

## 2 Inclusive Education: The Global Situation



*Everyone welcome: A primary school in Kenya.*

CREDIT: CMB

*(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.*

*(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.*

*(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.*

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, 1948

Considerable progress has been made in the last decade towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 2: *'Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling'*. In 2008, 52 million more children were enrolled in primary school than in 1999. In all, 696 million children were enrolled worldwide.

This right to free and compulsory primary education for all was recognised in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then, world leaders have made many promises to turn this right into a reality. It was not until the summit held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990<sup>10</sup> that the world community mobilised to try to achieve this, and following a sluggish response in the 1990s, they then had to agree to move the date back and be more proactive. The most significant of the promises made was the setting of the Education for All targets at the World Education Forum summit in Dakar in April 2000,<sup>11</sup> where more than 1,100 participants from 164 countries gathered to agree a framework. The date set for the achievement of the targets set in Dakar is 2015. The targets are:

- I. Expand early childhood care and learning
- II. Provide free and compulsory primary Education for All
- III. Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults
- IV. Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent
- V. Achieve gender parity by 2005, and gender equality by 2015
- VI. Improve the quality of education

Targets II and V were incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals, also set in 2000.

The Education for All initiative, together with the World Bank Fast Track Initiative, began to co-ordinate financial and technical support. There were real success stories, particularly when school fees were abolished in a number of countries. For example, in Tanzania the enrolment ratio doubled to 99.6 per cent in the period 1999–2008.



Great efforts were made to enrol girls. Botswana has reduced female drop-out rates by half by implementing readmission policies and Malawi has promoted girls' education in Grades 1–4 by providing learning materials. Similar initiatives have worked in rural and remote areas, such as the projects to provide tent schools in Mongolia and schools on boats for river people in Bangladesh. The 2011 *EFA Global Monitoring Report* estimated that 28 million children were denied access to education because of war and conflict. At least 35 states, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, will miss the goal set for 2015 by a large margin. More than 67 million children of primary age are not enrolled in school. A larger number drop out without completing primary school; for example, in sub-Saharan Africa more than 30 per cent of primary school students drop out before reaching the final grade.<sup>12</sup>

In order to meet Millennium Goal 2, all these children need to be enrolled and stay in school from 2009. We also know that more than one-third of the 67 million children who are missing from school are disabled, and as states get closer to reaching the goal, the proportion of out-of-school children who are disabled will increase.<sup>13</sup> We still have inaccurate and under-enumerated data on the number of disabled children in many developing countries. In 2008, 26 least developed countries (LDCs) had the national statistical capacity to report on education access, equity and quality, but their data did not include the number of disabled children.<sup>14</sup>

Belatedly, considerable effort is going into obtaining more accurate data on the numbers of disabled children, their type of impairment and the barriers they face. While globally comparable reliable data are notoriously difficult to obtain. One widely cited source estimates that 150 million children worldwide live with disabilities. In the 1970s, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 10 per cent of the global population lived with a disability.<sup>15</sup> This is a rough estimate that is still in use today, suggesting that there are over 150 million disabled children. This is likely to be a significant under-estimate.

In June 2011 WHO launched the *World Report on Disability*. This addresses the need for better research and data. It includes the first update of WHO's estimates of the prevalence of disability for more than 30 years and estimates that there are more than 1 billion disabled people in the world. Changing attitudes to disabled people in the community is at the heart of this process. The estimate that disabled people make up 15 per cent of the world's population is based on prevalence studies and surveys in various countries. If this figure were projected to the under 15 population, 280 million disabled children would be a more accurate figure,<sup>16</sup> though much needs to be done to improve statistics in this area.<sup>17</sup>

UNESCO's *EFA Global Monitoring Report* argues:

*Disability is one of the least visible but most potent factors in educational marginalization. Beyond the immediate health-related effects, physical and mental impairment carries a stigma that is often a basis for exclusion from society and school.*<sup>18</sup>

The impact is often worse for poorer households. The same arguments apply to Education for All Goal 2:

*Achieving the Education for All targets and Millennium Development Goals will be impossible without improving access to and quality of education for children with disabilities.*<sup>19</sup>

## Why is there so little progress on including disabled children in EFA?

Despite awareness of the need to focus on disabled children in the implementation of these initiatives by states, international agencies and many international NGOs have been slow to develop it. UNESCO set up a Flagship on education for disabled children in 2002 which has not been very effective, despite the efforts of the Norwegian and Finnish governments, which hosted it. At a meeting of interested parties held in Paris in 2011, it was decided that UNICEF, rather than UNESCO, should coordinate this.<sup>20</sup>

The deliberations around the UNCRPD in 2002–2006 and its coming into force in May 2008 helped to raise the profile of disabled children within Education for All.

World Vision, an international NGO, produced a report, *Education's Missing Millions*, in 2007, urging the EFA Fast Track Initiative partners to make aid to education and national education plans more responsive to the challenge of providing a quality education for the 25 million disabled primary age school children who were still out of school in developing countries. The core of the report was an analysis of 28 country education plans (see Table 2.1), an essential prerequisite for getting FTI funding, and two in-depth studies of Cambodia and Ethiopia. The report revealed that:

*... a number of FTI-endorsed countries, particularly those which are approaching universal primary education, do now have education sector plans which address the inclusion of disabled children. Most of these plans focus on making regular schools more inclusive, through additional learning materials and support, though some also retain some special provision. A few countries are also setting targets for enrolment and instituting financial and other incentives to encourage schools to become more inclusive. Some link disability to other initiatives to increase equity and reach excluded children, including early childhood care and education. However, in a number of countries, policies and provision for disabled children remain cursory or have not been implemented. Key gaps include:*

- *Lack of data on the number of disabled children in total and the proportion who are out of school, and on the range of specialist and inclusive provision;*
- *Insufficient planning of measures to improve provision, respond to the diversity of learning needs and increase capacity;*
- *Few cost projections, or use of funding mechanisms and incentives to encourage and support inclusion;*
- *Limited approaches to partnership with parents, communities, civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-state providers;*
- *Weak inter-ministry/sectoral/services links;*
- *Lack of mainstreaming of other issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS.<sup>21</sup>*

In a foreword to the report, Vernor Muñoz, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, said:

*At the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, world leaders agreed to boost investment in education, and support the Fast Track Initiative to help meet the shared goal of universal primary education by 2015. Two years later this promise was reaffirmed at the G8 summit in Germany. However, it is not enough for governments to simply address the missing financial millions necessary to ensure every child receives a*



Time to end human rights abuse.

CREDIT: UNESCO

good quality education. If we are to meet the 2015 goal, it is now time for governments to work together to actively target the millions of marginalised disabled children currently missing out on a free and good quality education. Moreover, from now on, the new paradigm of inclusive education must mark the institution of education, understanding that the traditional education system, as it was conceived and designed, is not only opposed to diversity, but also works against the rights and interests of populations historically excluded.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 2.1. Disability in FTI country plans**

Strong/sound plans	Some mention	No mention
Cambodia <sup>a</sup>	Burkina Faso	Albania
Djibouti	Guinea	Cameroon
Ethiopia <sup>a</sup>	Honduras	Mauritania
Gambia, The	Kyrgyz Republic	Nicaragua
Ghana	Madagascar	Timor-Leste
Guyana	Mali	
Kenya	Mongolia	
Lesotho	Niger	
Moldova	Rwanda	
Mozambique	Senegal	
Vietnam <sup>a</sup>	Tajikistan	
	Yemen	

<sup>a</sup>Draws on other documentation as well as main sector plans.

Rules, attitudes and systems that are unresponsive to the needs of disabled children often deny these children an opportunity for education. Excluding disabled children (UNESCO estimates that only 10 per cent attend primary school in Africa)<sup>23</sup> restricts their choices, making it more likely that they will live their adult lives in poverty, and has wider costs for society. No country can afford an education system that limits the potential of millions of children to contribute to social, cultural and economic life.<sup>24</sup>

Education has a key role to play in changing attitudes. Poverty is both a potential cause and a consequence of disability. In several countries, the probability of being in poverty rises in households headed by disabled people.<sup>25</sup> In Uganda, evidence from the 1990s found that the probability was as much as 60 per cent higher.<sup>26</sup> Disabled people are much less likely to be in work. Other family members may also be out of work (or school) so that they can care for them. Inadequate treatment, along with poor families' inability to invest sufficiently in health and nutrition, reinforces the problems disabled people face.<sup>27</sup> These links to poverty, combined with stigma, harassment, discrimination and a resulting low self-image, are a significant factor in disabled children's educational marginalisation.

Before the current economic crisis, over three-quarters of workers in Oceania, southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa did not have a waged job. The crisis has led to a further increase in the number of workers engaged in vulnerable employment. In 2009, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated the global vulnerable employment rate to be between 49 per cent and 53 per cent – 1.5 to 1.6 billion people who are working on their own or as unpaid family workers worldwide.

An estimated 1.4 billion people were still living in extreme poverty in 2005. Moreover, the effects of the global financial crisis are likely to persist: poverty rates will be slightly higher in 2015, and even beyond to 2020, than they would have been had the world economy grown steadily at its pre-crisis pace.<sup>28</sup>

Around four out of five disabled children live in developing countries and subsist in poverty. In addition, many millions of children live in households with disabled parents or other relatives. At all ages, levels of both moderate and severe impairment are higher in low- and middle-income countries than in rich countries. They are highest in sub-Saharan Africa. The scale of impairment and its concentration in the world's poorest countries contribute significantly to marginalisation in education. Systematic under-reporting of disability is a serious problem. To take one example, the 2004 census in Sierra Leone reported only 3,300 cases of mental impairment, while a detailed national survey the year before estimated the real figure to be ten times higher. One reason for under-reporting is that stigmatisation often makes parents and children reluctant to report disability.<sup>29</sup>

Many impairments can be traced back to poverty, poor nutrition and restricted access to basic services, and could be prevented by a redistribution of world resources. Malnutrition has the greatest impact on the cognitive development of under-five year olds, while malaria and TB cause the greatest number of impairments. Asphyxia during birth, often resulting from the absence of a skilled attendant, leaves an estimated 1 million children with impairments such as cerebral palsy and learning difficulties. Maternal iodine deficiency leads to 18 million babies being born with mental impairments. Deficiency in vitamin A leaves around 350,000 children blind in less developed countries every year. Many of these conditions can be eradicated, but the widening gap between the developed countries and middle and least developed countries, exacerbated by the economic crisis of the last few years, is leading to greater levels of impairment. Conflict contributes to disability both directly and indirectly, creating physical and mental impairment through its effects on poverty, nutrition and health-care. For every child killed in warfare, it is estimated that three are left.<sup>30</sup>

Over 80 per cent of road-related injuries and deaths occur in developing countries (UNICEF, 2007). Around 10 million children in less developed countries are involved each year, with a high proportion left permanently impaired.

The link between impairment and marginalisation in education is evident in countries at different ends of the spectrum in relation to primary school enrolment and completion. In Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania, being disabled doubles the probability of children never having attended school, and in Burkina Faso it increases the risk of children being out of school by two and a half times.<sup>31</sup> In these countries, inadequate policy and attention to disability is clearly holding back national progress towards universal primary education. In some countries that are closer to achieving that goal, disabled people represent the majority of those left behind. In Bulgaria and Romania, net enrolment ratios for children aged between 7 and 15 were over 90 per cent in 2002, but only 58 per cent for disabled children.<sup>32</sup> The disabled people's movement considers that disabled people are disabled by the barriers that they face as people with impairments, as illustrated above (see Box 2.1 for further evidence).



*Girls in Bangladesh.*

CREDIT: IEA

### **Box 2.1 Prejudice limits equality for disabled children in India**

Education planning documents in India enshrine a strong commitment to inclusive education. The aim is to provide all disabled children, irrespective of the type or degree of impairment, with education in an 'appropriate environment', which can include mainstream and special schools, as well as alternative schools and home-based learning. Delivering on this commitment requires a concerted political effort backed by reforms in provision. Yet disability remains

*Tackling poverty through education: the slums of Dharavi, Mumbai, India*

CREDIT: UNESCO



a major limitation on progress towards universal primary education in India. While there are inconsistencies in national data, estimates suggest that school participation among disabled children never rises above 70 per cent, far below the national average of around 90 per cent. According to a World Bank analysis of India's 2002 *National Sample Survey*, disabled children are five and a half times more likely to be out of school than children who are not disabled.

Disaggregation of the data highlights important variations. Almost three-quarters of children with severe impairments are out of school, compared with about 35 to 40 per cent of children with mild or moderate impairments. The most likely to be excluded are children with mental illness (two-thirds of whom never enrol in school) or blindness (over half never enrol). Public attitudes are among the greatest barriers to equal education for disabled people in India.

Children with mental impairments face the most deeply entrenched prejudice. In a public attitude survey carried out in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, almost half the respondents said such children could not attend regular or special school. Another commonly held view was that those with mental impairments would not find decent employment. People from households with a disabled member shared the general view, reflecting stigmatisation in the home.

Institutional constraints reinforce public attitudes. In 2005, just 18 per cent of India's schools were accessible to disabled children in terms of facilities such as ramps, appropriately designed classrooms, toilets and transport. National education policies reflect growing awareness of the problems associated with disability. Measures that have been introduced, range from providing aids and appliances in schools to stipends for children with disabilities. Public awareness is a problem that has hampered implementation. However, a survey in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh demonstrates that almost three-quarters of households that include a disabled member are unaware of their eligibility for aids and appliances, and only 2 per cent directly benefited from such aids in 2005. Less than half of these households were aware that stipends were available and only 4 per cent had received them.<sup>33</sup>

To counter situations such as those outlined above, governments across the world have recognised that inclusive education for disabled people is a human rights imperative. The UNCRPD has strengthened the entitlements and rights of disabled people. It requires governments to ensure that *'persons with disabilities can access to an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live'* (UNCRPD, Article 24 (2b)). As of January 2012, 109 countries and the EU had ratified the Convention. Unlike declarations (for example, the Millennium Development Goals and the 1994 *Salamanca Statement*) and frameworks (Education for All and the 1992 *UN Standard Rules on Equalization*), the Convention is legally binding on states parties who sign up to it.

The Convention must be taken as a whole, and Article 3(c) includes a right to full and effective participation and inclusion in society. Article 7 on children with disabilities reiterates and extends in an unequivocal manner the rights of disabled children contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989). Article 32 recognises the important role of international co-operation in fulfilling the requirements of the UNCRPD. These two Conventions provide a strong rights-based framework for the disabled children of the world.

*Importantly, the Convention provides a clear focus on the obligations of governments in ensuring that the rights of children with disabilities are protected. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its reviews of State Party reports, has found consistent evidence of the challenges faced by children with disabilities in realising their rights. There are an estimated 200 million children with disabilities across the world, more than 80 per cent of whom live in the developing world with little or no access to healthcare or education. They are disproportionately likely to live in poverty, experience physical and sexual violence, be denied a voice, and lack access to family life, information, play, sport, art or culture. Indeed, in the overwhelming number of countries reviewed, it has been necessary to make recommendations for action to overcome neglect or violation of rights.*

*The Committee on the Rights of the Child therefore strongly welcomes the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which emphasises that the barriers to the enjoyment of rights lie not in the disability itself, but in the social, physical, economic, cultural and attitudinal barriers faced by people, including children, with disabilities. It will serve as a powerful and complementary tool to the Convention on the Rights of the Child: while the latter establishes the human rights of children, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides the detailed elaboration of the measures needed for their realisation.*

Yanghee Lee, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>34</sup>

As a result, we should have seen an acceleration of activity in states parties and among donor countries and international agencies to implement inclusive education for disabled children and students around the world.

According to the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), a civil society-led world campaign, there has been a slowing down of the efforts to achieve Education for All, reflected both in international donations from the developed countries and the failure of many developing states to raise sufficient taxes or allocate a large enough proportion of their GDP to education. There has also been a failure to recruit, train and remunerate sufficient high quality teachers to achieve the target. This can be attributed to the economic difficulties encountered since 2008, but there is always a



Uganda: Girls learning sign language.

choice. The countries of the world cannot afford not to invest in developing an inclusive education system capable of providing quality education for all, and in particular for disabled children and students.

Progress towards these goals is painfully slow and much more needs to be done if Education for All is to be achieved. At current rates of progress Education for All will not be achieved in the next 100 years – let alone by 2015.

- Ninety-four countries missed the goal of getting an equal number of girls and boys in school by 2005.
- In order to reach the goal of all children receiving primary education by 2015, 69 million children needed to start school by 2009 (40 million did not).
- The world's poorest countries are still waiting for US\$9 billion from the world's richest countries – the amount needed to pay for all children to receive an education, each year.
- To pay for Education for All an additional US\$16 billion per year is needed in the 46 lowest income countries; this estimate does not include disabled children.<sup>35</sup>
- An additional 18 million more teachers are needed if every child is to receive a quality education.<sup>36</sup>

These projections of cost assume a steady rate of domestic input, but the economic crisis as reported in the *Global Monitoring Report 2010* was also affecting the level of domestic investment:

*Seven low income countries including Chad, Ghana, Niger and Senegal made cuts in education spending in 2009. Countries reporting cuts have some 3.7 million children out of school. In five of these seven low-income countries, planned spending in 2010 would leave the education budget below its 2008 level.*

*While seven lower middle income countries maintained or increased spending in 2009, six planned cuts to their education budgets in 2010. Looking ahead to 2015, fiscal adjustments planned for low-income countries threaten to widen the 'Education for All' financing gap. IMF projections point to overall public spending increases for low income countries averaging 6 per cent annually to 2015, while the average annual spending increase required to achieve universal primary education is about 12 per cent.<sup>37</sup>*

Interestingly, at its World Assembly in February 2011, the Global Campaign for Education adopted a motion on the education of disabled students:

*... it is now the right moment to further ensure through the motion texts, that all children and youth with disabilities have equal rights and opportunities in the education system, an education system that is meant to promote good learning environment for all regardless of their diverse needs ...*

*... Governments should design strategies, train all teachers on special needs, invest in inclusive infrastructure, make education more inclusive for all.*

The independent *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011* demonstrates the failure of the wealthier countries of the world to live up to the promises made to fund education. They have not targeted enough aid on basic education. For example, 70 per cent of education aid from France, Germany and Japan goes to higher education, and 50 per cent of French and German aid offers places at their own universities. The report makes the most recent projections of the number of children who will be out of school



**Table 2.2. Out-of-school population for 2008 and projections for 2015, selected countries**

Country	School year ending in 2008 ('000)	Short-run projection	Long-run projection
		(based on 2004–2009) 2015 ('000)	(based on 1999–2009) 2015 ('000)
Nigeria <sup>a,b</sup>	8,650	12,207	8,324
Pakistan <sup>b</sup>	7,261	6,793	5,833
India <sup>a,b</sup>	5,564	7,187	752
Ethiopia	2,732	388	957
Bangladesh <sup>c</sup>	2,024	–	–
Niger	1,213	1,103	982
Kenya <sup>b</sup>	1,088	386	579
Yemen	1,037	1,283	553
Philippines	961	1,007	961
Burkina Faso	922	447	729
Mozambique <sup>b</sup>	863	523	379
Ghana	792	295	744
Brazil	682	1,045	452
Thailand	506	193	302
South Africa <sup>a,b</sup>	503	866	754
Remaining 113 countries	7,599	9,641	6,557
Total 128 countries	40,371	43,364	28,857

Note: The global estimate for the number of out-of-school children is calculated by assuming that the proportion of the total out-of-school population in the 128 projection countries in 2015 will be the same as in 2008.

<sup>a</sup>Data for out-of-school children are for 2007.

<sup>b</sup>Commonwealth countries with 26 million out-of-school children.

<sup>c</sup>Rate changes for Bangladesh have not been calculated.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011; Annex, Statistical Table 5; UIS database.

in 2015, taking into account reductions in state spending on education and demographic change. The years 1999–2007 were a period of economic growth around the world, so more was invested in education. The long-run projection for 2015 demonstrates a more optimistic picture than the projection based on data reflecting the changed circumstances from 2008. As Table 2.2 demonstrates, in 128 countries in 2008 the out-of-school population was 40.37 million. The long-term projection for 2015 has this falling to 28.85 million, which significantly underestimates the number of disabled children. The short-term projection, taking account of changed circumstances, shows that numbers of out-of-school children will rise by 2015. This will be far from uniform. Countries with higher than average investment and a strong buy-in from their governments to EFA, e.g. Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Thailand, will continue to reduce the number of out-of-school children.

This possible projected increase in numbers of young people who are out of school should be seen against the continuing efforts in many countries that are leading to large increases in the numbers attending school. Drop-out rates are related to poverty and despite the increases in primary enrolment, 10 million children in sub-Saharan Africa who are currently enrolled will drop out of school. Drop-out rates are high for disabled children. The support and adjustments they need to access education are not provided, teachers are often not trained to meet their needs and families do not see the value in educating disabled children. The fall-out in transition to secondary is even higher and more so for disabled students.

Disabled children in rich countries have continuing difficulties getting the right type of support to be successful in education. These are due to outmoded ideas based



*Access to Braille is a human rights issue.*

CREDIT: UNESCO

on the 'medical model' way of thinking which leads to integration and segregation. Now that achieving Education for All is becoming increasingly difficult because there is an ever higher proportion of disabled children, there is a risk that the support they need will be sacrificed, as it is easier to ignore disabled children and their needs than to make the necessary changes.

The lack of emphasis on the inclusion of disabled children is reflected in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011* and in another UNESCO initiative, 'Building Human Capacities in Least Developed Countries'.<sup>38</sup> However, since the UNCRPD came into force, all UN agencies have had to include disabled people in everything they do. There is still a long way to go and training is needed at all levels, so that the impact of the UNCRPD and the paradigm shift required is appreciated and implemented.

In reviewing progress for the Education for All Initiative High Level Meeting in Jomtien in March 2011, 21 years after the original goals were set, UNESCO suggests the following way forward:

As reported in the regional EFA reports, the decade has provided ever clearer evidence of what works at increasing enrolment and completion rates in basic education:

- **More and better ECCE programmes**, especially those which are child centred, play based and provided in mother tongue;
- **Greater emphasis on the quality of the early years of learning** (i.e. much more effort and resources put into early literacy and numeracy);
- **The reduction and even elimination of school fees and other costs** along with the provision of stipends and other special incentives for the very poor;
- **A larger percentage of the ministry's budget devoted to basic education** (e.g. for infrastructure and teacher professional development and remuneration);
- **The reduction of repetition rates**, which often lead to higher drop-out rates, through such policies as automatic promotion accompanied by serious remedial support to those who are failing;
- **Special efforts directed at remote, rural populations and the urban poor** through programmes such as satellite schools, multigrade teaching and non-formal approaches which are accredited by the government and recognised by the labour market;
- **The greater and more genuine inclusion of learners with disabilities** into regular classrooms with specialised support before and during this process;
- In general, **the development of schools which are more child friendly** – not only academically effective, but also healthy and protective, genuinely inclusive, responsive to issues of gender, and encouraging of student, parent, and community participation.<sup>39</sup>

Each of the above will increase the enrolment, development, social and academic achievement of disabled children and students only if the specificity of including disabled children is made explicit, in addition to developing a wider inclusive education system capable of meeting the needs of each of the groups identified as excluded.

This UNESCO thinking came out of a major series of consultative conferences in different regions of the world, involving those charged with implementing inclusive education, carried out in the run-up to the 48th UNESCO International Education

Conference, organised by the International Bureau of Education in Geneva in November 2008. The conference was attended by ministerial delegates from 154 countries. The title 'Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future' gave a clear directional steer.

The closing statement called for there to be no diminution of funding for EFA because of the economic crisis and made the following point:

*We call upon Member States to adopt an inclusive education approach in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of educational policies as a way to further accelerate the attainment of Education for All (EFA) goals as well as to contribute to building more inclusive societies. To this end, a broadened concept of inclusive education can be viewed as a general guiding principle to strengthen education for sustainable development, lifelong learning for all and equal access of all levels of society to learning opportunities so as to implement the principles of inclusive education.<sup>40</sup>*

In defining inclusion, UNESCO (2005) highlights the following elements:

***Inclusion is a process.*** *Inclusion has to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. It is about learning how to live with difference and how to learn from difference, so that differences come to be seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning, amongst children and adults.*

***Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers.*** *It involves collecting, collating and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It is about using evidence of various kinds to stimulate creativity and problem-solving.*

***Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students.*** *Here 'presence' is concerned with where children are educated, and how reliably and punctually they attend; 'participation' relates to the quality of their experiences while they are there and must therefore incorporate the views of the learners themselves; 'achievement' is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results.*

***Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or under-achievement.*** *This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those groups which are statistically most 'at risk' are carefully monitored and that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in the education system.*

The thinking behind the framing of this definition of inclusion, as UNESCO's *Guidelines for Inclusion* (2005) makes clear, comes from challenging special education or integration of disabled children with the need to move to a view that focuses on the school, its policies and practices. These need to change to accommodate disabled learners, rather than the disabled learner having to fit in to things as they are. With this shift from the 'medical model' to the 'social model' thinking about disability, the definition of inclusion is then generalised to all other marginalised groups. Inclusion is now seen as a general process.

There are problems with this reframing of inclusion to cover Education for All, because the specificity of developing inclusive education to confront the oppression disabled people face in life and education is lost. The reality is that it is often harder and more challenging to include disabled pupils, particularly those who have sensory, communication, psycho-social, behavioural or learning difficulties or multi-impairments, than other excluded groups.



David – a blind teacher in Kerala.

CREDIT: EENET

The challenge is rooted deep in traditional values and stereotypes about physical and mental difference; ideas of normality; deficit thinking implicit in concepts such as 'special educational needs' and 'medical model' approaches to impairment which focus on what disabled people cannot, rather than what they can, do. Due to the lack of educational philosophy, pedagogy and training based on a social model of disability, millions of teachers feel disempowered when confronted with disabled children in their class. The general shifts in ethos and attitude needed to implement inclusive education help to restructure the entire system away from:

- Competition to collaboration
- Teacher-centred to child-centred
- Rigidity to flexibility
- Rote learning to discovery learning
- Class focus to whole school focus
- Disempowerment to empowerment
- Normality to diversity
- A fixed state to evolving process
- Barrier laden to barrier free
- A 'can't do' to a 'can do' attitude

These shifts are well known and expounded in the tools and documents in UNESCO's *Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education*.<sup>41</sup> Because of the generalising of inclusion, they apply to, and will promote, the inclusion of all excluded groups, but to include disabled pupils there must be a whole range of more specific understandings and measures, reasonable accommodations, support and personalised plans (UNCRPD, Article 24.2), such as the following:

- All staff to have disability equality training, where they confront their own prejudices and adopt the paradigm shift necessary for successful inclusion;
- Training in specific methods and accommodations to meet disabled students' needs;
- All students to be taught to understand the history of disabled people's oppression and social model/human rights approaches to disability (UNCRPD, Article 8);
- All parents and the local community to have disability equality training;
- All buildings, learning materials, communication, computers and activities to be accessible;
- Planning of teaching and learning to maximise strengths;
- Adapted and accessible assessments, curricula and examination methods;
- The development of a strong 'voice' and control over what happens to disabled students – 'nothing about us without us';
- Peer support and collaboration and empathy;
- Zero tolerance of harassment and bullying;

- Resources that support disabled students' learning;
- Learning resources, books and displays that model positive views of disabled people.

A closer look at national school data often reveals markedly different consequences for various impairments.<sup>42</sup> In Uganda, recent evidence suggests that drop-out rates are lower among children with visual and physical impairments than among those with mental impairments. Disabled children face many challenges in education. Three of the most serious involve institutionalised discrimination, stigmatisation and neglect, from the classroom to the local community and in the home. Disabled children are often isolated within their societies and communities because of a mixture of shame, fear and ignorance about the causes and consequences of their impairment.

Education systems and classroom experience can help counteract the marginalisation that disabled children face. However, if not run on truly inclusive lines, as outlined above, schools often have the opposite effect. Insufficient physical access, shortages of trained teachers and limited provision of teaching aids can diminish opportunities. Many schools, particularly those in remote rural areas or slums, are physically inaccessible to some disabled children. Without peer support and effective teaching, children with sensory or mental impairments can find schools noisy, confusing and threatening. The grossly inadequate level of provision for disabled children in general schools often drives parents and groups representing disabled people to demand separate provision.<sup>43</sup>

This demand is both understandable and is a symptom of wider problems. Putting disabled children in special needs schools or institutions can reinforce stigmatisation. It can also deny them a chance to participate in mainstream education, build relationships and develop in an inclusive environment. Moreover, special schools are often very expensive and can only ever cater for a tiny proportion of disabled children.

One qualitative study of attitudes towards autistic children in Ghana revealed they were widely described as 'useless and not capable of learning, stubborn, lazy, or willfully disobedient' (Anthony, 2009). In a statement with wider application, the Ghanaian Ministry of Education, Sports and Science has powerfully captured the social prejudices that shape the educational disadvantages associated with disability:

*The education of children with disabilities is undervalued by families, there is a lack of awareness about the potential of children with disabilities, children with disabilities in mainstream schools receive less attention from teachers and there is an overemphasis on academic achievement and examination as opposed to all round development of children.*<sup>44</sup>

In developing countries the implementation of inclusive education for disabled pupils and students will cost more than the estimate for Education for All, and this is already seriously underfunded. The reason is that these estimates were worked out on the basis of scaling up what has already happened to include the millions of excluded non-disabled children. To include 'the missing millions' of disabled children in developing countries will require more than the annual additional US\$16 billion required to get all children into school. How much extra is required? If it was half as much again this would mean US\$24 billion per year extra.<sup>45</sup> Compare this to the US\$2.2 trillion written off by the banks supported by governments from 2007 to 2010, caused by the lack of regulation, greed and bad judgement of the banking system. In the UK, the bank bail-out cost £117 billion and in the USA US\$850 billion. The other areas most affected are the EU and Japan.<sup>46</sup> These are the major aid donor countries. The measures taken by governments to retrieve this money, by cutting services and

increasing taxes on their citizens, has led to general economic stagnation in some areas, impacting seriously on less developed countries.

The UNESCO *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education* (2009a) point out that the cost of EFA is the equivalent of:

- Six days' worth of global military spending
- Half of what is spent on toys every year in the USA
- Less than what Europe spends on mineral water every year
- 0.1 per cent of the world's annual gross product.

Article 32 of the UNCRPD requires states parties to collaborate in an inclusive development process. The EU, the second largest aid donor, has recently ratified the UNCRPD. In a report to the European Commission (EC), the European Foundation Centre (2010) suggests that human rights clauses in EU aid agreements should be extended to cover implementation of the UNCRPD (Box 2.2).

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### Box 2.2 General recommendations for states parties on Article 32

States Parties should perform a **screening exercise** to assess the inclusivity of their development aid policies and programmes. To this purpose, screening exercises should, *inter alia*, include an assessment of whether:

- any laws, policies or practices exclude persons with disabilities from international co-operation programmes, either as beneficiaries or as implementers;
- domestic disability laws apply extraterritorially to development assistance;
- existing disability non-discrimination laws apply to the recruitment and training of people with disabilities for international development or foreign assistance assignments;
- international co-operation programmes are directed at inclusion and autonomy and applied without discrimination and in relation to all persons with disabilities, including women and children with disabilities; and
- persons with disabilities and their representative organisation are involved in development planning, implementation and evaluation.

Following the results of screening exercises, all the aforementioned issues should be mainstreamed to all previously established, or upcoming, international co-operation programmes.<sup>47</sup>

States Parties as donor (or beneficiary) countries should take measures to **guarantee** that international co-operation mainstreams the general principles of the UN CRPD, and is inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities.<sup>48</sup>

States Parties should, in their international co-operation programmes and/or projects, **ensure** participation by persons with disabilities in the design, development, and evaluation of the programme and project.

States Parties should ensure that their international co-operation programmes and projects **mainstream** actions towards persons with disabilities.<sup>49</sup>

States Parties as donors should, in their international co-operation programmes and projects, include actions that support the beneficiaries **capacity building** on issues related to the implementation of the UNCRPD. These actions should include, but are not limited to, training, exchange and sharing experiences and good practices.

States Parties as donor (or beneficiary) countries should ensure that programmes, and/or projects, targeting the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), take into account the rights of persons with disabilities.<sup>50</sup>

In the end this is about political choices and it makes no sense politically or economically **not** to have all the world's children in quality inclusive schools.

Whether we develop inclusive education for disabled children and students will depend on our values. There are currently both promising and contrary indicators. Over the last three years, Education for All has seriously engaged with the inclusion of disabled pupils. The UN Conventions adopted by states, the CRC and the UNCRPD, create a policy obligation for inclusive education for disabled pupils and students. Disabled people's organisations and advocates overwhelmingly favour moves to inclusive education, as witnessed by the wording of Article 24. There is a growing awareness that the planet has finite resources and a more eco-friendly and fairer way must be found to distribute them to eradicate poverty and increase wellbeing. On the other hand, budget reductions in public spending caused by the banking crisis will impact on teacher training and morale, and increase poverty. Monopolistic competition, rather than collaboration, is the dominant economic force. Increasingly, non-accountable banks and large corporations are not subject to regulation and pay insufficient taxes into the public purse.

State education in some countries, such as Sweden, USA and UK is being privatised by setting up internal markets, using the inadequacies of the education system and the promotion of choice. This is having a detrimental impact on schools' abilities to support a range of disabled children. In the UK, the coalition government is seeking to 'remove the bias to inclusive education'. Very few parents who have had to battle to keep their disabled children in English mainstream schools experience such a bias. They would claim there is a built-in bias favouring segregation and exclusion.<sup>51</sup> The current UK government, by making it much easier to set up segregated special schools such as academies and free schools, taking away appeals against exclusion and cutting support services to mainstream schools, is making it much harder for disabled children to be included in mainstream schools.<sup>52</sup>

We do not know the costs of a fully inclusive education system because no developing countries have yet achieved this. Indeed, developed countries have not got there either, mainly because they have infrastructures and ideologies based on the 'medical model' of disability and special educational needs, which can be very expensive. We do know the human costs to so many disabled children around the world of either not being in school or being in school, **without** their needs met to bring about:

- 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.*

(UNCRPD, Article 24.1)

There are many pockets of good practice of developing inclusive education for disabled children and students in early years education and in primary, secondary and tertiary education. A range of these, predominantly from Commonwealth countries, will be critically examined at national, regional, district or school level to inform our thinking, as countries begin to grapple with their treaty obligations.