



Inclusive education in resource-constrained environments: good practice examples and learning from implementation

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Query: What are recent examples of good practice in providing inclusive education in resource-constrained environments, in terms of:

- enrolling children with disabilities into mainstream schools
- creating inclusive environments in schools, for example through teacher training, whole school approaches and awareness raising
- identifying learning needs for children with disabilities, with a particular focus on intellectual disabilities
- use of specialist education resources (eg. teachers, resource centres) to support mainstream schools

Enquirer: Amna Khalid, DFID Pakistan

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1. Introduction

This query is a practical know-how query gathering good practice and learning from experts in the field of inclusive education for children with disabilities in resource-constrained environments. The report is based on interviews and a rapid review of documentation shared by interviewees, recognising the limited evidence base in this field. The Helpdesk team sought insights and case studies from the DFID-funded Disability Inclusive Development consortium¹ as well as academics and practitioners in the wider international development context. The list of individuals interviewed is available on page 12. The methodology also included conducting a light-touch scan of the available evidence to contextualise findings from the interviews and document review. Case studies are outlined in section 4 giving further details about the design of inclusive education programmes and key learning.

For the purpose of this query, inclusive education is defined as a fundamental human right of all learners, involving 'a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision

¹ The DID consortium partners are ADD International, BBC Media Action, BRAC, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), International Disability Alliance (IDA), Humanity & Inclusion, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Light for the World, Sense, and Social Development Direct.

serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences.² (UNCRPD Article 24 General Comment 4).

It is important to note some caveats here. Firstly, inclusive education is a controversial area with many differences of opinion amongst academics and practitioners on the spectrum of special education to fully inclusive education. This query shares insights from a small number of individuals and should therefore not be taken as outlining consensus in the sector. Secondly, whilst this query is focused on inclusive education, several experts underlined the need to support a twin-track approach providing specific and reasonable accommodations for particular disabilities within a broader context of inclusive and systemic reform (interviews with L. Wapling, S. Tesni, M. Schoeman; CBM, 2018). Thirdly, much of the available learning is related to children with physical disabilities; there were fewer good practice examples on reaching children with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, including those experiencing trauma as a result of violence, conflict and displacement.

Experts highlighted various key approaches to achieving impact for children with disabilities in resource-constrained environments, including some low-cost interventions and interventions which can have impact quickly and/or at scale:

- **Take a rights-based approach to education, focusing on identifying and removing the barriers to access and learning**, strengthening capacities, accountability and highlighting international frameworks and commitments (interview with L. Wapling; J. Myers).
- **Shift towards child-centred pedagogy in teacher training and curriculum development to meet the needs of diverse learners** (interviews with L. Wapling, S. Tesni, G. Le Fanu, M. Schoeman). Interactive lessons, and inclusive teaching and learning materials can improve the quality of learning for all. These measures can have significant impacts for the majority of children with disabilities enrolled in school, whose impairments are less visible and may not require assistive devices or other impairment-specific support.³
- **Integrate a focus on inclusion in teacher training, including in the pre-service teacher training curriculum** to achieve impact at scale. Studies suggest that teachers with exposure to inclusive pedagogies during pre-service training are more likely to have positive attitudes towards teaching children with disabilities (Wapling, 2016; Howegego et al., 2014). Support special education teacher trainees to develop skills to train other teachers in keeping with an inclusive model, rather than focusing on teaching individual children with disabilities. When developing **in-service training, focus on building skills to adapt materials and approaches and working with teachers in a collaborative way which promotes ownership and uptake** (interviews with M. Schoeman and G. Le Fanu).
- **Introduce the reforms mentioned above during scheduled reviews of curricula and teaching and learning materials, rather than through separate initiatives.** These reforms should be designed in consultation with DPOs (interview with L. Wapling).

² The definition goes on: Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion'

³ Data from DFID's Girls' Education Challenge suggests the proportion of children in classrooms who have a disability is between 3 and 5% (interview with L. Wapling). Recent data from Pakistan highlights that the majority of children with disabilities are in school, including 91% children with mild disabilities and 77% children with moderate to severe disabilities (Malik et al., 2018).

- **Introduce elements of inclusive education into existing project and programme activities**, for example awareness raising on the right to education, improving the accessibility of physical infrastructure, including installing ramps when school renovations are needed; and ensuring separate toilets are accessible when built through girls' education initiatives⁴ (interviews with L. Wapling and M. Schoeman).
- **Integrate Washington Group Questions into surveys and build disability markers into education management information systems** to better understand the impact of disability on access and learning outcomes (interview with L. Wapling). For example, see Section 4 for a case study on how disability-disaggregated data has helped ensure that DFID's Girls Education Challenge projects are more inclusive to girls with disabilities.
- **Use innovative approaches to funding to ensure adequate resources.** Disability-responsive budgeting⁵ has been shown to be less expensive than retrospectively incorporating resources, while working in partnership with communities and businesses to harness other resources has also been effective (IDDC, 2017; interview with M. Schoeman). A recent IDDC report points out that cost-effective inclusive education does not always involve additional funds and should include a more 'strategic allocation of existing funds, promoting universal design and co-operation agreements among multiple ministries' (p.6). Bringing assistive devices to children who require additional support can be less expensive than funding special schools. Partnerships with technology businesses for low-cost assistive devices can work well to improve inclusion (interview with M. Schoeman).
- Whilst experts noted that inclusive education is often challenged in resource-constrained environments due to perceptions of cost, **robust data on costs is limited**. A recent costing study in Senegal estimated that including children with visual impairments in mainstream schooling equated to an increase of between 0.2 and 0.34% of the country's education budget on an annual basis and identified measures to reduce scale up costs. The available evidence makes a case for inclusion, for example suggesting **segregation is inefficient, that special schools and services are high cost**, that there are **positive returns in GDP for inclusion** (Sightsavers, 2018; UNICEF, 2012; Lamichhane and Okubo, 2014; Morgon Banks and Pollack, 2014; IDDC, 2017).
- Experts also pointed to the value of learning from success in the push towards girls' education in keeping with a broader inclusion approach and suggested that all **girls' education interventions integrate disability inclusion** both in order to address the gendered discrepancies in education outcomes for girls with disabilities and to lower costs (interviews with N. Singal, L. Wapling).

2. Overview of the evidence

The **availability of data on disability and education is limited**, however, recent analysis demonstrated significant disparities between children with disabilities and non-disabled children in education outcomes (UNESCO, 2018).⁶ For example, in Cambodia, 57% of children with disabilities are

⁴ Two interviewees noted that lessons from achievements in improving school access and learning for girls can be usefully applied to inclusive education (interviews with Lorraine Wapling and Nidhi Singal).

⁵ Analysis related to budgetary outcomes on disability inclusion.

⁶ Up to date country level data is outlined here: <https://www.disabilitydataportal.com/explore-by-country/education/> Data on Pakistan is limited, though available data shows 28% people with disabilities achieve at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy skills (15 years and above). There is no comparison data for non-disabled people.

reported to be out of school, compared with 7% of non-disabled children, and adult literacy rates were lower for adults with disabilities than non-disabled adults in all 25 countries where data was available. The risk of being out of school is often compounded by gender, for example in Pakistan 26% girls with moderate to severe disabilities are out of school in comparison to 20% boys (Malik et al., 2018).

There is **very limited robust evidence on what works in inclusive education**, with the literature consisting in large part of theoretical and opinion pieces (Howgego et al., 2014). A recent DFID-funded evidence review found very few high quality reviews in education⁷ and concluded there are **no areas of strong evidence** (White et al., 2018). Most of the available impact studies examine programmes which aim to improve the skills of individual children rather than focusing on whole school approaches (White et al., 2018; Kuper et al., 2016). Recommendations from a 2018 synthesis of qualitative studies included moving away from the pull-out classroom model⁸, teacher training on behavioural and personal support, and supporting children with disabilities to change negative self-perceptions and develop positive coping strategies (Hannes et al., 2018). Despite the limited evidence on effectiveness, there are some examples of promising practice highlighted in the literature, including: a teacher training project covering self-efficacy, knowledge, attitudes and practices through a Leonard Cheshire project in Kenya; school-level interventions including Raising Voices' project to address school violence in Uganda; and the impact of child-friendly teaching and learning methodologies on academic outcomes in Pakistan (White et al., 2018; Kuper et al., 2016; Carew et al., 2018; Acedo et al., 2011).

Learning from organisations working in the field of inclusive education is available in the grey and academic literature submitted to the 2016 global consultation for General Comment 4: Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (OHCHR, 2016). The General Comment sets out benchmarks for good practice such as the need for a whole systems and school approach⁹, a focus on rights with respect for and value of diversity, a comprehensive focus on the accessibility of the learning environment ensuring children feel safe and supported, extra support for transitions through grades and levels of education, recognition of partnerships with schools, communities, government, non-governmental stakeholders and inclusive monitoring and cross-sectoral collaboration.

3. Practical know-how and learning from implementation

The following sub-sections provide an overview of the key points of learning with relation to the four sub-questions outlined in the query title:

a. Enrolment

Understanding the historical context and its impact on negative attitudes is key (interview with L. Wapling). In many low-income countries special education has been the norm for many years with deeply-embedded attitudes towards segregation. A study in China shows parents often prefer to send their children to special schools believing they provide a safer, better education (Deng and Holdsworth, 2007). Shifting the terminology around disability to promote positive and respectful language and framing the debate from a rights-based perspective can reduce the focus on impairments and emphasise that disabling barriers are rooted in systems rather than individuals. Support with specific

⁷ Please note this review only included systematic reviews and primary studies involving experimental and quasi-experimental methods. Qualitative studies were not included in the review. The review found 3 out of 12 systematic reviews to be high quality.

⁸ Where children are pulled out of mainstream classrooms in order to receive specialist support, either in small groups or one-to-one.

⁹ I.e. Where ministries of education, school management and governance structures work towards inclusion through for example, adequate resourcing and organisational change.

learning needs is, however, also important, based on a child's abilities and aspirations, and the resources and services available (see case study of CBM in Nicaragua, in Section 4).

It is important to **understand and address community attitudes** as these can be major barriers to quality inclusive education for children with disabilities. Leonard Cheshire has found that forming community groups with DPOs can successfully address negative attitudes by empowering people with disabilities to share and normalise their experiences (interviews with L. Wapling and M. Schoeman). Community mobilisation strategies should focus on working with existing community structures and groups, such as religious and traditional leaders, village councils and DPOs (interviews with G. Le Fanu and M. Schoeman). They should also examine the most accessible communication approaches to use (interview with G. Le Fanu). Advocacy with schools can highlight the relatively minor nature of many reasonable accommodations— for example placing a child with visual impairment near the front of the class/ a child with albinism away from windows (interview with J. Myers). It can also include sharing data on disability prevalence to acknowledge inclusion is unlikely to have a devastating impact on resources (interview with M. Schoeman). It should also highlight

Understanding the context-specific barriers that children face to enrolment is critical. Stigma and discrimination can be significant, although studies show some communities are more inclusive than expected, whilst perceptions of supply-side factors can be more significant. For example, a recent study in India found lack of accessible toilets as the main factor for parents, whilst in Nepal concerns about the care their children might receive in school were most significant (interview with N. Singal; Singal, 2016).

b. Creating inclusive environments in schools

Experts highlighted the **value of holistic approaches in creating inclusive school environments – working with teachers, school management, children and communities**. Approaches should go beyond improving physical infrastructure and building teacher capabilities to working with management and governance structures to create a positive ethos and culture at school level. Change is most likely to be sustained when leadership are engaged in supporting and managing the process of strengthening inclusion (input from J. Myers). Approaches in which schools identify barriers and critically reflect on their own practice can work well in achieving cultural change. Success factors include developing integrated plans based on reviews of available capacity and resources, coordinated by a dedicated team with head teacher leadership and ownership (interview with M. Schoeman).

Ensuring the safety of children with disabilities is paramount. Studies have shown children with disabilities are at higher risk of violence and abuse in schools (Corboz and Siddiq, 2017; Corboz et al., forthcoming). For example, projects working in schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan funded under the DFID What Works programme found that children with disabilities were more than twice as likely to be victims of peer violence as those without disabilities (Corboz and Siddiq, 2017; Corboz et al., forthcoming). Schools and ministries should **apply a disability and gender lens to safeguarding policies and procedures** (interview with G. Le Fanu).

There are several ways to promote inclusion in schools through **working with teachers**, including:

- Through training, including: integrating inclusion in **pre-service training** curricula and shifting away from specialist training focusing on different types of impairment (interview with S. Tesni); and **in-service training** provision equipping teachers with the skills to adapt existing materials to improve accessibility for a wide range of children through, for example, simplification and the use of pictures (interview with M. Schoeman). Training should be rooted in exploring and learning from the teachers' own experiences and developing ideas in a collaborative way which promotes teacher ownership (interview with G. Le Fanu).

- **Providing support to teachers in schools, for example through classroom assistants**, is important, given the significant pressures on teachers.¹⁰ A Leonard Cheshire project in Zimbabwe found that engaging parents of children with disabilities as classroom assistants and providing allowances can ensure low turnover (Deluca & Kett, 2018).
- Other approaches include: working with teachers as **inclusion champions** in schools (interview with G. Le Fanu), **incentivising teachers** through certification, additional stipends and peer support and exchange (interview with J. Myers), and **supporting people with disabilities to become teachers** which can have a positive impact on how children with disabilities feel about school but is often overlooked (interviews with S. Tesni and N. Singal; Mpokosa and Ndarahutse, 2008).

Sightsavers' learning suggests **raising awareness in children's clubs** in subtle ways avoiding excessive attention towards children with disabilities has led to non-disabled children demonstrating support for children with disabilities (interview with G. Le Fanu). Learning from CBM highlights how school clubs which involve children with disabilities, their families and friends can be a forum to raise awareness, create positive associations with disability and provide extra support. Early years play-based programmes can have positive impacts on non-disabled children's attitudes towards children with disabilities from a young age (interview with S. Tesni).

Community-Based Rehabilitation¹¹ was highlighted as working particularly well in rural settings where schools are community-based and there is little choice (interview with N. Singal). Other examples of good practice included bringing people with disabilities into schools to share their stories as **role models** and **engaging communities to conduct school audits to improve physical infrastructure** (interviews with S. Tesni, G. Le Fanu).

c. Identifying learning needs, with a focus on intellectual disabilities

Assessing learning needs can take place once a child is enrolled - it does not need to take place prior (interview with L. Wapling). Emphasis is often on the development of individualised education plans (IEPs), though one expert questioned their feasibility in classrooms of 50 children and over (interview with N. Singal).

There has been **limited learning across the inclusive education sector on identifying learning needs for children with intellectual disabilities**. The focus has predominantly been on the more visible and physical impairments (interview with N. Singal). Experts highlighted the importance of **defining intellectual disabilities as distinct from learning difficulties**, although this is a disputed area (interviews with N. Singal, L. Wapling).¹² Children with intellectual disabilities are likely to constitute

¹⁰ Interventions should recognise the significant pressures on teachers outside the classroom, for example community development initiatives such as vaccination programmes, birth registration and election duties, and prioritise demands accordingly (ie. Focusing on inclusive teaching in the classroom)(interviews with N. Singal; L. Wapling).

¹¹ a multi-sectoral approach endorsed by the World Health Organisation and delivered through partnership between people with disabilities, their families and communities, local government and non-governmental organisations: <https://www.who.int/disabilities/cbr/en/>

¹² **Intellectual disabilities** can be defined as 'a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills (impaired intelligence). This results in a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), and begins before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.'¹², **Learning difficulties** can be defined as 'any learning or emotional problem that affects, or substantially affects, a person's ability to learn, get along with others and follow convention'¹² for example dyslexia, though for some this may extend to other difficulties learning, such as not speaking the language of instruction, being hungry, or experiencing family trauma affecting performance (interview with G. Le Fanu).

a significant proportion of children with disabilities¹³ and the most easily excluded (interview with M. Schoeman). Leonard Cheshire sees this as due to a ‘lack of policy clarity on how to provide education for children with more severe disabilities, and the gaps in resources and teacher capacities to support these children’ (Leonard Cheshire, 2018: 6). Ensuring a rights-led, child-centred and multi-level pedagogical approach in classrooms can improve learning for all children, including those with intellectual disabilities. Changing teacher attitudes to increase understanding, sympathy and respect and providing skills to adapt lessons through creativity and common sense are reported as the most effective approaches (interviews with G. Le Fanu, S. Tesni, M. Schoeman).¹⁴

Experts cautioned that assessments without the right capabilities can lead to stigmatisation and misdiagnosis (interviews with G. Le Fanu, N. Singal, J. Myers). **Assessment should involve identifying learning needs and capacities rather than labelling impairments and emphasising deficits** (interview with N. Singal, J. Myers). Interviewees also noted the important role of some medical interventions in classrooms, particularly eye and hearing tests, to ensure those with hearing and sight impairments have access to assistive devices (interviews with N. Singal, L. Wapling, G. Le Fanu).

d. Use of specialist education resources in mainstream schools

Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERCs) are increasingly common in low income settings and have been used in India, Kenya, South Africa and Ethiopia. These centres are designed to support mainstream schools, early identification in communities and early years programming to prepare children for enrolment in mainstream schools. Challenges include lack of adequate funding, supporting large numbers of schools (hundreds rather than tens) and lack of adequate support when transitioning from a special school (interviews with S. Tesni, N. Singal). Partnering with IERCs or special schools on resources can reduce costs, for example through high-volume braille printing (interview with M. Schoeman).

Itinerant teachers who travel from school to school providing support is another important approach. Examples include Sightsavers’ work in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi (Lynch et al., 2011). However, it was noted that although they can be useful in terms of supporting children with some impairments (eg. sight as in the case of Sightsavers), they often do not have the capabilities to support teachers in inclusive pedagogy and are not trained to train other teachers (interviews with G. Le Fanu, M. Schoeman). A significant challenge is to overcome the “mystification” of skills needed to enable children with disabilities to learn (M. Schoeman). Emerging good practice includes the use of WhatsApp by itinerant teachers to provide ongoing support to teachers in mainstream schools (interview with M. Schoeman).

4. Case studies¹⁵

Case study 1: DFID’s Girls Education Challenge – How disability disaggregated data can generate knowledge and help ensure education is more inclusive to girls with disabilities

DFID’s Girls Education Challenge (GEC) currently **supports 27 projects working in 15 countries, many in resource-constrained environments**, some of which are severely affected by conflict. Many GEC organisations are new to disability inclusive education, but with the support of DFID and the Fund Managers have been taking a rights-based approach to disability to provide inclusive education for girls with disabilities. A key area which has been identified as central to **stimulating projects towards**

¹³ There is some evidence suggesting intellectual disabilities may be more common in low-income contexts (eg. Durkin, 2002: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12216065>)

¹⁴ In the near future, Leonard Cheshire plans to pilot what they call an adaptive pathway for children with intellectual disabilities through the development and implementation of personal goals and teacher training focusing on adapting lessons and supporting children independence (Leonard Cheshire, 2018).

¹⁵ Please see annex for more the full set of full-length case studies.

greater disability inclusion is data collection. GEC projects have collected data on disability prevalence using the Washington Group set of questions. Where projects have more than 5% disability prevalence rate, GEC expects them to reappraise their approach. **GEC technical advisors have supported projects** to identify appropriate activities, including running online webinars to improve knowledge gaps and share experiences around disability rights, barrier analysis and programming inclusive.

The GEC shows that mainstream organisations are willing to do disability inclusion – there is an appetite. The **mandatory requirement to collect and report disability disaggregated data** through the external evaluation process has led to huge changes – many organisations realised they had disabled children in their cohort that they did not know they had, have realised the extent of the barriers that need to be addressed, and begun to identify solutions to ensure education is more inclusive. Examples of how GEC projects are designing activities to increase access to girls with disabilities include:

- **ChildHope, Ethiopia:** awareness-raising with communities, and supporting teachers to be inclusion champions in schools.
- **Varkey Foundation, Ghana:** teacher training and gender-responsive pedagogy, looking for opportunities to make it disability sensitive.
- **Cheshire Services, Uganda:** capacity building of staff, partners and school management, including training and awareness-raising on disability inclusion with government officials and the Ministry of Education.

Several projects have also used the disability data to create a greater, more sustainable impact – by raising awareness with government on the need to provide inclusive education. For example, in Sierra Leone, the GEC project by Plan International presented its disability data to the government, showing that schools which they supported to undergo accessibility renovations enrolled more disabled children. In turn, this use of disability data helped encourage the Ministry of Education to produce an action plan for increasing inclusion.

Sources: Interview with Lorraine Wapling (GEC Disability Adviser, January 2019); GEC Quarterly Newsletter September 2018.

Case study 2: Education for All in Bombali District, Sierra Leone (adapted from submission by Guy Le Fanu, Senior Global Technical Lead for Education, Sightsavers¹⁶)

This EU-funded Sightsavers project (2017-2020) works in 45 mainstream primary and junior secondary schools in Sierra Leone, targeting 350 children with disabilities, of which at least 50% are female. The project seeks to address the following barriers with the following interventions:

Barriers	Interventions to address these barriers
Weak capacity of local structures to support inclusive education for children with disabilities –schools, child welfare committees, village development committees, ward development committees, mother’s groups, and local university to support inclusive education.	Identification in schools and communities; advocacy; development of accessible IEC materials on rights of children with disabilities; promotion of home-based educational support; training of social workers; establishment of inclusive education resource centre; capacity building of local authorities; mobilisation and training for DPOs
School learning environments are not always inclusive for children with disabilities,	Awareness-raising among non-disabled children in schools about disability issues; teacher-training needs assessment to

¹⁶ See full case study in annex.

<p>particularly girls with disabilities – e.g. negative attitudes and practices among some teachers and pupils, some teachers lack skills and knowledge, shortage of educational resources and assistive devices, inaccessible learning environments, unhygienic toilets lacking clean, running water</p>	<p>identify training needs; identification of teachers to act as inclusion champions in schools and communities; training for inclusion champions and production of an <i>Inclusion Champions' Manual</i>; development of school mentoring system encouraging pupils to support one another; accessibility audits in schools and refurbishment of school infrastructure; collaborative design of appropriate learning activities in schools – activities aligned with the national curriculum and both disability- and gender-sensitive; organisation of assessments for children with disabilities; provision of necessary assistive devices and educational equipment for children with disabilities</p>
<p>Lack of appropriate national policy frameworks in Sierra Leone for promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities – specifically, lack of an inclusive education policy and lack of focus on the education of children with disabilities in the initial teacher-training curriculum</p>	<p>Technical support to Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) for improved policy implementation and monitoring; review of teacher-training curriculum and advocacy for incorporation of inclusive perspectives; development of disability inclusion module which can be rolled in the teacher-training curriculum; coordination of development of new national inclusive education policy; advocacy for increased investment and timely/targeted disbursement of funds to support the education of children with disabilities; advocacy on disability-disaggregated data</p>

Key learning:¹⁷

- With the right types and levels of support, **inclusion champions can promote inclusive education in their schools and communities**. These champions were selected by the head teachers and their deputies who themselves received training – ensuring the support of these senior staff has been very important for the success of this project.
- In some areas, **mothers' clubs played a key role in advocating for the inclusion of children with disabilities** in schools. They also raised the funds to cover certain school costs of children with disabilities – e.g. cost of providing school uniforms.
- Other examples of good practice include **providing enjoyable, participatory activity-based teacher training** and backed this up with a **system for providing on-going support** for the schools (provided by a local university and a national NGO); supporting schools to develop their own **gender action plans** and providing them with small budgets to implement these plans.
- The project found **children with epilepsy were particularly likely to be excluded from school** due to ignorance and fear of the condition. Successful awareness-raising – dissemination of simple messages about epilepsy – has improved this situation. Ensuring these children have access to counselling, appropriate medication and follow-up support has also proved vital.
- **Teachers have found it challenging to produce/implement individual education plans** as it is a new way of working and thinking about educational provision.

¹⁷ A mid-term review has been completed. Data and information have been gathered formally through regular project monitoring and informally through field visits and discussions with project stakeholders. Case-studies have been collected and stored in a project database.

- Government of Sierra Leone at national and sub-national level lacks capacity to ensure quality education for children with disabilities. There is therefore **need for sustained investment by the international development community in the education system in Sierra Leone.**

Case study 3: Supporting transition from primary to secondary for girls with disabilities in Kenya (2014-2022)¹⁸ (adapted from submission by Marie Schoeman, Global Inclusive Education Technical Lead, Leonard Cheshire¹⁹)

Leonard Cheshire has been working with girls with disabilities in the Lake Region of Kenya since 2014. The project, funded by DFID through the GEC programme, seeks to improve access, retention and learning outcomes. In 2017, the project moved into a new phase working with 2,250 girls and 250 boys with disabilities to ensure children have a smooth transition from primary to secondary school or in some instances to vocational training. The project is working with 50 primary schools, 25 secondary schools and 8 vocational training institutes. The intervention is based on a holistic model to address a complex set of barriers²⁰, including child identification, assessment and support; training for teachers, school management committees and head teachers; creation of accessible and inclusive learning environments; parental, family and community awareness; work with local civil society and government on institutionalising inclusive education; and child-to-child activities.

Key learning includes:

- The project has encountered some **persistent challenges**, including weak implementation and resourcing of policies on disability, lack of consistency across government departments in their roles on inclusive education, ineffective and inflexible use and allocation of funds, gaps in pre-service teacher training on disability inclusion, and large class sizes.
- **Transition from one phase to another is always more challenging for children with disabilities and it is critical that the necessary preparatory steps be taken** e.g. This process can be enhanced through early intervention, advocacy and preparation of receiving schools and teachers, as well as involvement of parents and caregivers. Transition to secondary school will be facilitated through provision of appropriate resources from Education Assessment Resource Centres (EARCs) and support from teacher mentors.
- Leonard Cheshire is committed to **embedding technology and technological innovation** across all of its programmes and is exploring opportunities of how accessibility and learning can be improved. In Kenya the programme is currently considering how to best utilise technology to improve learning outcomes for girls with disabilities.
- Leonard Cheshire is **collaborating with relevant Government Departments, schools, the community and families to reduce the number of children with disabilities from leaving**

¹⁸ The names of the projects funded under GEC are: Girls Education Challenge: Pioneering Inclusive Education Strategies for girls with disabilities in Kenya (2014 – 2017), and Girls Education Challenge- Transition: Expanding Inclusive Education Strategies for girls with disabilities in Kenya (2017 – 2022)

¹⁹ See full case study in annex.

²⁰ The project addresses a number of different barriers, including: poverty, distance from school, stigma and discrimination and lack of support and understanding for parents and families; negative community attitudes; lack of capacity and willingness, hostile conditions and lack of resources in schools; physical inaccessibility of school infrastructure and transport systems; lack of funded support services for schools, weak inter-sectoral collaboration between education, health and social protection to ensure early identification and assessment; lack of data on out of school children; little knowledge and understanding of best practice in inclusive pedagogy.

school early and to improve their chances of exiting school with credible qualifications and the skills necessary to find decent jobs and become economically independent.

Case study 4: CBM's experience providing inclusive education in Nicaragua (adapted from submission by Sian Tesni, Senior Education Adviser, CBM)

CBM has worked with local partner Asopiecad in Nicaragua on inclusive education through Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), now referred to as Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID). It uses a Twin-Track approach to inclusive education: (1) early detection; and (2) early intervention services provided by trained, experienced community workers and family members. An action plan is developed for each child, based on their abilities, aspirations, resources and services in the community. Key lessons from CBM and Asopiecad's experience in providing inclusive education include:

- **Investing time and effort in targeted awareness raising and sensitisation programmes** within the community and with school staff has led to cooperation with schools that are ready to provide inclusive education on the basis of their own resources and culture.
- **A CBID approach ensures that all members of the community learn what the issues are and share in the solutions;** the community includes government and non-government stakeholders, rights bearers such as parents and persons with disability.
- **Implementing inclusive education programmes is particularly successful in small, local schools** where there has been an investment in raising awareness and on-going support is available.

Case study 5: ADD International Tanzania (adapted from submission by Shabani Abeid, Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, ADD Tanzania)

ADD international has collaborated on inclusive education with Disabled People's Organizations' Federation SHIVYAWATA, for the past 5 years. They target the education system and communities to develop Inclusive pre-primary and primary education within mainstream schools in three districts. The project aims to change attitudes to educating children with disabilities, improve enrolment, inclusive teaching and school planning skills and use learning to influence local and national government to implement the national inclusive education strategy. SHIVYAWATA delivers community awareness raising and advocacy.

The following are the recent examples of good practice:

- a. **Enrolling children with disabilities into mainstream schools:** training for DPOs on sensitisation techniques, including conducting effective campaigns, how to engage the communities effectively, best and suitable approaches to be used locally and nationally. Conducting advocacy meetings with key local and national leaders alongside community sensitisation works well. These advocacy meetings cover the importance of inclusive education, budget allocation to support IE, disability needs and services; teaching and learning materials; assistive devices. The activity goes along with sensitization and awareness. Combining a child-centred and village-to-village approach to enrolling children with disabilities works well.²¹

²¹ In the child-centred approach, sensitized and capacitated pupils with and without disabilities in schools support the process by identifying children with disabilities who are at home. They pass the information to their teachers. The village to village approach involves the trained identifiers namely DPOs, teachers and Local leaders visiting the villages and supporting the identifying children with disabilities.

- b. **Creating inclusive environments in schools:** Resource mobilisation practices involving DPOs and school committees conducting school assessments to identify inclusion needs followed by community mobilisation to allocate resources has worked well, in particular through building more understanding in communities, and enhancing ownership and sustainability.
- c. **Identifying learning needs:** assessment takes place both in communities and schools with clear referral mechanisms if medical interventions are needed; information is shared amongst stakeholders.
- d. **Use of specialist resources:** the project is working in partnership with Educational Support, Resource, and Assessment Centers (ESRACs) to conduct research on lessons learned in providing support on inclusive education. The project also works with the MoE and President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government offices to identify key partners such as teacher training colleges.

Expert contributors

Experts interviewed:

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Box 1: key readings

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About Helpdesk reports: The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk is funded by the UK Department for International Development, contracted through the Disability Inclusion Team (DIT) under the Disability Inclusive Development Programme. Helpdesk reports are based on between 3 and 4.5 days of desk-based research per query and are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues and expert thinking on issues around disability inclusion. Where referring to documented evidence, Helpdesk teams will seek to understand the methodologies used to generate evidence and will summarise this in Helpdesk outputs, noting any concerns with the robustness of the evidence being presented. For some Helpdesk services, in particular the practical know-how queries, the emphasis will be focused far less on academic validity of evidence and more on the validity of first-hand experience among disabled people and practitioners delivering and monitoring programmes on the ground. All sources will be clearly referenced.

Helpdesk services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations and individual experts on VAWG, including Social Development Direct, Sightsavers, Leonard Cheshire Disability, ADD International, Light for the World, BRAC, BBC Media Action, Sense and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Expert advice may be sought from this Group, as well as from the wider academic and practitioner community, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk or any of the contributing organisations/experts.

For any further request or enquiry, contact enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk

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