1 Introduction

Great efforts are being made to get all primary age children into school and to complete primary education as part of the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All (EFA). This has not included disabled children, especially in less developed countries. The first barrier arises from long-held ideas that locate the problem in the child and their impairment, rather than recognising that it is society's own response to the impairment that needs to change. Negative attitudes based on traditional thinking still act as a big social barrier. In many parts of the developed North, segregation in separate special schools of pupils with special educational needs or poor attempts at integration have left disabled children and students not achieving their potential. The alternative is to engage in the transformational process in schools that is the development of inclusive education. Too often this approach has been generalised so that the transformations necessary to include disabled children and students with the full range of impairments, and to meet their access and support needs, have not been given sufficient weight. There are a growing number of examples that do include disabled children and students in education. However, the fundamental transformative thinking that is necessary to complete this process is often missing.

Progress towards Education for All is having dramatic effects, but the absence of disabled children from this initiative has in the last few years been clearly demonstrated. We are still waiting for the World Bank Fast Track Initiative (FTI) to demonstrate it has understood the issue in its practice. Equally, although there has been a Flagship for including people with disabilities in Education for All since 2001, it has been largely ineffective.

By examining the theoretical underpinning of inclusive education from disabled people's experiences and viewpoints, we shall develop a critical approach that will inform future progress. This is not to detract from inclusion for all children, but to point out that unless we are specific in our thinking, disabled children will be left out.

The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and in particular Article 24, which requires the development of an inclusive education system for all children, presents both a challenge and an opportunity to the countries of the world and the Commonwealth. This book seeks to provide arguments for implementing the Convention and gives examples of how education systems which do this have been pioneered in Commonwealth countries and beyond. The task now is to implement inclusive education throughout the Commonwealth and the world. Article 24 of the UNCRPD covers many aspects of education at the different stages of people's lives. Its priority is to encourage disabled children to attend school at all levels (para. 2(a)). It asserts that the best way to do this is to focus on the best interests of the child (para. (2(b)). Article 24 also addresses the education needs of the large number of disabled adults who are uneducated or under-educated because they were unable to access education as children. It recognises the importance of lifelong learning (para. 5). This includes education for those who have acquired their impairment as adults and therefore want or need further education, such as vocational training and university degree programmes, to support their ability to work.

This Convention is a remarkable and forward-looking document. While it focuses on the rights and development of people with disabilities, it also speaks about our societies as a whole ... Too often, those living with disabilities have been seen as objects of embarrassment, and at best, of condescending pity and charity. ... On paper, they have enjoyed the same rights as others; in real life, they have been ... denied the opportunities that others take for granted.

Kofi Annan
UN Secretary General, UN General Assembly
13 December 2006

Box 1.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and life long learning directed to:

   (a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

   (b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;

   (c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

2. In realising this right, States Parties shall ensure that:

   (a) 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;

   (b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;

   (c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;

   (d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;

   (e) Effective individualised support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:

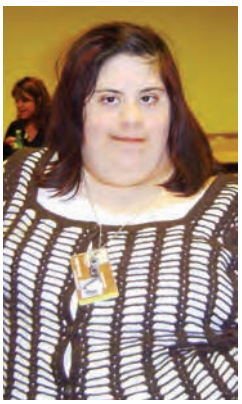
   (a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;

   (b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;

   (c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

4. **In order to help ensure the realisation of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. 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.**

5. **States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.**



Mia Farah, a young person with learning difficulties, who addressed the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the UNCRPD.
CREDIT: INCLUSION INTERNATIONAL

The terms 'disabled person' and 'disabled people/children/pupils' are used throughout this book unless another term is used in a specific quotation. 'Disabled person' is defined as in social model thinking, where it is the barriers that disable those with long-term impairments, so that people with all types and degrees of impairment face a common oppression of disablism – *'discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others'*.[1]

The Convention unambiguously recognises the link between inclusive education and the right to education of people with disabilities. Its approach is based on a growing body of evidence that shows that inclusive education not only provides the best educational environment, including for children with intellectual impairments, but also contributes to breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes. This approach will help to create a society that readily accepts and embraces disability, instead of fearing it. When children with and without disabilities grow up together and learn side by side in the same school, they develop a greater understanding and respect for each other.[2]

The value of inclusive education was highlighted by Amartya Sen in his address to the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers:

> *In promoting friendship and loyalty, and in safeguarding the commitment to freedom and peace, basic education can play a vital part. This requires, on the one hand, that the facilities of education be available to all, and on the other, that children be exposed to ideas from many different backgrounds and perspectives and be encouraged to think for themselves and to reason. Basic education is not just an arrangement for training to develop skills (important as that is); it is also a recognition of the nature of the world, with its diversity and richness, and an appreciation of the importance of freedom and reasoning as well as friendship. The need for that understanding – that vision – has never been stronger.* Sen (2004)

The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006, and became open for signature by UN member states on 30 March 2007. Education, one of the social, economic and cultural rights covered by the Convention, is subject to the 'progressive realisation' clause (4.2), which states that a country will adopt these rights

> *... to the maximum of its available resources and where needed, within the framework of international co-operation, with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of these rights.*

The circumscribed role and status of disabled people, as well as the lack of opportunities, is deeply ingrained in the institutions and in the underlying social stereotypes; these are the functions of culture, not nature.

Mukhtar Abdi Ogle, Kenya

However, states must plan and develop their capacity in line with the Convention from the moment of adoption. In education this means examining current legislation, practices and procedures to ensure the continuing development of their education systems so that all disabled children have access to education within an inclusive education system.[3]

Adoption of the Convention

During the 1990s, disability was introduced and analysed as a human rights issue by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The result was published in 1994, in the Committee's General Comment No. 5. The final breakthrough came when the UN Commission on Human Rights, actively supported by the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, identified and recognised disability as a human rights concern in a series of resolutions adopted in 1998, 2000 and 2002. As a logical consequence of this development, in 2001 the UN General Assembly accepted a proposal by the Government of Mexico for the elaboration of a UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The adoption of the Convention followed a unique and rapid process through the meetings of an ad hoc committee charged with developing it. The committee held eight meetings over a five-year period. This was faster than any previous convention.

'Nothing about us without us' became the watchword of the convention-making process. This is the slogan of Disabled Peoples' International. Many disabled people were involved in the deliberations, both as delegates from their state governments and from disabled people's organisations (DPOs). They were involved in the making of the Convention in a number of ways:

- State delegations were encouraged to include disabled people in their national delegations – this led to roughly one-quarter of state delegates being disabled people by the time of the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee;
- DPOs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were able to register their delegates to the Ad Hoc Committee, and they could observe informal sessions and speak in formal sessions;
- The UN made available 25 bursaries for disabled people from countries of the South to take part in the convention-making process;
- The eight international disabled people's organisations which have permanent consultative status and make up the International Disability Alliance (IDA) were expanded to form the International Disability Caucus (IDC). The IDC comprises nearly 100 disability organisations and had a significant impact on the shape and wording of the Convention. The Chair, Don MacKay, took comments from the IDC first whenever the floor was opened to civil society organisations. The IDC's daily bulletins imparted disabled people's views and a substantial portion of the Convention reflected this thinking.

Between meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee many DPOs carried out consultations with disabled people in their countries to ensure that their views were incorporated into the Convention.

Overall, 116 countries sent delegations to the Ad Hoc Committee and more than 800 NGOs and DPOs were registered. All states parties have a duty under the Convention to continue involving disabled people and their representative organisations in how they will implement and monitor it (Article 33).

Standards required of states parties

Article 24 of the UNCRPD also requires states parties to establish a number of standards to ensure the full and effective realisation by persons with disabilities of the right to an inclusive education. These standards should, *inter alia*, cover:

- The development of human personality and potential;
- A sense of dignity and self-worth of the human being;
- Respect for human rights, fundamental freedom and human diversity;
- Full and effective participation in a free society;
- The development by persons with disabilities of their talents and creativity;
- The provision of peer support;
- The provision of reasonable accommodation to meet an individual's requirements, i.e. the provision of individually tailored services, such as individualised educational plans, and the support necessary to facilitate inclusion.[4]

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, UNESCO, 2005

The Commonwealth and the Convention

As can be seen from Figure 1.1, as of January 2012 the position of the 54 Commonwealth countries is as follows: 10 have not adopted the UNCRPD; 9 have adopted the Convention, but not the Optional Protocol; 7 have signed both the UNCRPD and the Optional Protocol; 17 have ratified the UNCRPD; and 11 have ratified both the UNCRPD and the Optional Protocol.

This means that Commonwealth countries are slightly behind the world on the speed with which they have signed and ratified the Convention. One hundred and fifty-three countries out of a possible 193 have signed and 109 have ratified. Ninety countries have signed the Optional Protocol and 63 have ratified it. (For up-to-date figures check the UN *enable* website.)

If a world map showing which countries have signed up to the Convention is examined (see Figure 1.2), it is seen that Japan, Indonesia, USA and Russia are large countries that have yet to ratify, while most countries in Latin America have ratified. Africa is a more mixed picture. The European Union (EU) has ratified, as have most European countries. Among countries that have not signed, smaller countries predominate; this is also true within the Commonwealth. Article 32 requires states parties that have ratified to collaborate internationally and this is happening in some parts of the Commonwealth, with Australia and New Zealand supporting South Pacific countries. However, more organised support needs to be given to African and Caribbean countries. Here the UK Department for International Development (DFID) could play a much bigger role.

What do young disabled people want?

'Young Voices on the UN Convention' was a consultation involving focus groups of young disabled people, aged 16–25, whose findings were presented to the Ad Hoc Committee in New York. It included groups in nine Commonwealth countries:

Figure 1.1. Commonwealth countries and the UNCRPD, October 2011

	Antigua and Barbuda	signed UNCRPD and Protocol		Jamaica	ratified UNCRPD		St Lucia	not signed UNCRPD
	Australia	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol		Kenya	ratified UNCRPD		St Vincent and the Grenadines	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol
	The Bahamas	not signed UNCRPD		Kiribati	not signed UNCRPD		Samoa	not signed UNCRPD
	Bangladesh	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol		Lesotho	ratified UNCRPD		Seychelles	ratified UNCRPD
	Barbados	signed UNCRPD		Malawi	ratified UNCRPD		Sierra Leone	ratified UNCRPD
	Belize	ratified UNCRPD		Malaysia	ratified UNCRPD		Singapore	not signed UNCRPD
	Botswana	not signed UNCRPD		Maldives	ratified UNCRPD		Solomon Islands	signed UNCRPD and Protocol
	Brunei Darussalam	signed UNCRPD		Malta	signed UNCRPD and Protocol		South Africa	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol
	Cameroon	signed UNCRPD and Protocol		Mauritius	ratified UNCRPD		Sri Lanka	signed UNCRPD
	Canada	ratified UNCRPD		Mozambique	ratified UNCRPD		Swaziland	signed UNCRPD and Protocol
	Cyprus	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol		Namibia	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol		Tonga	signed UNCRPD
	Dominica	signed UNCRPD		Nauru	not signed UNCRPD		Trinidad and Tobago	signed UNCRPD
	Fiji	signed UNCRPD and Protocol		New Zealand	ratified UNCRPD		Tuvalu	not signed UNCRPD
	The Gambia	not signed UNCRPD		Nigeria	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol		Uganda	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol
	Ghana	signed UNCRPD and Protocol		Pakistan	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol		United Kingdom	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol
	Grenada	signed UNCRPD		Papua New Guinea	signed UNCRPD		United Rep. of Tanzania	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol
	Guyana	signed UNCRPD		Rwanda	ratified UNCRPD and Protocol		Vanuatu	ratified UNCRPD
	India	ratified UNCRPD		St Kitts and Nevis	not signed UNCRPD		Zambia	ratified UNCRPD

not signed UNCRPD | signed UNCRPD | signed UNCRPD and Protocol

ratified UNCRPD | ratified UNCRPD and Protocol

India, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland. Two hundred and twenty-two young people took part in the focus groups and were asked to identify the five areas that were most significant in their lives. A wide range of impairments was represented in the groups. Young people in all the groups were glad to be asked their views. The right to education was among the top three issues in 75 per cent of groups. Discussion on 'access to education' overlapped with 'communication' and 'negative attitudes'.

How could sound education take place without disabled youngsters being treated with equality?

Participants said:

'At school it was like they enjoyed making me miserable and uncomfortable.' (Sri Lanka)

'... sciences are compulsory and yet blind students cannot handle concepts that require vision – chemicals, for example.' (Uganda)

' ... I could not take part in activities (because of physical impairment) leading to frequent punishment by teachers, irrespective of my disability'. (Kenya)[5]

The Council for Disabled Children in the UK carried out similar activities to understand the aspirations of young disabled people (Box 1.3).

Box 1.2 What do young disabled people want?

In February 2010, representatives from 19 countries met in Johannesburg, South Africa.[6] This what they had to say:

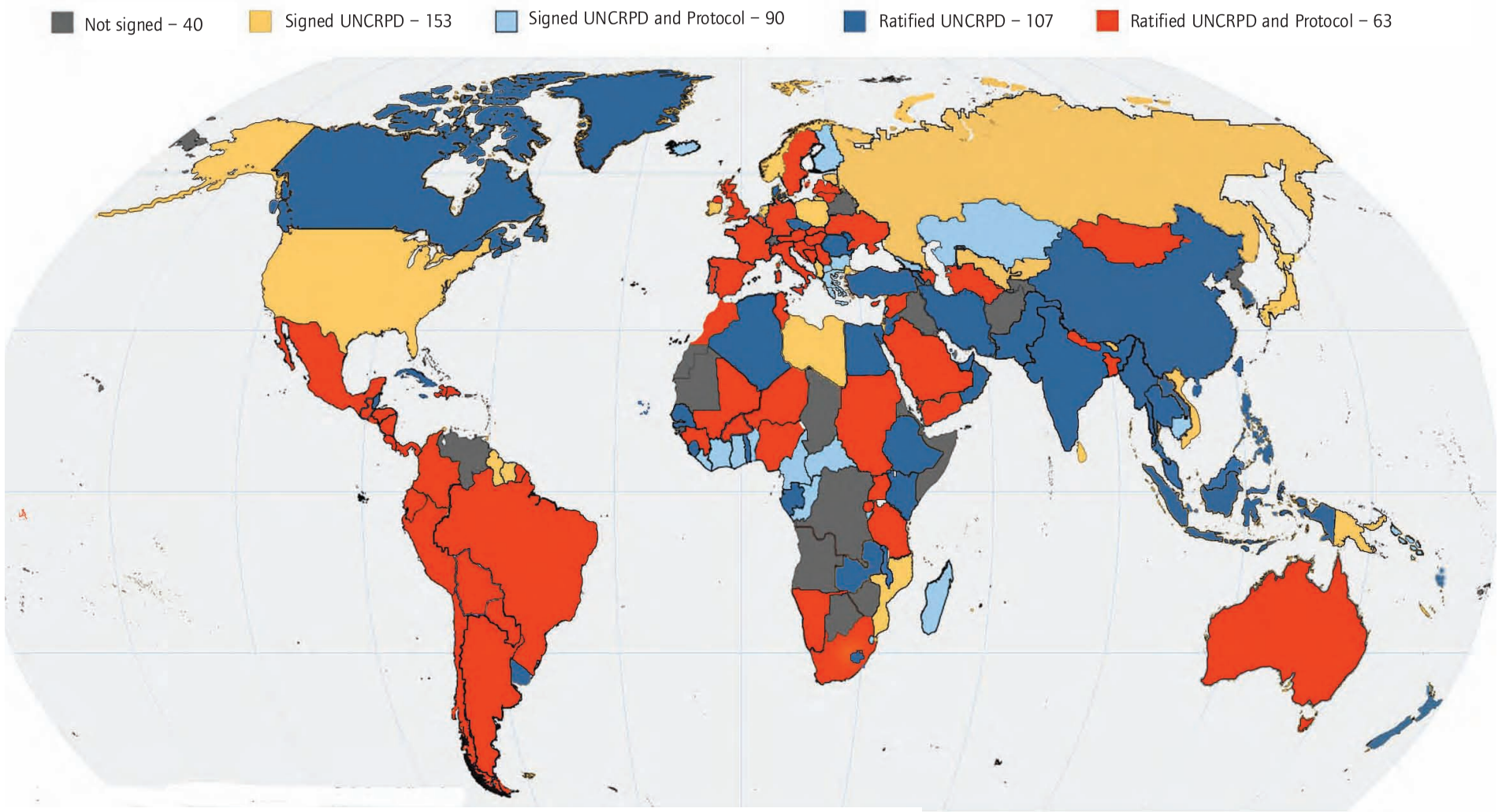
Ensuring that by 2015, persons with disabilities around the world enjoy full educational opportunities, gainful employment, political representation, social security entitlements, access to public spaces, health services and are living free from torture, abuse and discrimination.

And about education:

Article 24 of the UNCRPD confirms that persons with disabilities should have access to quality education, yet we note the following problems still existing in most countries around the globe:

- ***Shortage of trained staff and resource teachers at primary, secondary and tertiary levels;***
- ***Lack of awareness and adoption of upcoming accessible technologies which can help us have equal access to education materials and information;***
- ***No clear guidelines on inclusive education or concrete commitments in terms of budget allocation in our countries;***
- ***Lack of awareness and education facilities for people with disabilities in rural areas;***
- ***Inaccessible schools and local transport;***
- ***No proper guidelines for providing a needs-based curriculum;***
- ***Lack of access to scholarships by persons with disabilities.***

Figure 1.2. World map showing signatories to the UNCRPD and its Optional Protocol, December 2011



Myanmar and Indonesia have recently ratified the Convention.
Source: UN enable website, http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/maps/enablemap.jpg

On the march for rights.
CREDIT: NCIL, WASHINGTON

We therefore call on governments and other duty-bearers to recall the commitments made in the UNCRPD and urge them to address the problems as follows:

- ***Recruit sufficient resource teachers;***
- ***Adopt upcoming accessible technologies and make them easily available;***
- ***Issue clear guidelines on inclusive education and streamline needs-based education;***
- ***Put in sufficient resources (budget allocations) to enable an education of equal importance and quality to be provided to all children with disabilities, including accessible buildings and school transport, teacher training and the provision of additional support for those who require specialist support;***
- ***Develop appropriate solutions to provide education to people with severe disabilities, including home-based education;***
- ***Raise awareness, especially in rural areas, of education facilities and the rights of children with disabilities to education;***
- ***Introduce and expand scholarship opportunities for people with disabilities of all ages.***

Box 1.3 Every Disabled Child Matters

In the summer of 2007, the UK campaign, Every Disabled Child Matters, asked disabled young people what they wanted to tell the Prime Minister. Many children and young people felt really strongly about their right to education and their right to be fully included.

'"Average" is all a disabled child is allowed to be. We should have the same rights as the other children in schools', Christopher, aged 14.

'We should have the right to take our GCSE and other exams with full access to all the language usually available to us (I need to use word prediction) ... the examination board will not come out to my school to assess my individual learning needs', Gregor, aged 13.

'Tackle issues such as disabled children being excluded from school trips', Josh, aged 17.

'Find meaningful activities for us to do during games and PE. Not timing others or collecting balls.'

Some children and young people told us they wanted more and better access to support in school:

'Make every single school – primary and secondary – in the UK accessible for wheelchair users!', Alex.

'It should be easier to get help at school, without going through lots of fights, and before it's too late and you have lots of catching up to do', Hannah, aged 16.

'I would have no school for a day. I have Asperger's Syndrome and I hate school because it is very noisy and I get annoyed ... I find things very hard and I don't get any help. I would like the Prime Minister to come and talk to me – I can tell him how rubbish it is. I hate school!', Taylor.[7]

The long road to inclusive education

Getting to a position where disabled children are seen as included in human rights to education and other general rights has taken a long time and is now clear. But even if the rights are there on paper much more still needs to be done to make them a reality (Box 1.4).

Box 1.4 The long road to inclusive education for disabled children

1966 ***Universal Declaration of Human Rights***
Ensures the right to free and compulsory education for all children.

1966 ***UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights***
Article 13: 'Primary education shall be compulsory and free to all'.

1989 ***UN Convention on the Rights of the Child***
Ensures the right of all children to receive education without discrimination on any grounds. *Adopted by 189 countries.*

1990 ***World Declaration on Education for All (the Jomtien Declaration)***
First agreement on target of 'Education for All'.

1993 ***UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities***
Rule 6 affirms the equal rights to education of all children, youth and adults with disabilities and also states that education should be provided in 'an integrated school setting' and in the 'general school setting'.

1994 ***Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education***
' ... schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.' (para. 3)

2000 ***World Education Forum***
Framework for Action, Dakar (EFA goals and Millennium Development Goals) Ensuring that all children have access to and complete free primary education by 2015. Focus on marginalised communities and girls. Reaffirms the Salamanca Framework.

2000 ***E9 Declaration***
The Declaration on Education for All was agreed at the fourth summit of the nine high population countries.

2001 ***EFA Flagship on the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities***
Links Education for All with the Salamanca Framework for Action and the need to include disabled and other marginalised children. Working in six regions.

2006 ***UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities***
Promotes the right of persons with disabilities to inclusive education (Article 24).
Adopted by 153 countries, December 2011

See Appendix 2 for more details.

As can be seen from Box 1.5, ratifying the UNCRPD should not be a paper exercise formally entered into as a diplomatic method of gaining international kudos, but a commitment, judged by peer countries, to bring about substantial and lasting change in the lives of their disabled citizens. A recent review (October 2010) for the EU identifies some general obligations on states parties. These provide a useful beginning. It should be noted that education is a social, economic and cultural right and so is subject to progressive realisation, but it is also a right that is key to enabling many other rights contained in the UNCRPD to be met.

I got higher exam results than all the students in the same year group as me who were in the special school: and not because I'm cleverer, but just because of the opportunities I've been given.

Lucia Bellini, blind student, UK

Box 1.5 What general obligations on states parties arise from ratification of the UNCRPD with regard to Article 24?[8]

- States Parties should carry out a screening exercise to ensure that legislation is in place to promote the right to education for persons with disabilities of all ages, and is directed at providing equal educational opportunities at all levels of education (primary, secondary, general tertiary education, academic, vocational training, adult education, lifelong learning, or other).
- States Parties' legislation should advance inclusive education systems that allow children with disabilities to learn alongside their peers in inclusive schools (at primary and secondary school levels), for example through individual educational plans.
- States Parties should adopt specific measures to ensure persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system. Specific measures may include, inter alia, the specific development or strengthening of laws and policies enabling persons with disabilities to reach their fullest potential in mainstream educational settings.
- States Parties' legislation should provide for persons with disabilities to benefit from reasonable accommodation to facilitate their ability to learn in general education settings. Legislation should also provide for the provision of individual support for persons with disabilities to reach their fullest potential in the classroom. Legislation should further require that persons with disabilities have the right to receive education in a manner that is accessible to them (e.g. Braille, sign language or other appropriate means).
- States Parties should employ teachers who are qualified to teach persons with disabilities. To best promote inclusive education, States Parties should ensure that all teachers are well trained in teaching methods for persons with disabilities and that teacher training schools are encouraged, and given incentives, to provide quality inclusive education training.
- Furthermore, States Parties should provide disability-specific training to all staff working in the education system.

Lessons can be learned from past efforts. The previous UN Special Rapporteur on Disabilities commissioned a country-level survey to find out how well states were doing in implementing their responsibilities under the 1993 *Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities*.[9]

573 questionnaires were distributed to 191 UN member states, including 191 to 191 government bodies and 382 to two DPOs in each country. Some of the information obtained has been alarming with respect to the prospects for disabled people, particularly in the area of education for children. Nearly 30 countries reported that they had taken no measures to enable children to receive education in integrated settings; this has now been reduced to 13. It is important to remember that although a 60 per cent return of the questionnaire is impressive (providing information about 114 countries on 402 measures), there were 77 countries from which no information could be obtained (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Government actions to ensure the education of people with disabilities in integrated settings under the *UN Standard Rules on Equalization*

	No	Yes
Adopting policies	38	76
Passing legislation	51	63
Adopting programmes	35	79
Allocating financial resources	36	78
Modifying and adapting schools to the needs of children with disabilities	44	70
Training teachers and school administrators	30	84
Providing accessible schools, classrooms and educational materials	45	69
Involving organisations of people with disabilities in planning and implementing action	47	67

The more detailed results on education reveal a very mixed picture. More than half the 114 countries that responded said they had taken one or more measures to ensure integration in education for disabled people. The highest responses were with regard to teacher training, with 84 countries responding positively; the lowest was with regard to adopting legislation (63 countries). On implementing programmes to ensure integrated education, 79 countries responded positively. Between 70 and 72 countries have adopted measures to make the school environment accessible to disabled children through the allocation of financial resources, specific programmes, and modification and adaptation of the physical environment.

The 1993 *UN Standard Rules on Equalization* were only advisory. The UN Convention is binding under international law unless the acceding country enters a reservation. It is already clear that important as the UN Convention is, it only creates an opportunity for change. Disabled children and young people will only be fully included in the mainstream education system if there is a change in hearts and minds. As the case studies and this book demonstrate, we already know what to do to make inclusive education a reality. Each country will begin from a different historic, cultural and socio-economic position, but the process of developing inclusive education is one in which we can all participate and learn, supporting one another on the journey.

The development of inclusive education will require a massive programme of change to develop every country's education system at all levels. The process will benefit not only disabled children and young people, but all children, as education moves to a more child-centred and flexible pedagogy, and parents and the local community are enlisted in this endeavour. The prize is more tolerant, humane and productive societies.

In implementing the Convention, states parties need to develop structures to involve disabled people and their organisations. Where these do not exist, states will need to support capacity building, such as training-the-trainer courses and disability equality training (DET). DET is based on the principles of self-advocacy and social model analysis. The paradigm shift in thinking embodied in the Convention is the result of disabled people's own analysis of their experience of oppression and of their struggle for alternatives that put an end to their devaluation and exclusion.

In the last 63 years many fine words and sentiments have come from international reports, conferences, declarations and treaties, and many of these will be reproduced in the following chapters and Appendix 2. However, the continued ignoring of disabled children and young people's right to education is a continuing mark of shame against the governments and international agencies of our world. At the UN,

A society which is good for disabled people is a better society for all.
Dr Lisa Kauppinen, President of the World Federation of the Deaf, at the closing of the Copenhagen Summit, 2009

the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities took shape with strong involvement from DPOs. The involvement of DPOs in a more than tokenistic manner is not occurring in many countries and this is hindering effective implementation.

As we examine projects to develop Education for All and the development of inclusive education at international, national, regional/district and local/school level, it is remarkable how little the lived experience and understanding of disabled people is called upon in order to address the barriers to the involvement and inclusion of disabled children and adults.

These barriers are rooted in pervasive and pernicious oppressive attitudes towards physical, mental and psycho-social impairment; although these take many forms, they are universal. It is welcome to find examples of promising practices across the Commonwealth and beyond. Yet the one billion disabled people of the world are rarely involved on the ground in these projects, whether they are researchers, teachers, mentors, trainers, young activists or advocates. The implementation of disabled people's rights, and in particular the development and implementation of inclusive education, will not occur without their widespread involvement.

Bringing about the paradigm shift contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and countering centuries of prejudice, patronising and wrong attitudes, and the resulting structures and organisation across all societies requires a major change in the thinking and practices of all who are in positions of influence and authority. This book is an attempt to help bring about this shift in the area of education.

The remaining chapters examine in more detail the obligations of the UNCRPD and the human rights instruments that preceded it in the field of education. They consider various ways of thinking about disability, together with the thinking of disabled people themselves, which led to the paradigm shift from charity towards rights, and ask what this means in education. The cost of inclusion and a range of tools and checklists that are available to support the development of inclusive education will be a focus. Many of these tools can also be used by other excluded groups.

Chapter 2 reviews progress towards, and barriers to, the implementation of Education for All, and of disabled children in particular. Chapter 3 examines the need for changing attitudes

In Chapter 4 the 'disability rights in education model' is developed as a framework at different levels. Children do not fall into neat categories: many girls are also disabled; ethnic minorities or indigenous groups have disabled members. Children with HIV/AIDS count as having long-term impairments and so should also be considered as disabled; children who work, street children, child soldiers and those who have their lives disrupted by conflict or natural disasters all have a higher incidence of impairment and should therefore also be considered as disabled children, where appropriate.

Chapter 5 examines the development and implementation of international policy and the role of some of the main players

Chapter 6 reviews the development of national inclusion policies through practical examples.

Chapter 7 looks at district and regional strategies, focusing on support for inclusion through teacher training, altering access to buildings, turning special schools into resource centres, providing specific support for mediums such as Braille or sign language, augmented and alternative low and high tech communications, and use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

Chapter 8 provides examples at school and class level of developing inclusive

practice. It discusses specific educational issues arising from the inclusion of children with physical, sensory, mental, behavioural, psycho-social and communication impairments, with a view to highlighting good practice.

Chapter 9 examines ways of preventing drop-out; developing inclusive teaching and learning; empowering young disabled people; and providing peer support. It stresses the need to bring disability equality into the curriculum for all learners.

Chapter 10 critically reviews the outcomes of this journey, through attempts to implement inclusive education for disabled people around the Commonwealth and beyond, and provides pointers to the way forward.

The two accompanying DVDs contain clips illustrating developing inclusive practice from selected countries and projects in the Commonwealth.