Liliane Fonds

open the world for a child with a disability

Teddy, Uganda

Enabling Education

Steps Towards Global Disability-Inclusive Education

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Foreword

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the first global Agreement to mention persons with disabilities, and provide a clear message to 'leave no one behind'. SDG4 aims to ensure 'inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Reaching this goal by 2030 poses a considerable challenge for the international community in the light of the fact that half of the world's 65 million school-age children with disabilities are out of school. They still experience per→sistent inequalities in accessing the mainstream education systems in low income countries. In many countries these children are forgotten, ignored and deliberately dismissed from the education system. This exclusion has a significant negative impact, both on the individuals and the countries. Many studies show that countries are losing billions of dollars of potential income when persons with disabilities are not educated or working. On the other hand, many studies have shown that inclusive education can bring better social, academic and economic outcomes for learners, and this approach can cost much less then special schools.[1] Even with the facts on our side, we see that education is becoming a less important part of the global development aid agenda, especially in the agenda of the Dutch Government, and the funding for education programmes has declined significantly in recent years. This is also the case for education in emergency situations, in which children with disabilities are almost invisible.

For the Liliane Foundation, the education of children with disabilities is one of the most important components of its strategy. Inclusive education offers high quality formal and informal learning opportunities for every child within a mainstream system that adapts to the needs of all learners. In 2015, the Foundation invested almost 40% of its budget in education programmes for its partners in 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The Liliane Foundation is presenting this important report on inclusive education to the international development community, government officials in the Netherlands, and non-governmental organisations both in the Netherlands and the global South. This publication presents evidence that has come out of a review of more than hundreds previously published studies and reports of other relevant organisations that work on the subject of inclusive education.

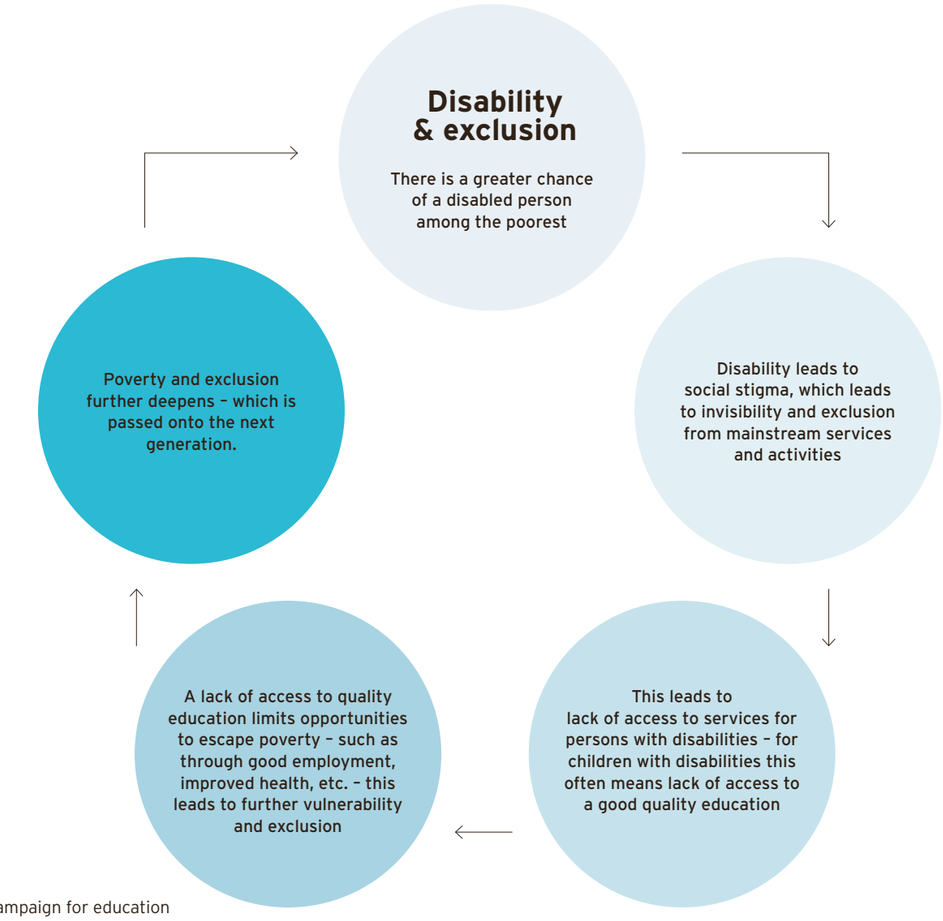
Including children with disabilities necessitates both investment and attention by governments, Civil Society Organisations, parents, teachers and communities, to ensure that girls and boys with disabilities can fully access the mainstream education system. This requires removing barriers in education, providing appropriate accommodation, and developing a culture of inclusion. This report aims to persuade decision makers to ensure that inclusive education becomes the norm, so that no child is left behind in the education process.

Source: Sight Savers

1 Getting the global perspective

Disability: Facts and Figures

Persons with disabilities comprise an estimated 15% of the world's population or one billion people, and more than half of them are women. 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries and persons with disabilities are over-represented among those living in absolute poverty.[2] Between 93 million and 150 million children are estimated to live with disabilities. Existing prevalence estimates of childhood disability vary considerably because of differences in definitions and the wide range of methodologies and measurement mechanisms adopted. The limitations of census and general household surveys in capturing childhood disability, the absence of registries in most low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and poor access to culturally appropriate clinical and diagnostic services all contribute to artificially low estimates.[3] As a result, many children with disabilities may neither be identified nor receive the services they need. An estimated 90% of children with disabilities in the developing world do not attend school. A far larger number of students with disabilities also drop out of elementary education due to barriers, and do not progress to secondary and tertiary education.[4]

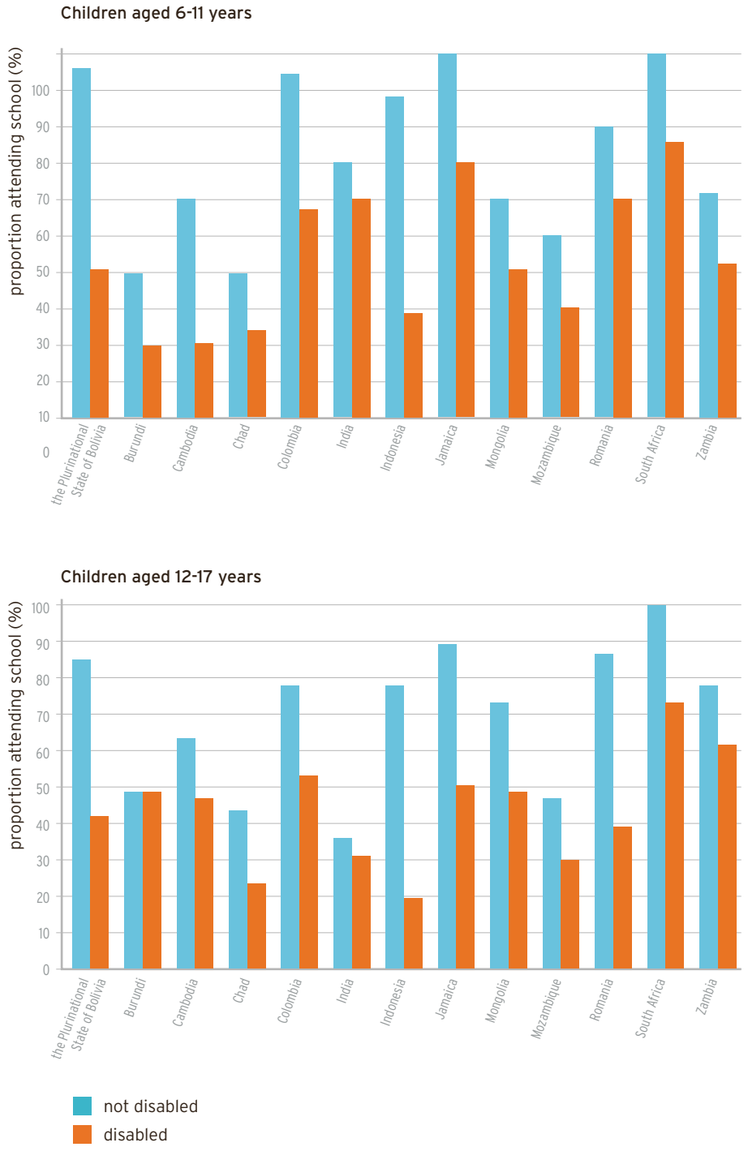


Source: Global Campaign for education

Leave no one behind: The SDGs, disability and education

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals include persons with disabilities and have thus opened doors for their participation and recognition as active, contributing members of society. These people should not face discrimination, or be excluded or left behind.[5] Commitments to educating persons with disabilities play a central role in SDG4, which specifically seeks to ensure 'inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Equality of access to all levels of education for persons with disabilities, and inclusive, accessible learning environments for all, are highlighted in the targets, as is the need for access to good quality early childhood development and education (ECDE).[6]

Proportion of children aged 6-11 years and 12-17 years with and without a disability who are in school



Source: WHO

The global reality

Many children and adults with disabilities have historically been excluded from mainstream education opportunities. In most countries, early efforts at providing education or training were generally through special schools, usually targeting specific impairments, such as schools for the blind.[7] These institutions were usually in urban areas and were not cost-effective, only reaching a small proportion of those in need, and tending to isolate individuals from their families and communities.[8]

At present it is estimated that 65 million primary and lower secondary school aged children in developing countries have disabilities, half of whom are out of school (Education Commission, 2016). Many more miss out on Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE). Young children with disabilities are among the most marginalized, often invisible in household and education surveys and excluded from national and global strategies targeting out-of-school children.[9] Disability is strongly associated with poor rates of primary school completion in Latin America, Asia and Africa.[10] Cultural barriers keep children with disabilities out of school, as do systemic and pedagogical barriers such as untrained teachers, and inaccessible school infrastructure and materials. Girls, young women and people with particular impairments, including intellectual disabilities, face the most severe educational inequities.[11]

Children with disabilities are also the last to receive emergency relief and support, because basic supplies and relief services are not inclusive or accessible.[12] New environmental barriers may arise as a result of an emergency or conflict, assistive devices may be damaged or lost, and established education services or support systems may become inaccessible.[13]

This exclusion from education has a significant negative financial impact both on persons with disabil-ities and on national economies. Many studies show that countries are losing billions of dollars of potential income when persons with disabilities are not educated or working. A study from Bangla-desh indicated that 26 million US dollars were lost every year due to the reduced earnings attributable to lower education levels among persons with disabilities.[14]

The increasing education gap between those in or out of school worsens the position of those who are already marginalized. As more children participate in education, the exclusion of the marginalized becomes more pronounced, leading to an increasing gap between the majority and the forgotten minorities. As a result of this discrimination, children with disabilities are on the periphery of society, experiencing growing inequality and extreme exclusion, particularly in an increasingly knowledge-based world.

What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education entails providing meaningful learning opportunities to all students within the regular school system.[15] Ideally, it allows children with and without disabilities to attend the same age-appropriate classes at the local school, with additional, individually tailored support as needed. It requires physical accommodation as well as a new, child-centred curriculum that includes representa-tion of the full spectrum of people found in society, and reflects the needs of all children.[16] Inclusive education offers quality, relevant formal and informal learning opportunities within a mainstream system that adapts to all learners. When children learn together, regardless of differences, everybody in society benefits in the long term. Good quality, inclusive education can remove learning barriers for every child, reduce out-of school populations, improve the transition between education levels, and generally help tackle discrimination. Inclusive early childhood development and education (ECDE) is critical, and can improve the presence, participation and achievement of children in subsequent education levels. A study in nine Caribbean countries showed that increasing school attendance had a great impact on crime rates, reducing violent activity in young people by 55-60%. School attendance also significantly reduced risky health behaviours, such as alcohol consumption, drug use and smoking.[17] Achieving these changes depends on 'in-depth transformation' of legislation, policy, planning, administration, financing, and delivery.[18]

International legal framework

There are number of international legal Agreements that address the topic of education for all. This report considers two of these:

International Education Policy Framework

1948	Human Rights Declaration*
1989	UN Convention on the rights of the child (art. 23, 28, 29)*
1990	World Declaration on Education for All, Thailand
1993	UN Standard Rules for the Equalisation of Opportunities for persons with Disabilities (Rule 6)
1994	Salamanca Declaration of World Conference on Special Needs Education (Access and Quality)
2000	World Declaration on Education For All, Dakar
2000	Millennium Development Goal 2 Universal Primary Education by 2015
2006	International Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 24)*
2015	Agenda for Sustainable Development- Sustainable Development Goal 4

* legally binding texts

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) represents the first legally bind-ing international instrument to deal comprehensively with the human rights of children, and more significantly, for the inclusion of children with disabilities in education. The CRC is based on four main principles: non-discrimination, the best interest of the child, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child. The principle of non-discrimination as stated in article 2 of the CRC specifically prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability.[19] Article 28 refers to the child's right to free and compulsory primary education, to secondary and vocational education, and to the prevention of dropping out. Article 23 of the CRC is especially important due to its recognition that children with mental and physical disabilities are entitled to enjoy a full and de-cent life in conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.[20]

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognizes in Article 24 the right of all children with disabilities to be included in the general education system and to receive the individual support they require. Systemic change to remove barriers and provide appropriate accommodation and support services is required to ensure that children with disabilities are not excluded from mainstream educational opportunities. The CRPD sets out the right to free, good quality, inclusive education at all levels for children, young people and adults with disabilities 'without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity'. These rights apply equally to those living in crisis contexts. Ratification of the CRPD means that countries are legally obliged to provide inclusive, good quality and free primary and secondary education to all children.[21] As of December 2016, it has 160 signatories and 172 parties, which includes 171 states and the European Union. This commitment also implies that high income countries should support the efforts of low and middle income countries through their develop-ment assistance. This is stated in Article 32, which further recognizes the critical role of donors and international co-operation in providing technical and financial resources to this end.

The importance of inclusive education

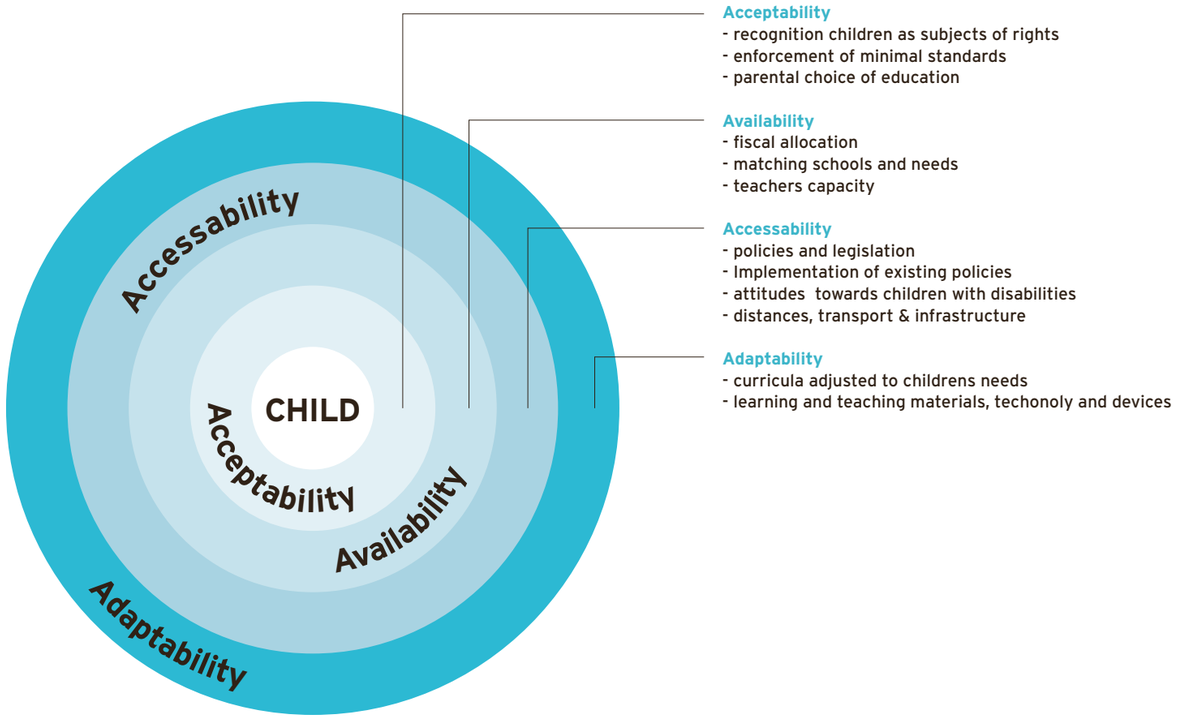
The inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in education is important for several reasons:

- Education contributes to human capital formation and is thus a key determinant of personal well-being and welfare. It has been demonstrated that each additional dollar invested in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) brings a return of 6-17 dollars.[22]
- At an individual level, inclusive education improves social skills and creates social networks for learners. In addition, It can increase opportunities for employment, higher wages and more sustainable livelihoods.
- Children with disabilities will also benefit from public health campaigns or other development initiatives. These are often provided at schools, especially if children are the subject of interest.
- Inclusive Education has proved to be more cost-efficient. In South-Africa, the average cost of building a new special school in 2012 was 9 million dollars. On the other hand, upgrading the infrastructure of a mainstream school to accommodate children with disabilities cost an average of around 370,000 dollars.[23]
- Inclusive education enables better interaction of children with disabilities with their non-disabled peers. In that way prejudice and stigma of disability can be tackled, and gender empowerment and equality can be promoted among all children.

4As approach in disability-inclusive education

To be a meaningful right, education must be acceptable, available accessible and adaptable. The governments, as the prime duty-bearers, should enable the education system to implement these '4As' principles for all children, including children with disabilities. There are, however, also duties which are the responsibility of other actors in the education process: the child as the privileged subject of the right to education and the bearer of the duty to comply with compulsory education requirements, the child's parents who are the 'first educators', and professional educators, namely teachers.[24]

The 4As approach was developed by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski. In our report we have adapted the 4As approach to analyze the situation of children with disabilities in the mainstream education system. By using a participatory process, this 4As framework can become a tool to enable diverse stakeholders to think through what the right to education means for children with disabilities, and compare their current reality to this ideal context.



Source: Right to Education Project (RTE)

2 Acceptability of education for children with disabilities

Acceptability means that the content of education is relevant, non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and of high quality, and that the school itself is safe and the teachers professional. This means that the government should set and enforce requirements for minimum standards of health and safety, characteristics of the building, and the quality of education.[25] The safeguarding of these aspects plays an important role in the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream education system, which contributes to a process of socialization. As a result, children with disabilities will be seen as full members of society.[26]

Children with disabilities as subjects of rights

It is difficult for children to get their views heard and to make decisions concerning their lives. The barriers are even greater for children with disabilities. This is because in many countries, children with disabilities are still considered as ill and as recipients of charity. This stems from the 'medical model' under which persons with disabilities, including children, were set apart from society because of their condition. It is often assumed in society that disabled children would not have views to ex-press, and that they have limited capacity to work and interact with others.[27] Because of these assumptions, children with disabilities are put in a passive position in which others decide on their des-tiny and their further development. As a result of this perception, discrimination, isolation and stig-matization have strong impacts on children with disabilities.[28]

Through the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular Article 12, children are recognised as the subjects of rights. Article 12 establishes that children are entitled to express their views on all matters of concern to them and to have them given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.[29] Children with disabilities are no longer objects of charity, medical treatment, and social protection, but are seen as subjects with rights which they are expected to claim.[30] Article 7 of the CRPD includes the recommendation that governments should provide children with disabilities with 'disability and age appropriate assistance' to ensure its realization.[31] Based on these Conventions, it is essential that children with disabilities are able to express their views on how they want to be educated, and on the challenges they face in the education process.

Enforcement of minimal standards

Another obstacle to the acceptability of education for children with disabilities is that governments have failed to set up minimum standards for health, safety and quality of education. Safety is often not guaranteed. For example, children with disabilities are often beaten, abused (or even sexually abused) or bullied by teachers.[32] Girls with disabilities experience significantly higher rates of gender-based violence, sexual abuse and maltreatment than girls without disabilities. Studies have shown that women and girls with disabilities are three times more likely to experience gender-based violence than non-disabled women and girls.[33] Fellow students who are exposed to this kind of behav-iour may follow the teacher's example and also bully or beat their classmates. This is because teach-ers also function as role models. Children with disabilities are exposed to bullying and teasing on their way to and from school[34], which can also cause an increase in the drop-out rate. Schools and governments therefore also need to ensure that the route to school is safe for disabled children.

There is also a growing body of evidence on the correlation between access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools and health and educational

outcomes for students. Studies in Malawi and Uganda have revealed that children with disabilities are burdened by poor access to WASH in schools, and are even prevented from attending school due to inaccessible WASH facilities.[35] This is especially true for girls who are often unable to attend school because they do not have access to a toilet, which makes it impossible to make it through a full day of school. In some countries, the vast majority of students do not have access to clean drinking water.[36] When these minimum standards are not enforced, it may result in an increase in the drop out rate because children with disabilities do not have an educational environment where their needs are met.

In emergencies, children and youngsters with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and often have no or limited access to education and protection programmes. They are often overlooked in emergency registration systems, and may fail to receive such basic entitlements as food, water, clothing and access to educational activities. The lack of data due to weak registration and reporting systems remains a challenge.[37] With this lack of systematic reporting on disability in education in emergency programmes, it is difficult to get a clear idea of the number of children being denied their right to education. Meanwhile, education in emergencies budgets are often not flexible enough to ensure accessible and disability-friendly programmes. A rigorous literature review of what works best to promote children's educational access, quality of learning and well-being in emergencies found no studies of children with disabilities in emergency situations that met their methodological stand-ards.[38] This is especially shocking, considering that children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups of people.

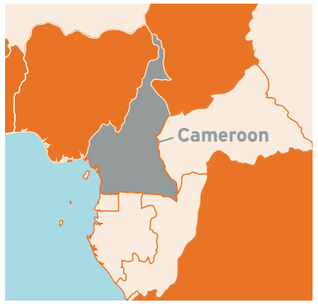
Governments have the obligation of setting and enforcing minimum standards of health, safety and quality of education.[39] This means that there should be appropriate school facilities whose design, sport facilities and surrounding spaces reflect the needs of the children. The play areas should also be designed to ensure opportunities for physical exercise and recreation, which also demonstrate that children with disabilities are accepted.[40] This also means that hygiene and sanitation facilities are appropriate for children with disabilities, the buildings are of good quality, and clean drinking water is provided in accessible manner. Clean latrine and a raised pedestal to sit on to avoid touching the ground are minimal components without which these children are unable to independently access water or sanitation during their full day at school. In accessing water, schools need to have boreholes that are with adjusted height and pipe system that children with physical disabilities can reach. The enforcement of minimum standards also includes the quality of education, which means that the same standards exist for private, public and religious institutions. These standards include the level of the teacher, the number of pupils per teacher in a class, and timetables for full-time education.[41]

Parental choice of education

The exclusion and stigma of children with disabilities often start in their households.[42] When a mother gives birth to a child with a disability, the family often breaks down, and as a result many single mothers raise their child alone. The family of a child with a disability is often isolated, and experiences exclusion and stigma from the community and the social network. Furthermore, because parents feel ashamed of their children, they tend to keep them hidden from the community and do not enroll them in schools. Parents often do not realize that they have the power to participate in educational processes and that they can act as stakeholders influencing and changing the education system.

Parents should be the first educators of their children, guiding them in gaining the skills, knowledge and confidence that will help them to achieve independence and economic success. Parents also have the right to ask for education for their children that coincides with their ideas and beliefs.[43] This right of parents to choose the educational system that fits with their beliefs is affirmed in all general human rights treaties, and is included in the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education. This right entails the liberty of parents firstly to choose for their children an institution other than those maintained by the public authorities, and secondly to ensure that the religious and moral education of the children conforming with their own convictions is respected.[44]

Case Study:
Advocacy for Inclusive Education in Cameroon



Inclusive Education in the context of Cameroon

The practice of Inclusive Education in Cameroon is backed by both national and international legal instruments. Nationally, the country has 3 important legislative and policy documents: The 2010 law on Protection and Welfare of Persons with Disabilities, The Compendium of Laws on Decentralisation, Chapter III on Education, Literacy and Vocational Training, and the 2009 Policy Guideline on Inclusive Education. Internationally, the country has signed the UNCRPD and it is also working on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG4.

The public bodies charged with the responsibility of implementing inclusive education in Cameroon are the Ministries of basic, secondary and higher education, which run and also monitor institutions of learning for citizens. As a major stakeholder in Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs assesses learners with impairments through its regional delegations, and issues disability cards so that these learners can benefit from education free of tuition fees in Public Educational and training Institutions.

Although the country has a solid legal and institutional framework to safeguard inclusive education, children with disabilities still experience a number of challenges when it comes to access to mainstream education. Most of the children lack self-esteem and have doubt in their own abilities, because of the stigma and the discrimination that they have experienced since their birth. Their parents, relatives and neighbours also do not accept them as equal members of the community. They often stay at home, isolated and hidden, and not being considered important enough to enroll in school and get a proper education. The teachers lack acceptance and are also not equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to teach children with disabilities. There are not enough teachers, and insufficient teaching materials and assistive devices. Moreover, the schools also lack ramps and appropriate toilets, classrooms and recreational spaces to accommodate these children.

SEEPD programme on Inclusive Education

In Cameroon, the Liliane Foundation collaborates with its Strategic Partner Organisation Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS). CBCHS has implemented a programme on Socio Economic Empowerment of People with Disabilities (SEEPD) in the north west region since 2009. The programme aims to empower children with disabilities in the north west region by increasing their attendance in mainstream government schools and convincing the government to make inclusive education standard practice in Cameroon. Advocacy has been an important strategy of SEEPD, targeting diverse governmental decision makers at different levels. These include the Ministry of Education, Regional delegates (responsible for education policy at the regional level), the General Certificate of Education Board (or GCE Board, responsible for examination policy) and municipal councils (responsible for budget allocation for community development) and parent-teacher associations. CBCHB used diverse advocacy activities to persuade the decision makers of the importance of inclusive education. These included mass sensitization through the media (television, radio and newspapers), formal and informal meetings with politicians, training of education authorities and school administrators, creation of parent support groups, piloting inclusive education in government schools, and providing specialized advisory support to strengthen government capacity in the field of inclusive education.

Since 2009, the SEEPD programme has been able to create 'demand' for inclusive education by sensitization of the general public, religious and traditional leaders, and especially parents and caretakers, to the importance of education for their children. SEEPD succeeded in convincing the government to pilot inclusive education in 17 government schools, demonstrating the possibility of inclusive education to the government. It further lobbied the government to adopt a new, inclusive examination policy for the Anglophone part of Cameroon. SEEPD also provided an embosser to the GCE Board for improved braille translation of exams. Last but not least, SEEPD, in collaboration with 18 Municipal Councils, has signed action plans for disability mainstreaming. A focal person in each Council was assigned to act as a as an intermediary between the Councils and SEEPD. As a result of increased engagement of the government, and improved awareness and knowledge of teachers and other school staff, the number of children with disabilities who have accessed mainstream schools has increased every year, for example from 259 in 2015 to 318 in 2016.

The next steps for CBCHS are to widen the implementation programme from regional to national level, and to reach out to more children with disabilities who still do not have access to mainstream schools.

3 Availability of education for children with disabilities

The **availability** of education entails two different kinds of governmental obligations. The government should allow non-state actors to establish educational institutions as a civil and political right. As a social and economic right, governments should establish or fund these educational institutions, or a combination of these and other means, in order to ensure that education is available.[45] Each child should therefore be provided with an available school place or learning opportunity, together with appropriately qualified teachers, and appropriate resources and equipment.[46] The level of provision of primary education should be consistent with the numbers of children entitled to receive it. The aspect of availability can be discussed taking into account the fiscal allocations for education, the availability of schools matching the number and diversity of school aged children, and the capacity of teachers (including education and training, and their labour conditions).

Fiscal allocations for inclusive education

The gaps in policy implementation which are commonly encountered are often caused or exacerbated by a lack of financial commitment. Hardly any country commits anywhere near the amounts needed to ensure inclusive education.[47] It is often assumed that the costs of providing inclusive education are prohibitive in low and middle income countries. the additional costs are often not as high as initially assumed. The heaviest investment in this case is not necessarily the cost of construction, but is more often the substantial investment in time needed for better planning, and for supportive implementation policies.

The recent Global Education Monitoring Report for 2016 found that only 31 low and middle income countries out of 76 have specific budget allocations for children with disabilities.[48] The inclusion of disability in a country's education sector plan is a good predictor of budgetary allocations. The presence of an inclusive education plan, policy or strategy is not a guarantee of adequate funding.[49] In most low income countries, the Government education budgets do not aim to improve and maintain the whole education system with inclusion in mind, and they rarely provide for individual accommodation measures.

Although many countries have laws or constitutions enshrining the right to free primary education, children are often excluded from education because their parents cannot afford informal school fees. A 2005 survey by the World Bank covering 93 countries found that only 16 charged no fees at all, even though the vast majority made free education nominally available.[50]

Most countries have a mixture of private and public schools. In the broadest sense, private schools encompass all non-state-run schools, some of which may actually be partially or even fully funded by the state.[51] In quite a few countries, governments provide subsidies to a diverse range of schools without operating any government-run schools.[52] In Ethiopia, where 96% of children with disabilities are out of school, the education sector plan anticipates closing the financing gap using household and community contributions.[53]

National budgets play a key role in ensuring that the right to education is implemented equally for all children, including children with disabilities. Disability-inclusive budgeting at national and decentralized levels will ensure that children with different disabilities will be able to access quality education. Government education budgets should aim to maintain and improve the whole education system with inclusion in mind, by use

of teacher training, and specially designed learning materials, or other individual accommodation measures where needed.[54] Increasing education funding to the internationally recommended level of 20% of the national budget is the first necessary step, and it is vital to follow this with prioritizing those who are the most marginalized, with at least half of education spending going to basic education.[55]

Governments in many countries have eradicated formal school fees, but this is not enough. Indirect costs and informal charges continue to be a burden for many children living in poverty, especially children with disabilities. Eliminating all school fees, or cutting costs for uniforms, textbooks and other materials is a first step towards improving affordability. Incentives covering other costs linked to school attendance can also play a vital role in enabling children with disabilities to participate in school.[56]

Matching the needs of children with disabilities

Many countries have overcrowded classrooms, and teachers who have not been trained to respond to diverse needs. At present, teacher-pupil ratios in most low and middle income countries make it very difficult to ensure a high quality, inclusive education. UNESCO estimated that 1.6 million additional teachers were required to achieve universal primary education under the MDGs. Without these additional teachers, and a consequent lowering of the teacher - pupil ratio, building inclusive education systems will be all but impossible. If teachers are faced with classrooms of 50-plus on their own, they will struggle to dedicate enough time to the needs of individual learners, especially those with disabilities.[57]
The reasons given for why children with disabilities should not be allowed to attend mainstream schools are related to the limited capacity of regular schools to accommodate them, considering the lack of appropriately trained teachers, limited pedagogic materials and resources, lack of accessible transport and infrastructure, and difficulties communicating with children with sensory and intellectual impairments. As a result, many persons without disabilities advocate attendance at special schools.

Studies and common knowledge of girls with disabilities suggest that there are multiple additional factors affecting whether girls with disabilities go to school. These factors include inaccessible transportation and school infrastructure, and water and sanitation facilities at school, as well as inadequate assistive devices, teaching and learning materials.[58] Additional factors include low expectations and low perceived returns from schooling by the child, her family and her community. Girls with mental disabilities face additional barriers due to their condition, placing them at higher risk of being excluded or dropping out of school.[59] Furthermore, girls with disabilities experience higher rates of gender based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation than girls without disabilities.[60] One survey of 3706 primary school children aged 11–14 in Uganda found that 24% of disabled girls reported experiencing sexual violence at school compared with 12% of non-disabled girls.[61]

Accurate information on the pre-school and school aged population in each district or locality is needed to ensure that the availability of places, trained teachers and educational resources is consistent with the size of that population, and the number of children identified as having disabilities.[62] The gathering of these data can be organized in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, from local to national level, including: non-governmental organisations, community members, traditional leaders, religious organisations, and parent groups. In communities where families deny the existence of a child with a disability because of associated stigma or shame, the involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities in the process of data collection has proven to complement the child-to-child approaches in compiling the data.[63] Schools can also play a role in the process of birth registration as an important factor in building an accurate record of child population.

Teaching capacity

All children benefit from having well-trained teachers, schools benefit from professional manage-ment and education systems benefit from visionary leadership.[64] Teachers are the most important factor in determining the quality of education a child receives. For children with disabilities, teachers can play a major role in determining whether or not they are even able to go to the local school, given that teachers or headmasters often decide whether or not a local child with a disability is 'allowed' into a school.[65] The training of teachers in low income countries tends, however, to be fragmented, uncoordinated and inadequate. If teachers do not have positive attitudes and acceptance towards learners with disabilities, it is unlikely that these children will receive satisfactory education.[66] This issue is very prevalent in emergency situations,. One report on Syrian refugees with disabilities points to challenges often related to teachers who are reluctant to accept children with disabilities in classes.[67]

An additional challenge is that teachers may not have the time or resources to support learners with disabilities. In resource-poor settings, classrooms are frequently overcrowded and there is a severe shortage of well trained teachers capable of routinely handling the individual needs of children with disabilities. The majority of teachers lack sign-language skills, which creates barriers for deaf pupils. Other support such as classroom assistants is also lacking. Advances in teacher education have not necessarily kept pace with the policy changes that followed the 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Declaration on special needs education.[68]

Another issue can be uneven distribution of teachers. This can result in shortages, particularly of qualified teachers, in the most disadvantaged regions and schools. Even in countries that allocate teachers on the basis of student numbers, teachers can find ways to avoid difficult postings.[69]

Adults with disabilities often face considerable obstacles to qualifying as teachers, and the lack of persons with disabilities among teaching personnel presents another challenge to inclusive education.[70] Exclusion of persons with disabilities from teacher training limits the number of qualified disabled teachers, who can act as role models for children (with and without disabilities) in mainstream schools.

Teaching is a highly skilled profession, requiring dedicated training not only in subject knowledge, but in didactics and pedagogics – including identifying strengths, weaknesses and interests, and respond-ing to diverse learning needs, classroom management, positive discipline and attitudes.[71] Each coun-try therefore needs to incorporate inclusive education for children with disabilities into the national teacher training curriculum. There is also a need for continuous professional development pro-grammes (in-service teacher training) which are comprehensive, contextually relevant and provide teachers with the space to learn, do and reflect on their practices.[72] New technology and innovation can provide learning and professional knowledge platforms for teachers, and offer teacher training in digital formats that can be delivered online or as mobile phone apps.[73]

Teachers also need to be able to rely on specialist help from colleagues who have greater expertise and experience of working with children with disabilities, especially children with sensory or intellectual impairments. In order to attract more teachers to work in resource-poor communities, a variety of incentives is needed, such as travel allowances, subsidized housing, study leave, and training opportunities.

The teaching workforce needs to be more diverse, and targeted efforts are needed to ensure that persons with disabilities can train as teachers, find work and be supported in their jobs. Teachers with disabilities can act as positive role models for children in mainstream schools.

Global facts & figures

Disability contributes to poverty, while poverty increases the likelihood of becoming disabled. Through education you can break this vicious cycle.

GLOBAL/REGIONAL FACTS

Globally between **93 million** and **150 million** children are estimated to live with disabilities.

80% of the people living with a disability live in developing countries.

20% of the poorest populations are persons with disabilities.

At present it is estimated that **65 million** primary and lower secondary school aged children in developing countries have disabilities, half of whom are out of school.

Less than **10%** of children with disabilities in Africa attend primary school.

The proportion of children with disabilities receiving any form of education is as low as **1-3%** in some developing countries.

FACTS SITUATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

There are up to **129.000** children in the Netherlands with a disability.

80% of the primary school-aged children with a mental disability receives special education on a separate school.

99,4% of the secondary school-aged children with a mental disability receives special education on a separate school.

15.000 children in the Netherlands do not receive any form of education, because of disabilities, diseases, or behavior problems.

Only 31 low- and middle income countries out of 76 have specific budget allocations for children with disabilities or for special education.

In **Burkina Faso,** having a disability increases the risk of children being out of school by two and a half times.

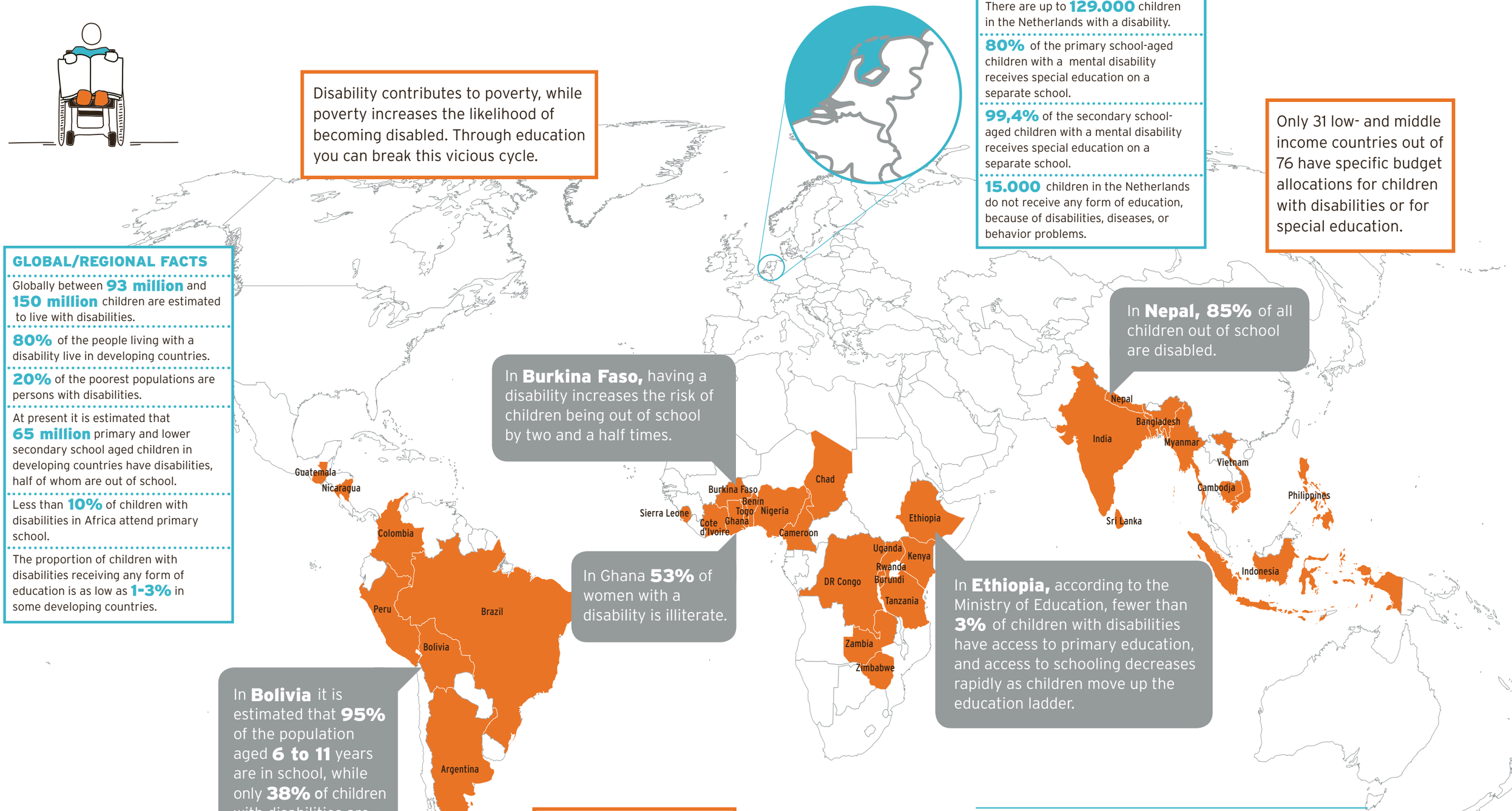
In Ghana **53%** of women with a disability is illiterate.

In **Bolivia** it is estimated that **95%** of the population aged **6 to 11** years are in school, while only **38%** of children with disabilities are – more than doubling the chances of not being in school.

In **Nepal, 85%** of all children out of school are disabled.

In **Ethiopia,** according to the Ministry of Education, fewer than **3%** of children with disabilities have access to primary education, and access to schooling decreases rapidly as children move up the education ladder.

The greatest barriers to inclusive education are caused by the attitude of the society and not by the personal impairment that the child has.



Countries in which the Liliane Foundation concentrates its work

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In1school - Schendingen recht op inclusief onderwijs. Een analyse van de actuele situatie in Nederland. Jose Sits & Jacqueline Schoonheim. Mei 2016. In1school is an initiative of the NSGK.

More research into pedagogical practices is needed to help policy makers, planners and practitioners understand the quality of education that is being offered by teachers to all children, especially children with disabilities. The results of such research will provide evidence on how to improve teacher training, and teaching and learning practices, especially in low income countries. According to a recent report on costs for inclusive education, if the governments invest in good quality education, featuring well-trained teachers and strong peer support, as many as 80-90% of learners with disabili-ties could be educated in mainstream schools with only minor additional support.[74]

Case Study:
RAISE for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education in the Indian context

With a population of about a billion and a quarter, India is the second most populous country in the world. Although estimates vary significantly, probably around 5 percent of these people has a disability. Due to social stigma issues, people with disabilities in India often face discrimination and exclusion. An important national Act, the Persons With Disabilities Act 1995, protects the rights of people with disabilities in many different areas. Their right to education and in particular the right to inclusive education were also laid down in this Act. In 2010, however, 90 percent of children with disabilities still did not attend school. It is obvious that there is a gap between the laws on paper and their implementation in practice, meaning that the duty-bearers are not fulfilling the obligations laid down in the legislation.

RAISE for Inclusive Education

The RAISE project in the north east region of India stands for Regional Action for IncluSive Education. This project was initiated by Jan Vikas Samiti (JVS), a Strategic Partner Organisation of the Liliane Foundation. JVS complements the programme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). SSA ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and high quality education. The focus of the project is on improving the quality of education for children with disabilities in government and government supported schools. To reach this aim, inclusive education model schools within the primary school system are developed, that the government will then replicate elsewhere.

The project aims to contribute to an inclusive education system in which children with disabilities fully participate on an equal basis with others. This is done by focusing on the capacity building of teachers in inclusive education, because this is key to the success of the project. Primary teachers therefore receive short-term courses on inclusive education. This entails learning more about different disabilities, supporting the children with disabilities, and combining the expertise of resource teachers, special educators and mainstream teachers. Teachers also learn how to use ICT, and appropriate and innovative modules and manuals are developed for teachers to work with. Special attention is given to gender in these courses.

The project also has a big advocacy element, because it is striving for children as the subjects of rights. There is low awareness in civil society organisations about the right to education of children with disabilities. The project campaigns for more awareness of the right to education at the grassroots level. Through networking with institutions, community based organisations and the mass media, the project raises awareness about the educational rights and entitlement of children with disabilities. The project also organizes meetings to strengthen parents' groups of disabled and non-disabled students and Disabled Persons Organisations (DPOs) in the catchments of the selected partner schools. The project is also building alliances with other NGOs, advocacy groups and quasi-judicial bodies, to improve the atti-tudes and understanding of parents, teachers and community members. This has not been for nothing, and the enrolment of children with disabilities has more than doubled, from 1.17 million in 2003-2004 to 2.35 million in 2013-2014. This is 86.45 percent of the identified children with disabilities.

4 Accessibility of education for children with disabilities

National education systems should be non-discriminatory and **accessible** to all, and positive steps should be taken to include the most marginalized students such as children with disabilities, within practically reachable distance. The barriers which keep children with disabilities out of school in such disproportionately large numbers are attributed to negative attitudes and systems, and an inaccessible environment that can prevent children with disabilities from participating fully in the education system.[75]

Policies and legislation

Government institutions exclude children and youngsters with disabilities from many policies related to the areas of their interest, especially educational policies. In many low income countries there is a lack of national legislation, policy targets or plans for inclusive education of children with disabilities. Disabilities and inclusive approaches are too often not mentioned in national education policies.[76] In many instances, the policy makers do not understand and accept the concept of inclusive education. In some countries, policies may still exist that facilitate the possibility of authorities declaring that some children are 'uneducable'.[77] This practice usually applies to children with severe intellectual disabilities. In some other countries, the education of some particular groups of learners is the responsibility of an authority other than the Ministry of Education. This very often leads to a situation where these learners are not expected to participate in mainstream education, and consequently, they do not have equal opportunities for further education or employment.

For real change to take place, governments need to adopt a serious approach to the obligations that arise from the human rights treaties that they have signed and ratified. National policies and practices in education need to be based on a commitment to these global human rights principles. Children with disabilities have the same right to education as all other children. They have the right to be educated in regular, inclusive schools and not in separate segregated systems. Within regular inclusive schools, they have the right to an education that responds to the diversity of their abilities and is adapted to their particular needs, with support as needed.

Implementation of existing policies

Even if policies on inclusive education exist, they are often not well implemented. In many low income countries the school staff is ignorant of the inclusive education policy and in most of the cases they are not trained on how to implement such a policy.

In many countries, the implementation of policies is complicated by divided ministerial responsibilities, where the responsibility for educating children with disabilities lies with the ministry of social welfare, (or a similar ministry) with no or few formal links to the ministry of education, or education sector planning.[78]

While inclusion is consistent with the rights of children with disabilities and is generally more cost effective than special or separate schools, it cannot happen without appropriate levels of support.[79]
Administrative procedures need to be effective from central to local school levels. The focus in the early stages should be on building support and creating positive attitudes, and preparing the school for the necessary changes. Decisions on policy and practices for the education of children with disabilities should be made in collaboration with education officials, schools, parents, communities, families and organisations of persons with disabilities.[80] Another focus should be on establishing methods of identifying children who are out of school, and encouraging them to

attend. One of the most important keys to success is the preparation of teachers so that they have the skills necessary to teach children with a wide range of abilities. The school should be fully accessible for children with disabilities, all learning materials should be accessible for the specific needs of each individual, and the curriculum should be flexible, to ensure that all children can participate in all activities.[81]

Attitudinal challenges

The greatest barriers to inclusion are caused by the attitudes of society and not by the disability of the child. Negative attitudes towards differences result in discrimination and can lead to a serious barrier to learning.[82] Negative attitudes can take the form of social discrimination, lack of awareness, and traditional prejudices. Regarding children with disabilities, some communities still maintain es-tablished beliefs that educating the disabled is pointless. Often, the problem is identified as being caused by the child's differences rather than the education system's shortcomings.[83] Ignorance about the nature and causes of disability, the frequent invisibility of the children themselves, serious under-estimation of their potential and capacities, and other impediments to equal opportunity and treat-ment all conspire to keep children with disabilities silenced and marginalized.[84] One report on Syrian refugees with disabilities points to challenges related to the reluctance of teachers to accept children with disabilities in their classes.[85]

Many children with disabilities do not have the choice of attending their local community school, and may have to attend special residential schools far from their families and local community in order to receive education, because the local community school does not accept children with disabilities. Even when a policy of inclusion has been adopted, some schools may refuse to comply with the regulations and may refuse entry to children with disabilities. Others may try to refer all children with disabilities to special schools. Schools may only accept a limited number of children with disabilities, and may refuse entry to older children and those with more significant disabilities. Well-developed systems of special schools may be resistant to inclusive education and may feel threatened by the proposed changes.

Bringing disability into political and social discourse makes it possible to sensitize decision makers and service providers, as well as demonstrate to society at large that disability is part of the human condition. The importance of involving children with disabilities cannot be overstated. Prejudice can be reduced through interaction, as demonstrated by activities that bring together children with and without disabilities. Social integration benefits everyone, and children who have experienced inclusion – in education, for example – can then be society's best teachers in reducing inequalities and building an inclusive society. Education and awareness-raising are required to overcome the ignorance and prejudice surrounding disability. Such education should be a regular component of professional training in architecture, construction, design, informatics, and marketing. Policy makers and those working on behalf of persons with disabilities need to be educated about the importance of accessibility.

Changing attitudes towards disability requires the eradication of prejudice and discrimination, and breaking down walls of superstition and ignorance. The media are one of the most powerful tools for changing public attitudes in many countries. By including nuanced portrayals of children with disabilities who have received education and are now successful adults, the media can send out positive messages that they are members of families and communities, and can also counter misrepresentations and stereotypes that reinforce social prejudices.

Distance, transport and infrastructure

The distance from home to school makes getting to the school difficult for children with disabilities. There is no universal benchmark for the appropriate distance to school. One estimate suggests that two km, or a thirty minute walk, should be viewed as an upper limit.[86] Much depends, however, on context and circumstance. The geographical landscape can often limit accessibility and make relatively short distances more difficult to travel.[87]

The distance to and from school can be excessive in sparsely populated rural areas, and public transport plays a crucial role for accessibility. However, the public transport in many countries is itself not accessible to persons with disabilities. This effectively prevents many children with disabilities from reaching school. Parental responses to surveys underline the importance of transport. One survey in Bangladesh found that parents of children with disabilities in rural areas saw the absence of a specialized transport system from home to school, and the lack of subsidized support for rickshaw transport, as major constraints.[88]

The vast majority of centres of learning are physically inaccessible to many learners, especially to those who have physical disabilities. In poorer, particularly rural areas, the centres of learning are often inaccessible, largely because buildings are run down or poorly maintained. They are often unhealthy and unsafe for all learners. Many schools are not equipped to respond to special needs, and the community does not provide local backing. Environmental barriers include inaccessible doors, passageways, stairs, toilets, ramps, and recreational areas. A major problem identified by many students is physically getting into school.[89] Furthermore, environments with inadequate lighting, or noisy environments prevent children with visual or hearing impairments from learning.[90] In emergencies where resources are scarce, the inadequate infrastructure constitutes a major barrier for children with disabilities who want to participate in school.

Accessible educational facilities can be beneficial not only for children with disabilities but also for other children, and adults as well.[91] The broad benefit can generate widespread support for making changes in the educational system. In order to be effective and sustainable, accessibility initiatives in education need to take external constraints into account, including affordability, availability of technology, knowledge, construction materials, etc.[92] The easiest way to improve accessibility is by improving the physical accessibility of buildings. It is more important, however, to build a 'culture of accessibility' and focus on removing basic environmental barriers.[93] The education authorities can, moreover, play a role in addressing access problems through regulating school design, providing subsidized transport and building schools closer to homes.

As long as governments target investment with equality in mind, classroom construction can reduce distance and improve physical accessibility to bring schools closer to marginalized people. Ensuring that school construction programmes prioritize remote rural areas and urban slums is key. Some marginalized groups, notably pastoralists, have been bypassed as a result of inflexible models of school provision. More flexible models, including multi-grade and mobile schools, can open the doors to education for the marginalized.[94]

Case Study:
Garango, town for inclusive education

Inclusive Education in the context of Burkina Faso
The practice of inclusive education is based on the Education act of 1996. Even though different ministries are responsible for the implementation of the laws, a Directorate for the Promotion of Gender and Inclusive Education (DPEIFG) has been created to better address inclusion and gender issues in schools. Unfortunately, there are no official statistics on the number of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. It can, however, be said that children with disabilities in urban areas have more opportunities than those in rural areas. According to UNICEF, 5518 children with disabilities were enrolled in school in 3 school provinces. (UNICEF, 2013) This represents only 3% of the total student population in these provinces. Despite the obvious willingness of actors to implement inclusive education, many challenges remain, such as: negative perceptions about disability, lack of physical access to the school facilities, lack of teaching and learning materials, and lack of knowledge of teachers and other education staff of how to cope with children with disabilities in the classroom.

Nonetheless, there are also successes. Looking back to 10 years ago, very little attention was given to the schooling of children with disabilities, and even less to inclusive education. Today, we can see considerable achievements, such as the recognition of the educational rights of children with disabilities , the creation of increasingly favourable conditions, and the existence of private initiatives confirming that inclusive education is possible.

Inclusive Education in Action
Dupont Organisation for Social Development (ODDS) is the Liliane Foundation's Strategic Partner Organisation in Burkina Faso. The Liliane Foundation partly funded a successful pilot project on inclusive education in Garango, which was implemented between 2012 and 2015. The aim of the project was to show that with an improvement of the current system to take into account the special needs of the children with disabilities, they can be accommodated in mainstream public schools in the same way as other children. The project targeted the municipality of Garango which has 2 education districts with 52 public schools. The project included children with physical and sensory disabilities as well as epilepsy.

ODDS contributed to this project by bringing together several technical and financial partners, focusing on the 'Rehabilitation, care and support' component. This is a crucial aspect to the inclusion of children with disabilities in school. The other partners covered adaptation of the environment - such as the establishment of transitional classes of inclusion and construction of ramps - and training and supervision of the teachers. The government was actively involved in staffing the schools, the organisation of the annual conference of teachers, and in technical supervision.

As a result of the project, schools have been provided with transitional classes of inclusion, and 357 teachers have improved their skills in the supervision and teaching of children with disabilities. Parents and community members have also become more aware on the importance of education, and empowered to make informed decisions for the education of their children. *This has all led to a total of 580 children with disabilities who have become enrolled into inclusive mainstream schooling (473 children with disabilities at primary school and 107 in preschool).*

The achievements of the project are currently being consolidated. The approach and lessons learned will be shared with other municipalities in Burkina Faso. The ambition is to expand the approach to other regions, step by step, until the whole country offers accessible inclusive education.

The most important recommendations from this project that other organisations can take into account are as follows:

- Before starting, study well what is done on the ground in terms of inclusive education
- Make sure to engage the involvement of the population through awareness-raising
- Involve state actors, to ensure that they take responsibility and continue working on inclusive education
- Ensure good coordination between stakeholders
- Have a good follow-up and evaluation and capitalize the lessons learned.

Supriya, Nepal

photo: Henk Braam

Nicaragua

photo: Marieke Viergever

Nicaragua

photo: Marieke Viergever

5 Adaptability of education for children with disabilities

What children should learn at school and how the learning process should be organized is a source of never-ending challenge and change.[95] The usual approach is to review the content and process of learning from the viewpoint of the child as a future adult, while the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that the best interests of the child should be given priority. The choice in the Convention to refer to the best interests of the individual child highlights the need for the educational system to become and remain **adaptable**. There is also a division made between school and education, because even if children are not able to go to school, there should still be a possibility for them to receive an education.[96]

In order for the education to be adaptable, it needs to have flexible curricula, adaptable teaching and learning materials and assistive technology and devices for children with disabilities. These aspects are consequently discussed in this chapter.

Educational curricula

In any education system, the curriculum and examinations are major obstacles or tools which can obstruct or facilitate the development of a more inclusive system. The curriculum is often unable to meet the needs of a wide range of different learners. In many contexts, the curriculum and examinations are centrally designed and rigid, leaving little flexibility for local adaptations or for teachers to experiment and try out new approaches.[97] The content might be distant from the reality in which students live, and therefore inaccessible and not motivating. The methods of examination also exclude many students. If students with learning difficulties do not pass examinations, this can be de-motivating and discouraging, and can result in increased school drop out rates. This is especially the case when children have to pass examinations before they can move to the next level.[98]

A lack of accessible communication and information affects the lives of many children and adults with disabilities.[99] Individuals with communication difficulties, such as hearing impairment or speech impairment, are at a significant social disadvantage, in both low income and high income countries. Deaf students and those with intellectual impairments argue that mainstreaming is not always a positive experience. Supporters of special schools – such as schools for the blind, deaf, or deaf-blind, particularly in low-income countries, often point to the fact that these institutions provide high-quality and specialized learning environments.[100]

Inclusive education entails the provision of meaningful learning opportunities for all students within the regular school system, and therefore requires strategies that cater for the naturally diverse learning styles of all students, whilst accommodating the exceptional learning needs of some students.[101]

Education systems need to move away from more traditional pedagogies and adopt more learner-centred approaches which recognize that each individual has an ability to learn and a specific way of learning. The curricula, teaching methods and materials, assessment and examination systems, and the management of classes all need to be accessible and flexible to support differences in learning patterns.[102] Assessment practices also need to facilitate inclusion. The need to attain academic excellence often pervades school cultures, meaning that policies on inclusion need to ensure that all children reach their potential.

Individualized education plans are a useful tool for children with special educational

needs, to help them to learn effectively in the least restrictive environments. Developed through a multidisciplinary process, they identify needs, learning goals and objectives, appropriate teaching strategies, and the necessary accommodation and support.

The curriculum should enable every child to acquire the core academic curriculum and basic cognitive skills, together with essential life skills that equip children to face life challenges, make well-balanced decisions, and develop a healthy lifestyle, good social relationships, critical thinking, and the capacity for non-violent conflict resolution.[103] It should also develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and promote respect for different cultures and values and for the natural environment.

The curriculum, textbooks and learning materials need to be appropriate for all students and should seek to promote and respect diversity. Governments are required to provide an education for all children on the basis of equality of opportunity. To achieve this objective, it is essential that all children are rendered visible in the curriculum and that no discrimination or prejudice is explicitly or implicitly reflected in it – whether on the basis of gender, ethnicity, class, caste, language, culture or religion.[104] The curriculum also needs to include alternative forms of communication for children with disabilities, particularly those who have severe hearing or visual impairments, such as learning of braille, and orientation and mobility skills.[105] The curriculum also needs to be developed with regard to children's developing capacities.

Learning and teaching materials, technology and devices

All children need access to high quality, appropriate teaching and learning materials. However, in poor communities where having books is already a luxury, alternative and additional teaching and learning materials can just be a dream for children with disabilities.[106]

Assistive technology and devices include any product, instrument, equipment or technology adapted or specially designed to improve the functioning of a person with a disability.[107] They have the potential to radically enhance the experience of learners with disabilities, by providing access to learning and teaching materials, promoting better learning, and supporting independence and social inclusion.

Currently, only five to 15% of children in low income countries have access to the assistive technologies they require, thereby hindering their access to school, reducing their ability to participate, impacting on their learning achievements, and holding back their independence and social inclusion.[108] Less than 1% of reading materials are thought to be available in accessible formats for blind or visually impaired readers. This number is even lower in emergency situations, where children with disabilities are overlooked and cannot access assistive technologies and learning materials appropriate for their needs. Yet, as much as a 20% increase in student achievement is possible if students have their own textbooks.[109]

Placing deaf children in schools where none of the teachers can communicate in sign language will do little to alleviate their disadvantages. Very few schools in the poorest countries, or even in middle income countries, have access to braille textbooks, or teachers able to teach braille. It is therefore critical that moves towards integration are part of a broader strategy encompassing teacher training, school financing and other measures. Children with severe autism are likely to face very different education-related challenges. Impairments that affect the capacity to communicate and interact in ways common in mainstream schools can impose particularly high practical and social obstacles to participation in education.

Schools are considered to have adapted well when they use diverse technologies, teaching and learning materials and devices to cater for the diversity of children who participate in education. Children with severe visual impairments, for example, will need braille books and teachers trained to teach them to read. In addition, measures need to be taken to ensure that the whole curriculum is available in braille and that it is published in time for each academic year. Children with severe hearing impairments will need teachers or assistants who can communicate in sign language.

Children with intellectual impairments need information presented in clear and simple language. Children who have severe mental health conditions need to engage with health workers who have the communication skills and confidence to communicate effectively with them. Children who are not able to speak need access to 'augmentative and alternative communication' systems and acceptance of these forms of communication where they live, go to school and work. These include communication displays, sign language and speech-generating devices.[110] Learners with difficulty in understanding as a result of intellectual impairments may need adapted teaching styles and methods. The choices regarding appropriate accommodation will depend on the available resource.

The principle of Universal Design for all learning materials is gaining in interest and momentum. In some countries and contexts, digital textbook provision may be a sound investment that might include video versions in sign language, simplified language, audio, Daisy and other formats accessible to a range of learners with and without disabilities.[111]

The costs of producing digital textbooks and the price of mobile readers and tablets have decreased rapidly over the past fifteen years, making digital materials potentially available to significantly more school age children. Alongside these new and exciting developments, it will continue to be important to make physical text books and teaching and learning materials available.

Assistive technology is also important for the education process of children with disabilities. This technology improves mobility, and allows more effective communication, better vision and hearing, and fuller participation in learning activities.[112] It provides the means of access for participation in educational, social and recreational opportunities, facilitates greater physical and mental function and improved self-confidence, and reduces costs for educational services and individual support.[113] Many mainstream computing devices now come with accessible features which decrease the cost factor. Furthermore, there is a growing investment by countries in e-learning and digital learning for general classrooms that has vast potential to benefit children with disabilities if Universal Design principles are adopted. Assistive technology can have positive socio-economic benefits for children with disabilities by improving their access to education and improving their performance to achieve good results.

Case Study:
Small adaptations make a big difference

Inclusive education in the context of Guatemala

The practice of inclusive education in Guatemala is based in the Law for the Care of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is also ratified by the Guatemalan government. The inclusive education is implemented by the Ministry of Education, the National Council for persons with a disability (CONRADI), and local municipal authorities. Thanks to the efforts of the civil society and the Special Education Law there is a Directorate-General for Special Education in the Ministry of Education.

Despite the legislative framework, the implementation process of inclusive education is often obstructed by the negative attitudes of different actors. For example the teachers in school have difficulties accepting children with disabilities. Parents are also ashamed of their children and do not see an added value in enrolling them in mainstream schools. These negative attitudes can be overcome with awareness raising and more knowledge on the benefits of inclusive education both for children with and without disabilities.

There is unfortunately no official data on the number of students with disabilities that go to mainstream schools to receive education. However, FUNDAL in Guatemala has supported 444 children to receive education in mainstream schools in several departments.

Inclusive education in action

In Guatemala the Liliane foundation is supporting different local partner organisations among which is FUNDAL, an organisation that helps deaf and blind children. FUNDAL focuses on improving the attitudes of teachers, parents and students with and without a disability and adaptation of curriculums and teaching materials to fit the needs of children with disabilities. FUNDAL is organizing regular awareness workshops with teachers and learners; providing technical support and knowledge in adapting the teaching and learning materials and learning devices for these children. Joselyn is one of the children supported by the FUNDAL programme.

She is 11-year old girl and lives in San Pedro, Sacatepéquez. This is a community where the population are mainly descendants of the Maya's. Joselyn enjoys being surrounded by children of her own age and is friendly, perceptive, loving with an admirable perseverance to accomplish her dreams. The hearing loss and low vision is not constraining her to learn new things and gain new experiences. Her parents where striving for her and wanted to give her the opportunity to go to school. They sought support of different institutions, and in February 2015 she went to a special school for the deafblind. There she learned how to communicate, worked on her independence and her behavioral development. The year after she went to a regular school in San Pedro. At first she faced some difficulties in this new environment concerning the new routines, the attention and the sense of belonging into the group. However, FUNDAL helped with the adjustments of the curriculum and it also assisted teachers to gain more skills to teach her. Joselyn showed that with her dedication she was able to achieve her goals and that you can achieve anything if you have the dedication and the strength.

Another child that is supported by FUNDAL is Anibal who is 13 years old and also included in the mainstream school in his community. Anibal has physical disability but he fully able to participate in the classroom activities due to adaptations such as the blackboard, the water and sanitation facilities and the playground. Because of his abilities and talents the teachers and his peers change their attitude towards his disability. He is an outstanding student in his class, showing that a disability should not deprive him from his right to education.

Steps Towards Disability-Inclusive Education

Achieving inclusive education is a long and challenging trajectory for a variety of stakeholders. With the right attitude and commitment of stakeholders, however, this goal can be realized in an effective and sustainable way.

Mainstream civil society organisations (CSOs) need to make sure that their programmes are inclusive and accessible for all children, including children with disabilities. CSOs such as the Liliane Foundation that already work specifically on disability need to act as an experts on the subject of disability-inclusive development, providing data and advice, and further sharing knowledge and experiences with the mainstream organisations, and raising their awareness of the importance of inclusive education. The CSOs can also play a role in the capacity building of governments, including sharing and exchanging information and good practices from their work. The engagement of the CSOs with the private sector, research institutes, national governments and other stakeholders in multi-stakeholder partnerships for inclusive education might bring innovative solutions to the question of how the goal of inclusive education can be achieved in a sustainable way.

The 7 concrete steps explained below can be taken into account, primarily by national governments. Civil society organisations, donor governments and intergovernmental organisations need to support and assist governments in low-income countries reaching these steps in long run.

Step 1: Creating positive attitudes towards inclusive education

- Create awareness of the positive effects of inclusive education through public campaigns.
- Promote inclusive education as education for all among teachers, parents, communities, governments, and civil society organisations.
- Support Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approaches, which can help to reduce stigma and prejudice.

Step 2: Creating appropriate policy frameworks for inclusive education

- Implement the CRPD by aligning the national level legislation to meet these commitments.
- Develop realistic national inclusive education plans, outlining the specific activities which each stakeholder in the education sector needs to undertake.
- Involve children with disabilities, parents and Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs), as well as other marginalised groups, in the process of development, implementation and monitoring of the education action plans.
- Develop strategies which increase community and family involvement in school management committees and district education offices, including encouraging inputs into budget priorities and the tracking of expenditure.

Step 3: Building commitment, leadership, capacities of government institutions

- Ensure that the Ministry of Education has the primary responsibility for the education of children with disabilities, and coordinates the relationship with other resource ministries and governmental bodies.
- Ensure that the inclusive education action plans are backed by high level political leadership.[114]

- Put in place accountability measures – such as inclusive education indicators – as performance criteria across departments, from national and district to school level.
- Invest in improving the attitude, knowledge and capacity of local and national government institutions, to facilitate their delivery of inclusive education.

Step 4: Making resources available

- Ensure a time-bound and costed inclusive education implementation plan, with sufficient and specifically allocated resources.[115]
- Increase education funding to the internationally recommended level of 20% of the national budget is the first necessary step, and it is vital to follow this with prioritizing those who are the most marginalized, with at least half of education spending going to basic education.[116]
- Increase the domestic resource base through progressive taxation, counter-cyclical investment, and addressing tax dodging.[117]
- Finance a twin-track approach to inclusive education by supporting systemic changes alongside specific initiatives to support the needs of learners with disabilities.

Step 5: Making schools accessible for all children

- Design inclusive early childhood interventions for children with disabilities.
- Ensure a cohesive transition of the curriculum between early childhood, primary and secondary education to allow continuity of education and minimize dropping out.
- Design flexible curricula and assessments procedures that fit the diverse needs of all children.
- Provide accessible materials, resources people and assistive technology, such as braille or sign-language interpreters, and actively endorse the use of universally accessible Information Communication Technology (ICT).
- Provide accessible and subsidized transport for children who need to travel longer distances
- Adjust the water and sanitation facilities that fit the needs of children with disabilities by building clean latrines, a raised pedestal and boreholes systems with adjusted heights.

Step 6: Improving capacity and coping skills for teachers

- Increase acceptance of children with disabilities among teachers.
- Increase the pedagogical capacities of teachers to be able to cope more effectively with flexible curricula.
- Create incentives and improve the social status and the living conditions of teachers. (E.g. increasing salaries, providing better living quarters, providing home leave, increasing respect for their work, etc.).
- Transform existing special education institutions into knowledge-resource centres to assist the mainstream system.[118]
- Create smaller classes, so that teachers can focus on individual children's needs.
- Ensure that adequate support materials and expertise in disability specific skills are available (i.e. computer technology, large print and braille learning materials, sign language and augmentative and alternative communication).
- Promote the training and recruitment of teachers with disabilities.

Step 7: Improving data and building accountability for action

- Ensure data are disaggregated by disability and gender, and track both enrolment and retention (including in different schools, such as segregated or mainstream).
- Ensure effective collection and analysis of data to improve planning and monitoring.

Recommendations for the Dutch Government

The Netherlands accepted and endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals in the end of 2015. A few months later (April 2016) , the Netherlands ratified the UNCRPD. Both international frameworks are strongly related to inclusion of children with disabilities in the Dutch Foreign policies:

- The Netherlands has been playing a prominent role in promoting the 'Leave No One Behind agenda' of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During the High Level Political Forum New York the Netherlands challenged other state parties to develop concrete action plans on inclusion of marginalized groups.[119] The Netherlands formed a new fund "Voice" which specifically aims on strengthening the voice of marginalized groups (which children with disabilities apparently are).
- The UNCRPD mainly relates to domestic policies of the Netherland, but has one specific article on International Cooperation, article 32. It states that policies for international cooperation need to be inclusive for persons with disabilities. Next, it emphasizes that inclusion of persons with disabilities is a shared international responsibility among States and civil society actors.

In the light of the two above mentioned international frameworks, we recommend the following:

1 Nine out of ten children with disabilities are left behind, and not receiving any education. Education is a very powerful tool to empower children who face multiple forms of exclusion. Therefore, **prioritize education for children with disabilities** in the policies for Development Cooperation, as part of a broader, strong focus on 'Leave no one behind'. Make budget available for a 'Leave no one behind Education Fund', which focuses on making existing education more inclusive.

2 **Don't build new barriers in existing programmes:** Ensure that education-activities, financed by Dutch development funds are inclusive for all children, and not used to construct new barriers. Accessibility is not costly when built in from the design stage. For example, by including accessibility criteria in calls for proposals and involvement of persons with disabilities in planning right from the start.
More specific:
- Unemployment rates amongst youngsters with disabilities are very high. Therefore, ensure that vocational training programmes are inclusive for youngster with disabilities (as part of 'Food Security' priority). There are successful models already, like 'Employable'.[120]
- Children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience sexual violence than non-disabled children.[121] Therefore, **ensure that children and youngsters with disabilities are included in sexual education** (as part of 'Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights' priority).
- Ensure that Water and Sanitation facilities near or in school buildings are accessible for children with disabilities and offer a safe environment.

3 **Make sure that children with disabilities and their families are not left behind in humanitarian crises:** Several reports state that in humanitarian crises, children with disabilities are not reached at all, and do not have access to school. Therefore, ensure that children with disabilities are included in the planning and reporting processes of the humanitarian response plans, appeals mechanisms and needs assessments of organisations that the government supports.

- Make sure that activities within the 'Education cannot wait fund' meet the standards of the 'Charter on Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Aid'.[122]
- Ask relief partners to report disaggregated disability data, consistent with Sphere standards. A good example of very practical guidelines for inclusive education in humanitarian situations is Age and Disability Capacity Building Programme(ADCAP).[123]
- Make funds available for training and implementation of inclusive education.

4 **Empower children with disabilities and their families to speak out to their own governments and hold them accountable for inclusive education.**
The Strategic Partnership Program, Voice and Accountability Fund are good instruments to facilitate this.

Endnotes

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114 Global Campaign for Education. Equal Right, Equal Opportunity- Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities
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117 IDDC, 2016
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119 : '…all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80 per cent live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and mi-grants (p7 of the Declaration)'.
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author
Liliane Foundation
editor
Simon Delany
concept and design
Comma-S ontwerpers, 's-Hertogenbosch
photo cover
Jan-Joseph Stok

Liliane Foundation
Havensingel 26
5211 TX 's-Hertogenbosch
The Netherlands

phone number + 31 (0)73 518 94 20
fax + 31 (0)73 518 94 21
e-mail programs@lilianefonds.nl

www.lilianefonds.org
www.lilianefonds.nl

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