in the school and work with teachers to make resources. They also provide support to families of children with disabilities.

Staff at a private inclusive school and special centre mentioned specifically that they see involving the community as the essential key to success of inclusive education.

There are wide disparities between the different types of schools; those in the private sector unsurprisingly tend to be better resourced

Quality of provision/care

There are wide disparities between the different types of schools; those in the private sector unsurprisingly tend to be better resourced. However, special schools owned by the church or parent associations frequently lack sufficient resources. The financial gaps are in some cases filled by the government support in the payment of teacher salaries, teachers' capacity building and other requirements including supplies. Project-funded activities tend to be intensively human resource based, meaning that the support is unsustainable when the project ends. The government schools visited have limited resources; therefore disability-adapted infrastructure may be unavailable. The many challenges of providing quality education in mainstream schools are reflected in the high dropout rates at the primary level, especially in Grades 2 and 5 (Republic of Rwanda, 2015b). These challenges to children's retention will be compounded for children with disabilities.

Teaching and learning

Many classes were seated in a horseshoe arrangement, but all teaching observed was whole-class based, relied on traditional methods and focused on completing the syllabus, irrespective of the students' learning levels. The lack of awareness of the barriers children face to learning means that learning difficulties tend not to be recognised, and even in inclusive schools it was apparent that teachers had no understanding of applying differentiation in teaching or learning outcomes. In fact, teachers appeared to have very few strategies to ensure all children are learning and able to participate fully; the only one mentioned was sitting children with disabilities at the front of the class. There continues to be a reliance on repeating a class as the only strategy for children who do not meet the learning expectations and subsequently fail the end-of-year exams. Respondents also mentioned that a recently introduced teacher performance contract means children with low grades may be encouraged to drop out as it reflects on the teacher's performance. It was acknowledged that some of these children may have non-visible disabilities that remain unrecognised.

It is important to remember that teaching does not guarantee learning, and it is unlikely a child will learn something when it is presented in the same way a second time. Teachers suggested they required more support to develop their

skills and strategies to be able to meet a more diverse range of learning needs in their classrooms.

Little support is provided for teachers to be inclusive, and in schools under projects that have been introduced to assessment systems and where IEPs are expected to be used, teachers report: *'there is no time in class to follow the IEP. There are 40 students in the morning and 40 in the afternoon, and we have no materials and insufficient textbooks. If a child does not succeed academically the only option is to repeat or drop out.'*

Contrary to child-friendly and inclusive practices, children in all schools visited gave reports of beating being used as punishment, most commonly for low marks, lateness and talking in class.

In the special school sector, respondents mentioned the need for a single system to be employed for Braille and sign language. At the moment different systems are in use, which causes some confusion.

Teaching and learning materials

A general lack of materials and assistive devices was stressed by many respondents, and was observed in school visits. Children with disabilities are not represented in textbooks, although positive representation could help change attitudes and break down stereotypes. Specialist teachers also highlighted a lack of adapted textbooks for students with visual impairments, especially with descriptions of diagrams and pictures.

It was noted that there had been an increased use of teaching aids by teachers trained under some projects, although how this was measured was not made clear. It was also mentioned that a sign language dictionary is currently being produced which could be used to introduce a standard form across Rwanda.

Curriculum flexibility

As detailed above, no differentiation was reported or observed in the schools visited. Teachers taught the syllabus, irrespective of the students' understanding or level of learning. However, it is understood that a review of the national curriculum for primary and secondary schools has taken place and a revised curriculum has been launched that will be implemented in schools from January 2016. The revised curriculum is reported to be competency based and aimed at improving the quality of learning for all children. Inclusive education is one of the cross-cutting themes identified as a priority area in the curriculum, and it is expected to be flexible to adapt to the needs of children with special needs. Related textbooks, readers and teacher training will be provided to support the curriculum roll-out.

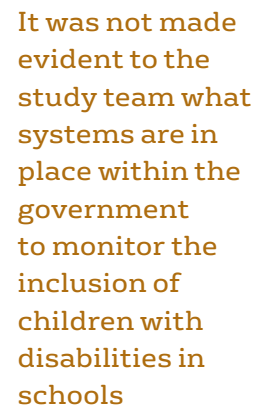
Special schools follow the national curriculum with a few adaptations and some schools develop their own. The school for children with visual impairments follows the national curriculum to ensure their students can sit national exams, but mentioned they face difficulties in accessing materials, as textbooks have not been developed with students' learning needs in mind. Teachers of students with moderate and severe intellectual impairments face challenges, as there is no standard curriculum for children who do not have the capacity to follow the national curriculum and require basic skills training.

Special schools follow the national curriculum with a few adaptations and some schools develop their own

Quality assurance/monitoring of schools/programmes for children with disabilities

The different projects and initiatives have monitored their programme outcomes according to their own requirements. There was no mention of adopting any such system at the district level. It was not made evident to the study team what systems are in place within the government to monitor the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, although it was mentioned that inspectors do not attend regularly and do not have the remit to cover special schools. It was also not clear whether school inspectors are provided training in inclusive and special needs education, which raises questions about their capability to monitor and support quality implementation in inclusive settings.

Schools are required to report the number of learners with disabilities they have to the Ministry of Education each year. However, it is not obvious what follow-up or other assistance schools get receive from the ministry.



It was not made evident to the study team what systems are in place within the government to monitor the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools



English Media Club

Recommendations

Rwanda has made some significant progress in the education of children with disabilities and has clear directives on placement in mainstream schools wherever possible. Inputs towards developing inclusive education have, however, tended to rely on project-based activities provided by NGOs, with a focus on visible disabilities and impairments rather than on difficulties in learning. There has been no systematic drive to foster a culture of inclusion within the system generally, or to provide the necessary support for teachers to meet a diverse range of learning needs.

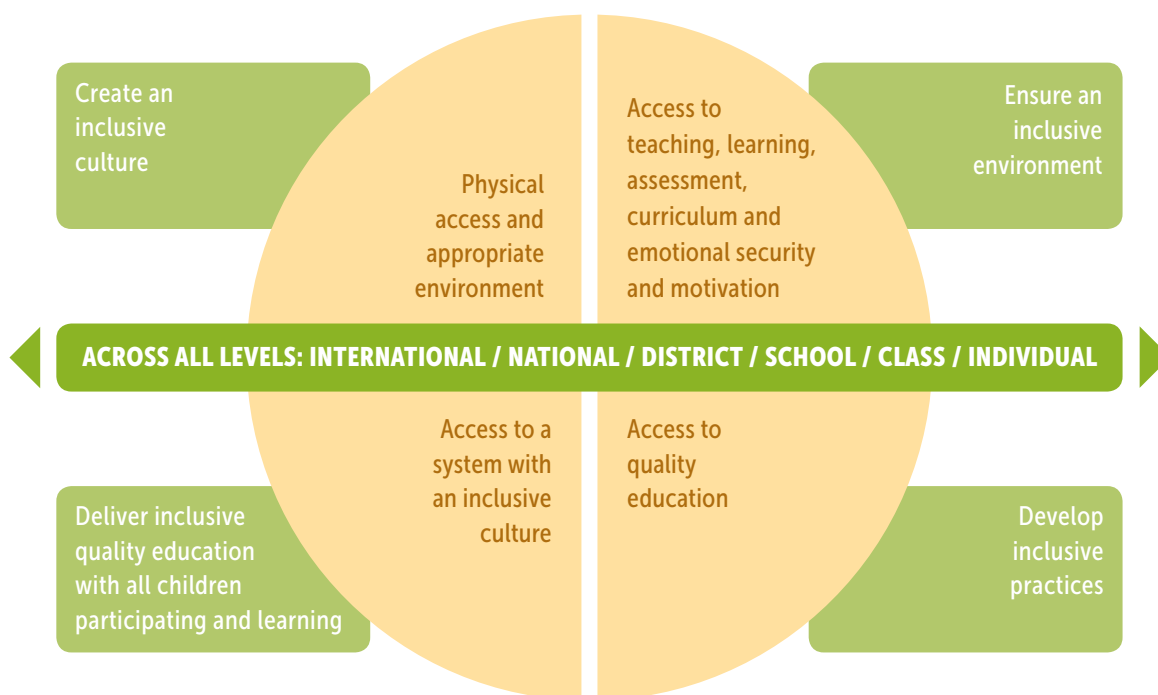
The global initiative on out of school children (2015) reports that even if children with disabilities are able to gain access to school, they are particularly disadvantaged by non-inclusive teaching methods, inflexible curricula and examination systems. An inclusive school is one that reduces the difficulties to all children in accessing, participating and achieving in education. Many factors are involved in ensuring an inclusive, learner-friendly environment, including the relevance of the curriculum, the pace of teaching, the materials and methodology used, teaching according to learning needs, time given to absorb learning and the method of assessment. The continuous development of teaching skills required to respond to the different needs of learners can only be seen in terms of educational quality improvement for all children.

The move towards a more inclusive system needs to be seen as a continual long-term process and an integral part of quality improvement in teaching and learning. Since this is so wide ranging it is useful to consider it as development along the four dimensions depicted in Figure 4. This is loosely based on the widely used Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), which provides a set of indicators to describe levels of inclusion at the school level, but is extended here to apply to development at all levels in the system:

- **Creating an inclusive culture** – is focused both within the wider community or society and within the system. It requires developing a common recognition and acceptance of the right of all children to participate in education without discrimination, and the need to reduce the barriers some children face to do so.

The move towards a more inclusive system needs to be seen as a continual long-term process and an integral part of quality improvement in teaching and learning

FIGURE 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



- **Developing inclusive practices** – is focused at the system level (governmental as well as non-governmental systems of practice, programmes and provision). It requires developing inclusive practices throughout the system, to ensure that every level of the system supports schools to improve teaching and learning and become more inclusive. This relates to all activities that enable the delivery of quality inclusive education, including training activities and teacher development.
- **Ensuring an inclusive environment** – is focused at the school level. It is concerned with the provision, maintenance and accessibility of the school infrastructure, as well as the school's general ethos and attitudes. This can also include technologies, assistive devices and other factors that will ensure schools are accessible to children with disabilities.
- **Delivering quality, inclusive education** – is focused at the system level in the creation of monitoring and supportive structures to ensure that the educational rights of children with disabilities are met, and is also related to the classroom in the form of quality improvement in teaching and learning. This includes curriculum, teaching and learning materials, pedagogy and pupil assessment. The goal is for all children to be valued equally and participate in their education. Ensuring inclusive issues are embedded in the system and integrating these issues into all activities generates momentum to make the necessary changes in practice and attitudes.

These dimensions are a guide to ensure all aspects are considered; they should not be seen as clear-cut and rigid areas. Some aspects will not fit neatly into one dimension, and some blurring and overlapping may naturally occur.

The goal is for all children to be valued equally and participate in their education

Key recommendation A: Creating an inclusive culture

- 1. Conduct on-going awareness-raising activities** to continue to change attitudes in communities. In order to create a supportive, inclusive culture it will also be necessary to raise awareness at all levels within the system so that everyone has a responsibility to support schools to become more inclusive.
- 2. Improve coordination and collaboration between ministries** with responsibilities for children with disabilities to provide assistive devices, health checks and other non-educational support for children with disabilities.
- 3. Develop a clear national assessment system** to identify children's learning needs and entitlement to support, and appropriate educational placements if required.
- 4. Identify best practice from pilot initiatives** and incorporate these into a model of inclusive education to be adopted by every school. Strengthen coordination mechanisms to ensure future work undertaken by INGOs and local NGOs in support of education for children with disabilities complies with this model, is sustainable and supports the government plan to develop the entire system to become more inclusive. Encourage NGO involvement in developing community support and ensure coverage in the most needed districts (for example where few children with disabilities are enrolled in school, in areas with low achievement, or districts that have had no support).
- 5. Encourage schools to include children with disabilities** by providing incentives for additional resources.
- 6. Review data collection on children with disabilities**, moving away from focusing on visual impairments to focus on learning needs. This would encompass a broader group of learnings, and provide information that is more useful in planning responses to the educational needs of children in schools. The government's policy recognises that it will not be possible for some children's needs to be met in a mainstream school. It is therefore important to conduct a survey to find out how many children would be expected to require a special placement and work towards ensuring provision will be available.

In order to create a supportive, inclusive culture it will also be necessary to raise awareness at all levels within the system so that everyone has a responsibility to support schools to become more inclusive

FIGURE 4: ACHIEVING IMPROVED INCLUSIVE CULTURE IN RWANDA



Key recommendation B: Developing inclusive practices

7. Expedite the implementation of the strategic plan for the revised Policy for Inclusive and Special Needs Education and establish a desk responsible for inclusive and special needs education in the REB.

8. To ensure that special school placements can be offered according to need, it will be necessary to review their status and explore options to include them in the overall system, including inspection and quality assurance. It is also essential to ensure increased liaison between government and special schools with a view to special schools acting as outreach centres, utilising their expertise to support other teachers in mainstream schools.

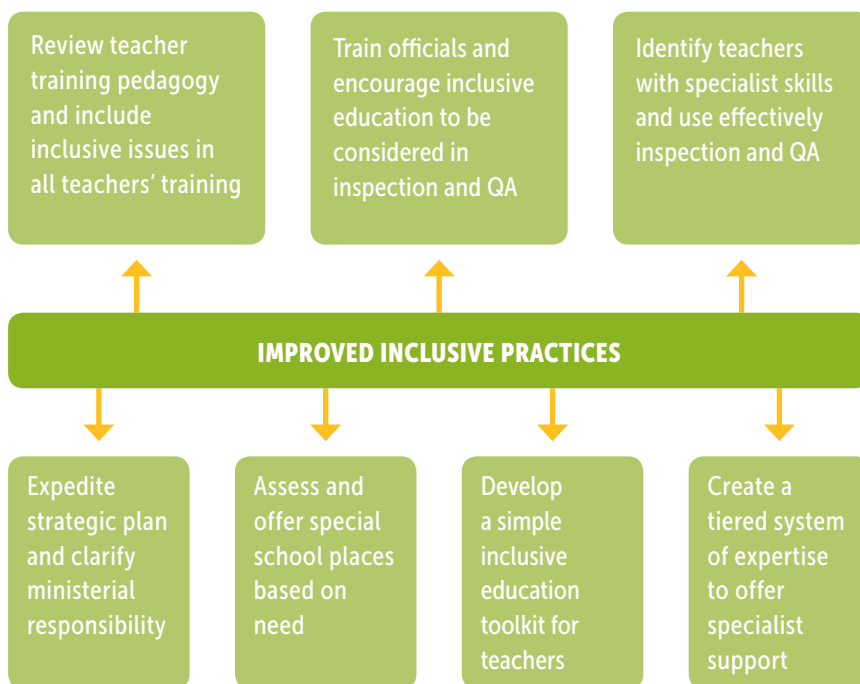
9. Provide orientation, training and guidelines to all officials in the system, and incorporate inclusive issues into inspection and quality assurance checks. It is clear that teachers not only require on-going professional development beyond their initial training, but that there also needs to be support from all levels within the system to ensure they can fulfil their role and make sure all children are learning to their full potential. Studies highlight the importance of developing professional staff at all levels to support teachers, including providing opportunities for officials to increase their understanding and capacity to imagine what might be achieved, and increasing their sense of accountability for bringing this about. This may also involve tackling assumptions that taken for granted, especially in relation to expectations about certain groups of students, including their capabilities and behaviours (Ainscow and Miles, 2009).

10. Review initial and in-service training of teachers:

- Provide training and support to teacher trainers to enable the use of participatory methodologies in pre-service and in-service teacher training. This would demonstrate how trainee teachers are expected to teach in the classroom and provide them with reference models.
- Ensure initial teacher training incorporates and reflects issues of inclusion within all subjects reinforcing the idea that teachers have a responsibility to ensure all children are learning, with practical strategies for presenting content in different ways to suit different abilities and learning needs and differentiation of the curriculum.
- Develop a systematic approach to in-service training for teachers based on developing reflective practice with issues of inclusion incorporated and reflected within all subjects. All training opportunities need to reinforce the idea that teachers have a responsibility to ensure all children are learning, with practical strategies for presenting content in different ways to suit different abilities and learning needs, to differentiate the curriculum, and to use a range of teaching and learning materials. Especially in the absence of specific support systems for children with disabilities, it is important that teachers are provided with the knowledge to set appropriate learning targets and remove the barriers to learning and achieving that some children face. It is important that teachers can distinguish between children who are under-achieving and those who having a specific learning difficulty which may require special attention. Under-achievement may be

Studies highlight the importance of developing professional staff at all levels to support teachers

FIGURE 5: IMPROVING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN RWANDA



the result of poor-quality or inappropriate teaching, or the effect of absence from school, lack of attention by the learner and so on, and interventions need to be made accordingly.

11. Identify teachers with experience and skills in teaching children with disabilities and ensure they are employed to their best use within the system to support other teachers.

12. Develop a simple toolkit for all teachers to provide an interim measure of support and guidance on how to make their classrooms more inclusive and child friendly, together with strategies for differentiating the curriculum, a checklist for assessment or simple strategies to identify children experiencing difficulties in learning, and practical initiatives that can be applied in the classroom to overcome these. Toolkits would also encourage the systematic use of IEPs for children with special educational needs and guidance on their development. This would require some orientation to the toolkit and support for teachers in its use, potentially by orienting the headteacher or another resource person identified in the school.

13. Work towards a tiered system of support, as outlined in the national policy, with an identified teacher with additional training and expertise acting as a Special Needs Education Coordinator to provide support to teachers in assessment and teaching strategies. A third level of expertise is also required to provide specialised teachers for children with visual, hearing or intellectual impairments. A teacher of the visually impaired is required to have an in-depth knowledge of Braille and to understand the specific needs of those children in accessing education and being able to complete daily tasks. A teacher of the hearing impaired requires very different skills in the form of sign language and other specific needs of those children to access the curriculum. It is not possible for one teacher to acquire

It is important that teachers can distinguish between children who are under-achieving and those who having a specific learning difficulty which may require special attention

the necessary skills to do both. This specialist support may be provided in a special setting or as itinerant support in mainstream schools. Children with severe intellectual impairments require very specialist inputs with carefully planned learning targets which may be more related to life skills than the usual curriculum. This also requires specialised teachers.

A teacher of the hearing impaired requires very different skills in the form of sign language and other specific needs of those children to access the curriculum. It is not possible for one teacher to acquire the necessary skills to do both

Key recommendation C: Ensuring an inclusive environment

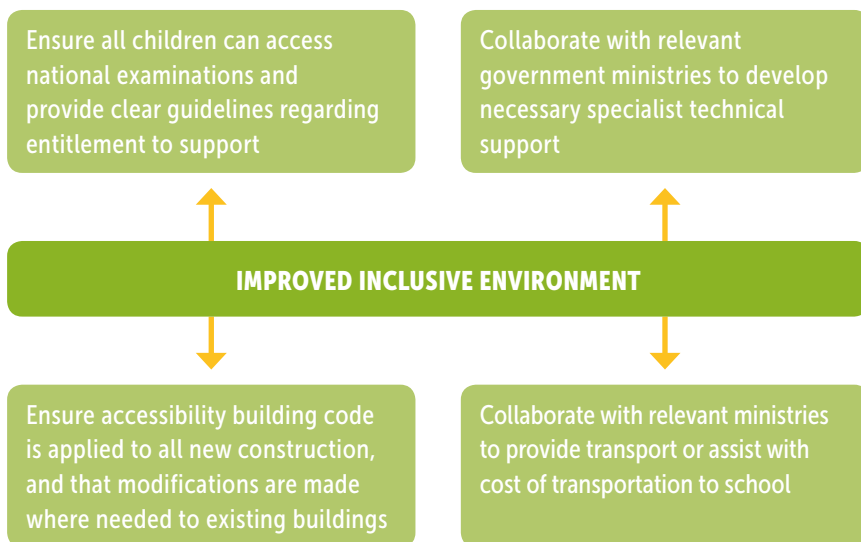
14. Ensure the accessibility building code is applied to all new school construction, and allocate resources to make modifications to existing buildings on a needs basis.

15. Ensure all children can access national exams, and provide clear guidelines regarding entitlements to support (readers, sign interpreters, Braille translation, computers, etc.) and any additional time allowances.

16. Collaborate with other relevant ministries to ensure learners with disabilities are provided appropriate assistive devices and learning materials, including technology, as necessary. Additional materials need to be developed to enable a more inclusive learning environment; this includes adapted textbooks for children with visual impairments and greater representation of children with disabilities in textbooks.

17. Collaborate with other relevant ministries to provide transport or transport costs for children with disabilities who need transport to attend school. Consider other allowances for costs (e.g. canteen, clothing, stationery, school fees, etc.) to encourage parents of children with disabilities to enrol their children in school.

FIGURE 6: IMPROVING THE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT IN RWANDA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM



Key recommendation D: Delivering quality, inclusive education

18. Provide opportunities for teachers to develop their skills further and to become reflective practitioners. This would make them aware of their own practice in the classroom and enable them to learn from their own experience and from their colleagues. There is often a mismatch between what teachers think is happening in their classrooms and what is actually taking place. Teachers need to be aware that even if they are enrolled in and attending school, children continue to be excluded from the learning process if they are never asked to contribute, if they do not offer to contribute, if they cannot see the blackboard, do not have the textbook, cannot hear or see the teacher, if the pace of the lesson is too fast or slow, or if they do not understand the lesson but no help is offered to them. Teachers therefore need opportunities to reflect on what is happening in their lessons and to continually develop their skills to provide inclusive opportunities and encourage the participation of all children.

There is often a mismatch between what teachers think is happening in their classrooms and what is actually taking place

FIGURE 7: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN RWANDA





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barasaga cyane ariko
gusa n'imitwarire yabo.
Nyabwangu undi akite-
Nyabwangu bivugaga "u-
adatekereje." Na ho Nyab-
wangu yakomeye akubwira
"ukora ikintu abanje kugite-
wicisha bugufi."

Nyabwangu yakundaga ku-
kandi akitwara nabi. Iyo yahura
wamugaye yaramusekaga akavuye
Ese imana yakuremye inaniwe?" Ny-
abwangu we yari umukobwa mwiza utuje.
ababyeyi be. Uko yabonaga nyina
iriba yaramwagiraga naho Nyabwangu
akihagararira kure akamwisekera ati
"njye wakubwiye ngo umbyare?"

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Appendix 1: Meetings and visits

Field study meetings and visits held 20 April – 1 May 2015

Date	Location	Meeting / visit description
20/04/15	Kigali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing meeting with UNICEF Education Programme personnel Focus group discussion with NGO representatives working in education for children with disabilities: Fondation Liliane, NUDOR, Voluntary Services Overseas, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, UR-Support Foundation, Handicap International
21/04/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UR College of Education/ dean of inclusive and special needs education Ministry of Education, officer responsible for inclusive and special needs education NCC: child rights protection officer (children with disabilities)
22/04/15	Kamonyi District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kamonyi District education officers Primary school visit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with headteacher, teachers, FGD: parents of children with disabilities, FGD: children with disabilities School and classroom observation
23/04/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEFAPEK special centre and inclusive school: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with director, headteacher, FGD: teachers, FGD: parents of children with and without disabilities, FGD: children with and without disabilities
24/04/15	Rwamagana District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rwamagana District education officer Visit, HVP Rwamagana special school: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with director, deputy of studies, FGD: teachers, FGD: children with disabilities, headteacher of neighbouring private school, parish priest, local village leader School observation
27/04/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with NCPD officials School visit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with headteacher, FGD: teachers, FGD: children with disabilities
28/04/15	Rubavu District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Rubavu District disability and mainstream officer, NCPD coordinator
29/04/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School visit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with headteacher, FGD: teachers, FGD: children with disabilities, PTC representative School and classroom observation Family visit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with parent of child with disabilities out of school
30/04/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School visit 1: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Transitional class observation FGD: a teacher and parents of children with disabilities School visit 2: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with headteacher, FGD: teachers, FGD: parents, FGD: children with disabilities School and classroom observation
Debrief meetings		
01/05/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debrief with UNICEF Education Programme personnel
Follow-up meetings		
11/05/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debrief with Ministry of Education
14/05/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with REB pedagogic specialists FGD: out of school children with disabilities
19/05/15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with director of HVP Gatagara Gikondo – Centre for Health and Education Services

Appendix 2: Data analysis summary, Republic of Rwanda

Eastern and Southern Africa regional study on education for children with disabilities

Enabling environment

Law/policy	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Knowledge/status of CRPD/CRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs advocate implementation of CRPD and to raise awareness of rights. • NCC started in 2011 to coordinate and advocate children's rights – monitors implementation of CRC. • NCPD established in 2011 to ensure rights for PWD – monitors achievements against CRPD and reports to UNESCO on progress every four years. • Schools understand all children should be in school – mention of EFA and IE policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised inclusive and special needs policy awaiting approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expedite approval of revised policy.
Knowledge of laws, plans and policies regarding education of children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised inclusive policy 2013 awaiting approval. Previous one 2007. • NGOs and DPOs were involved in policy development. • NCPD ensure policies are in place, provide advocacy and ensure collaboration of all stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a policy, but initiatives are at the district level. Therefore there is a difference in implementation between districts'</i> (district official). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan to implement the revised policy has been developed, but cannot be implemented until the policy is approved.
Definition of disability and policy for identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handicap International have developed eight pedagogical tools for assessment and identification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need clarification of terminology being used across Rwanda. • Focus is on low-incidence impairments rather than on barriers to learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised policy lays out assessment process and criteria for placement.
Budget to support education for children with disabilities and financial resources available to children with disabilities and/or their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINEDUC prepare a strategic plan with budget for year's activities. It is linked to ESSP and includes all priority activities. • <i>'Schools can choose to spend capitation grant on materials to support children with disabilities'</i> (district official). • Some social protection funding for PWD (the funding is usually for vulnerable groups, including PWDs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear roles and responsibilities since the restructure mean that the REB used the budget allocated by MEN for inclusive education activities for other purposes. • No budget or extra funding for schools with children with disabilities. 	
Organisation and collaboration between education, health, social services, others to support children with disabilities and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPOs and NGOs support implementation of ESDP. • There is a disability forum chaired by NCPD, and NCC works with MINEDUC to ensure inclusive education policy is implemented. • Volunteer group of 40 key players for promotion of inclusive education – includes KIE, sector education officers, teachers – meet once per term and engage in public awareness. 		
Agreements, responsibilities and coordination of activities with NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a high-level national task force including NGOs and government officials to conduct awareness for high-level issues – especially policy. MINEDUC monitors the activities of some NGOs. • The NCC monitors and coordinates activities on children's rights. • NCPD ensures collaboration of all stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO activities are not well coordinated – many different pilots. They must support ESSP, but all have their own specific districts and areas they work in. This means some districts benefit from activity more than others. The criteria INGOs use to select their districts is not clear (MINEDUC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure NGO activities support system development.

Enabling environment (continued)

Law/policy	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Data availability on children with disabilities – EMIS, other (census etc) and use in planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School census this year will include visual, hearing, physical, intellectual and other/multiple impairments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity regarding identification. • Low numbers of children with disabilities in schools. 	
System of provision (inclusive, segregated etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive education is the government's policy, with special schools used where inclusion is impossible due to nature/severity of disability. • Special school for visually impaired. • Some schools identified as inclusive and have higher intake of children with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trained expertise is a challenge. • There are various models of inclusive education, resulting in no clear understanding of the terminology. • Some parents of children with disabilities would prefer special schools but they are too far away/expensive and few in number. • Demand for placements exceeds supply. 	

Supply-side factors

Law/policy	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Practice for identifying children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents inform if school asks if their child has a disability. • Observation. • Handicap International devised a tool and checklists for identification. • In special school, may need a doctor's certificate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'You can see them, so we know easily. They are known in the community'</i> (district official). • Focus on visible types of disabilities – many children with learning difficulties are not recognised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC aims to identify all children with disabilities in Rwanda through survey.
Practice of enrolment/ entitlement to placement and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusal to enrol is declining as teachers receive training. • Number of children with disabilities in schools has increased as headteachers have been oriented and there is cell and sector support (under project). • In Kamonyi District: team sent by district to make assessment – includes head of cell, headteacher, parent, two teachers. Use assessment tool and decide needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents decide whether to take a child to special school. Mainstream schools may decline entry to a child with disabilities if, for example, they do not have qualified personnel or specialised equipment. • There is a danger parents will take child to special boarding school or centre to avoid their responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need referral system to other levels of support and expertise.
Disparities in provision by type of school, geographic location, age, gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a TVET pilot under the national employment programme. NCPD are supporting people with disabilities to enrol in TVET short courses – especially hearing and visually impaired in two centres. • May have access to specialists from centre for advice – but depends on district and on centre. • Project-based activities are restricted to a few districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges for inclusion are different at the secondary level – need higher budget for specialist equipment and materials. • Students are more self-aware – more likely to drop out. More difficult for teachers to adapt local materials to support learning. Participation in learning is a big challenge at the secondary level. • Very few enrol – those with severe disabilities tend to drop out. • Special centres and schools were not included in the 'one laptop per child' programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to provide assistant teachers to support children with disabilities in the classroom.
Accessibility to school for children with disabilities – transport, environmental conditions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many children walk to school – this can be long distances for those with disabilities who do not attend their nearest school. Conditions can be difficult – pot holes and slippery in rainy season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need transport for children with disabilities to go to school – it is expensive and time consuming for parents.

Supply-side factors (continued)

Law/policy	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Accessibility of school buildings, common facilities and classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New standards require new buildings to be accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No budget to repair and maintain old buildings or make adaptations. Noisy roofs mean classes have to stop during rainy season (especially difficult for visually impaired students who rely on verbal explanations). 	
Materials and communication	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Representation of children with disabilities in teaching/learning materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is none. 		
Appropriateness and availability of materials for specific disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources in general. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of adapted textbooks for visually impaired. Lack of assistive devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need materials and specialist equipment.
Flexibility of curriculum to meet all learning needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New curriculum to start January 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No differentiation in teaching and learning. 	
Human resources	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Teacher training – pre-service, in-service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a new school of inclusive education and special needs education at the University of Rwanda College of Education. Four programmes have been designed: diploma, post-grad diploma, B.Ed, masters. There are currently 46 students. Plans to develop resource centre to reinforce training and community support. Plan to develop expertise in TTCs – starting with three. Handicap International has trained 4000 teachers in inclusive education both pre-service and in-service training. Four training modules: intro to inclusive education, visual and hearing impairments, physical impairments, intellectual impairments. NCPD has provided orientation training to 210 teachers in inclusive education in Western province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of personnel is a challenge for KIE. Restructure means in-service training is now under the REB, which does not provide inclusive education training. District official trained by Handicap International can train headteachers and teachers, but now no budget to do so. Project-based activities do not reach every district – Kamonyi District's priority was to train 800 teachers in inclusive education, and achieved this through support of Handicap International. Teachers trained under projects move away from school and are replaced by untrained teachers from outside the district. This means schools are left with untrained teachers although they have enrolled children with disabilities: <i>'I did not know about IEP preparation and needed help from others – teachers share knowledge but I have no time in class to follow the IEP. There are 40 students in the morning and 40 in the afternoon, insufficient textbooks. Children with disabilities may have to repeat the class as there is nowhere else to go if they do not succeed academically. I need training to include children with disabilities in my class'</i> (untrained teacher working in completed IE project school). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-service teacher training needs to be a priority. Teachers need orientation to teaching aids, materials and resources. Those trained under projects need more in-depth knowledge. Those not trained need a whole package. Teachers move around, and this means gaps quickly emerge in school-based training provided by projects.
Training for specialist teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DVDs available for teacher training in sign language. Teachers for visually impaired trained in-house at special school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of specialist teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan is to develop some generalist teachers and a smaller group of specialists who would conduct assessments and support students and teachers from a resource centre in the sector.

Supply-side factors (continued)

Human resources	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Training/awareness raising for non-teaching staff/officials/parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handicap International provided six months' training for one district official on inclusive education in the districts they were working in (with teachers). NCPD provides some awareness training. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for a special/inclusive education desk at the REB. Need training for parents in sign language, for example.
Availability of technical support/therapists and specialist staff to schools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very limited collaboration between special schools and mainstream schools – although the government pays salaries of special school teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need specialists, especially for visual and hearing impaired.
Inclusion of children with disabilities in assessment and national exams and how any entitlement to support is allocated		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No extra time or allowances made (extra time is given, at least to visually impaired students, but it is unclear whether this is based on a policy/directive from the MINEDUC.) Children are given extra time to finish their work unless supervisor is not aware. Sometimes the supervisors do not give the students all the materials because they do not read Braille and cannot recognise the different parts of the paper. Problems of confusion between different versions of Braille. Answers are written in Braille by students and translated for sending to markers – if the translator is not familiar with the version of Braille being used students can miss marks because of poor translation – e.g. difference between capital and lowercase letters in chemistry. 	
Cultural issues/attitudes and expectations regarding disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitudes are changing among parents – they no longer hide their children with disabilities. They play a more active role in their education. <i>Now our children are becoming more independent – before they were dirty and had little self-esteem. Now they are motivated and want to be like others – they are no longer at home</i> (parent of child with disabilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents still try to hide children with disabilities – need more sensitisation. They think children with disabilities have no value and cannot learn. Other children reflect these attitudes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability is a new issue being discussed – need advocacy to realise goals.
Inclusion of children with disabilities and/or families in all stages of decision making about child's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents involved as education volunteers. Parents involved in IEP development (in schools that have been under projects). <i>Parents support each other now – we learned physio techniques from Handicap International and can pass this on to others. We also visit homes and sensitise or help other parents. We can see the achievements of our children through inclusive education</i> (parent of child with disabilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives for parental involvement tend to be project based. 	

Demand-side factors

Human resources	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Support for families of children with disabilities to participate in their child's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Handicap International project, parent volunteers were organised to support children in class, make resources and manage the resource room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project-based initiatives do not reach all schools and districts. 	
Child's own voice in decision making and overcoming barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC organise a child summit every year – based on information provided by child forums in every village. Six children elected to the forum in every village – one place for child with disabilities. Each forum sends a representative to the cell level and then to the sector to gather information and discuss problems faced by children. These are compiled at the district level and presented at the national summit. Priorities are agreed at high-level government and an action plan developed to implement. NCC monitor and report progress to next summit. 		
Community involvement in supporting children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs work to develop community involvement. • Community education volunteers in Kamonyi District – organised by headteachers – support children with disabilities in schools and work with teachers to make resources. Also provide support to families with children with disabilities. • Special centres see involving community as key to success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above. 	

Quality of provision/care

Human resources	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Effect of existing provision on access to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More children with disabilities are entering school. • Children with disabilities are very motivated and do not drop out like the others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings are inaccessible – even those that have been modified have ramps that do not run to the ground, inaccessible toilets. • Crowded classrooms. • Many reports of beating being used as punishment – for low marks, lateness, talking in class. 	
Effect of existing provision on progression in learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High dropout rates at primary level in general, especially Grades 2 and 5. • Lack of differentiation in teaching to suit ability levels. Reliance on repeating class as strategy for children with learning difficulties. • Many children do not pass national exam at end of primary level. • Particularly difficult for children with disabilities to transition to secondary. • Teacher performance contract means children are dropping out if they have low grades – some of these may have non-visible disabilities that are unrecognised. 	

Quality of provision/care (continued)

Human resources	Existing situation and specified strengths	Specified constraints, challenges, gaps, bottlenecks, weaknesses	Specified priorities, needs, other comments
Quality assurance/ monitoring of schools/ programmes for children with disabilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive education has been set up differently under different projects and within different districts. 	
Teaching methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only teaching strategy is to sit children with disabilities at front of class. • No changes to teaching methodology, lack of variety in presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on textbook and completion of syllabus. • No differentiation in teaching or learning outcomes. 	
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many classes in horseshoe seating arrangement. • Increased use of teaching aids by teachers trained under some projects. 		
Advice/support for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project-based inputs. 		
Specialist support and resources for children with disabilities			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a single system for Braille and sign language – a sign language dictionary is being produced.



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