

Children with disabilities have an equal right to an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education.⁽¹⁾ However in most low and middle income countries, they are **ten times less likely to attend school than non-disabled peers and are more likely to drop out than any other group of children.**⁽²⁾

The inclusion of children with disabilities involves them being welcomed and supported within their local mainstream school.

Gaps in the provision of an equitable education system

The barriers preventing disabled children from accessing quality basic education:

Political and system-wide:

- **Divided ministerial** responsibility for addressing disability often housed within separate ministries.
- **Lack of (or poor quality) legislation, policies, targets and plans.**
- Poor monitoring and follow-up of national policies and plans.
- **Inadequate resources** and capacity to implement on the ground.

School-level:

- **Curriculums only utilising passive learning** such as oral repetition, dictation and copying from the blackboard.
- **Inadequate training** and on-going support for mainstream teachers.
- **Physical barriers** both in getting to school and accessing facilities once there, such as toilets and even the classrooms themselves.

Home/community-level challenges:

- **Attitudinal barriers** with negative attitudes amongst teachers, parents and communities.
- **Labelling** children by health condition can lead to stigmatisation, peer rejection, and poor self-esteem.

What are the benefits of inclusive education?

An **Inclusive Education (IE) approach** ensures that schools and local **education systems are responsive** to the needs of all children, including children with disabilities. Inclusive education that addresses the needs of children with disabilities plays a positive role in helping address community stigma related to disability, demonstrating that children with disabilities can have a positive future and contribute to society.



© McGeown/Humanity & Inclusion

Humanity & Inclusion currently runs 34 projects in 30 countries worldwide. In 2010 in Kara, northern Togo, one of the approaches used to facilitate inclusive education was to introduce the “itinerant teacher” model as part of our regional West Africa Inclusive Education Programme funded by AFD. The project provided mobile, itinerant teachers trained in disability-specific teaching skills. The teachers visit different schools and work with specific students while simultaneously providing ongoing support and advice to mainstream teachers. Sign language is used during classes at the school in the photo which is now fully inclusive.

Humanity & Inclusion and the Regional Directorate for Education (DRE) in Togo jointly run this scheme. We have also been involved in national advocacy and teacher training and are currently rolling out Inclusive Education modules in six teacher training institutes. The impact of this intervention has been that Inclusive Education is now embedded in the Education Sector Plan (2014-2016) and the Ministry of Education has validated HI’s braille, sign language and Inclusive Education manuals for use nationwide.

QUICK FACTS

- 1 in 20 children under 14 years old has a moderate to severe disability. (UNICEF, World Report, 2013).
- Over 32 million school aged children with disabilities are estimated to be out of school worldwide, roughly 1/3 of the out of school population. (Education commission report, 2016)
- The estimated return on the education investment for schooling disabled children in Nepal and the Phillipines is 25%. (ILO, Lamichhane and Sawada, 2013 and Mori and Yamagata, 2009)
- In a study across 19 low income countries, the gap in primary school completion rates between children with and without disabilities has increased dramatically over time. (Male, C., and Q. Wodon 2017).

References ⁽¹⁾ [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24](#) | ⁽²⁾ [Plan International, Data across 56 Countries](#)

⁽³⁾ [World Education Forum, Incheon Declaration](#) | ⁽⁴⁾ [Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal 4, 2015](#)

⁽⁵⁾ [“Send All My Friends to School”, Global Campaign for Education.](#)

