WHY Inclusive Education?

Achieving education for all children in South Sudan

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Supporting Martin to access education

When Martin from South Sudan went blind at the age of sixteen years old, about five years ago, he withdrew socially. Having lost interest in life around him, Martin spent most days in his hut sleeping. He also stopped attending school.

It was not until a Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) worker from the Sudan Evangelical Mission (SEM), a Christian non-profit organisation, intervened that Martin's life began to turn around. Martin is one of the many cases of visually impaired persons that SEM helps to rehabilitate in the Mundri region. The region is affected by river blindness, a condition that develops when victims are stung by the bite from the black simulium fly found near the waterways in this area.

The CBR worker supported Martin to regain his self-esteem. After three years of working with Martin, the CBR worker introduced him to Braille and increased his independence through mobility training. More training was also provided on daily living skills to enable his return to school. The teachers at Martin’s school also received training in Inclusive Education and the CBR worker does regular follow up visits to support Martin and his teacher.

After two years back at school, Martin has now graduated to primary 6 and plays an active role in his community. One of his great joys, he says, is that “now I can go visit my neighbours”.

CONTENTS

- EQUAL EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN ................................................................. 4
- EDUCATION AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ........................................... 7
- WHY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION? ....................................................................... 8
- SEVEN COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION .......... 10
- ACHIEVING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SOUTH SUDAN ..................... 18
- REFERENCES ........................................................................................................... 23
Inclusive Education: the right approach

During a Nairobi workshop in January 2014, leading members of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) laid out their intention to develop an education system for children with disabilities and other excluded groups based on Inclusive Education and the child-friendly schools model.

The task we face to implement Inclusive Education across South Sudan is both daunting and exciting, as we will be building an education system that honours the rights of all citizens. Through enhanced international cooperation and a genuine commitment from political leaders, we can redress the wrongs of the past. All children, including those who are at risk of exclusion or in need of additional support in order to achieve, will be ensured access to quality education.

The evidence from around the world is clear. When persons with disabilities are included in education, they are given an opportunity to escape the inequalities and prejudices, which for so long have confined them to poverty and the denial of their human rights. We need to end the wastage of human potential and resources. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that low-and middle-income countries that fail to adequately promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the open labour market with improved education opportunities for this group run the risk of losing 5 to 7% of their annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Moreover, the changes facilitated in the education system will be beneficial to all learners and will result in more humane, educated and equitable societies.

We cherish education for all our people equally and aim to provide a lifelong education for all children and adults of South Sudan: an education that is relevant and based on the needs of the people, to enable them to be responsible and productive citizens.”

MoEST mission
Republic of South Sudan
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Disabilities in children can be due to extreme poverty, landmines, malnutrition, poor maternal care, inadequate health services or a high prevalence of tropical diseases such as malaria, river blindness and nodding disease. This could result in children becoming blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, an inability to walk or grip (physical impairments), or to speak, or difficulties with learning and intellectual impairments.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that at least 15% of children in poor countries are likely to suffer from a life-limiting impairment. Based on this percentage, there are approximately 867,500 children with disabilities in South Sudan of which only 23,000 or 1.6% of primary school pupils and 1.7% of those at secondary school were identified as learners with special educational needs in 2011.

How children with disabilities are often excluded from education

Many children with disabilities are hidden or prevented from going to school by their families, who do not see the value of educating a child with a disability. Other parents fail to send their children to school because they fear for their safety or wish to protect them from the negative attitudes and discrimination of others.

Those children with disabilities who do attend school, have to contend with challenges such as inaccessible buildings and learning material. Negative attitudes, a lack of sensitivity towards disability and failure to acknowledge the rights of people with disabilities are at the root of these barriers to education.

What do we mean by the term ‘disability’?

Disability is an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Article 24 decrees that State Parties shall ensure that:

1. Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;
2. Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and local free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
3. Reasonable accommodation of the individual’s requirements is provided;
4. Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system to facilitate their effective education;
5. Effective individualised support measures are provided in environments that maximise academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.
6. Adequate training of all teachers in Braille, sign language and other forms of communication can be provided and teachers with disabilities recruited. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.

Promoting inclusion is about reforming the education system. Inclusive Education is much more cost-effective than a segregated system, not only in terms of the running costs but also the long-term costs on the society.”

Roger Slee
Professor in Inclusive Education
UNESCO, 2005

联合国儿童权利公约：第24条 —包容教育

联合国儿童权利公约（UNCRPD，2006）是一项将国际社会团结起来的条约，相信包容教育是教育残疾儿童的最佳方式，并创建一个平等参与社会的公平和包容的社会。第24条的UNCRPD，由超过33个非洲国家批准，概述了如何实现包容教育。

第24条规定，国家缔约方应确保：

1. 残疾人不得因残疾而被排除在一般教育体系之外，儿童和残疾儿童不得因残疾而排除在免费且有义务的初等教育，或从第二级教育，基于残疾的条件；
2. 残疾人可以进入包括、质量和服务等的初级和第二级教育，基于其在社区中生活条件的他人；
3. 合理的个体需要合理地提供；
4. 残疾人得到所需的支持，包括一般教育系统中有效实现教育的条件；
5. 有效的个性化支持措施在环境中提供，以最大化学术和社会发展，与完全包容的目标一致。
6. 足够多的教师受涵盖盲文、手语和其他形式沟通的培训，能够被提供和教师与残疾被雇用。这样的培训应包含残疾意识和使用适当辅助性或替代性模式、手段和沟通方式的教育技术与材料，以支持有残疾的人。

推动包容性是关于改革教育制度。包容性教育比隔离制度更具有成本效益，不仅在运行成本上，而且在社会上的长期成本上。
WHY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Creating an Inclusive Education system will not only address the barriers to education faced by children with disabilities and any others who are excluded, but will nurture tolerance in society and improve the quality of education for all children.

What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive Education is a system that caters for all excluded children who are currently not supported to achieve their potential at school. These include children from ethnic and linguistic minorities, girls, nomadic and street children, children suffering extreme poverty and living in rural areas as well as children with disabilities.

Inclusive Education will entail the development of schools, teachers and the community at large to successfully support all learners in acquiring quality education. In other words, instead of treating all learners the same, we must develop a system that meets their individual needs.

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all children and the youth, through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications to content, approach, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. “

UNESCO, 2009

Reasons to recommend Inclusive Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusive Education –</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is a process of transforming and improving schools to provide equitable quality education – it is a never-ending process that guides us in addressing the ever-changing needs of learners.</td>
<td>Improves the quality of education for all children – teachers use varied and improved teaching practices to accommodate all learning styles, thus making learning more interesting, developing a higher calibre of teachers and reducing poor quality teaching and poor learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>Addresses the number of children out of school, dropouts and low completion rates.</td>
<td>Leads to higher self-esteem among excluded children and raises the maturity and sensitivity/emotional intelligence of peers as they take responsibility for the learning of others.</td>
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<td>Affords individuals a better chance to enjoy a decent livelihood. Each year out-of-compulsory-schooling has a negative effect on gross domestic product (GDP).</td>
<td>Provides internationally agreed upon ways of providing quality education for all.</td>
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<td>Is much cheaper than developing a separate special needs system, which costs 7 to 9 times more.</td>
<td>Strengthens community involvement in education and builds civic responsibility.</td>
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<td>Crucially brings together all peoples in a country to facilitate reconstruction and reconciliation through the promotion of social justice, equality and rights-based thinking.</td>
<td>Results in a multiplier effect in respect of resources invested. As schools need to work closely with health and other social services under an inclusive education system, they can serve as a hub for the local community, for example by providing: improved access to nutrition and early childhood development services; computers for the community; and accessible classrooms that can serve as venues for adult education.</td>
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Prevents the social isolation that children and young people with disabilities experience.

Combats stereotypes and negative attitudes – children and young people who learn together, learn to live together.
**SEVEN COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Responses to the most frequently asked questions and objections raised about Inclusive Education.

1. **Children with disabilities cannot learn like non-disabled children**

All children can learn. Their brains are programmed to do so. Outdated cultural beliefs and adult responses to the physical and mental differences displayed by children with disabilities have led to people assuming that they cannot learn when, in fact, all children learn and think differently. Any education facility or classroom that does not accommodate differences in learners is likely to fail many children. This is why child-friendly or child-centred approaches are being increasingly adopted.

These approaches accommodate the different learning styles of pupils in the classroom, while at the same time addressing the barriers that hinder their learning. One example come from Zambia, where children were previously taught in a language other than their home language, making it difficult for them to grasp basic concepts. This system was changed and it became mandatory for children to be taught in their home language during the first three years of school. The result: improved learning outcomes and postponed competencies in English.

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**Programme to train teachers to include children with disabilities in Zanzibar**

Zanzibar is an island off the coast of Tanzania with a population of just under one million. Even though school enrollment is almost 100%, school attendance rates are about 70% with over 130,000 children – mainly girls and those with disabilities – remaining outside the education system. The government, although committed to providing education for all, faces several challenges, including a shortage of classrooms, poorly trained teachers, high teacher: pupil ratios and a lack of adequate learning and teaching material.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training – with the support of the Zanzibar Association of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (a parent organisation) and the financial backing of NFU (a Norwegian NGO) since 1998 – initiated a pilot project that includes children with disabilities, and more particularly those with intellectual impairments, in school. The programme has a strong focus on changing attitudes around disability, especially among policymakers, decision-makers and teachers.

Parents and the NFU provided training for teachers and school principals in 20 of the 420 schools. Initially the teachers were anxious and had to put in extra work hours, but once they grew accustomed to the practice their confidence and skills grew. To date over 3,800 children with disabilities, including those who are intellectually challenged are included in 86 schools.

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**Helpful resources**

Watch these two videos:

1. Support for teachers and the role of the Inclusive Education Unit: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQ3ME787vgo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQ3ME787vgo)
2. Model lessons on how to organise the class to meet the different needs in the classroom: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RASPRgqw648](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RASPRgqw648).
Teachers who are committed to their craft, use child-centred and active learning methods, and are mindful of the learning requirements of the children in their classroom, need only mentoring and top-up training to teach children with disabilities and other children requiring additional support. With the move to Inclusive Education, UNESCO recommends that all pre-service teachers and in-service teachers make impairment-specific adjustments to learning and teaching practices. An example of an adjustment is to position children with visual or hearing impairments in the front of the class, and to allocate study buddies to differentiate their work to help them succeed. It is also vital that regular teachers have access to information, support and mentoring from teachers who have experience working with children with disabilities, in addition to a Community-based Rehabilitation Worker, special educationists, NGOs in the field of disability/inclusive education and Disabled People Organisations.

### School for children with visual impairments acts as resource and rehabilitation centre in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

The Association Burkinabé pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants (ABPAM)/Burkina Faso Association for the Advancement of Blind and Visually-impaired People in Ouagadougou is a school for children with visual impairments, which also serves as a resource and rehabilitation centre for other schools in the area.

Children at the ABPAM school receive two to three years of intensive training in Braille and other basic concepts. The first year involves careful observation of the child’s strengths, weaknesses and learning preferences. Thereafter, children with visual impairments are placed in a regular school, where ABPAM professionals support teachers transcribing the children’s schoolwork and tests into Braille before transcribing their responses into print for the teacher to read. ABPAM staff also provide small training sessions and mentorship to the teachers, whom they encourage to use concrete objects and detailed descriptions when teaching a child who is blind. In the rural areas, children who are blind or deaf receive a similar service in transition classes – which are located in the regular school – before they join the hearing and sighted students in their classroom.

### About ABPAM

ABPAM is a Disabled People’s Organisation (DPO) for the blind. There are several ABPAM run schools in Burkina Faso that have taken the initiative to serve as resource centres. The schools have a strong community and social inclusion focus. With children from afar accommodated by nearby host families during the school term or school week, the surrounding community is well accustomed to socialising with individuals with visual impairments.

### UNESCO, Inclusive, Learning-friendly Environment (ILFE) Toolkit

The Toolkit promotes and provides guidance on creating an inclusive, learning-friendly environment (ILFE) which welcomes, nurtures, and educates all children, regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, socio-economic, emotional, linguistic or other characteristics.

The ILFE Toolkit contains a series of booklets that touch on all the aspects of teaching practices that an inclusive teacher would need. The booklets includes examples of creative ways for teachers to handle large classrooms, multi-grade classes, and the teaching of children with disabilities in low-income countries.

### Helpful resource

3. **Children with disabilities need special classes and special schools**

In some cases special classes and schools can serve as a transition into regular schools, provided this is where the child learns important skills such as sign language and Braille. Special classes and special schools with no view to facilitate inclusion at a later stage, however, reinforce the stigma/negative beliefs about people with disabilities – among them the perception that they are different and inferior to others, with only the ability to learn crafts such as basketry. On the other hand, simply placing a child with a disability in a regular school and leaving him/her to either “sink or swim” is not what Inclusive Education is about either. In an inclusive setting, barriers are removed and interventions are put in place to encourage both the child’s academic and social participation and development.

4. **The pupil: teacher ratio is too high to accommodate students with disabilities**

As has been demonstrated, it is not the size of the class but the quality of teaching and the way in which teaching and learning are organised that are key to accommodating all children, including those with disabilities\(^\text{12}\).

Children are an excellent resource. Organising them in groups and using cooperative and peer learning methods, children who are academically stronger or possess a natural knack for teaching can help those with difficulties. Moreover, a lack of space in the classroom could encourage teachers to use outside spaces and organise excursions to capture the interest of the students.

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**Children used as a resource in the classroom in Mpika District, Zambia**

In the Mpika District in Northern Zambia, where a strong history of teachers communicating health education messages through child-to-child methods exists, seventeen schools were transformed with the involvement of students in the running of the schools. This method was also incorporated into Mathematics, English, Geography and Social Science lessons before being introduced in the mid-1990s to explore community attitudes to disability.

Pupils were asked to bring children with disabilities from their community to school. These children were then twinned with non-disabled pupils for purposes of socialisation. As a result, non-disabled children were often able to advise their teacher on how to relate to the disabled child, with many picking up sign language in the process.

Introducing children to their rights helped them to identify their responsibilities – irrespective of their abilities – and encouraged them to become more responsible.

Cooperative learning groups of mixed abilities and gender helped to create happy relationships and a positive environment conducive to the appreciation of diversity. Group work further encouraged the pupils to support each other's learning, with this collaboration resulting in them learning from each other and sharing their knowledge and experiences. In the end they all benefited and felt enriched by this experience\(^\text{14}\).

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**Helpful resource**

The Enabling Education Network (EENET) has the largest online collection of free manuals and articles on good practices in inclusive education and will send free hard copies to developing countries\(^\text{13}\).

Link to the website: [www.eenet.org.uk](http://www.eenet.org.uk)

On the contrary, the quality of education improves. Teachers who creatively find ways to include children with disabilities or children who are taught in a language other than their mother tongue use teaching methods that are more interesting and engaging. For example, a teacher who has a blind student in a class would use stick or string to demonstrate or visualise the length of a metre in a mathematics lesson on measurement. This approach will incidentally help non-disabled classmates who learn better with visual demonstration, rather than having a teacher instruct in front of the classroom. These teachers generally become more sensitive to the way different children learn and use methods that appeal to all children’s senses and styles of learning. Some teachers can do this naturally, through troubleshooting, while others would benefit from Inclusive Education training and coaching. UNESCO, as a rule, recommends that all pre-service and in-service teachers receive training in disability-related accommodations for learning and Inclusive Education.

6. The quality of education drops when children with disabilities and those requiring additional support are included in regular classes

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7. Educating children with disabilities is not a worthwhile investment

Educating children with disabilities is definitely a worthwhile investment. Many of the great developments in the world can be attributed to the inventions and influences of great people with disabilities. Great men in history – Albert Einstein, the German physicist who invented modern physics; Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States of America who abolished slavery; and Beethoven, the composer who wrote all his greatest symphonies when profoundly deaf – were all known to have disabilities and yet accomplished extraordinary achievements. Moreover, the International Labour Organization estimates that countries that fail to educate people with disabilities to prepare them for the workplace, will suffer a 5% to 7% loss in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). To redress inequities, more incentives are in place to encourage the employment of people with disabilities. An educated child with disabilities can therefore earn a decent living and contribute to the welfare of the family. In many villages, mothers and siblings of children with disabilities are often forced to stay at home to care for their child instead of going out to work. By sending the child to school, family members are free to earn a living and contribute to the household.

UNESCO International Conference, Salamanca, Spain

In 1994 UNESCO convened an international conference of 92 countries in Salamanca, Spain. Twenty-five non-profit organisations and international experts adopted the far-reaching statement and framework on special needs education. Leaders concluded that Inclusive Education is the most cost-effective way of developing a high quality education system that meets the needs of all students and combats discrimination.
ACHIEVING AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SOUTH SUDAN

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) intends to develop an Inclusive Education system where all children, especially those with disabilities, attend their local school and get the support they need. To develop an inclusive education system a twin-track approach is needed.

The twin-track approach

The twin-track approach addresses the issues within the system and those specific to the child. This approach marks a paradigm shift from viewing the person with a disability as the problem to examining and addressing the attitudinal, organisational and environmental barriers that deny people with disabilities access to opportunities and hinder their ability to participate as equals in society.

TRACK 1
Deliver on the right to education by changing policies, practices and attitudes at all levels of the education system. Remove barriers and create enabling conditions to enhance the quality of and access to education for all children and achieve positive learning outcomes that will develop their full academic, social and vocational potential.

TRACK 2
Address specific support needs. Empower individuals as Rights Holders by providing health, rehabilitation and social support services (e.g. reasonable accommodation). Offer learning and participation opportunities for individuals via differentiated teaching methods, sign language and the translation of material into accessible formats (e.g. Braille and audio).

The new approach to children with disabilities and education
The paradigm shift, which is at the heart of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, involves a shift from viewing the person as the problem by challenging barriers in attitudes, environments and practices beyond the person.

DIAGRAM 1

In Diagram 1 the thinking, based on the medical/charity model that leads to the integration or exclusion of the child with disabilities (no longer acceptable), is illustrated.

CHILD AS THE PROBLEM
- Does not respond, cannot learn
- Has special needs
- Needs special teachers
- Needs special environment
- Is different from other children
- Cannot get to school

EDUCATION SYSTEM AS THE PROBLEM
- Negative attitudes
- Rigid methods, rigid curriculum
- Poor quality training
- Lack of teaching aids and equipment
- Many dropouts, many repeaters
- Parents not involved
- Teachers and schools not supported

DIAGRAM 2

Here, Diagram 2 shows the paradigm shift applied to schools with a social/human rights model leading to inclusion (accepted).

DIAGRAM 1

DIAGRAM 2
Suggestions for addressing barriers to education at school, district and state/national level

The reality for the vast majority of children with moderate to severe impairments is that they do not make it to school at all. There are generally four causes for these barriers. These are:

1. Negative attitudes amongst teachers, parents and community at large as well as among children without disabilities.
2. No adequate policy and procedural guidelines.
3. Lack of understanding and skills
4. Lack of organisational and environmental adjustments.

Overcoming barriers

Barriers need to be tackled in the classroom, at the school, within the community, family and district, and at state or national level. When addressing these barriers it is important to explore all the angles of an issue. The following questions could help your reflection and problem-solving:

- Who experiences barriers?
- What are the barriers to participation and learning?
- How can such barriers be minimised?
- What resources to support participation and learning are available?
- How can additional resources be mobilised?
- What next?

We also need to be prepared to organise education differently to reach some excluded groups.

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Alternative basic education for the Karamoja Region, Uganda

In the Karamoja Region of Uganda, where most people are nomads and only 11.5% of the population is literate, children’s domestic duties are essential to the survival of their families. In this region, a community-based project called Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja has been set up to promote inclusion in education. It encourages the participation of disabled children and school instruction in the local language, and the curriculum is relevant to the community’s livelihood, containing instruction on such topics as livestock and crop production.

EDUCATION FOR ALL:

Seven strategies to help deliver on this promise

The Global Campaign for Education, the largest non-governmental alliance pushing governments to deliver on their promise of EDUCATION FOR ALL, believes that a huge impact on the rights of people with disabilities can be made through efforts by national governments to deliver on the following strategies:

1. Create an appropriate legislative framework and set out ambitious national plans for inclusion.
2. Provide the capacity, resources and leadership to implement ambitious national plans for inclusion.
3. Improve data on disability and education and build accountability for action.
4. Make schools and classrooms accessible and relevant for all.
5. Ensure enough appropriately trained teachers for all.
6. Challenge attitudes that reinforce discrimination.
7. Create an enabling environment to support Inclusive Education, amongst others through cross-sectoral policies and strategies that reduce exclusion.

These strategies must be supported by bilateral donors and the international community through development cooperation in the form of finance and technical support and should also include the promotion of collaboration. This will help to ensure that children with disabilities are not left behind or left until last!
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