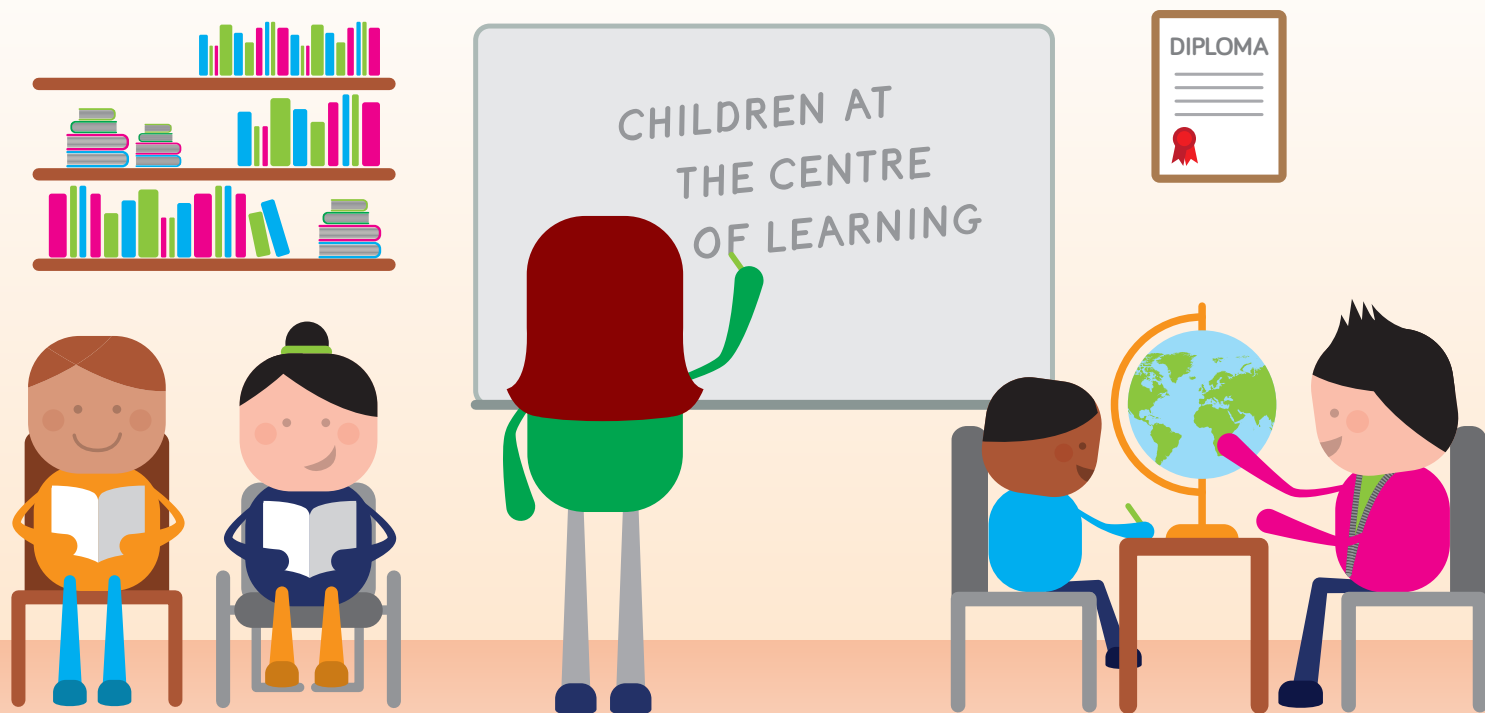


Teachers, Inclusive, Child-Centred Teaching and Pedagogy

Webinar 12 - Companion Technical Booklet



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With major thanks to Australian Aid for its strong support to UNICEF and its counterparts and partners, who are committed to realizing the rights of children and persons with disabilities. The Rights, Education and Protection partnership (REAP) is contributing to putting into action UNICEF's mandate to advocate for the protection of all children's rights and expand opportunities to reach their full potential.

Teachers, Inclusive, Child-Centred Teaching and Pedagogy

Webinar Booklet

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What this booklet can do for you

The purpose of this booklet and the accompanying webinar is to assist UNICEF staff and our partners to understand how teachers can be prepared and supported to teach in **inclusive settings**, and which teaching and learning approaches are most suitable.

In this booklet you will be introduced to:

- *The profile of inclusive teachers.*
- *Different perspectives on special educational needs.*
- *Approaches to teach children with disabilities in mainstream settings.*
- *Models to prepare student teachers to work in inclusive settings.*
- *Strategies to support and train teachers already working in inclusive settings.*

For information on the following related topics, refer to the other modules in this series:

1. Conceptualizing Inclusive Education and Contextualizing it within the UNICEF Mission
2. Definition and Classification of Disability
3. Legislation and Policies for Inclusive Education
4. Collecting Data on Child Disability
5. Mapping Children with Disabilities Out of School
6. EMIS and Children with Disabilities
7. Partnerships, Advocacy and Communication for Social Change
8. Financing of Inclusive Education
9. Inclusive Pre-School Programmes
10. Access to School and the Learning Environment I – Physical, Information and Communication
11. Access to School and the Learning Environment II – Universal Design for Learning
12. Teachers, Inclusive, Child-Centred Teaching and Pedagogy (*this booklet*)
13. Parents, Family and Community Participation in Inclusive Education
14. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

How to use this booklet

Each section starts with a summary of the key points. The links in the activity boxes will bring you to websites with videos and case studies to deepen your understanding about the topic. The questions in the activity boxes will help you to link the materials to this booklet. At the end of each section you will find a box with reflective questions. These questions will help you critically reflect on the content of this booklet and place it within your own context. We encourage you to discuss the activities and reflective questions

together with your colleagues and partners. Throughout the booklet you will find boxes with suggestions for further reading, or toolkits that will help you to implement the main ideas.

If, at any time, you would like to go back to the beginning of this booklet, simply click on the sentence "Webinar 12 - Companion Technical Booklet" at the top of each page, and you will be directed to the Table of Contents.

To access the companion webinar, just scan the QR code.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

DPO	Disabled People Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

I. Introduction

Teachers are crucial in providing quality education for all children. All over the world teachers are dedicated to ensuring the right to education for all children. Although many teachers are working in challenging circumstances (large classes, inadequate infrastructure, lack of basic teaching and learning materials, high absenteeism, inflexible policies and curricula, low salaries, etc.), they are working hard to accommodate all learners in their schools.¹ Despite the efforts of policy-makers, head teachers and teachers, many children still lack teachers who are adequately trained and supported to meet their needs. UNESCO has estimated that worldwide 1.6 million additional teachers are needed to provide universal primary education by 2015.² There is a real risk that under the pressure to increase the number of teachers within a very short deadline, the quality of the teacher training will decrease. **Inclusive education** might be seen as a luxury, or as the responsibility of specialists,³ but inclusive education is crucial to ensure all children have access to quality education.⁴ Well-trained, supported and motivated teachers have an impact on the enrolment, participation and achievement of all children, and especially of children with disabilities who need extra encouragement and support to have access to and stay in school.⁵

In Booklet 1, *Conceptualizing Inclusive Education and Contextualizing it within the UNICEF Mission*, inclusive education is defined as: “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children.”

Inclusive education is therefore a dynamic process that requires continuous support and professional development of teachers. Inclusive education does not end with making adaptations inside the classroom. It is an on-going reflection and self-evaluation, within the whole school community, of the barriers children might face in accessing quality education, and how to remove those barriers.

In this booklet you will be encouraged to reflect on a number of key issues related to teaching in inclusive settings. We invite you to discuss the issues with your colleagues and local partners and try to place them within your specific context. The questions and activities in each section will help you with more in-depth reflection and analysis on how special education needs are conceptualized, how teachers respond to diversity in their classrooms and how teachers are trained and supported in your context. Each section includes a link for further reading. The key issues include:

- What does it mean to be an inclusive teacher?
- What are special educational needs?
- Do children with disabilities require different teaching techniques and strategies?
- How can teachers be prepared to work in inclusive settings?
- How can teachers who are already working in inclusive settings be supported?

II. What is an Inclusive Teacher?

Key Points

- *Inclusive education is the responsibility of all teachers.*
- *There is no fixed set of skills and knowledge which all teachers need to obtain to be able to teach in inclusive classes.*
- *Inclusive education requires an on-going reflection by teachers on how the children in their class are learning and participating in the class, school and community, and how to take the diverse range of needs of the children into account when teaching in mainstream settings.*
- *Inclusive values and attitudes are crucial. Teachers who believe it is their responsibility to teach all children are more effective teachers in general.*

It will be elaborated in the next sections that notions such as ‘special educational needs’ and ‘special **pedagogy** for children with disabilities’ are problematic. All teachers will meet children in their classes with a variety of needs, abilities and interests. Within an inclusive approach, rather than labelling certain groups of children as ‘special’ and involving **specialist teachers** or centres to educate them, all teachers are held responsible for the learning and wellbeing of all the students in their classes. All teachers should be inclusive teachers.

As explained in the Introduction, inclusive education is a dynamic process. It is therefore not possible to provide a blueprint with a set of fixed skills and knowledge that all teachers should have in order to be able to teach in inclusive settings. For example, in any given year there might be a child with visual impairments in the class and the teacher will need to be able to adjust her/his teaching style, content and materials, taking into account the specific needs of children with visual impairments. The next year the child with a visual impairment has probably moved to the next grade, and there might be a child with a learning disability in the class. The teacher will need to adjust his/her teaching in an entirely different way. Instead of focusing only on specific skills and knowledge of teaching strategies, teachers will need to develop a reflective attitude and inclusive values. Teachers need to believe all children have the right to attend mainstream education, and analyse their school and classroom settings and reflect on how to make them accessible and meaningful for all of their students. They will need to do this through an ongoing process, as communities, cultures, the interests, needs and abilities of children and teachers are constantly evolving. As a result all children feel equally valued in inclusive classes.

The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education developed a profile of inclusive teachers⁶ based on four core values for inclusive teachers and a set of competences related to each core value. It has been recognized that inclusive values and attitudes in teacher training are essential for inclusive teachers. Actions in inclusive schools (such as adaptations in teaching style, content and materials) that are not related to inclusive values such as equality, rights, respect for diversity and participation, etc., are less sustainable and more related to instructions from higher authorities. The skills and knowledge teachers learn in order to teach in inclusive settings should therefore be embedded in inclusive values to be meaningful.⁷ Teachers who believe it is their responsibility to teach all children are more effective teachers in general.⁸

Value 1: Valuing learner diversity – learner difference is considered as a resource and asset to education.

Areas of competences for teachers:

- Conceptions of inclusive education.
- The teacher’s view of learner differences.

Value 2: Supporting all learners – teachers have high expectations for all learners’ achievements.

Areas of competences for teachers:

- Promoting the academic, social, practical and emotional learning of all learners.
- Effective teaching approaches in heterogeneous classes.

Value 3: Working with others – collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers.

Areas of competences for teachers:

- Working with parents and families.
- Working with a range of other education professionals.

Value 4: Personal professional development.

Areas of competences for teachers:

- Teachers as reflective practitioners.
- Initial teacher education as a foundation for on-going professional learning and development.

Activity

Watch the video of Laura and Carlos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bp5dHoEk0_w

Reflective questions:

- What can teachers do to support the learning of Laura and Carlos?
- How do the values and attitudes of Laura’s and Carlos’s teachers affect their learning process?
- What do you think are the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes for the teachers of Laura and Carlos?

See the Chapter IV sub-section Teacher Training Content for more reflections on essential components of teacher training.

Reflective Questions

- Are the core values for inclusive teachers shared among key stakeholders (teachers, parents, children, policy-makers, etc.) in your country?
- What do you think are the key attitudes, skills and knowledge for inclusive teachers?
- Are they different from the attitudes, skills and knowledge teachers should have in general?
- Are the teachers in your country sufficiently supported to acquire the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to teach in inclusive settings?
- If not, what is lacking? What should change to prepare teachers better to work in inclusive settings?
- What could UNICEF and other agencies or partners be doing more of to support teachers and stakeholders in engaging with the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to teach in inclusive settings?

To learn more go to:

<http://www.european-agency.org/news/teacher-education-for-inclusion-profile-of-inclusive-teachers>

Additional questions after reading the profile for inclusive teachers:

- *Does the inclusive teacher profile fit in your context?*
- *Are the competencies mentioned in the profile for inclusive teachers different from the knowledge, skills and attitudes any teacher should have?*
- *How does the pre- and in-service teacher training in your country already prepare teachers to acquire the competencies mentioned in the profile?*
- *Which components are lacking in the teacher training in your country? How does this influence the implementation of inclusive education?*

Activity

With your colleagues make a sketch of what you think an inclusive teacher should look like in your context. Try to think about the essential values and competences for inclusive teachers.

Follow this by discussing ways in which the development of inclusive teachers can be supported through the activities of UNICEF and partners.

III. Teaching and Learning in Inclusive Settings

Key Points

- *There are two ways of conceptualizing the educational needs of children with disabilities:*
 - *The individual view places the 'problem' inside the child with disabilities, which leads to labelling the child as being 'special'. This is problematic for a number of reasons: labelling lowers the teacher's expectations towards children with disabilities; teachers may feel as if they are not responsible or capable of teaching children with disabilities; and opportunities are missed to make changes in the teaching style, class and school environment which would benefit all children.*
 - *The curriculum view problematizes the educational system instead of the child with disabilities. It is based on the assumption that all children may experience difficulties at school and that these difficulties point to ways in which teaching and learning can be improved for all children.*
- *Not all children with disabilities share the same learning needs and it is not possible to identify special teaching strategies for children with disabilities that are significantly different from general teaching strategies.*
- *Since there are no specific teaching strategies for children with disabilities, inclusive teachers use and adapt a child-centred pedagogy to meet the needs of all children.*
- *Key elements in the child-centred pedagogy include: facilitating multiple pathways to learning; encouraging cooperative learning; creating meaningful learning opportunities; developing attractive and flexible learning settings; and rethinking assessment strategies and changing roles of teachers.*

Are the Educational Needs of Children with Disabilities Different or Special?

To answer this question, it is important to first examine the ways in which children can learn. All children – without exception – can learn, but how they learn at different points in their lives may differ, and may differ for different topics. Some children learn from listening to the teacher, while others might prefer doing exercises, using visual aids or having group discussions. Seven different pathways of learning can be distinguished:⁹

Verbal or linguistic	Children think and learn through written and spoken words, memory and recall
Logical or mathematical	Children think and learn through reasoning and calculating. They can easily use numbers, recognize abstract patterns and take precise measurements
Visual or spatial	Children think and learn through visual aids. They like arts, can easily read maps, diagrams and charts
Body or kinaesthetic	Children learn and think through movement, games and drama
Music or rhythmic	Children learn through sounds, rhyme, rhythm and repetition
Interpersonal	Children learn in groups through cooperative work. They easily understand social situations and develop easily relationships
Intro-personal	Children learn through personal concentration and self-reflection. They can work alone and are aware of their own feelings, strenghts and weaknesses

In a class situation where the teacher uses only **rote learning**, repeating the teaching content over and over again, the teaching approach will probably only accommodate a small group of learners (those who prefer verbal learning). Other children might have more difficulties in following the lessons. This does not necessarily mean that these children have a learning disability.

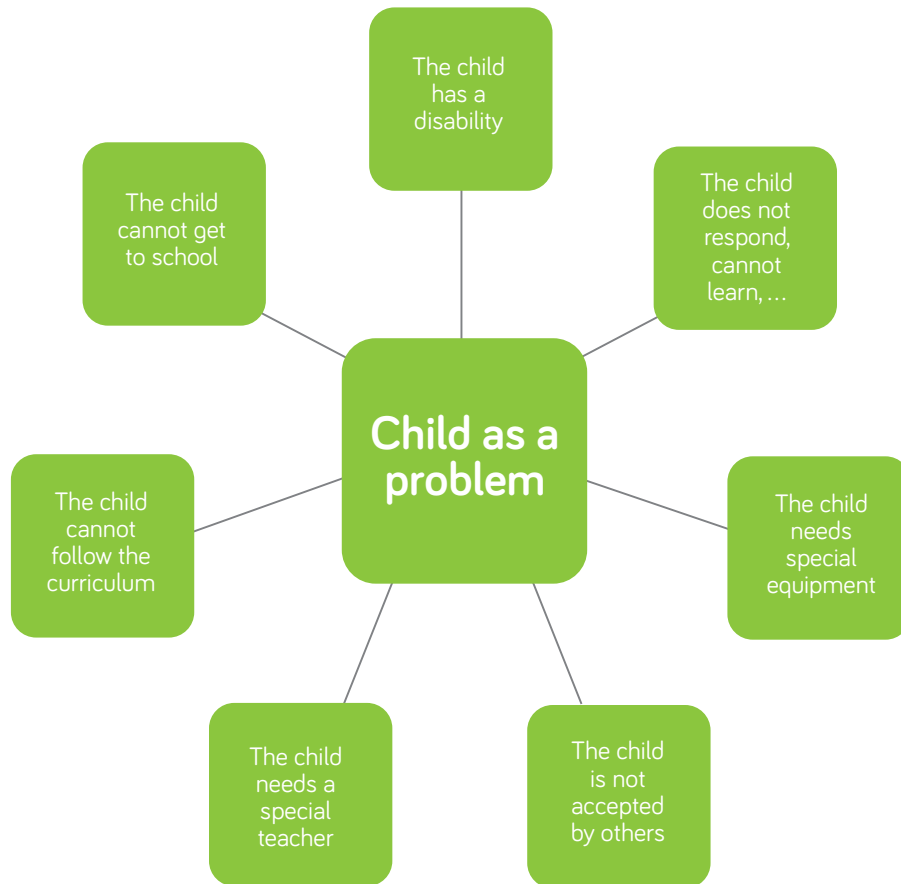
See Chapter III sub-section Multiple Learning Pathways to read more about how to take different pathways to learning into account when planning lessons and learning activities.

Traditionally, in many countries where children with disabilities were experiencing educational difficulty ‘the problem’ was located as being within the child – leading to a diagnosis that the child had special educational needs. This is also called the *individual learner view*.¹⁰ The education difficulties are defined based on individual characteristics, such as the child’s disability. It is based on the following assumptions:

- A group of children can be identified who are special or different.
- These children need special teaching to respond to their problem.
- It is best to teach children with similar problems together.
- Other children are normal and benefit from the existing forms of schooling.

The individual view has been criticized for a number of reasons:¹¹

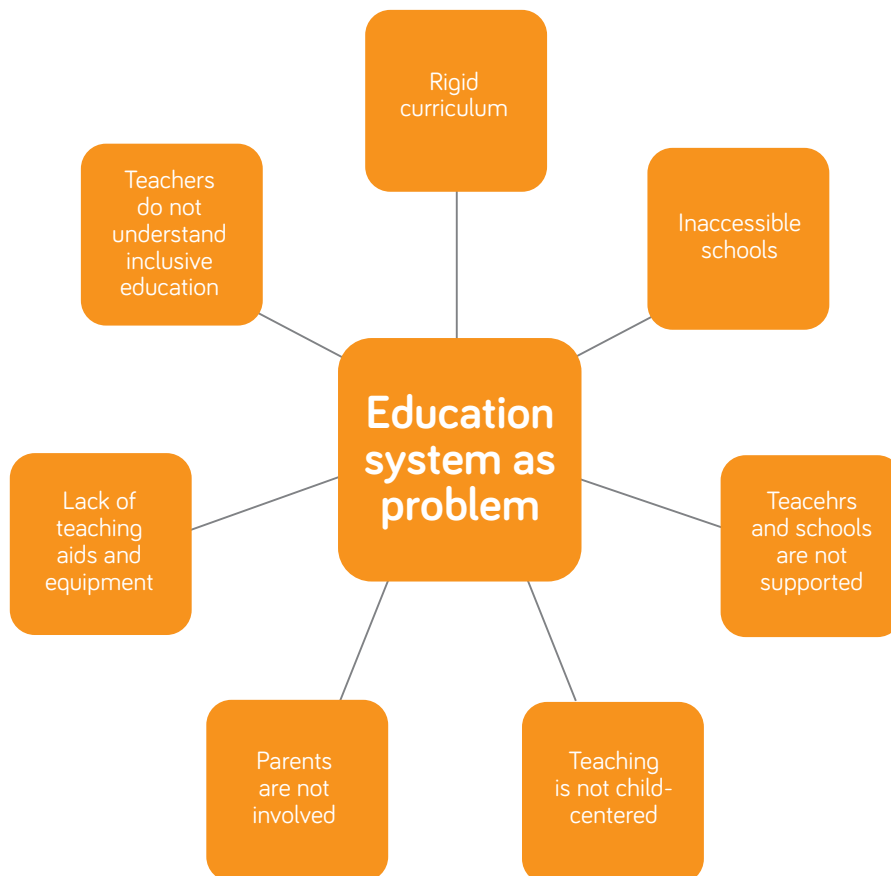
- Labelling or putting children in categories, for example: the ‘visually impaired children’, may lower educators’ expectations towards these children. Over-protection from teachers may lead to a lack of challenge and stimulation. For example, to avoid pressure children with intellectual disabilities might be asked to make drawings while the other children are doing writing exercises. This might be boring, stigmatizing and ultimately lead to the child making very little educational progress.
- Dividing children into categories or types encourages the idea that these groups of children should be taught in the same ‘special’ way (see more on special pedagogy in the Chapter III sub-section Is there a Special Pedagogy?), by different types of teachers or even in different settings. A common practice is, for example, to provide children with disabilities extra tasks or special assignments to catch up with the rest of the class. The children are often separated from the class for these special assignments when the other children have break time, art or sport classes. This not only isolates the children with disabilities but they also miss out on activities which are important for the development of their social skills, or other skills which are important for their overall development. Above all, it stigmatizes the children. Also, the presence of additional adults to provide support for individual children inside the class can become a barrier to interaction between the child and the rest of the class, unless the extra adult is seen as a means to provide increased flexibility of teaching for all children.
- Due to the focus on individual characteristics (such as IQ, hearing ability, etc.), teachers may think it is not possible to overcome a child’s learning difficulties, or that it is the job of experts to deal with them.
- Most children do not fit neatly in the categories, and different experts can give conflicting advice for the same child.
- Categorizing children can increase the idea that children with disabilities need extra resources and decrease the confidence of regular teachers, who might think children with disabilities can be taught only with those additional resources.
- Because of the individual focus, the wider school community, organization of the school and curriculum are not questioned. Opportunities might be missed to improve the school for all children.

'Child as problem' diagram.¹²

More currently, instead of problematizing the individual child the education system in itself is problematized. This is sometimes called the *curriculum view*.¹³ Educational difficulties are defined based on the services and activities provided for the children and the conditions created in the school and community. The key assumptions are:

- Any child may experience difficulties at school, not only children with disabilities.
- These difficulties can point to ways in which teaching can be improved.
- These improvements lead to better learning conditions for all children.
- Teachers should be supported to develop their practice to become more inclusive (instead of bringing in specialists to deal with children with disabilities).

'Education system as a problem' diagram.¹⁴



Reflective Questions

- How are concepts such as 'disability' and 'special needs' defined in your country?
- How does this influence the current interventions and programmes towards children with disabilities?
- Are children with disabilities included in regular classrooms or segregated in **special schools**?
- How effective do you think the current arrangements for including children with disabilities in schools in your country are?
- How might current arrangements be improved?

Is there a Special Pedagogy?

The term 'pedagogy' is commonly used within education to refer to 'the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command'.¹⁵ Researchers have debated whether teaching children with disabilities require specific teaching approaches, or whether teachers can use regular teaching approaches.

There are two main positions in this debate:¹⁶

- *The unique differences position.*
All learners have needs that are common to all and needs that are unique to them as individuals. Instead of assuming there is a special pedagogy for children with disabilities, teachers use the child-centred pedagogy to respond to the needs of all learners. Some call it 'children-friendly' pedagogy, to emphasise that teachers do not always need to respond to children individually, but can sometimes respond to their common needs.
- *The general differences position.*
Additional to the needs common to all learners and unique individual needs, learners have needs that are specific to their subgroup. Children, however, do not fall neatly into subgroups (which are often impairment-related: for example, children with multiple disabilities). Researchers have been unable to identify any evidence which supports the argument that all learners in a subgroup have the same needs. Similarly, there is no clear evidence base which supports the argument that specific teaching strategies are required for subgroups which are significantly different from general teaching strategies.

The assumption that children with disabilities have special needs, and need specific teaching methodologies, can lead regular teachers to think they are not capable of, or responsible for, teaching all children in their classrooms.

The concepts 'continua of teaching approaches' with 'high intensity levels' and 'low intensity levels' are introduced to emphasise that the teaching approaches teachers use in their classrooms are the same for all the children. However, for some children the approaches are used more or less intensely.

Generally, it is not considered useful to encourage teachers to believe that there are special and different teaching approaches required for children with disabilities. Teachers need to be encouraged to include and teach all children in regular classes.

Reflective Questions

- How do teachers in your country respond to children with disabilities in regular classes?
- How effective are those approaches?
- What do you think are the barriers to enabling teachers to think differently about pedagogy?
- How can UNICEF and other agencies support this process?

Child-Centred Pedagogy

As explained in the previous sections, all teachers will meet children with very diverse backgrounds, abilities, interests and learning needs in their schools. As there is not a special pedagogy to teach children with disabilities, teachers in inclusive settings use a child-centred pedagogy to meet the needs of all the children. It is, however, not very helpful to make a rigid division between teacher-centred and child-centred education. In many parts of the world education is very traditional (rote learning) and within many cultures the respect for the teacher is very important. When implementing a child-centred pedagogy the local conditions and culture should be respected and taken into account. It is possible to implement elements of child-centred pedagogy in a more traditional set-up.¹⁷ The key point we need to remember is that in order for teachers to develop a more inclusive pedagogy, they often need to begin to change their classroom behaviour: where they stand, how they use resources, the way they speak to and interact with the children and the way they assess the children's learning. This can be seen in the case study from the Laos Inclusive Education Project in the further reading activity, below.

Activity

Read The Case Study 'The Inclusive Lesson' on page 105

http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/A_Quality_Education_For_All_LaoPDR.pdf

Think about the following questions:

- How has the teacher changed her teaching behaviour, compared to traditional rote learning approaches?
- In what ways is this teacher engaging all the children in the class and supporting their learning?
- How is she able to assess children's learning more effectively?

Key features in child-centred learning approaches:

Some of the approaches used in the case study are explained in more detail in this next section.

Meaningful Learning Opportunities

When students understand the purpose of the lessons and school activities, they will be more motivated. The link between what and how it is taught and the daily lives of the children is important. This can only be done if teachers make an effort to connect with their students, know what is important for them and create a relaxed atmosphere in which students feel safe to exchange with each other and the teacher. Some ideas on how to make this connection include:¹⁸

- Build lessons on previous knowledge and skills of students. The teacher needs to know the students very well and give them opportunities to show what they know and make significant contributions to the lessons.
- Use daily experiences of the children as examples when explaining new concepts. This will increase the relevancy of the lessons for the children. Students can be encouraged to bring things from home and share their stories and experiences. Again, the teacher needs to be very aware of the living circumstances and culture of the students.
- Make learning purposeful by giving children opportunities to practice what they have learned in daily situations.

- Relate what the children learn in one subject to what they have learned in another subject. Many subjects are interrelated and it is important to show this coherence.

Multiple Learning Pathways

Children learn in different ways. Most children use all of the different pathways to learning throughout their learning process (see Chapter III sub-section Are the Educational Needs of Children with Disabilities Different or Special?). Teachers need to be able to facilitate these multiple pathways of learning by using different teaching approaches to ensure all children participate and learn together.¹⁹ Teachers become 'reflective practitioners' within the child-centred pedagogy. They are encouraged to constantly reflect upon:

- Which pathways of learning the children in their class are most comfortable with.
- The reasons why some children are not progressing at the same pace as others.
- The strategies and techniques to use to enable all children to learn and achieve.
- How to make adjustments in resources, activities and/or access to make them accessible for all.
- The motivation and engagement of the children and how it is influenced by their specific background and experiences.
- How the cultural-bound assumptions shape the interaction with and between children, other teachers and parents.

Depending on many factors – such as the topic of the lesson, the specific learning pathways of the students, the context, and the skills of the teachers, etc. – the teacher will use a variety of teaching approaches, such as:

- Giving opportunities for exploring, expressing, learning and consolidating knowledge.
- Providing freedom to children to use their own research and problem-solving skills, and guiding children to make the best use of their natural talents.

Many teachers are very familiar with rote learning. They often experienced this traditional teaching style when they were children themselves and during **pre-service teacher training**. Teachers need to be encouraged to provide opportunities for children to explore and experience (for example, through field trips and educational games), to facilitate group discussions and group work and to use a wide variety of teaching and learning aids. The principles of 'Universal Design for Learning' can be used to accommodate the different needs and learning styles among the children. Key principles of the universal design for learning include:²⁰

- Provide multiple ways of *representation*. Children differ in the way they perceive and comprehend information. Children with sensory disabilities, learning disabilities or those from a different cultural background, for example, will approach the content differently. Using different ways of representation allows all students to make connections within and between concepts. Using different ways of representation will increase the quality of learning for all children. Teachers can alternate between visual and auditory information, customize display areas, clarify symbols and vocabulary, illustrate through multiple media, and highlight patterns, etc.
- Provide multiple ways of *action and expression*. Children differ in how they express what they know. For example, children with speech impairments may want to express themselves through written texts

rather than orally. All children use different expression styles throughout their learning process. Teachers can, for example, use assistive devices and tools for alternative communication, encourage children to explore different ways of communication and expression, and allow children to express what they learned in different ways (written, verbal, drawings, etc.) at different times.

- Provide multiple ways of *engagement*. Children have different motivations for learning. Some children might be engaged by novelty and spontaneity, while this may frighten others who might prefer structure and routine. Some children prefer to work individually, while others like to work in groups. Teachers can offer choice and autonomy, minimize threats and distractions, facilitate coping skills, and develop self-assessment and reflection.

See also Booklet 11 for more information on Universal Design for Learning.

Cooperative Learning

Within cooperative learning, students share responsibilities and resources in working towards common goals. Cooperative group work can be powerful in increasing children's understanding of concepts and positive attitudes towards the work and each other. When implemented well, group work allows teachers to spend more time with individuals and small groups.²¹

There are many different approaches to cooperative learning and group work. It is important for teachers to consider how to divide children into groups. To ensure group work is effective in inclusive classes, especially when teaching children with disabilities, it is best to avoid making groups based on ability levels. Placing all children with disabilities in one group can be very stigmatizing and offers children little opportunity for collaboration and learning. Creating groups of children with a variety of backgrounds provides most learning opportunities for all.²²

Teachers have to create an environment in which children feel valued and are supported to take risks and contribute. Group work needs to be planned carefully to ensure the activity is meaningful for all, and teachers need to be available during the tasks to give support where needed. The children will need to learn and practice skills to make group work successful (understanding the assignment, dividing the tasks and resources, taking turns, valuing each other's contributions, expressing ideas, and active listening, etc.).

The children can each preform a role. Make sure that the roles rotate and everyone gets to be the team leader, for example. It is important also that children with disabilities receive valuable and crucial roles in the group work. It might often be necessary to make ground rules with the children before starting group work.²³

To be meaningful, group work needs to go beyond situations where children complete tasks individually and assist others when needed. Most interesting learning experiences derive from situations where children depend on each other and have to collaborate to complete an assignment. The different forms of interdependence during group work include:²⁴

- Goal interdependence: the group has a single goal.
- Reward interdependence: the whole group receives recognition for achieving the goal.
- Resource interdependence: each child has different resources (materials and knowledge) that need to be combined in order to complete the assignment.

- Role interdependence: each child has a different role, which is needed to complete the assignment (time-keeper, reporter, etc.).

Attractive and Accessible Learning Settings

The class and school environment can support child-centred learning and teaching. Child-centred learning spaces are welcoming for all children, are safe for all, enable equal participation of all learners and focus on self-discovery.²⁵

Although it is important to create attractive and accessible learning spaces for all, this is not the end goal, but rather a means to implement child-centred learning approaches in which the right of all children to access quality education is valued and addressed.

Some features of child-centred learning spaces include:²⁶

- **Physical space:** ensure all children can move around freely in the class and school, work individually and in groups, and access learning resources when needed.
- **Learning corners:** set up different learning corners in your class in which children can learn independently or in small groups through self-directed learning. In each corner, resources and instructions are presented. The corners give the students the opportunity to enrich what they have previously learned, to practice new skills and to explore new concepts. Students can participate in planning, organizing and managing the learning corners. This can strengthen the link between home and school.
- **Display areas:** make a display board in the class in which you can show the work of (all) children and provide feedback on activities. Change the display board frequently and use it as a teaching aid.
- **Class library:** books are very effective teaching aids which help children to learn new concepts, develop language and understand messages. Local books or books made by children can be just as effective as expensive children's books.

Assessment

All teachers will want to know at different points of the lesson, the week, the term or year, what their students have learned and how they are able to apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Within a traditional teaching approach assessment is usually *summative*. Children need to memorize, often heavy, curriculum content and show once or twice a year what they remember during written or oral tests. This approach creates barriers for many children. Children who have difficulties in processing large amounts of content, who need more time to answer questions or who struggle to express what they have learned in written text or in an oral presentation might fail the tests, even though they did learn and had gained new skills and knowledge.

With *continuous formative assessment*, used in inclusive and child-centred classes, all children have the opportunity to show what they have learned in different ways, according to their different pathways of learning. The continuous assessments provide feedback for teachers, who can at any moment adjust their lessons to ensure that all children understand what is going on, and for children, who learn how they can make progress. It helps to communicate the strengths and weaknesses with the parents on a regular basis, so they can be involved in the learning process of their children throughout the school year. Within this approach, assessment is serving the educational process by promoting learning and guiding teaching. It is assessment 'for' and 'of' learning.²⁷

Formative assessment techniques can include:²⁸

- Observations and keeping observational records, factual non-judgemental notes of children's activities.
- Asking open-ended questions during activities to assess the children's ability to express themselves verbally and to know why children behave in a certain way.
- Screening tests to find out what the children already know and can do, to provide meaningful learning opportunities.
- Portfolios for assessment. A portfolio includes samples of the child's work (written samples – essays, stories and reports; and illustrations – pictures, maps, diagrams and mathematics worksheets, etc.) Also, children's non-curricular activities can be recorded, such as taking responsibility in a classroom committee. The portfolios show what the child has learned and how the child learned it. It focuses on achievements rather than on failures. A child can be included in the assessment through portfolios, for example, by deciding what to record in the portfolio. The portfolio can be used to assess the progress of the child over a certain period (instead of comparing the results of children with each other). The portfolio serves as a basis for discussion with the children and their parents about their learning progress.
- Learning stories: this form of narrative assessment includes written documentation and pictures of the child's learning. It does not focus on mistakes or weaknesses. It recognizes that learning takes place through a unique interaction of the child with the world. Parents and children are usually involved in documenting the child's learning.
- Quizzes, checklists, classroom tests, learning journals and conferences, etc.

Feedback is a crucial part of formative assessment. It motivates the children, informs them of how they are doing and shows them how they can improve. But teachers need to be careful over how they assess children and give them feedback, especially in inclusive classes. Children with learning disabilities are often not asked direct questions during the lesson, so as not to embarrass them and not to disrupt the flow of the lesson. This leaves children with disabilities without feedback for long periods of time. The teachers need to find ways to include all children in assessments and feedback. Feedback can be given by teachers, peers, parents and children themselves.²⁹

The difference between summative and formative assessment:³⁰

Summative assessment	Formative assessment
Evaluating the child's <i>performance</i>	<i>Evaluating the child's progress</i>
<i>At the end of a module or course</i>	<i>During a course or module</i>
To make a final judgement on what the child has achieved	To provide opportunities for improving the learning process

Activity

Watch this video with examples of formative assessment strategies:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ab4hbIsOonU>

Reflective questions:

- How are the key principles of child-centred education reflected in these formative assessment strategies?
- How does the use of formative assessment increase the quality of education in the video?
- Why would formative assessment provide more opportunities for children with disabilities to show what they had learned than summative assessment?

Changing Roles of Teachers

In more traditional education settings the teacher has a clear role: he/she provides information to the children. When implementing a more child-centred approach in the classroom, the role of the teacher will change. The teacher does not have a fixed role anymore, but adapts to the situation. Some possible roles for teachers in child-centred classes include:³¹

- **Facilitator:** providing appropriate learning opportunities and encouraging children to contribute ideas in a constructive manner.
- **Manager:** planning and guiding discussions to ensure all children can contribute.
- **Observer:** observing children as they work alone, in groups and as they play. This will help to understand them better and create better learning activities.
- **Learner:** reflecting on the lessons and ways to make them more meaningful in the future.

Developing Inclusive Cultures

Inclusive education is more than placing children with disabilities in **mainstream schools**; it is more than making in-classroom adaptations; and it is even more than changing pedagogy. Inclusive schools share a culture of inclusion that affects how the school operates, policies are developed and implemented, problems are solved, teachers are supported and communities are involved.³²

Common characteristics of inclusive school cultures include:³³

- Seeing differences among students and staff as resources.
- Organizational features that supported teaming among staff.
- A collaborative interactional and problem-solving style among staff and children.
- A reflective attitude, leading to changes in programmes and strategies among school staff.
- Leadership that is shared and distributed among formal leaders and staff.
- A willingness to struggle to sustain inclusive practices.
- An understanding of the social/political nature of inclusion.
- The use of language and symbols to communicate ideals and spread commitments across the school and into the community.
- A focus on the learners instead of on the content when planning teaching and learning activities.
- An uncompromising commitment and belief in inclusive education.

Strategies to develop inclusive cultures in schools:³⁴

- Translate national inclusive education policies into school-based policies.³⁵ These school-based policies should include a commitment to non-discrimination and inclusion, the development of a child-centred school framework, school self-assessments and school development plans.
- Ensure that such policies are reflected in all aspects of the life of the school: classroom teaching and relationships, school and board meetings, teacher supervision, school trips, playground behaviour, budgetary allocations and any interface with the local community or wider public.
- Engage teacher associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations, and other functioning school support groups with programmes to increase their understanding and knowledge of disability.
- End segregation within schools by:
 - Ensuring a commitment to inclusive classroom teaching.
 - Developing municipal policies for inclusive classroom environments, involving schools, teachers, municipal officials, school administrators, parents and children, as well as other stakeholders.
 - Provision of support within mainstream classes to children with disabilities.
 - Monitoring schools on a regular basis to ensure that segregation is not taking place either formally or informally. Monitoring should involve parents of children with disabilities in order that systems are transparent and accountable to them and their children.

Reflective Questions

- How can the key features of the child-centred education approach help teachers to design lessons that accommodate the needs of all students with disabilities?
- Which features of child-centred education are already used in your country?
- What support and training would teachers in your country need to implement the child-centred pedagogy?



To learn more go to:

Teachers often find it helpful to learn about new ideas to support them in modifying their lessons and school environments to meet the needs of children with disabilities. It reassures them that teaching children with disabilities in regular classrooms does not require complex and specialist knowledge, skills and materials. It reaffirms that they are able to teach children with disabilities, using the child-centred teaching and learning approach. Such ideas can be found in the following resources:

- *Toolkit for creating inclusive, learner-friendly environments*, <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/inclusive-education/resources/ilfe-toolkit/>
- *Manual for child-friendly schools*: http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Friendly_Schools_Manual_EN_040809.pdf
- *Teacher guide to understand and respond to children's needs in the classroom*: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001243/124394e.pdf>
- *Strategies for teachers in inclusive classes*: <http://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/building-inclusive-classrooms/inclusive-teaching-strategies.html>

Additional questions after reading the resources:

- *How do these guides for teaching children with disabilities increase the quality of teaching and learning for all children?*
- *Are any of the strategies expensive or complex to implement in your context? Why do you think this?*
- *Which strategies are low-cost? Which are easy to implement in regular schools in your context?*
- *For which strategies would teachers need additional support? Where could they find this in your country?*
- *How much flexibility does the curriculum and assessment procedures allow in your country to make adjustments when needed?*

IV. Pre-Service Teacher Training

Key Points

- *How inclusive education is defined influences teacher training. In countries where policy on disability is rooted in the **medical model**, teacher training will tend to focus on identification of children with disabilities, and the implication of the disability on the learning capacities and strategies to teach children with disabilities – instead of on the underlying values and child-centred pedagogy which could reduce the need to make special adjustments for children with disabilities.*
- *An embedded approach in which all student teachers learn about inclusive education in all elements of their training is more effective in preparing teachers to work in inclusive settings than separated (optional) modules on inclusive education.*
- *All teachers need to fully understand the inclusive pedagogy and core values. They also need to acquire a basic understanding of different groups of impairments and how to make adjustments to ensure children with disabilities can participate in regular education based on inclusive principles.*
- *Teacher trainers ideally have hands-on experience in inclusive education and model child-centred pedagogy and self-reflection in their teaching approach.*
- *Student teachers need experience in successful inclusive schools, where they can learn from experienced inclusive teachers who can model effective practice.*
- *People with disabilities need to be involved in teacher training.*

Regular teacher training often fails to provide teachers with the confidence, skills and knowledge they need to support the learning of children with disabilities in regular classes. The lack of support for all teachers to meet the needs of all learners is one of the key reasons why so many children with disabilities are still not attending school, drop out early or are excluded from learning within the school. All teachers need appropriate **initial training**, in-service support and continuous professional development in inclusive education.³⁶ Teachers who are trained in inclusive education are able to recognize and value diversity among students and are more positive towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools.³⁷

Understanding Inclusive Education

There are many different definitions of inclusive education. The understanding of what inclusive education is does not only differ from country to country, but it can also vary a lot from policy to practice level inside a country. It is important to reflect upon how inclusive education is understood in teacher training as it influences its implementation.

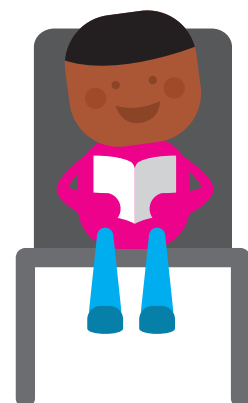
Most international conventions, agreements and goals on inclusive education are based on a right-based or **social model of disability** (See Booklet 3, *Legislation and Policies for Inclusive Education* for more information on the **rights-based approach** to inclusive education). Even in countries where the national

inclusive education policies are based on these international conventions, using a social model of disabilities, teacher training on inclusive education is still often rooted in a medical model of disability. Much inclusive teacher training is concerned with awareness of special needs, identification of children with disabilities, the implication of the disability on the learning capacities of the children and strategies to teach children with disabilities, rather than on the overall philosophy and underlying values.³⁸ The medical model and the focus of the 'problems' inside the child is considered as discriminatory and leads to segregation or attempts to 'normalize' children with disabilities (integrated education). The persistent dominance of the medical model of disability in teacher training slows down or even hinders the full implementation of inclusive education.

Ideally, policy-makers and teacher trainers should understand that:³⁹

- Inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education (for further reading on the definition of inclusive education, see Booklet 1).
- Inclusive education is a dynamic process that requires continuous support and professional development of teachers. It is an on-going reflection and self-evaluation, within the whole school community, of the barriers children might face in accessing quality education and how to remove those barriers.
- Inclusive education cuts across all aspects of education (curriculum and material development, assessment, school infrastructure, education data and information management, etc.). It is not a separate project, but a philosophy that underpins the whole educational system. Inclusive education should be seen as the responsibility of all education stakeholders and not only for special teachers or experts.
- Policy-makers, teacher trainers and teachers need to embrace values and practices that support all learners and have the skills and knowledge to meet the specific needs of children with disabilities.
- Inclusive education is connected with other sectors, for example the health sector, sanitation sector, transport sector and judicial sector. This inter-sectoral approach is especially important in the early years of education.
- Explicit commitments need to be made to train and recruit teachers with disabilities.
- Teacher training and professional development is an ongoing process that requires investment and a clear financial plan.

See also Booklet 3, *Legislation and Policies for Inclusive Education*, for further reading on inclusive education policy development.



Reflective Questions

- How is inclusive education in your country defined in education policies?
- Is this reflected in the teacher training?
- How does the teacher training in your country facilitate or hinder the implementation of inclusive education?

Teacher Training Models

There are two approaches to prepare student teachers to teach in inclusive settings:

- Separate modules.
- Embedded approach.

In many countries, student teachers learn about inclusive education through *separate modules* or *units*. These modules, often called ‘special needs education’, are often optional, and limited in time. As these modules are not obligatory for all students, many miss the opportunity to prepare themselves for teaching in inclusive settings. Furthermore, the special modules can give the impression that inclusive education is different from ‘normal’ education and not the responsibility of all teachers. It reinforces the idea that inclusive education requires special expertise.

Within the *embedded* or *permeated* model, inclusive education is part of training for all teachers and is reinforced in every element of pre- and **in-service teacher training**. It is more likely teachers develop inclusive values and attitudes and feel responsible for all children through an embedded approach.⁴⁰ It has been widely agreed that using a child-centred pedagogy and accommodating the needs of children with disabilities in the regular classes benefits all children. Introducing inclusive education to all student teachers through obligatory courses therefore increases the quality of education for all children.⁴¹

Reflective Questions

- How is the pre-service teacher training organized in your country?
- How does this facilitate or hinder the implementation of inclusive education?

Teacher Training Content

There has been a lot of discussion on what knowledge, skills and attitudes teachers need to obtain to be able to teach in inclusive settings.

Many inclusive education training courses situate the problem inside the child. A lot of effort goes on teaching about different impairments, the medical causes of impairments, identification of children with disabilities and special adjustments to make when teaching children with disabilities. Often there is little attention to environmental factors that raise barriers to education for children with disabilities and overall, child-centred, pedagogy, which could reduce the need to make special adjustments for children with disabilities. This approach, based on the medical model of disability, often leads to individual support models in practice. Individual education plans are set up with individual learning goals, and adjustments to make. The learning and teaching environment as a whole is not questioned. Opportunities are missed to make structural changes and increase the quality of education for all children.

On the other hand, broad approaches that train teachers in child-centred pedagogy, child-centred schools and education for all tend to overlook children with disabilities, and this can re-enforce the misconception that there is a requirement for specialised pedagogical approaches. Teachers might feel overwhelmed and doubt that they can teach children with disabilities within their regular classes. Many teachers believe they can teach children with only mild or moderate disabilities, while those with more severe or complex disabilities should go to segregated schools for children with disabilities.

All teachers need to fully understand the inclusive pedagogy, be able to create inclusive environments and obtain inclusive values. All teachers also need to acquire a basic understanding of different groups of impairments and how to make adjustments to ensure children with disabilities can participate in regular education based on inclusive principles.⁴²

Key components in inclusive teacher training:⁴³

- Identifying children’s specific learning needs and barriers in the class, school and community, which can impact on the presence, participation and achievement of children.
- Innovative ways to support all children to learn and participate in all school and community activities.
- How to collaborate with colleagues, parents and community members.
- Where to find additional support/resources when needed.

Practice is an essential part of teacher training. Both student teachers and teacher trainees need more opportunities to practice child-centred and inclusive teaching skills through role plays, model lessons and especially observations and practicums in inclusive schools.

Reflective Questions

- What is the key content of pre-service inclusive education training in your country?
- How does this relate to the national and international definitions on inclusive education?
- Does it sufficiently prepare all teachers to teach in inclusive settings?

Teacher Trainers

Many teachers express the need to experience and practice an inclusive, child-centred pedagogy.⁴⁴ However, most of the pre-service teacher training courses are lecture-based, focusing on knowledge rather than on skills, values and attitudes. They offer little or no opportunity for students to practice skills in real schools.

Many teacher trainers themselves have little experience with innovative teaching methods or teaching in inclusive settings. It is difficult for them to fully prepare student teachers to work in inclusive schools. Teacher trainers need to be supported to develop self-critical skills to reflect upon their own beliefs, values,

culture and attitudes towards inclusion and disability. They should become models for inclusive teaching in their own lessons. Self-reflection is important for both teacher trainers and students. What teachers learn in (theoretical) training courses from experts is very often not implemented in practice, unless teachers have the skills to reflect deeper on the content to develop a wider understanding about the concepts and how to relate them to their specific context.

Reflective Questions

- Who are the teacher trainers in your country?
- What kind of experience do they have with inclusive education?
- How does this influence the teacher training in your country?
- Does the teacher training in your country provide a model with innovative (child-centred) teaching strategies for student teachers?

Involving People with Disabilities in Teacher Training

Teacher training (both pre- and in-service training) needs to be designed in cooperation with a range of stakeholders. Because there is often a lack of practical experience in inclusive education and working with children with disabilities, it is important that people with disabilities and Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) are represented.

Some ideas on how to involve people with disabilities and/or DPOs in teacher training:⁴⁵

- Involve people with disabilities in policy discussions on education strategies, teacher training and curricula developing, etc.
- Make efforts to train and employ teachers (educators) with disabilities.
- Include guest speakers from different stakeholder groups (among which are people with disabilities) in the teacher training.

- Provide opportunities for student teachers to do practice in inclusive schools or at facilities/events with people with disabilities.
- Enable people with disabilities to be involved in school management, parent and/or community committees.

Reflective Questions

- How are people with disabilities in your country involved in teacher training?
- How accessible is teacher training for people with disabilities in your country?
- Which barriers might people with disabilities face in your country to becoming a teacher (educator)?

To learn more go to:

- *Literature review on teacher education for children with disabilities:*
http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Teacher_education_for_children_disabilities_litreview.pdf
- *Toolkit for advocacy on inclusive teacher training:*
<http://www.unescobkk.org/resources/e-library/publications/article/promoting-inclusive-teacher-education/>

V. In-Service Teacher Support

Key Points

- *School-based training models are more effective than cascade training models in supporting the idea that all teachers are responsible for the learning of all children. The school-based training model creates opportunities for practical and hands-on learning experiences.*
- *Action learning and reflective practice underpin all successful teacher development activity. Teachers need to be able to make clear links between the new theories and ideas they are being introduced to and given time, space and support to begin to introduce these into their practice in the classroom. They also need to be able to discuss and share their experiences with mentors and colleagues in order to consolidate their learning.*
- *Teacher development is a continuous effort and should go together with budget allocation and policy development to ensure teachers can actually implement what they have learned.*
- *In-service teacher training should be coherent with pre-service teacher training and the national education policies and strategies.*
- *Teachers need hands-on support to implement inclusive education. This can be provided through the development of communities of practice among teachers, peer support and coaching, parental and community involvement, child-to-child support, and specialist teachers and resource centres.*
- *Bringing additional support in the classroom (specialist teachers, volunteers, parents, etc.) can be valuable, but needs to be thought through carefully. Support teachers or volunteers can increase the stigma towards children with disabilities, who could become dependent on the helpers and feel less need to interact with their peers. Furthermore, it could mask the difficulties children with disabilities face in their learning process, and reduce opportunities for teachers to make adjustments which can benefit all children.*

In-Service Teacher Training

All teachers need on-going and high-quality professional development on inclusive education. In many countries, in-service teacher training on inclusive education is provided by NGOs or donor-funded programmes. The *cascade model* is a very popular approach in these programmes. Within the cascade model a core group of teachers is trained to train other teachers, who can in turn train other teachers. The cascade model has the potential to reach a large group of teachers in a short amount of time with relatively limited resources. This approach has justifiably been heavily criticised in recent years because of the lack of impact it has had on changing teacher behaviour in the classroom. The success of the cascade model depends heavily on the training skills of the core group of teachers. The key message of the original training can get lost in the process. The teachers who train their colleagues often do not have the in-depth knowledge and experience to reply to questions and provide real-life examples. Cascade training often ignores fundamental principles of professional learning.⁴⁶

Strategies to increase the effectiveness of the training courses following the cascade model include:⁴⁷

- Core groups of teachers need to receive detailed materials and lesson plans.
- Continuous professional development of the core group of teachers.
- School-based support and advice to transfer knowledge and skills to the daily practice at school.
- Mentoring of inexperienced teachers by colleagues or experts with more hands-on experience in inclusive education.
- Peer support among teachers, through which they can share experiences in implementing inclusive education.
- Central monitoring of the training process and regular follow-up visits.

The *school-based training model* is an alternative to the cascade model. Within this approach, the training is delivered inside the school to all relevant stakeholders. It supports the idea that all teachers are responsible for the learning of all children and that the same inclusive values should be shared within the entire school community. The school-based training model creates opportunities for practical and hands-on learning experiences. The trainers can relate the training content to the specific school context and the new skills can be immediately practiced with the support of experts. It is important to create school development plans and post-training monitoring to increase the sustainability of the school-based training courses. Different schools can be trained in a cluster when needed. This provides the opportunity for exchange of ideas and experiences between colleagues and local study visits. In contexts with limited resources or where teachers are geographically spread *distance learning* can be an option.

Besides the more formal training options, there are other approaches to increase the skills and attitudes of teachers. These include, for example, school visits, peer observations and coaching, participation in conferences and teacher networks, school cluster groups and informal mentoring.⁴⁸

When designing in-service teacher training in inclusive education, it is important to keep coherence between pre- and in-service training and the overall education strategy and development of inclusive education. It is less likely change will happen based on short-term teacher training courses only. Teacher development is a continuous effort and should go together with budget allocation and policy development to ensure teachers can actually implement what they have learned.

Stand-alone training courses in inclusive education can lead to the misunderstanding that inclusive education is a separate project for specialist teachers, instead of a whole-school improvement which affects all teachers and aspects of the school community.



Reflective Questions

- Who mainly provides in-service teacher training in your country?
- How is in-service training related to the pre-service teacher training and general education strategy?
- Which model for teacher training is most popular in your country?
- How is the transition from training to daily practice?
- Do teachers have the support (in terms of finance, policy and culture) to implement what they learn during inclusive education training courses?

Activity

Together with your colleagues, make a map of all the organizations who are involved in in-service teacher training in your country.

- Do all these organizations share the same inclusive values and understanding of inclusive education?
- What are the different approaches to teacher learning which different organizations based their programmes on? Is *action learning* and reflective practice understood as an essential element of the programme?
- Is there coherence between the training contents of all these organizations? Is there coherence between the in-service and pre-service teacher training?

Support for Teachers

Teaching in inclusive settings can seem complex and overwhelming. However, even in the most challenging contexts, teachers can find support within the school community. Teachers can consider the following sources for support:⁴⁹

Support from Children

There are many programmes that encourage children to support each other. Peers can be very powerful in supporting the participation of children with disabilities in the school and community. Peer support programmes are based upon the assumption that children are willing, able and motivated to help each other. When children are encouraged to get to know each other, and understand which challenges some are facing in going to school, it is very likely they will overcome their initial fears or prejudices and become a valuable resource of support in inclusive schools.

Children can play different roles. In 'Circle of Friends' programmes, for example, children are encouraged to build up friendships. These friendship relations are the basis for providing practical support for each other. In 'Making Action Plans' (MAPS), children are part of the support teams around children with disabilities (together with professionals and family members). The children help to plan and implement interventions to increase the participation of children with disabilities in all school activities. They often have a different

perspective on the situation compared to adults and provide creative solutions. All children report to benefit from peer-support programmes. It gives children the opportunity to develop social and problem-solving skills in a non-formal setting.

Support from Other Teachers

Teachers learn best from each other. Collaboration among teachers is very valuable in terms of teacher professional development and as a source for additional support in implementing inclusive education.

Peer Observation

When teachers are implementing inclusive education they might feel insecure at the beginning. It is helpful if someone observes their lessons with a particular focus on the elements of child-centred pedagogy. It can be a bit intimidating when experts, school managers or even local education authorities do these observations. Often teachers feel more relaxed and are more open to learn in a mutual exchange where they have the opportunity to observe each other's lessons and exchange ideas afterwards. The peer observations can be informal or more structured with 'pre' and 'post' meetings and observations, and reporting sheets. In any case, it is important to agree on the procedures and ethical considerations beforehand (for example: what is the purpose of the observations? Who will receive a report, if any? How to ensure respect and equality?). Teachers within the same school or neighbourhood can observe each other's lessons. Some find it less artificial when the observing teacher does not sit at the back of the class, but instead actively participates in the lesson and observes in the meantime.

Peer Coaching

The purpose of peer coaching is for teachers to provide support to each other. It should happen in a collegial and friendly atmosphere, where there is no fear of evaluation. Usually teachers reflect together about the challenges they meet in their classes (for example, meeting the needs of all learners). The teachers map strategies on how to deal with these challenges together and select a partner to implement the selected strategies. The coach will observe, gather documentation, ask questions and model approaches, etc. Afterwards, all teachers meet again to share the documentations, reflect on the strategies and share experiences.

The following three sections will provide an overview of how parents, community members and special teachers can provide in-class support for inclusive teachers. It is a common approach in inclusive education to bring in other adults/experts to ensure that the needs of all learners are met. Before going into more detail on how to organize this kind of support, we first reflect on some possible challenges when bringing additional support in the classroom:

- The presence of additional adults in the classroom can be a distraction and even disrupt children from focusing on their assignments.
- When children with disabilities receive support to complete their assignments, the teacher might not fully understand the barriers the child experiences in following the lessons and completing such work. It can mask the difficulties the child faces and this can have a negative influence on the learning outcomes on a longer term. The teacher is not challenged any more to adjust the teaching, learning, curriculum, environment, etc. to the needs of all children. It is possible opportunities are missed to increase the quality of education for all children.
- The support teachers or volunteers can increase the stigma towards the children with disabilities. It labels the children as 'special'.
- Children with disabilities may become dependent on the additional adult and feel less need to cooperate with other students in the class.

- The teacher might feel less responsible for the students with disabilities.

Additional support in the classroom can, however, be valuable to ensuring that all children participate in all activities and receive the most individual support as necessary. The additional support should be planned carefully. It is important to reflect on the different roles of the helpers beforehand and make regular evaluations about the cooperation. Adults can play different roles, depending on the needs in the classroom:

- **Individual helper:** provide more intensive support for one or a small group of students.
- **Activity manager:** keep the rest of the class involved in activities and tasks.
- **Mover:** maintain the flow of the activity by solving small issues and providing resources when needed.

In any case, the additional helpers should be involved in any training or capacity building activity on inclusive education to ensure all share the same inclusive values and feel equally responsible for the education of all children.

Support from Parents

Parents are the experts of their children. They know their child's abilities, needs and interests better than anyone else. Teachers who keep a regular contact with parents can make a better link between the home and school situation, which is important in designing child-centred lessons with meaningful and active learning opportunities. There are many ways in which teachers can connect with parents. Examples include:

- Face-to-face, when parent drop or pick up their children.
- Home visits.
- Home-school notebooks.
- School weblogs.
- Parent-teacher conferences.

In many schools there are parent associations through which parents support the planning, implementation and evaluation of school activities. These associations are good fora to explore the challenges some children face in going to school and participating in activities, and to reflect together on solutions.

Community Involvement

Schools can link with the surrounding community to find the necessary support. Many community members have the skills and willingness to contribute to the school and increase the quality of teaching and learning for all children. Teachers can use questionnaires and community meetings to get to know the community members, their skills and engagement. Some ideas of ways in which community members can support the learning for all at school include:

- Help teachers to make learning aids which are accessible for all.
- Make the school and class environment more accessible for all.
- Provide transport for children with disabilities to and from school.
- Volunteer to support the teacher inside the class, so she/he can balance her/his time between individual and group instruction more easily.

- Set up a community council to reflect together with the teachers and children on how to overcome barriers in learning.
- Support fundraising to purchase additional teaching and learning aids or assistive devices when needed.
- Lobby local education authorities to implement inclusive education policies and ensure the right of all to education is respected.

Specialist Teachers and Special Resource Centres⁵⁰

In many countries, policy-makers are making the shift from special education towards inclusive education. Many special schools are transformed into **inclusive education resource centres** to ensure the resources and expertise is not wasted. A lot of special teachers become support teachers who give advice, demonstrate teaching strategies and assist schools and families in implementing inclusive education.

As mentioned above, while the additional support from resource teachers can be very valuable, it needs to be planned carefully to avoid increasing the stigma towards children with disabilities and the idea that children with disabilities need special care, delivered by experts. Similarly, resource centres can be very helpful in identification of children with disabilities, providing early intervention and sharing resources. Careful planning and collaboration with all stakeholders is needed to avoid these resource centres becoming special schools with a different name.

Global evidence suggests that resource centres are only effective when resource teachers are trained as inclusive education support/advisory teachers who are able to support regular teachers in changing their practice to become more inclusive.

Reflective Questions

- What kind of support do teachers in your country receive to implement inclusive education?
- How effective is this support?
- Which type of support would be helpful to implement in your country? What kind of resources would you need to do so?

To learn more go to:

- *Teacher resource pack on special needs in the classroom:*
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000966/096636eo.pdf>

Notes

VI. Summary

In this booklet you were invited to reflect on how teachers are prepared to teach in inclusive settings and how teachers address special educational needs in regular schools and classrooms in your context.

The key messages concerning child-centred pedagogy and inclusive teacher training and support include:

- Inclusive education is a dynamic process based on inclusive values. As communities, cultures, interests, needs and abilities of children and teachers are constantly evolving, it is not possible to provide teachers with a fixed set of skills and knowledge they can apply in any inclusive classroom. It is therefore important **teachers become reflective practitioners** who are able to analyse the learning and teaching situation and make adjustments where needed.
- Inclusive education involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range. It is the responsibility of the state to educate all children.
- Education stakeholders at all levels should understand **inclusive education is the responsibility of all**. It is a cross-cutting issue which should be addressed throughout the development of education strategies and policies, curricula and material, assessment, school infrastructure, education data and information management, etc.
- **All children have needs that are common to all and unique to them as individuals**. It is problematic to search for educational needs that are common to a specific group of children. It is therefore **not possible to identify a special pedagogy or teaching strategy to teach children with disabilities in inclusive settings**. Teachers use the same teaching approaches as with other children, with a higher or lower level of intensity.
- The **child-centred pedagogy** enables teachers to respond to the learning needs of all children, including children with disabilities. Key elements of the child-centred pedagogy include providing meaningful learning opportunities, taking multiple pathways of learning into account, establishing cooperative learning, creating attractive learning settings and using continuous assessment procedures.
- An **embedded approach for pre-service training of teachers**, in which inclusive education is a compulsory part of the training for all teachers and is reinforced in every element of the training, is more effective than providing separate modules on inclusive education.
- Teacher training should ensure all teachers fully understand inclusive pedagogy and acquire a basic understanding of different groups of impairments and how to make adjustments to ensure children with disabilities can participate in regular education based on inclusive principles.
- Ideally, **teacher trainers should have hands-on experience in inclusive education and provide a model for child-centred pedagogy** during their courses.
- Caution is needed when implementing cascade models for in-service teacher training. **School-based training models are more effective** in supporting the idea that all teachers are responsible for the learning of all children. The school-based training model creates opportunities for practical and hands-on learning experiences.

- Teacher development is a continuous effort. There should be **coherence between pre- and in-service training and the overall education strategy**, together with budget allocation and policy development, to ensure that teachers can actually implement what they have learned.
- Apart from pre- and in-service training, teachers need hands-on support to implement inclusive education. This can be provided through the development of communities of practice among teachers, peer support and coaching, parental and community involvement, child-to-child support and specialist teachers and resource centres.

Notes

Glossary of Terms

Inclusive Education is ‘a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children’ (See Booklet 1).

Inclusive Education Resource Centre is a term with different meanings. In this booklet we understand an inclusive education resource centre as an institute that provides support to inclusive schools. This can include monitoring of inclusive schools, training of teachers, capacity building of parents, developing and disseminating teaching and learning tools and assistive devices, and individual support and advice for teachers, parents and children, etc.

However, it should be noted that ‘resource centre’ is also a term often used to describe provision located either in special schools or regular schools which is resourced with staff and equipment to support children with disabilities. In many instances these resource centres are not inclusive and become a form of segregated special education where children with disabilities are taught separately from their peers. In resource centres which are not focused on inclusive education, special needs teachers can often become a disabling barrier to the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream settings. This is because, explicitly or implicitly, they support the concept that specialised teaching is required for children with disabilities. UNICEF does not support this view and wherever possible UNICEF staff should be advocating and planning with partners for the development of inclusive provision.

Inclusive Setting is a place (school, college, community learning centre, etc.) where all students can learn and participate meaningfully together.

Initial Training is also called pre-service training.

In-Service Teacher Training is training and professional development/support for teachers who are already working in schools.

Mainstream School is a school that provides education for all children, without a focus on specific groups of children. It is sometimes called ‘regular school’ or ‘ordinary school’, as well. In some countries the term ‘normal school’ is used. This should be discouraged as it perpetuates the myth that there are children who are ‘normal’ and therefore some children who are ‘not normal’.

Medical Model of Disability explains disability as a health problem or medical condition of an individual that can be treated with medical assistance. Therefore, disability is the result of the medical condition. The individual with a disability is seen as being in need of a cure, and it is the health professional’s responsibility to alleviate his/her pain and suffering. *(UNICEF challenges this model wherever it is encountered in order to support the systemic introduction of a social model of disability – see Booklet 1).*

Pedagogy is commonly used within education to refer to the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command.

Pre-Service Teacher Training is the training teachers receive before they start to work in a school.

Rote Learning is a learning approach based on memorisation through repetition.

Rights-Based Approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress (See Booklet 1).

Specialist Teacher is a teacher with expertise in working with children with disabilities. These teachers are sometimes referred to as special needs teachers or, for example, in some Southern African countries as 'itinerant teachers', because they move from school to school to support children with disabilities. See the note on resource centres for more detail.

Special School is a school that is specially organized to meet the needs of specific groups of children (such as children with disabilities).

Social Model of Disability explains disability results from interactions between an individual with a specific physical, intellectual, sensory or mental health impairment and the surrounding social and cultural environment. Disability is therefore understood as a socio-political construct, whereby the attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers that inherently exist within society systematically exclude and discriminate against people with disabilities. It is only with removal of the barriers that disability can be reduced. (*This is the model UNICEF advocates* – see Booklet 1).

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