

10 Conclusion

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires all states parties, educationalists, parents of disabled children and disabled people's organisations to be actively aware of the changing paradigm around disability. There has been a shift from viewing the problem as one that is caused by the disabled person to identifying the barriers to disabled people's inclusion in society on every level, and then enacting laws, policies, procedures and practices to change the situation.

Article 24 of the Convention requires a careful implementation programme to be developed within the available resources. For many countries of the South, this will mean finding out which children are not in school and exploring ways of getting them there. A number of studies have identified high school drop-out rates, especially for disabled pupils. One of the challenges in implementing Article 24 is to alter the curriculum to make it exciting and relevant to all learners, and to make sure there are sufficient teachers and that they are trained in pupil-centred and flexible inclusive pedagogies, capable of including pupils with the whole range and severity of impairments. Teachers with particular expertise, such as knowledge of Braille or the ability to teach deaf pupils or pupils with significant learning difficulties, need to be redeployed from special schools to provide support in the mainstream as resource and itinerant teachers, and their schools should be turned into regional and district resource centres.

Young disabled people not only need to be included, together with other excluded groups, so that they can achieve their potential, but they must also be empowered to live worthwhile lives in a world still full of discriminatory barriers. For young disabled people to reach this position, they need supportive parents, families and teachers. Traditional values must be systematically challenged and parents must be empowered to become allies in their children's struggle for their rights.

Disabled adults and their organisations have a crucial role to play. These organisations need training to become effective advocates of inclusive education and disability equality. They can empower and act as role models to young disabled people; they can challenge negative attitudes in communities and schools; they can act as monitors and champions of disabled pupils' inclusion or challenge the lack of it; they can mentor them and develop their understanding of the type of adjustments and support they need. At the same time disabled people's organisations can educate teachers about the social oppression that is disability. There are so few disabled teachers that we cannot wait. Disabled people and their organisations must be at the centre of the drive for inclusive education. 'Nothing about us without us' has real meaning.

If the millions of teachers around the world are to understand what is required, then learning from and showcasing the islands of good practice that exist in every country is essential. Teachers must be treated with respect and their working and living conditions improved. Training must be provided and class sizes reduced by the recruitment of more teachers skilled in inclusive pedagogy. Inclusive and child-centred pedagogy must be mandatory in all initial training and provide the core of in-service professional development.

States must recognise that gender discrimination can have a double impact on disabled girls and young women in their struggle to be educated and included. Programmes to address this double inequality must be put into place.

In implementing Article 24, all states parties should be mindful of Article 31, which requires them to monitor and gather data on progress towards the goals set



Pablo Pineda, winner of the Silver Shell award at the 2009 San Sebastián International Film Festival. Pablo played a graduate with Down syndrome in the film Yo Tambien, a role that was similar to his real life situation. Pablo went to mainstream school and college with his mother's support.

out in the Convention. The recent finding by the World Health Organization (2011) that there are 1 billion disabled people in the world, or 15 per cent of the world's total population, will require major upward adjustments in resource allocation and changes in survey methods. This is backed up by recent surveys of the number of disabled children, using the questions developed by the Washington Group,³³⁶ which reports that pilot projects it has conducted in Africa and Asia show that between 14 and 17 per cent of children have an impairment.³³⁷

While the WHO *World Report on Disability* is welcome, its analysis of education in Chapter 7 is partial and out-of-date in its approach to comparing the benefits of provision in inclusive settings over special schools. In calling for a proper comparison of outcomes from the two, especially in developing countries, the authors miss key changes in the debate, as the research they quote dates from 1995.³³⁸

It is clear from the literature review carried out by Mitchell (2010) (Box 4.3) for the New Zealand Government, which looked at all English language published sources, that the large majority of studies show no worse outcomes for disabled children who attend mainstream schools, and that some show benefits, compared to children in special schools. Mitchell argues that educational provision for disabled students should not be primarily designed to fit the student into existing systems, but rather that provision should be reformed so that it can accommodate diversity. This is inclusion, not integration (see Chapter 4), a distinction not made by the authors of the *World Report on Disability*, which treats all forms of mainstreaming in the same way. Mitchell also concludes that inclusive education goes far beyond the physical placement of disabled students in general classrooms, but requires nothing less than the transformation of regular education by promoting positive school/classroom cultures and structures, together with evidence-based practices.

How effective is inclusive education?

The difference in achievement outcomes for disabled pupils in various types of education in England was recently shown in a dramatic way in a UK Government report (DFE, 2010). Ironically, the coalition government's more open approach to data has released information that was not published under the previous Labour government. This ultimately undercuts the basis of the 'choice' argument in the 2011 Green Paper, 'Support and Aspiration'. The figures for pupils who have Statements – the highest level of need – are revealing. In 2010, 54.8 per cent of pupils with a Statement attended mainstream schools. While it is true that 30,000 of those attending special schools had severe or profound learning difficulties, the remaining 60,000 had the same range of impairments as pupils who attended mainstream schools.

The data in Table 10.1 was acquired from the Department for Education and demonstrates great inequality of outcome between special and mainstream schooling for groups of children with similar impairments. At the end of primary school, children on the autistic spectrum who attend mainstream schools are 23 times more likely to do well than children in special schools. This disparity continues at age 16 with a 25-fold difference at higher qualifications or a 12-fold difference at lower level basic qualifications. There is a similar difference of outcomes for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties as their main presenting impairment – with children in mainstream education doing 20 times better than children in special schools at the end of primary school, with no pupils in special schools recorded as achieving the required Level 4. At the age of 16, four times as many secondary school pupils with moderate learning difficulties in mainstream schools achieved five GCSE passes at Grades A–C

Table 10.1. Achievement by type of special educational need comparing community schools and special schools in England at key stage 2 and key stage 4, 2009/ 2010

School Action + and Statemented	Key stage 2 Level 4 Community special school	Key stage 2 Level 4 Community primary school	5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*–C including English & Maths Community secondary schools	5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*–C including English & Maths Community special schools	5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*–G including English & Maths Community secondary schools	5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*–G including English & Maths Community special schools
All Pupils	2% (5,000)	80% (255,900)	54% (271,100)	0% (9,000)	94% (271,100)	7% (9,000)
Total SEN	2% (5,000)	36% (27,330)	17% (26,850)	0% (9000)	70% (26,850)	7% (9000)
Moderate learning difficulties	0% (890)	20% (8,500)	4% (5,800)	– (2,700)	70% (5,800)	2% (2,700)
Autism	2% (1,000)	46% (1,800)	25% (1,300)	1% (1,100)	84% (1,300)	7% (1,100)
BESD	11% (750)	50% (5,700)	14% (10,400)	0% (2,200)	64% (10,400)	17% (2,200)
Hearing impaired	0% (40)	49% (570)	36% (620)	– (90)	89% (620)	20% (90)
Visually impaired	5% (20)	58% (280)	42% (340)	– (50)	90% (340)	33% (50)
Physical disability	2% (190)	53% (870)	33% (860) (860)	– (290)	86% (860)	9% (290)

Nos. 1–5 suppressed

Source: Safeguarding and Vulnerable Children Analysis Team, Analysis and Research Division, Children, Young People and Families Directorate, UK Department for Education, 2010.

as their peers in special schools and 35 times as many achieved the lower level of five GCSE passes at Grades A–G. Similar disparities are found for those with physical and sensory impairments and to a lesser extent for those with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. It could be argued that these figures do not compare like with like, but the placement of pupils with special educational needs is a combination of parental choice and postcode lottery for pupils with these type of impairments. This is more influential than the severity of the pupil's impairment and so in aggregate provides a useful comparison.

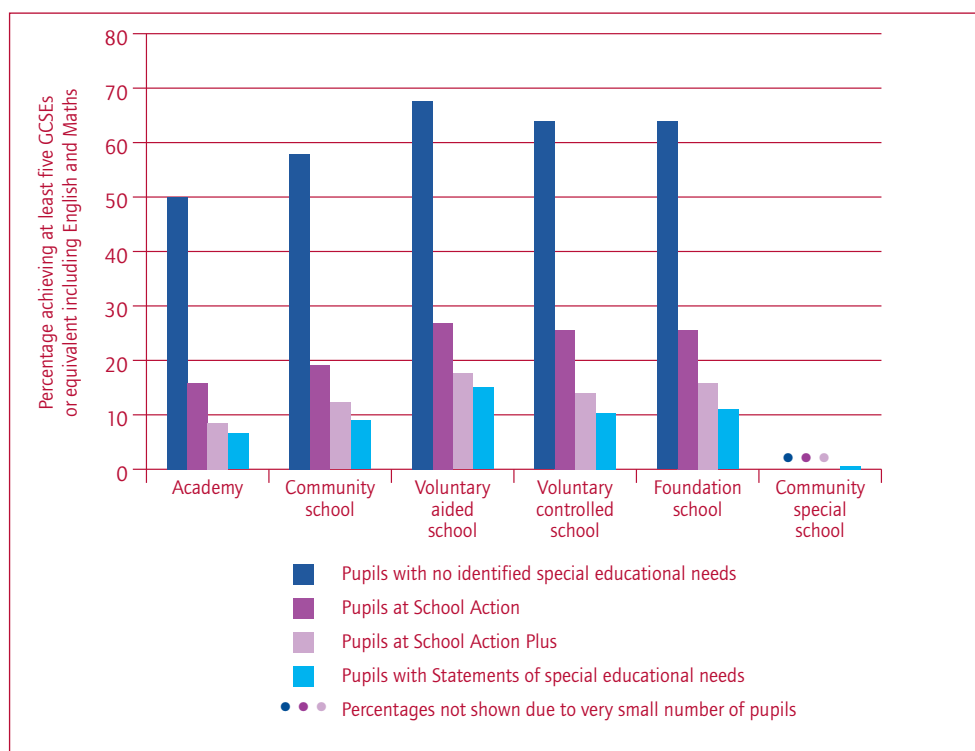
How can these substantial differences in favour of mainstreaming be explained?

MacArthur (2009), in her excellent publication *Learning Better Together*, examines the evidence in more detail. This is the subject of a major disagreement in the UK, with the coalition government committed to reasserting a bias to segregated education by removing the 'bias to inclusive education'. UK debates in this area often influence other parts of the Commonwealth.

MacArthur quotes research that compares the learning of disabled students in regular classrooms with students in special education settings (including approaches that withdraw disabled students from regular classrooms). This comparative research has looked at students' academic learning in mathematics, reading and other areas of the curriculum, and at student behaviour.

Disabled students have been found to do better academically and in terms of their behaviour in regular classrooms. In regular classes, instruction focuses more on the

Figure 10.1. Percentage of pupils who achieve the Level 2 threshold (including English and Maths) at key stage 4 by school type and provision for SEN, 2009



Source: UK Department for Education

regular education curriculum, whereas teachers using withdrawal approaches, where students are taken out of the classroom for specialist teaching, have a remedial focus. Some research is of particular note. In a North American study of primary and secondary schools, Fisher and Meyer (2002) compared the development of two groups of students with intellectual disabilities over two years (20 in regular education and 20 in special education settings). Their research showed that students with 'moderate and severe intellectual disabilities' in regular classrooms made greater gains in their social behaviour and in their overall development than students in special education settings. They point out that it is commonly assumed that students achieve better results in special education settings because of the specialist approaches they offer, such as intensive teaching, higher ratios of adults to children and specially trained staff.

However, their research challenges this idea, and indicates instead that the regular classroom is the best place for disabled students to learn.

A long-term study by a group of British researchers provides further evidence for improved learning by students with Down syndrome who attended regular classrooms (Buckley *et al.*, 2006). The study looked at the academic and social lives of 46 teenagers, 28 who attended special schools and 18 who attended mainstream schools, where they were taught in regular classrooms.

The young people in the two groups were placed in mainstream or special schools on the basis of where they lived; they were from similar social and family backgrounds and were likely to be of similar potential abilities when they started school. The study looked at students' progress in speech and language, literacy, socialisation, daily living skills and behaviour. When these students were followed up as teenagers, it was found that all had progressed on all the measures except communication.

Communication continued to improve through teenage years for the children in regular classrooms, but not for those in special schools. Similar findings come from another British study by Turner *et al.* (2008) that followed a group of 71 children with Down syndrome born between 1973 and 1980. Data collected when the children were aged 9, 13 and 21 years showed that school placement had a significant effect on students' academic achievement. Children with Down syndrome who were educated in regular classrooms had higher achievements in reading, writing and mathematics than those taught in segregated special education settings. These advantages continued into adult life.

How do researchers explain students' improved learning in the environment of regular classrooms compared to segregated, special education settings? Some say that teachers in regular schools have higher expectations for student learning; that students have access to appropriate role models; and there are increased opportunities for academic engagement and achievement. Buckley (2008) concludes from her research with Down syndrome students in the UK that it is not possible to provide top-level learning environments in special schools and classrooms, however hard teachers work. She argues that learning within a typically developing peer group may be essential for optimal progress.

To ensure that disabled students participate fully and achieve the full benefits of inclusive education, several of the comparative studies described here emphasise that schools must be provided with the guidance and support they need to understand inclusion and to work towards it. This means ensuring that schools have the resources, support and professional development opportunities that allow them to continuously question and improve their own approaches to teaching and learning. It also means that teacher education programmes must prepare pre-service teachers to work in inclusive schools that include a diverse range of children. Local administrators, advisors and inspectors should also be trained to support this agenda. Most importantly, the headteacher or principal must embrace the development of inclusive education and provide the support and leadership their staff need to make the transition.

World Report on Disability, 2011

The WHO *World Report on Disability*, published in June 2011, is a welcome contribution, which will increase the profile of disability rights and give an impetus to the urgent need to implement the UNCRPD at all levels. Chapter 7 addresses the barriers to inclusive education and how to address them. We can draw some conclusions using the following headings.

System-wide barriers

Legislation is important. In Malta this was vital and in New Zealand joined up thinking from ministries is promoting an understanding of the right of the education of disabled students. However, just passing legislation without implementing it does not work. As a study of low- and middle-income countries by the OECD (2007a) established, there has to be political will, otherwise legislation will have limited impact.

Policy: A clear policy helps shape delivery, as in Lesotho, which started with a policy in 1987 and by 1993 had found that 17 per cent of its primary school pupils were disabled. The SSA policy in India has given a very clear direction, but is under-funded due to an underestimate of numbers. Teachers' attitudes are positively affected by a strong government policy.

Plans: Clear national plans which identify the issues to be addressed, and provide mechanisms and funding for training, adjustments and support are likely to create a

move towards inclusion. The Mozambique Plan is belatedly seeking to bring disabled children into its strategy for achieving Education for All, but it is under-funded and Mozambique lacks sufficient expertise on the ground and in schools. Bangladesh does not have a national plan and therefore the gaps are being filled by NGO projects such as BRAC.

Some federal states in Canada and Australia, for example Queensland and New Brunswick, have highly developed plans, drawn up after widespread consultation and engagement with all stakeholders to reach a new consensus favouring an inclusive education system.

Funding: Funding can be through a national budget that tends to support fixed assets, resourced schools or special schools, as in Pakistan; through financing the particular needs of the institution for materials, teaching aids, training and operational support; or through financing individuals to meet their needs, as in New Zealand or England. In most low- and middle-income countries, funding for state education is insufficient to provide education of a similar standard as non-disabled children. In the developed countries too much of the funding goes on the relatively few disabled children in special schools and units, and not enough is spent on developing inclusion in the mainstream. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Save the Children and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency provided long-term funding and technical support for an inclusive education project from 1993 to 2009 (Grimes, 2010). The project resulted in a centralised, national approach to the development of policy and practice in inclusive education. Services began in 1993, when a pilot school opened in the capital, Vientiane. There are now 539 schools across 141 districts providing inclusive education and specialised support for more than 3,000 children with disabilities.³³⁹

School interventions

Recognising and addressing individual differences: The UNESCO *Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environments* (Box 8.1) and the CSIE's *Index for Inclusion* are useful aids in moving from traditional pedagogies to a more learner-centred approach. These approaches have also been attempted in the move towards an outcomes-based system in South Africa and the development of inclusive pedagogies in England, Scotland, New Zealand and Canada.

Streaming into ability groups is often an obstacle to inclusion, while mixed ability teaching and mixed age classrooms can be a way forward.³⁴⁰

Individualised education plans are a useful tool for facilitating learning, if parents, children and teachers are jointly involved in their construction and they can be used to develop and plan teaching and learning to suit the needs of the child. All the high-income countries use them, which would suggest they may only work in a resource rich environment.

Equipment and accommodations need not be high tech. A letterboard can be just as useful as an expensive talker for children with communication difficulties. As we saw in pre-schools in Dharavi, Mumbai, learning aids can be designed and made from local materials. Disabled adults can be employed in making low- and medium-tech aids and appliances.

Additional support will be needed by many disabled children and students if they are to access teaching and learning with their peers. In Brazil, the government is committed to a support room in every school and 30,000 are already in place. Teaching assistants, learning assistants or special needs assistants are being increasingly used to support the participation of disabled pupils in mainstream classes. Their



A mother in Tanzania brings her deaf child to school.

CREDIT: MTAJU

successful deployment requires effective communication and regular planning time with the class teacher. There are signs from experience in New Zealand and the UK that they can also act as a barrier to the social and academic development of disabled children.³⁴¹

High expectations and flexibility are key. As we saw, students with significant learning difficulties have progressed to higher education in Alberta and have been highly successful.

The Alliance for Inclusive Education has developed a training pack for inclusion assistants, who champion the inclusion of disabled children from a rights-based and social model approach.³⁴²

Resource teachers can be important in bringing additional expertise into the classroom in a team teaching situation. They need to work as a team to be most effective. Resource teachers have been very important in developing inclusion across Italy. The SSA programme in India relies heavily on resource teachers to support mainstream teachers, and to recruit and support additional disabled children in school.

Teachers with a particular specialism are important, such as itinerant teachers of the blind, who have been used effectively in Kenya, India and Bangladesh, and teachers of the deaf, who can support the inclusion of deaf pupils. However, we have seen that deaf children need other deaf people to learn to communicate in sign language and many ways have been found to do this.

Turning special schools into resource bases that support inclusion in surrounding schools is a good idea, but can be far harder to achieve. The South African Government planned this well, but entrenched attitudes from some educational professionals

and pressure from some parents reacting to large classes and integration, but not inclusion, has led to a growth in special schools. This is evidence that a plan must impact on all schools, not just a few.

Collaborative teaming among staff has proved highly successful in South Africa, with school-based and district-based support groups. Inclusion is not a solitary teaching activity, but requires teachers, social workers, psychologists, parents, community and disability organisations to work together and learn from each other.

Building capacity of teachers for inclusion is crucial and we have examined different training models. The key lesson is that it must not be an add-on, but an integral part of all teachers' initial and continuing development. Training for in-service colleagues is much more effective if they undergo it together in their school or groups of schools. The *Framework for Inclusion* developed in Scotland could be adapted for training for all teachers around the world.

Removing physical barriers: New schools need to be built to universal design standards. Existing schools can be made more accessible by the community, as in Tanzania and South Africa. Changing the layout of furniture can make an important contribution and is easily achieved.

Overcoming negative attitudes

Disabled people's organisations can help change attitudes by their presence and pressure. They are a very important element of change, by advocating rights-based approaches, compared to charity and medical approaches. Educating teachers to confront their own and their communities' traditional idea of disability as a stigma is a necessary first step, as is getting them to understand that if they are a good teacher, they can be a good teacher for all children.

Community attitudes need addressing and changing, often by enlisting local leaders or chiefs as in Oriang, Kenya and in Zanzibar. Examples of innovative practices that link CBR to inclusive education can be found in many low-income countries. In the Karamoja region of Uganda, where most people are nomads and only 11.5 per cent of the population are literate, children's domestic duties are essential to the survival of their families. In this region, a project called Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja has been set up. This community-based project has pushed for inclusion in education. It encourages the participation of disabled children and school instruction in the local language. The curriculum is relevant to the community's livelihood, containing instruction on such topics as livestock and crop production.³⁴³

Parents need to be involved in all aspects of learning. Frequently around the world it has been a parent's belief in their child and their right to education that has initiated moves to inclusive education. Equally, many parents, particularly in low-income countries, do not see how it is possible for their child to attend school. Work needs to be done through CBR and other initiatives, street theatre as in Dharavi, Mumbai or through using the school as a hub in the community as in Kwazulu-Natal. Training parents in the paradigm shift and empowering them to be champions of inclusion is vital if they are to become powerful allies in their child's struggle for inclusion. NFU, a parents' organisation in Norway, has helped parents in Zanzibar collaborate with the Education Ministry in introducing inclusive education. This has brought about remarkable results in including children with intellectual impairments in school and vocational training.

Disabled children have the right to be consulted and listened to. Many will need support and empowerment to find their voice, but the Young Voices already operating

in 19 Commonwealth countries show what a powerful advocacy role they can play. Every school needs to address how to give their disabled students a voice and develop structures for them to express their views and develop their capacity as self-advocates.

Scaling up pilot projects

With over 100 countries having ratified the Convention, the 'implementation gap' between reality on the ground, in terms of the development of inclusive education, and what is meant to be happening is in danger of widening. Some of the most successful examples of inclusive education identified here have been initiated by NGOs, often with donor support, for example BRAC in Bangladesh, Leonard Cheshire Disability in Kenya and Uganda, NFU in Zanzibar, Tanzania, Miet in Kwazulu Natal, Sightsavers in Bangladesh and India, Handicap International in Rwanda and Save the Children in India and Mongolia. These projects and many others that have been successful need to be systematically brought to scale.

Inclusion International suggest the following approach. What does scaling up these kinds of examples require? Increasingly, the literature on scaling up points to the crucial need to develop local-to-regional-to-global networks. This fits in well with the DREM model developed by Peters, described in Chapter 4.

In this way stakeholders can share information, technology and financing. They can find ways to demonstrate innovations, and then get them embedded in systems and policies for wider dissemination and impact. As Sachs (2005: 242) has written:

The end of poverty must start in the villages of Sauri and the slums of Mumbai, and millions of places like them. The key to ending poverty is to create a global network of connections that reach from impoverished communities to the very centres of world power and wealth and back again.

Sachs (2005) and the UN Millennium Project have examined a number of case studies in innovation which they suggest draw upon these 'networks of connections' to scale up their impact. They identify key 'success factors' associated with national-level scaling up of innovations, including:

- Political leadership;
- Effective and co-ordinated local-to-national human resources and public management strategies;
- Local delivery mechanisms engaging local communities and civil society organisations;
- Mobilisation of private sector engagement, support and investment;
- Effective monitoring of progress against national goals and benchmarks;
- Long-term, predictable funding commitments and technical assistance from donor agencies.

This framework is a useful tool for assessing the existing efforts on a country-by-country basis to 'scale up' inclusive education. It is also important to ask:

- Is there senior political leadership for the cause?
- Is a national action plan in place with a clear focus on inclusive education?
- Does the plan have measurable targets and outcomes?

- Will the plan require leadership to implement the many policy commitments now in place?

In any attempt to scale up, the fundamental of implementing inclusive education must be remembered.

Together with other international agencies, Commonwealth leaders must focus on scaling up the many useful, mainly NGO-driven, inclusion projects that already exist and are outlined in Chapters 7 and 8.

Inclusion: The 'magic formula'

Mitchell (2009) puts forward a useful formula to summarise the process of implementing inclusive education, to which the author has added, in light of the Disability Rights in Education Model.

$$\text{Inclusive Education} = \text{V} + \text{P} + \text{CC} + \text{5As} + \text{S} + \text{R} + \text{E} + \text{DET} + \text{L}$$

V = Vision Inclusive education requires a commitment from educators at all levels of the system.

P = Placement Placement in age-appropriate classrooms in learners' neighbourhood schools is a necessary (but not sufficient) requirement of inclusive education.

CC = Child-to-Child Given the heavy weight of traditional and medical model ideas about difference and disabled people in all societies, it is essential that educationists create a welcoming class environment and develop peer relationships. These should be social with buddies and circles of friends, and academic with peer support and collaborative working.

5As

- (i) *Adapted curriculum*: Making appropriate adaptations and modifications to the general curriculum is central to inclusive education and is probably the biggest challenge to educators.
- (ii) *Adapted assessment*: It is essential that assessment serves educational purposes by promoting learning and guiding teachers, and does not simply function as a tool for sorting and selecting learners for advancement.
- (iii) *Adapted teaching*: Inclusive education challenges educators to develop a wide repertoire of evidence-based teaching strategies, i.e. clearly specified methods that have been shown by good quality research to be effective in bringing a desired outcome in learners. This requires initial and continuing training.
- (iv) *Acceptance*: Inclusive education relies on educators, learners and their parents accepting the right of disabled learners to be educated in general education classrooms, to receive equitable resources and not be bullied or harassed.
- (v) *Access*: For learners with physical, mental or sensory impairments to be included, adequate access and accommodations must be provided, for example ramps, toilets, space for wheelchairs, letter boards, Braille and other communication aids.

S = Support Inclusive education for disabled learners requires support from a team of professionals, in addition to regular classroom teachers. These include aides and assistant teachers, specialist advisers and appropriate therapists.

R = Resources Inclusive education requires adequate funding (but no more than would be provided in a special school). This includes appropriate learning materials and books in the right formats.

E = Engagement Inclusive education to be successful needs continuing engagement with learners, parents, community and disabled people in developing policies and practices.

DET = Disability Equality Training Training for staff, parents and learners, based on the paradigm shift to the social model of disability, to counter the dominant deficit medical model. This should be delivered by suitably trained disabled young people and adults. An awareness of the oppression disabled people are subject to needs to be specifically addressed in the curriculum.

L = Leadership To bring all the above elements of the 'magic formula' together, leadership is required based on inclusive ethos and values at all levels – government, national and local education authorities, principals and classroom teachers.

I have added three categories to Mitchell's formula to fit in with the DREM model and the experience of disabled people. These are CC (Child-to-Child) – this is more than acceptance; E (Engagement) on a continuous basis with learners, parents, the community and disabled people and their organisations; and DET (Disability Equality Training), delivered by capacitated disabled people using their life experience and social model thinking to challenge and change attitudes and practices.

The way forward

The task we face across the Commonwealth and around the world is daunting and exciting. Through enhanced international co-operation and a real determination from political leaders to put right the wrongs of the past, we can make progress towards the goal of every disabled child and young person accessing and achieving within the education system. We need to end the wastage of human potential and resources.

The evidence from around the world is clear. When disabled people are included in education, they can escape the inequalities and prejudices which for so long have confined them to poverty and denial of their human rights.

Moreover, the changes in education systems that this will require will mean that all learners benefit, leading to more humane, educated and equal societies. There are however some major obstacles to implementing inclusive education. These are macro-economic, political and cultural.

Barnes and Mercer (2010), taking a long-term view, evaluate the position of disabled people in the majority developing world and identify the barriers to disabled people as largely emanating from the world economic order. According to some estimates (Giddens, 2001: 71), in 1820 the gap between the world's richest and poorest nations was approximately 3:1, but this widened with the growth of international capitalism, so that by 1992 the difference had multiplied to a staggering 72:1. Globalisation has accelerated the pace of change and has marginalised more people in poverty. The production of impairment and disability is inseparable from the extreme levels of poverty and inequality in developing countries and the wider background of capitalist industrialisation and globalisation. The linkages between poverty and disability encompass outcomes such as limited access to education, employment, food and housing, public health and healthcare, and reduced social, civil and political rights. A cycle of poverty and disability sets in with cumulative and reinforcing disadvantages and inequalities.

Over recent decades, there has been a growing internationalisation of disability politics and policies. Pressure has built up on governments around the world to address the social exclusion and lack of basic human rights experienced by disabled

Fighting for inclusion when it comes to race and gender is obvious – races are equal and genders are equal. But to me, minds and bodies are also equal – the idea of educating someone separately because their mind or body is different seems ridiculous and like another form of apartheid.

Benjamin Zephaniah, poet and disabled person, *The Teacher*, May/June 2003

*We must be the
change we wish in
the world.*
Mahatma Gandhi

people. Action relied heavily on funding and inputs from donor countries, international aid organisations and NGOs, with community-based rehabilitation projects prominent. Yet the historical record shows a relative lack of positive changes in the lives of disabled people and poor communities. This offers a salutary lesson about the pitfalls of ad hoc short-term experiments in social reform that are not adequately resourced (although there is intense competition for material support). Too often projects do not emerge organically from the communities they are designed to support, but remain largely under the direction of external professional 'experts'.

A powerful stimulus to changing 'official' thinking have been the actions of poor and disabled people, establishing their own organisations, campaigning for social justice, equality and self-empowerment, and highlighting the consequences of disabling social and environmental barriers. The involvement of disabled people in the UNCRPD is a case in point. This politicisation and articulation of broader strategies has been pursued despite the endless pressure for survival experienced by so many poorer and disabled people. Nonetheless, it is vital that disabled people maintain a critical approach to Western theories and policies. Ideas about what is best for a particular country must not be imposed by outside, non-disabled or disabled, 'experts'. A disability rights agenda has yet to nullify the impact of vast material differences between countries. Hence, the need to explore more fundamental changes in the relationship between poorer countries and the capitalist world order to achieve the goals of disabled people. In education, the globalisation agenda is having an impact.

In the four years since the first edition of this book, much progress has been made, but there is also a feeling that initiatives are stalling, linked to the global economic crisis. New ideas on treating education as a commodity in a competitive global market place are gaining ground. Inclusion thrives on collaboration and caring for each other. We have a choice. Ball (2007: 191), in examining the commodification of education and the increasing role of private enterprise in state education, warns against the damaging effects:

We need to struggle to think differently about education policy before it is too late. We need to move beyond the tyrannies of improvement, efficacy and standards to recover a language of and for education articulated in terms of ethics, moral obligations and values.

Slee (2011), an academic who was involved in advising on educational change towards a more inclusive approach in Queensland, Australia, offers a comprehensive critique of the co-option of inclusive education into the conservative defence of the status quo. Slee demonstrates the connection between the macroeconomic approach of the World Bank and IMF, and the growth of neo-conservatism and consumerism, and the halting of progress towards genuine inclusive education. He argues there is still time to counter these trends, but educators and decision-makers must acknowledge the growth of 'collective indifference'. He argues that rather than mainstreaming or integration, the 'irregular school' is needed to achieve inclusion. To achieve irregular schools, politicians, administrators, educators, parents and disabled people must address five key tasks to achieve and maintain inclusive practice:

- The restorative task, including democratic, direct representation of all parties, especially the hitherto marginalised, with sufficient time and support for all to appreciate key issues.
- The analytical task of understanding the processes of exclusion and restructuring to rely less on outside placement;

- The policy task of decoupling from special education so inclusion is part of the motivation of general education reform and is aimed at including the excluded;
- The educational task needs to broaden and reinstate value for socially connected learning, for innovation, for creativity, for critical understanding, for mutuality in learning processes, for connected thematic teaching and learning, for ongoing assessment and compiling portfolios in preference to high stakes tests;
- The values task of reinstating the value of those who have been undervalued by schools and of building communities based on trust, collaboration and social justice.

What is needed, Slee argues, *'is an acknowledgement of exclusion and a determination to dismantle it now. We know that the task condemns or privileges us to a life of vigilance. All must share in this and this will create difficulty, struggle, tension and new productive relationships.'* Are we capable? Together, we can do it!

The education and development of one-sixth of the world's people can no longer be ignored or sidelined. As the leaders, teachers, parents, citizens and young people of the Commonwealth and the world seek to develop new collaborative and sustainable ways of living together on our finite planet, perhaps those who have been pushed to the margins are the very ones with the solutions. Places as diverse as Samoa, Zambia, New Brunswick, Canada and rural Brazil have demonstrated that all can be included in education. A world based on inclusion and collaboration is now our great hope. Will you help make this a reality?

Getting started

At the North South Dialogue held in Delhi in 2005, Professor Gary Bunch said:

Now we come to my final and most important key, simply getting started. I have heard people talk about the values and challenges of inclusion on many occasions and in many places. I have heard administrators discuss why inclusion, though having undisputed value, could not happen in their particular environments. I have heard many professionals explain why a certain child or youth, who would certainly benefit from being included, certainly could not be included due to this, or that, compelling reason. I have heard inclusion described as a wonderful philosophy, but too utopian to be possible. There are many who resist inclusion in these ways.

Where I have seen inclusion succeed in Canada, I have seen educators, parents, and others put aside reservations and simply get started. Without getting started and finding out what can happen, none of the other key elements I have mentioned is worth anything. They obtain their value by someone deciding to get started and then getting started.³⁴⁴