



LIGHT
FOR THE WORLD



POLICY

Disability Inclusive Education



Global situation

Inclusive education transforms education systems in order to increase **access, acceptance, participation** and **learning achievement** of all children by removing barriers and enhancing the capacity of the education system to accommodate diversity. Inclusive education is about ensuring that all children learn and flourish.

This policy focuses on disability inclusive education.

Some groups of students are at risk of exclusion or discrimination in education based on their gender, race, ethnicity, location, socio-economic standing or other context-specific marginalisation, such as street children, indigenous people, minority language groups and refugees. **Children with disabilities are the largest group of girls and boys who are denied their right to education.**

- There are between 93 and 150 million compulsory school-aged girls and boys with disabilities worldwide
- 32.5 million primary and lower secondary school-aged children with disabilities in low and middle income countries are estimated to be out of school.¹

There is a wide range of evidence demonstrating that children with disabilities are more likely to:

- be excluded from education;
- drop out early;
- be unaccounted for in data systems;
- be forgotten in education sector planning;
- be neglected in resource allocations.

¹ Education Commission, 2016, p. 33. Available online: <http://report.educationcommission.org/download/891/>

Disability inclusive education is more than just about access. Educational models where children with disabilities are segregated or integrated without systemic reform of content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies, could worsen stigma and discrimination.

Instead, disability inclusive education transforms all aspects of education to address shortcomings and focus on the well-being and success of students with disabilities. It is our ambition to support partners to move from integration to disability inclusive education.

Disability inclusive education is a means of achieving high-quality education and has proven benefits for all. Active learning, peer support and child-centred approaches enrich learning for all students. Disability inclusive education fosters community, respect, tolerance and diversity. Research also states that investing in the education of people with disabilities is beneficial to the individual and to national economies.

Despite current evidence related to the cost and benefits of investing in disability inclusive education and renewed commitments to honour education for all, technical and resource allocation is nowhere near the level required to trigger system change.

Our approach

Guiding framework

4 Sustainable Development Goal

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all

- Underpinning principle of leave no one behind
- The most inclusive goal of the SDGs with regard to disability
- The Education 2030 Framework for Action operationalises the goal

Targets

- ▶ 4.5. Equal access to **all levels of education** and vocational training for persons with disabilities
- ▶ 4.A. Child-, disability- and gender-sensitive **education facilities**

Indicator

% of schools with **adapted infrastructure and material** for students with disabilities

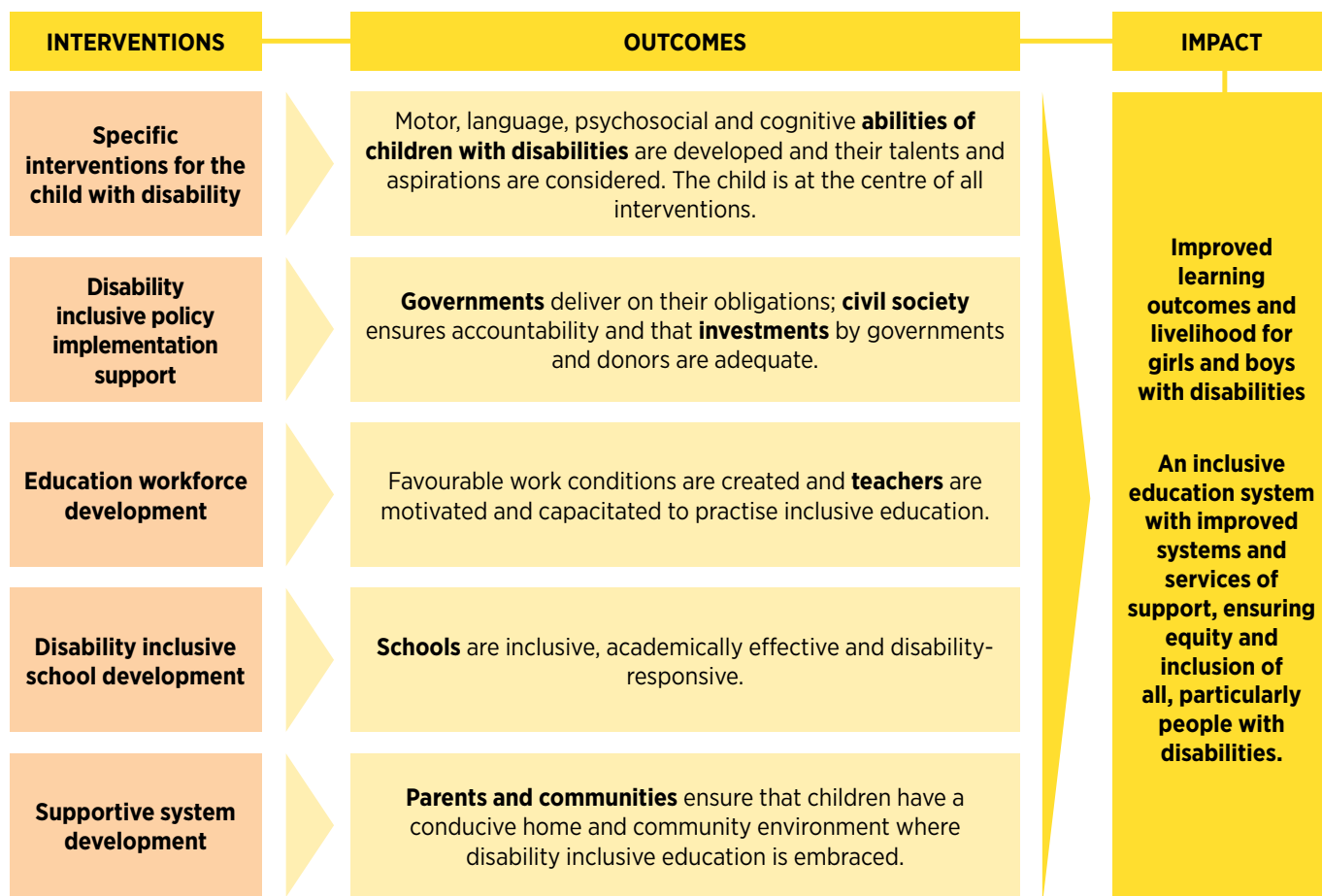
24 Article of the UNCRPD

General Comment 4 on Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires in-depth transformation of education systems; legislation, policies, mechanisms for financing, administrating, designing and monitoring education must change and align with the UN CRPD and Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Theory of Change

Light for the World focuses on five areas in our aim to create disability inclusive education systems, as described in our Theory of Change:

The Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) strategy is the bedrock of our inclusive education work. The CBR approach contributes to developing ecosystems in which girls and boys with disabilities can flourish. Changing social norms is the stepping stone to developing inclusive education systems.



Specific interventions for the child with disability

Light for the World is working to ensure children with disabilities are identified as early as possible and receive intervention, rehabilitation and treatment, in order to improve their education opportunities and quality of life. We aim to reduce the disabling effects of impairments and promote full development (social, physical, communication and emotional) of more children:

- For some children this could mean undergoing surgery to remove a cataract, using a prosthesis, wearing spectacles or receiving physiotherapy;
- whilst for others this could involve developing their pre-literacy skills, providing sign-language instruction to parents and babies and other assistive devices and/or information and communication technologies.
- This also includes increasing the capacity of parents and service providers to improve interventions, so that more children can function at their optimum level of ability and receive appropriate assistive devices which may assist them to participate more fully in the classroom and community environments.
- It is expected that as more children gain in self-esteem and confidence, they might increasingly articulate their wants, needs and rights. Light for the World aims to work to develop the capacity of parents and service providers, to instil the belief in every child that they can make a valuable contribution to society, and to support early learning stimulation.

Disability inclusive policy implementation support

Most countries have a commitment to international and national legal frameworks for inclusive education for girls and boys with disabilities. Light for the World has a partnership with the Global Campaign for Education, and specific donors have strong commitments to disability inclusive education. We aim to increase government accountability for implementing policies and plans that support the right to education. This includes:

- Improving the collection of data and evidence;
- Empowering and equipping more organisations and activists to advocate and lobby;
- Improving donor understanding of disability inclusive education.
- Through these, it is anticipated that:
 - ♦ more right-holders and advocates participate in planning, management and review of education plans;
 - ♦ there is increased government and donor investment in disability inclusive education;
 - ♦ and that data and evidence will be stronger.

To contribute to influencing these changes, Light for the World will:

- design and implement innovative projects and programmes with distinct interventions and rigorous monitoring and evaluation that can be taken to scale;
- support and strengthen inclusive education directorates;
- leverage the diplomatic strength of bilateral and multilateral donors by influencing them to raise and address concerns around aspects of the topic;
- develop strategic evidence-based advocacy and a coordinated approach amongst international NGOs;
- bring disability perspectives into current education debates and advocacy movements;
- provide the mainstream education initiatives with the technical input required for disability inclusive education by partnering with long-standing expert education organisations;
- promote a cross-sectoral approach to ensure support for girls and boys with disabilities in inclusive education;
- and empower national education coalitions and people with disabilities and their families as right-holders and advocates to champion the cause.

Education workforce development and training institutions

Inclusive education directorates are taking a central role in creating disability inclusive education systems. Institutions training teachers are also developing accredited and structured professional development courses. With these important entry points, we aim to ensure that the educational workforce embraces disability inclusive education for people with disabilities and is committed to realising it, through:

- embedding inclusion in the programmes of major education actors leading to more directorates mainstreaming disability and promoting programmes in schools;
- improved work conditions and official recognition of the qualifications and expertise of teachers;
- more specialist teachers equipped to support schools;
- more teaching and learning materials;
- and embedding the principles of inclusion in training curriculums.

These changes could lead to schools having more teachers who are competent, supported and motivated to provide quality, inclusive education.

In order to contribute to these changes, Light for the World aims to:

- influence and support major education actors;
- offer technical support to education ministries in developing clear policy and procedural guidelines;
- promote cross-learning among general and specialist teachers;
- develop teaching and learning materials;

- work with teacher-training institutions to develop courses;
- and encourage and provide opportunities for people with disabilities to be part of the workforce.

Inclusive school development

Light for the World partners are working in the context of supportive school management and parent-teachers associations; school clubs, sports and recreational activities; and in schools where Universal Design for Learning and cooperative learning are increasingly becoming the norm. We want to make more schools successful academically as well as being disability-responsive.

To support this goal, Light for the World aims to contribute to:

- schools becoming more welcoming, barrier-free and having a culture of acceptance;
- fostering a learning environment where learners and teachers support each other;
- more inclusion of children with disabilities in all subjects, developing understanding and as a result, improved academic and holistic learning outcomes.

To achieve these aims, Light for the World will use child-to-child approaches, enrolling the support of the school management team and parent-teacher association and promoting Universal Design for Learning along with cooperative learning approaches as inclusive pedagogies.

Supportive system development

Within Disability Inclusion in Community Development, our partners are currently promoting access for all to a quality education. We will ensure that community members and leaders uphold the right to education of children with disabilities and attempt to counter negative

attitudes about the value of educating a child with a disability. This will result in:

- more parents of children with disabilities supporting their child to reach their full potential and exercise their rights;
- parents becoming more economically able to support their child's education;
- the people surrounding children developing positive attitudes about the abilities of people with disabilities.

Light for the World will engage in various activities to influence these changes, including:

- ongoing awareness raising and the use of media, role models and spreading of good practices;
- counselling of parents of children with disabilities;
- and promoting inclusion of people with disabilities in social services and in the work of mainstream NGOs.

Implementation

Light for the World implements Disability Inclusive Education through the following strategies:

- ◆ We choose local partners who already do quality work or demonstrate great potential. Support is provided to partners to strengthen the quality of their interventions where necessary;
- ◆ Light for the World leads on international, regional and national evidence-based advocacy either as an expert organisation or in partnership. We bring in the testimonies, voices and lived experiences of our partners and beneficiaries. We encourage government transformation and civil society strengthening. We are committed to finding easily scalable and low-cost innovations.

Our priority areas

- Advocating equitable investment by providing the disability perspective on existing education financing discussions;
- Expanding our portfolio of work to include Early Childhood Development and early learning;
- Improving learning outcomes by investing in education workforce development and accessible learning using information and communication technologies;
- Developing the education workforce via training institutions and providing continuous professional development opportunities for teachers;
- Enhancing research, monitoring and evaluation systems, thereby generating data to develop more efficient and effective programmes;
- Strengthening our advocacy efforts and linking global with national advocacy;
- Building capacities of teachers, CBR workers, officials, our staff and children with disabilities and their families.

Areas for innovation

- ◆ School Eye Health
- ◆ Investment in early learning
- ◆ Learning outcomes
- ◆ Youth- and child-led activism

Knowledge & research to promote learning

Building on the current context of some existing local and international platforms for knowledge dissemination, we aim to build higher quality and relevant inclusive education programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. This begins with more evidence, data and knowledge from disability inclusive programming being captured, analysed and shared, which will motivate stakeholders to develop and improve the effectiveness of their interventions.

The types of approaches Light for the World will use to positively influence these changes include:

- supporting communities with practical assistance in specific sub-areas of disability inclusive education (e.g. education for the blind and partially sighted);
- gathering research on areas where there is a shortage of evidence such as identification of children with disabilities, learning outcomes and cost-effectiveness of disability inclusive education models;
- creating platforms for stakeholders to network and share;
- and strengthening our own monitoring and evaluation systems.

We endeavour to accomplish this through partnerships with research institutions to enhance our own programming and to underpin our evidence-based advocacy.

Programmatic links to other thematic areas and strategies

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Education is an enabling right and acts as a catalyst for all other rights that allow full participation in and enjoyment of life. The right to education was first enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the right to education for persons with disabilities was reinforced in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Honouring and ensuring the rights of the most excluded in society promotes tolerance, peace and acceptance, which is the pathway to an inclusive society.

Disability Inclusion in Community Development

Disability Inclusion in Community Development is the foundation on which our Disability Inclusive Education projects are based. Dedicated and trained community workers go out into the community to meet with children with disabilities in remote villages. They then take action through:

- counselling and educating their parents, the community leaders and service providers through dispelling negative stereotypes about disabilities and educating them about the rights and support needs of girls and boys with disabilities;
- Negotiating access to services for all children and supporting the participation and development of children in school by providing them with the tools they may need, e.g. assistive devices, training in disability-specific skills (sign language, Braille, etc.) and rehabilitation.

Eye Health

There is a close correlation between good health and improved educational outcomes for children. Around 80 percent of what a child learns in school is information that is presented visually. Our Disability Inclusive Education



and Eye Health programmes complement each other. School eye health can improve the attendance and performance of children in school while disability inclusive education ensures that a child whose sight cannot be restored can learn in their nearby village school.

Economic Empowerment

Educating a child with a disability has a positive impact at an individual, household and national level. Persons with disabilities who are educated receive between 19.3% to 25.6% higher wages than those who are not.¹ Each additional year of schooling completed by an adult with a

1 Lamichhane, K., and Sawada, Y. 2013. "Disability and returns to education in a developing country." *Economics of Education Review* 37: 85-94.

disability reduces the probability that their household will belong to the poorest two quintiles by 2-5%.² Moreover, the Gross Domestic Product of a country rises by at least 2% when children and young people with disabilities attend school, thereby allowing their caregivers and siblings to also attend school or earn a decent livelihood.³

2 Filmer, Deon. 2008. "Disability, Poverty, and Schooling in Developing Countries: Results from 14 Household Surveys." *The World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 141-163.

3 Banks, Lena Morgon and Polack, Sarah. 2014. *The Economic Costs of Exclusion and Gains of Inclusion of People with Disabilities*. Available online https://www.cbm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Costs-of-Exclusion-and-Gains-of-Inclusion-Report.pdf

Geographical focus

The policy applies to all countries where Light for the World members work. The geographical focus of the full policy implementation is Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. The policy also applies to countries with more limited implementation such as Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal, North-East India, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, South Sudan and Tanzania.

Partnerships and networks

We partner with networks and organisations on an international and national level, such as:

- International: Global Campaign for Education (GCE), International Disability and Development consortium (IDDC), UNESCO;
- Regional: African Disability Forum (ADF), African Child Policy Forum (ACPF);
- National: UNICEF, Humanity and Inclusion, Plan International, Stromme Foundation, Lilliana Fonds, AIFO, British Council, CBM;
- Research: REAL Cambridge University, University of Cape Town Institute for Monitoring and Evaluation, Education Equity Research Initiative.



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