Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through the Sustainable Development Goals

A RESOURCE PACKAGE

QUALITY EDUCATION

Policy Guidance for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through the Sustainable Development Goals

A RESOURCE PACKAGE

QUALITY EDUCATION

Policy Guidance for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

New York and Geneva, 2024

© 2024 United Nations

HR/PUB/22/7

This work is available open access by complying with the Creative Commons licence created for intergovernmental organizations, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/.

Publishers must delete the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) logo from their edition and create a new cover design. Publishers should email the file of their edition to publications@un.org.

United Nations publication, issued by OHCHR.

This Policy Guidance is a component of *Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through the Sustainable Development Goals: a Resource Package*.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

Mention of such a figure indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

All components of the Resource Package have been produced with the financial support of the European Union. Their contents are the sole responsibility of OHCHR and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



Contents

Overview vii

I. In brief 2

1. What is the situation? 2
2. What needs to be done? 3
3. Dos and don'ts 8

II. In depth 13

1. Introduction 13
2. Connection to other tools 13
3. Why is Sustainable Development Goal 4 important for persons with disabilities? 13
4. Establishing and implementing an inclusive education system: actions applicable across all targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 16
   - 4.1 Governance by the ministry of education 16
   - 4.2 Legislation 18
   - 4.3 Close consultation with, and the active involvement of, persons with disabilities 19
   - 4.4 Awareness-raising 19
   - 4.5 Teachers and education staff 20
   - 4.6 Budget allocation 22
   - 4.7 Data collection and disaggregation 23
   - 4.8 Accountability and complaint mechanisms 24
5. Other key actions by target 25
   - 5.1 Access to, and completion of, inclusive quality education: targets 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6 25
     - 5.1.1 Adopt a non-rejection policy and prohibit admissions requirements 26
     - 5.1.2 Foster inclusive learning environments 27
     - 5.1.3 Ensure support, including through reasonable accommodation 28
     - 5.1.4 Provide equally valid certification 30
     - 5.1.5 Identify and address gaps in the education trajectory of students with disabilities 32
     - 5.1.6 Collect data to monitor and enhance inclusion 35

Contents

5.2 Quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education: target 4.2 **36**

5.2.1 Ensure quality early childhood support in inclusive and community-based settings **36**

5.2.2 Provide awareness-raising, support services and training to parents and caregivers **38**

5.2.3 Establish mechanisms for early identification and early intervention for inclusive early education **39**

5.3 Access to higher education, including university, and the availability of scholarships for persons with disabilities: targets 4.3 and 4.b **39**

5.3.1 Ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation in admission procedures **40**

5.3.2 Adopt specific measures to increase the number of persons with disabilities in tertiary education **40**

5.4 Acquiring skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship by persons with disabilities: target 4.4 **41**

5.4.1 Adopt measures to make mainstream vocational training inclusive of persons with disabilities **41**

5.4.2 Adopt measures to provide on-the-job training or workplace learning **42**

5.4.3 Implement capacity-building strategies for self-employment **43**

Additional resources **44**

Annex: Key concepts **46**

Overview

Promoting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through the Sustainable Development Goals: a Resource Package provides guidance on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals with a view to advancing the development and rights of persons with disabilities in relation to policymaking, training, awareness-raising and monitoring.

The Resource Package comprises the following:

- Policy Guidance for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals
- Overview of Thematic Issues and Policy Recommendations
- Indicators on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Frequently asked questions on the indicators on the Convention
- Data sources guidance
- Training materials on disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals

The Policy Guidance for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals begins with an introduction supporting the navigation of the Resource Package. The Foundations component should be read prior to the Goal-specific guidance and the Overview of Thematic Issues and Policy Recommendations. A set of human rights indicators for each article of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is offered to provide guidance on how to measure the implementation of the Convention. These indicators are also referred to in the Policy Guidance and the Overview as guidance for policy implementation. Each human rights indicator is accompanied by data sources guidance and examples thereof to inform the measure of an outcome. Lastly, the Resource Package includes training materials to build capacity in the areas covered by the Policy Guidance.

I. In brief

I. In brief

1. What is the situation?

Persons with disabilities are underrepresented in the education system. Estimates suggest that children with disabilities represent about 1 in 7 of all children who are out of school. Many of those who attend school are exposed to education systems that do not adequately support their learning requirements or they are provided with lower quality education, including in segregated or special education.

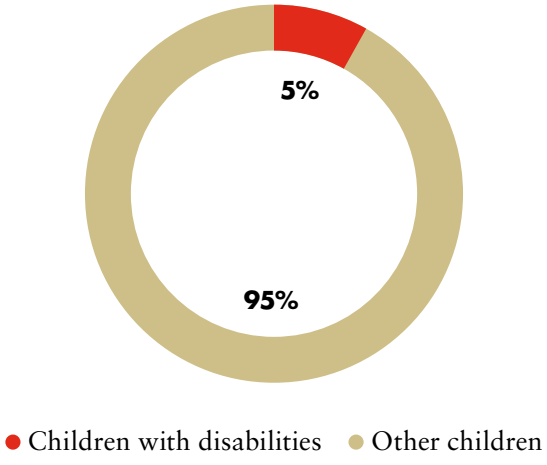
The accessibility of educational infrastructure, materials and methods is a concern common to all levels of education. In this regard, data at the regional and global levels remain scarce. Crowdsourced accessibility data from several countries indicate that only 47 per cent of more than 30,000 educational facilities are considered accessible for wheelchair users (*Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations publication, 2019), p. 87, figure II.39).

Completion rates are lower among persons with disabilities when compared to persons without disabilities: 56 per cent compared to 73 per cent for primary school (*Disability and Development Report*, p. 79, figure II.29). Children with disabilities who do attend primary school are less likely than children without disabilities to complete their schooling. As such, children with disabilities are also less likely to pursue higher levels of education than their peers without disabilities.

Persons with disabilities are more likely to experience lower learning outcomes – the literacy rate among persons with disabilities has been estimated to be 54 per cent, compared to 77 per cent for other persons, as depicted in figure III. This percentage is even lower for women and girls with disabilities (*Disability and Development Report*, p. 83, figure II.33).

FIGURE I

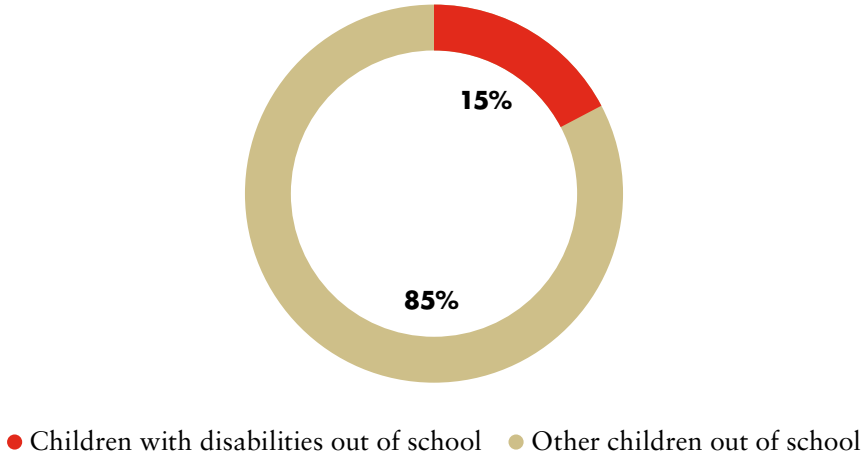
Proportion of children with and without disabilities



Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *The State of the World's Children 2013: Children with Disabilities* (2013), p. 3.

FIGURE II

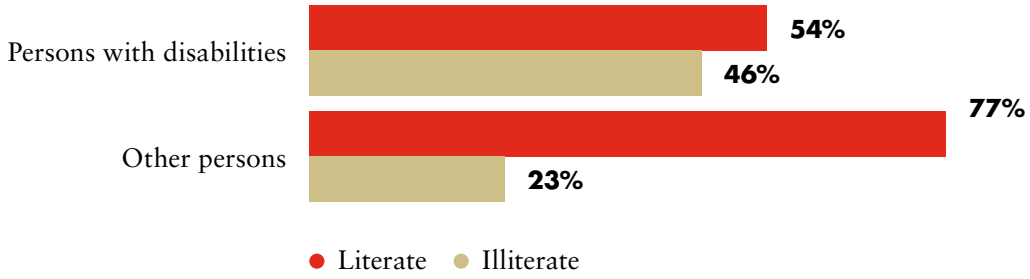
Proportion of children out of school with and without disabilities



Source: Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education – All Means All* (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2020), p. 72, figure 3.4).

FIGURE III

Literacy rates of persons with disabilities compared to those of the broader population



Source: *Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations publication, 2019), p. 83, figure II.33.

2. What needs to be done?

Implementing Sustainable Development Goal 4 requires putting in place an inclusive education system, with structural measures across all educational levels that relate to all Goal 4 targets and the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Inclusive education is:

"the result of a process of continuing and proactive commitment to eliminate barriers impeding the right to education, together with changes to culture, policy and practice of regular schools to accommodate and effectively include all students.... Inclusion involves 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 serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and the environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences." (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, paras. 10 (d) and 11)

FIGURE IV

Main areas of intervention to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4



Establishing and implementing an inclusive education system: actions applicable across all targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4

To achieve the targets of Goal 4, the following actions should be taken:

1. Ensure that the education of all students, including students with disabilities, is led and governed by the ministry of education. "Ministry of education" refers to the public entity in charge of the education system;
2. Establish an inclusive education unit to lead national policies and plans to transition and progress towards inclusive education;

3. Establish coordination mechanisms that link the ministry of education with other ministries, government disability focal points and other public bodies;
4. Enable collaboration between levels of government and support local governments to implement inclusive education;
5. Adopt legislation to recognize the right to inclusive education for all students, prohibiting disability-based discrimination and applying universal design and accessibility standards to learning environments and prohibiting violence, corporal punishment, harassment and bullying in the education system, including in the classroom, on the basis of disability;
6. Adopt, monitor and enforce accessibility standards;
7. Ensure the participation of persons with disabilities, particularly children and youth, and their representative organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of inclusive education policies and programmes;
8. Carry out awareness-raising campaigns and activities to promote inclusive education among all education stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students and the population at large, to combat negative stereotypes and attitudes that go against the inclusion of students with disabilities and to highlight the benefits of inclusive education for all individuals and the community at large;
9. Ensure that all future and existing teachers and teaching support staff undergo compulsory pre-service and in-service training on inclusive education methods and pedagogy as an integral part of teacher-training curricula;
10. Contribute to inclusive school cultures by ensuring diversity and a gender balance in the recruitment of teachers and teaching support staff;
11. Allocate budgets to support inclusive education and ensure the disaggregation of expenditures to track and account for gaps in the provision of services, materials and supports;
12. Strengthen the education management information system to engage in systematic data collection and disaggregation. Ensure the coordination of data systems with the national statistics office and support research to identify gaps in provision, with a view to strengthening the implementation of inclusive education;
13. Establish accessible mechanisms through education authorities, as well as independent accountability mechanisms for students, parents and representative organizations, to lodge complaints concerning shortfalls in the implementation of inclusive education, including claims of disability-based discrimination, and provide access to effective remedies.

Access to, and completion of, inclusive quality education



Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

Target 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Target 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

Target 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

To achieve these targets, the following actions should be taken:

1. Adopt a non-rejection policy and prohibit admissions requirements;
2. Foster inclusive learning environments;
3. Ensure support, including through reasonable accommodation;
4. Provide equally valid certification;
5. Identify and address gaps in the education trajectory of students with disabilities;
6. Collect data to monitor and enhance inclusion.

Quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education



Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

To achieve this target, the following actions should be taken:

1. Ensure quality early childhood support in inclusive and community-based settings;
2. Provide awareness-raising, support services and training to parents and caregivers;
3. Establish mechanisms for early identification and early intervention for inclusive early education.

Access to higher education, including university, and the availability of scholarships for persons with disabilities



Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Target 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

To achieve these targets, the following actions should be taken:

1. Ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation in admission procedures;
2. Adopt specific measures to increase the number of persons with disabilities in tertiary education.

Acquiring skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship by persons with disabilities



Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

To achieve this target, the following actions should be taken:

1. Adopt measures to make mainstream vocational training inclusive of all persons with disabilities;
2. Adopt measures to provide on-the-job training or workplace learning;
3. Implement capacity-building strategies for self-employment.

3. Dos and don'ts

Ensuring the consideration of persons with disabilities in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4

Law, policy and programmes	
Do	**Don't**
Establish in law an actionable right to inclusive education. Establish, in legislation and policies, that no student with disability can be excluded from general education (non-rejection clause). Inclusion should be ensured with age-appropriate peers.	Include, in legislation or policies, restrictions or conditions for students with disabilities on access to general education (e.g. making access dependent on meeting certain intelligence quotient standards, general examinations or assessment requirements).
Establish an inclusive education unit within the ministry of education to lead the implementation of inclusive education legislation and policies and to coordinate with all relevant ministries and stakeholders.	Allocate the responsibility for the coordination of inclusive education to ministries other than the ministry of education, such as the ministry of social welfare.
Ensure accessible schools by incorporating universal design principles and digital procurement standards in education infrastructure.	Build school infrastructure or invest in digital procurement without consulting with organizations of persons with disabilities.
Practice and implementation	
Do	**Don't**
Ensure that students with disabilities learn in non-segregated, safe and inclusive environments, free from all forms of violence and discrimination.	Fail to raise awareness about, or to implement protocols against, discrimination, violence, bullying and other behaviours that contribute to hostile environments.
Recognize the right of students to have access to quality support measures (including additional teaching support) and assistive technology that contribute to inclusive learning.	Segregate students under special education schemes (such as special schools or special classrooms within a school, isolated with a special education teacher in the classroom) in order to have access to support and assistive technology.

Include reasonable accommodation as a non-discrimination measure to provide for the individual requirements of students with disabilities. Create resource centres, with an appropriate budget, to provide support.	Apply a one-size-fits-all approach, requiring students to conform or adapt to the school curricula and environment.
Ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation in the context of examinations and assessments to enable students with disabilities to participate.	Apply a one-size-fits-all approach to the administration of examinations or assessments.
Ensure that students who need individual education plans (with learning objectives and strategies tailored to their requirements) have them, as well as individualized assessments.	Establish general learning objectives as if students with or without impairments are a one-size-fits-all category, ignoring the individual strengths and challenges of each student.
Ensure that students with disabilities have access to educational materials in multiple communication formats, according to their individual requirements.	Require students to learn or study from materials that are not accessible to them, putting the burden of making them accessible on the student, or in environments that are not inclusive of them.
Ensure that students with disabilities receive a certification of completion for all education levels, at an equal value to others, especially certification of completion of secondary education that enables them to have access to higher education on the basis of equal opportunity.	Deny students with disabilities valid certification upon the completion of their studies or restrict their access to higher levels of education (e.g. certification of lesser value, on the basis of curricular adaptation).
Information, communication and awareness-raising	
Do	**Don't**
Raise awareness about inclusive education among parents, teachers, teachers' unions, education management, staff and society at large.	Replicate existing stereotypes of students with disabilities that foster discrimination, violence and/or segregation.
Training	
Do	**Don't**
Support teachers, administrators and all persons involved in education in the use of inclusive and flexible teaching strategies that maximize the participation and learning of all students.	Condone approaches for teaching all students with a one-size-fits-all approach.

Prepare all teachers to educate students with disabilities in their classes.	Prepare mainstream and "inclusive" or "special" teachers separately.
Prepare all children and parents for inclusive education, particularly concerning support, a welcoming environment and measures to combat bullying, harassment and exclusion.	Overlook emerging exclusion dynamics in the classroom.
Engage support staff to work with teachers, as needed, to facilitate inclusive classrooms.	Allocate support staff to work with students with disabilities, while teachers focus on students without disabilities.
Participation	
Do	**Don't**
Ensure that measures to enable the participation of children with disabilities extend to the extracurricular and social activities connected to the school and the community.	Overlook the requirements of persons with disabilities in the extracurricular and social activities connected to the school and the community.
Adopt strategies to promote the right of children and youth with disabilities to be heard and to participate in decision-making within classrooms and schools, as well as all public matters, including those on education, and support the establishment of representative organizations of children and youth with disabilities, in particular self-advocacy organizations of children with intellectual or psychosocial impairments, and those representing girls with disabilities.	Treat children and youth with disabilities as passive recipients or deny them the right and opportunities to be active agents in all public decision-making.
Data collection and disaggregation	
Do	**Don't**
Collect and systematize data disaggregation by disability together with other possible vectors of exclusion, not only of the number of students who have access to education and complete studies, but also of the number of children and youth with disabilities who are out of school and their educational trajectories, to identify and eliminate barriers and to strengthen their inclusion.	Leave administrative data unprocessed, non-systematized and/or unanalysed.

Accountability	
Do	**Don't**
Establish accessible accountability mechanisms, including administrative procedures and independent accountability mechanisms, to facilitate the submission of complaints on the right to inclusive education, including on all forms of discrimination.	Limit the possibility of bringing complaints about non-inclusive education policies and practices, including disability-based discrimination, to the judiciary.

II. In depth

II. In depth

1. Introduction

This section provides detailed guidance for policymakers on measures that are required to implement Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education that ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Part II, section 2 shows the connection between the Policy Guidance on Sustainable Development Goal 4 and other resources, including the human rights indicators on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other related tools.

Part II, section 3 provides an overview of the situation of persons with disabilities in relation to education.

Part II, section 4 presents measures to establish and sustain an inclusive education system that cut across all targets of Goal 4.

Part II, section 5 outlines other key actions to ensure inclusive learning, aligned with specific Sustainable Development Goal targets. When appropriate, targets have been considered together. For example, targets 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6 address equal access to, and the completion of, quality education, and the quality of learning outcomes for students with disabilities. Targets 4.3 and 4.b address access to higher education, including universities. Target 4.4 focuses on the development and acquisition of skills for employment. While covered under target 4.3, vocational training is, in the present guidance, addressed under target 4.4, given its centrality to skills development and employment.

2. Connection to other tools

- Indicators on article 24 (education) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Other related articles of the Convention and the indicators thereon: 1–4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 16, 19, 25, 27, 28 and 31
- Data sources guidance on article 24 and other related articles of the Convention
- Training materials for Sustainable Development Goal 4
- Video for Goal 4

3. Why is Sustainable Development Goal 4 important for persons with disabilities?

Children with disabilities remain underrepresented worldwide, across all levels of education. According to the *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education – All Means All* of the Global Education Monitoring Report Team (UNESCO, 2020) children with disabilities comprise 15 per cent of all out-of-school children. Children with disabilities who do attend primary school are less likely than children without disabilities to complete it and later to pursue higher levels of education. Across the globe, literacy among persons with disabilities is consistently lower than among persons without disabilities.

In this context, the situation of girls with disabilities is of particular concern as far as they are less likely to attend and complete school, compared to boys with disabilities or other girls. The World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, WHO, 2011) found that 50.6 per cent of boys with disabilities had completed primary school, compared to 61.3 per cent of boys without disabilities, while 41.7 per cent of girls with disabilities had completed primary school, compared to 52.9 per cent of girls without disabilities. The same report found that women with disabilities had spent less time in education overall, having completed an average of 5 years of schooling, compared to 6.3 for other women and 6 years for men with disabilities. Beyond girls, other groups of children with disabilities may face compounded discrimination based on indigenous or minority membership, migratory status, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex characteristics or intersections of the aforementioned.

It has been established that early childhood development and education are key contributors to the successful completion of primary and other levels of education (H. Yoshikawa and S. Kabay, "The evidence base on early childhood care and education in global contexts", background paper prepared for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2015)). Likewise, encouraging the participation of children with disabilities in early childhood development and education improves access to primary and further education levels. However, available evidence suggests that, particularly in low-resource settings, there is limited availability of funding to enable the inclusion of children with disabilities in pre-primary education (WHO and World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, p. 219, table 7.2).

Limited current and reliable disaggregated data are available regarding children with disabilities and their participation in education, at all levels. In 2016, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics finalized a module on child functioning that is aimed at identifying children aged between 2 and 17 years who are at risk of functional difficulty. The module is beginning to be used in education management information systems.

As a consequence of lower enrolment rates in primary and secondary education, persons with disabilities also experience lower enrolment and completion rates in tertiary education. The United Nations reported that, in 42 countries in 2012, an average of 24 per cent of the overall population had completed tertiary education, compared to only 12 per cent of persons with disabilities (*Disability and Development Report*, p. 81, figure II.31).

Currently, there are no general or disaggregated data on scholarships available to persons with disabilities, particularly regarding their enrolment in higher education and/or access to education for sustainable development and human rights (target 4.b).

There are little data on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) participation and outcomes for persons with disabilities. Where available to persons with disabilities, vocational training is often provided in segregated settings and not linked to the needs and quality requirements of the labour market. In low- and middle-income countries, an average of 42 per cent of persons with disabilities reported that they needed vocational rehabilitation to support their re-entry into the workforce. However, only 10 per cent of persons with disabilities reported that that need had been met (WHO and World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, p. 42, table 2.5).

Lower education completion rates lead to reduced access to qualifications and thus fewer opportunities to find employment and/or to develop a business. As a consequence, persons with disabilities have lower employment rates when compared to others. According to the *World Report*

on Disability, the employment rate for persons with disabilities is 44 per cent, compared to 75 per cent for others, and persons with disabilities experience higher inactivity rates – approximately 49 per cent compared to 20 per cent for others.

Accessible education infrastructure, or schools that have been built in accordance with universal design principles, ensures that everyone can reach and enter the school, as well as communicate, interact and participate in school activities. The *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020* cites crowdsourced accessibility data from several countries (largely high-income) that indicate that only 47 per cent of more than 30,000 education facilities were considered accessible for wheelchair users. UNESCO reports that incorporating accessibility and universal design features into school infrastructure from the outset increases the total cost by 1 per cent, while adapting it after completion can increase costs by 5 per cent or more.

Teacher pre- and in-service education is essential to ensure that teachers are confident and skilled in the use of inclusive education teaching methodologies, including child-centred pedagogy that uses differentiated instruction and assistive technologies. However, as reported in the *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, few receive adequate preparation or professional development – 25 per cent of teachers in middle- and high-income countries reported a high need for professional development in teaching students with disabilities and, across 10 sub-Saharan African countries, just 8 per cent of grades two and six teachers had received in-service training on inclusive education.

A lack of accessible curricula, environments and availability of reasonable accommodations and support in regular schools has led to segregated education for many students with disabilities. Separate "special schools", or institutions for the education of persons with disabilities, are sometimes organized by impairment (such as schools for blind students and schools for deaf students). Students are segregated and expectations regarding learning outcomes may be lower based on prevailing societal and cultural stereotypes about persons with disabilities. Segregated schooling leads to segregated living, to the detriment of the individual and their families and society as a whole. Ending segregation is a general objective of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In recent decades, many education systems around the world have begun to integrate children with disabilities in regular schools. Integration is a process of placing persons with disabilities in existing mainstream educational institutions, as long as the former can adjust to the standardized requirements of such institutions. Integration commonly excludes learners with higher support requirements and can lead to the segregation of students with disabilities within mainstream schools.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Sustainable Development Goal 4 embrace inclusive education. Article 24 of the Convention recognizes inclusive education as the means to fulfil the right to education for all people and particularly persons with disabilities. From a rights perspective, inclusive education is accepted as the most suitable approach to guarantee universality and non-discrimination in the right to education. Goal 4 is a key element of leaving no one behind, as it calls for the development of skills and the fostering of community values and belonging, which cannot be achieved for persons with disabilities without the strengthening of inclusive education systems.

4. Establishing and implementing an inclusive education system: actions applicable across all targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4

Establishing and implementing an inclusive education system: actions applicable across all targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Inclusive education is:

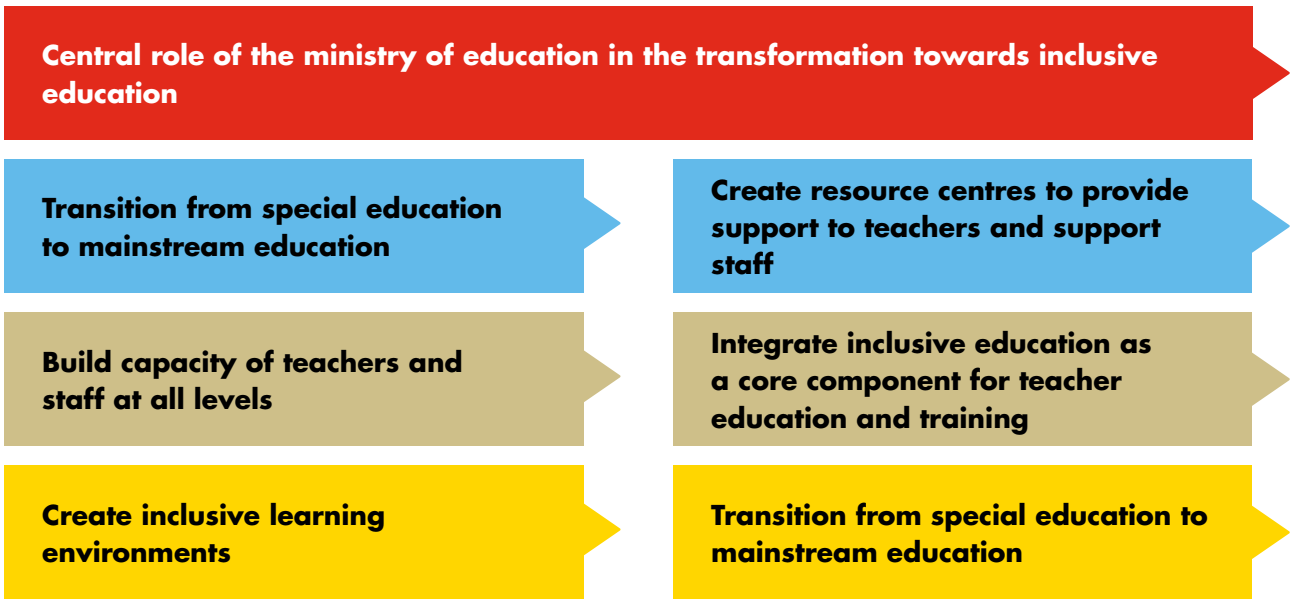
"the result of a process of continuing and proactive commitment to eliminate barriers impeding the right to education, together with changes to culture, policy and practice of regular schools to accommodate and effectively include all students.... Inclusion involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and the environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences." (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, paras. 10 (d) and 11)

The requirements of an inclusive education system that is capable of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for persons with disabilities are described in the following sections.

4.1 Governance by the ministry of education

FIGURE V

Central role of the ministry of education in inclusive education



The ministry or department mandated with education commonly has a central role as the main governance body. This contributes to consistency, coherence and coordination throughout the education system, towards a common vision of inclusive education, across its diverse components. This includes ensuring inclusive pathways for students with disabilities throughout all levels of education and the provision of competency frameworks, professional development on inclusive education and support to improve working conditions for teachers.

The ministry of education is responsible for leading national policies and plans to transition and progress towards inclusive education, and for centralizing responsibility for the continuous review and readjustment of inclusive education measures. An inclusive education unit established within the ministry of education can lead quality assurance on inclusive education and can gather data to inform the monitoring of inclusive education practice, policy and legislation.

Coordination mechanisms that link the ministry of education with other ministries, government disability focal points and other public bodies are required to enable access to health services and social protection for students with disabilities. Led by the ministry of education, coordination with the ministry of health supports access to screening, assessment and rehabilitation services. Access to financial aid and other supports can be enhanced through coordination with the ministry responsible for social protection.

Cooperation between levels of government and support for regional and local education authorities are key to ensuring that the delivery of inclusive education is responsive to changing requirements at the school level. In many contexts, the education system distributes responsibilities among national Governments (such as responsibilities for curricula, funding and training of teachers, support staff, administrative staff and other actors in the education sector) and local governments (such as responsibility for the direct implementation of education). Local governments should be supported, as required, to deliver quality inclusive education throughout their geographic area of responsibility.

Governance and coordination for inclusive education

Inclusive education working groups made up of representatives from ministries of education, health, social welfare and women and children, as well as organizations of persons with disabilities, service providers, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations and other relevant civil society organizations, are effective mechanisms for the coordination, planning and monitoring of, and accountability for, inclusive education in Central Java province (Munaw Yusuf, Erma Kumala Sari and Ravid Karsidi, "Evaluation of the Inclusive Education Programme Implementation in Central Java province", *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Special Education (ICSE 2019)* (Atlantis Press, 2019)).

Inclusive education must be led by the ministry of education

In many countries, public bodies, such as the ministry of social affairs or of welfare, are responsible for the education of students with disabilities through, for example, "special schools" for primary and secondary school-aged students or other programmes provided exclusively for persons with

disabilities at an older age. Such practices remain outside the governance of the ministry of education – that is, outside the mainstream education system and its curricula, pedagogy, quality standards, information management systems and oversight mechanisms. This separation of responsibility can promote and reinforce the segregation of persons with disabilities.

Where such practices exist, the accumulated experience of the professionals involved should be assessed and oriented towards the development of resource centres for inclusive education, which provide support to the mainstream education system.

For example, the Ministry of National Education of Colombia provides guidelines for inclusive education and works with national institutes for blind persons and deaf persons to create inclusive programmes. Regional education departments implement the policy. They carry out identification and enrolment campaigns for children with disabilities in coordination with other government entities, then develop progressive implementation plans (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, p. 97).

Related indicators on the Convention: 24.1, 24.3 and 24.6

4.2 Legislation

Recommendations

Ministries of education should ensure that:

1. Overarching legislation on education sets out an actionable right for all children, explicitly embraces inclusive education in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see definition above) and recognizes the right to inclusive education for all students, without exception. Legislation should protect the right of students with disabilities to attend regular schools. It should not include provisions or clauses allowing for the exclusion of students with disabilities from general education (e.g. based on impairments, where considered "appropriate" for the child (see part II, section 5.1));

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.1 and 24.2

2. Legislation prohibits discrimination, including harassment, bullying, violence and corporal punishment in the education system, including in the classroom, on the basis of disability;

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.1 and 24.9

3. Universal design and accessibility standards are adopted, monitored and enforced. Provisions in legislation should:

   a. Make all education facilities (both public and private), of all levels, accessible for students with disabilities;

   b. Ensure the availability of accessible materials for students with disabilities;

   c. Provide and ensure that learning environments are inclusive of all students, including students with disabilities.

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.7, 24.8, 24.11 and 24.13

4.3 Close consultation with, and the active involvement of, persons with disabilities

Recommendation

The ministry of education should ensure the systematic participation of, and active consultation with, persons with disabilities, in all their diversity, their families and their representative organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of inclusive education policies and programmes. In particular, children with disabilities have the right to be heard, to share their perspectives and to take part in decision-making concerning their education. This should occur at all levels, including at the individual (e.g. the development of their individual education plan) and the collective levels (e.g. through student councils).

- Related indicators on the Convention: 24.25 and 7.14

4.4 Awareness-raising

Many teachers, school staff, parents and students with disabilities remain unaware of the model of inclusive education and its benefits and of the right to inclusive education. Parents of children with disabilities may remain sceptical or apprehensive about practices for inclusion, especially where support systems and resources are scarce. As such, they may not feel confident about enrolling their child in an inclusive school and continue to favour segregated special schools. On occasion, parents, both without and with children with disabilities, may even openly oppose changes towards inclusive education. Awareness-raising efforts play a critical role in fostering an environment that welcomes inclusive education and should be led by persons with disabilities.

Recommendation

Awareness-raising campaigns and activities should be systematically carried out to promote inclusive education among all education stakeholders and society at large to eliminate barriers (including attitudinal barriers), to improve inclusive education practices and to promote enrolment and the continuation of schooling, particularly to ensure that children with disabilities start school at the appropriate age.

- Related indicators on the Convention: 24.23, 8.2 and 8.9

Awareness-raising through non-formal education

In Greece, the Association of Social Responsibility for Children and Youth runs an experiential non-formal education programme that promotes disability awareness through an open and informative dialogue between primary and secondary school students and motivational speakers (young persons with disabilities), who coordinate and implement the programme. The main aim of the initiative is to fight ignorance and deconstruct stereotypes in order to facilitate the inclusive education process. The association is striving for a barrier-free and rights-based inclusive society, and its members strongly believe that education removes barriers for persons with disabilities and is the answer to social insensitivity, apathy and indifference. The speakers emphasize the role and importance of schools in developing social consciousness, eliminating prejudice and promoting the inclusion of socially vulnerable groups (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, "Focus on the person: Disability Awareness Programme successfully implemented in schools in Greece since 2009").

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship



Target 4.7 addresses the need to incorporate key content throughout the education process in order to foster increased respect for individual human rights, inclusion and the promotion of sustainable development by developing "the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED)" (Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All, para. 9) (see "Quality education" in the present guidance).

> Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

In particular, human rights education and training on the rights of persons with disabilities, notably relating to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, enables students to learn about diversity and inclusion and to better identify inequalities and disability-based discrimination. This also contributes to holding persons and institutions accountable, by submitting requests and complaints and engaging with authorities, to promote the continuous improvement of their practices.

> Related indicators on the Convention: 8.6 and 30.4

4.5 Teachers and education staff



Target 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

This target addresses the need to increase and improve the teaching workforce and is thus important for, and applicable to, all levels of education.

Building the capacity of education sector staff, including teachers but also other school personnel, can challenge resistance linked to stigma and a lack of experience and is key for the development and success of inclusive education.

Recommendations

The ministry of education should provide and promote:

1. Compulsory pre-service training for all future teachers on inclusive education methods and pedagogy (including on the accessibility of the classroom and school environment; the use of augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communications; and reasonable accommodation) as an integral part of general teacher training curricula, in coordination with educational institutions that provide certifications for teaching, including tertiary institutions and universities;

2. Compulsory in-service training for teachers and school staff on inclusive education methods and pedagogy (including on the accessibility of the classroom and school environment; the use of augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communications; and reasonable accommodation), in coordination with relevant education actors (such as universities and teachers' unions);
3. Gender-sensitive human resources and the recruitment of teachers with disabilities to ensure diversity and a gender balance within the education workforce;
4. Diverse and inclusive school cultures that promote and reward positive interactions between teachers with and without disabilities;
5. Recognition of teachers with disabilities and those with inclusive education experience, through promotion to leadership roles;
6. Support staff, as needed, to work with teachers, facilitating inclusive classrooms.

Related indicators on the Convention: 24.6, 24.21 and 24.22

See also part II, section 5 on capacity-building in the Foundations Guidance.

Education support personnel deployed in the Cook Islands

The Cook Islands Inclusive Education Policy, introduced in 2002 and reviewed in 2011, focuses on taking a more inclusive approach by transferring students with physical and learning disabilities from special units to mainstream schools. To achieve this, the role of support personnel, particularly teaching assistants, is recognized. They received specialist training and many gained a New Zealand-issued teacher's assistant certificate. Their role is to provide one-on-one support to an individual child or support a small group within a class, depending on the level of need. They work at all levels, from early childhood to secondary education. The assistants are meant to work with the teachers to assure the best quality learning environment for students with certified special requirements. The ultimate responsibility and the duty of care for all children remain with teachers – a supervisory teacher must be present at all times. Teachers write weekly plans based on the learning outcomes of the inclusive education programme and give assistants direction and opportunity for feedback (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, p. 150).

Teacher training for inclusion

The Callan Services for Persons with Disabilities is a partnership of stakeholders advocating for inclusion in Papua New Guinea. Among other activities, the partnership established the Callan Inclusive Education Institute to upgrade staff knowledge and skills at inclusive education resource centres, which raise awareness, screen for disabilities, provide rehabilitation and preparation for mainstream education, and place children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms with long-term support. The institute also provides training for mainstream teachers and resource centre staff on how to work with and train mainstream teachers (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, p. 147).

Diversity among teachers

In Nepal, educated individuals with visual impairments are actively recruited as teachers in mainstream schools. Out of the approximately 1,000 persons in Nepal with visual impairments and a university degree, about 400 work as teachers in mainstream schools. A survey found that both students and principals perceived these teachers positively, despite some challenges in classroom management, in support (such as the provision of materials in Braille) and in help with marking examinations or training in the use of computers. Students reported that the teachers' strengths were positive attitudes and good communication skills and that they paid more attention to social and moral lessons (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, p. 152).

Learning together, teaching together

Many countries provide pre-service teacher training in separate general education and special education streams. This results in teachers who are prepared to teach students who fit certain pre-established criteria but who are not prepared to teach a diverse range of students in an inclusive classroom.

For students to learn together, teachers must have a variety of skills to address the different requirements that a diverse range of students may have. All teachers must be prepared to teach all students and should receive continuous training to develop the skills required to reach students who require more support.

Bringing this mix of skills to the classroom requires pre-service training on inclusive education philosophies and approaches, strategies for working collaboratively with other teachers, teaching and learning materials for students with disabilities, and teaching strategies that enable learning by students with diverse requirements. For example, universal design for learning is a widely recommended strategy for reaching a variety of students (UNICEF North Macedonia, *Access to School and the Learning Environment II: Universal Design for Learning – Inclusive Education Booklet on the Basic Concepts of Universal Design for Learning*, 2014).

Unifying pre-service education for teachers under one system can build common ground among teachers, as well as a platform for exchange, sharing and learning.

4.6 Budget allocation

Recommendations

The ministry of education and relevant State structures should:

1. Allocate a budget for the implementation of the different aspects of inclusive education and establish markers to track expenditures;
2. Disaggregate budget expenditures for inclusive education so that areas of priority and gaps are clear and comparable. Where there are transition plans from special education towards inclusive education for students with disabilities, budget allocations should be disaggregated

where possible by expenditure on materials, support and reasonable accommodations to prevent gaps in the provision of support and to allow for the comparison of expenditures across systems.

- Related indicators on the Convention: 24.14 and 24.24

See also part II, section 1.3.2 on disability markers in the Foundations Guidance.

Evidence-based resource allocation to support inclusive education

Where countries have education management information systems that effectively identify children with disabilities, funding can be allocated to support inclusion. Fiji has recently begun including disability data in its staffing formula, which allocates proportionately more staff to schools with students with relevant support requirements. The data system also enables special and inclusive education grants to go to schools, based on data from the students' learning profiles (D. Mont and B. Sprunt, "Adapting education management information systems to support inclusive education", in *The SAGE Handbook of Inclusion and Diversity in Education*, M. Schuelka and others, eds. (Sage Publications Ltd., 2019), pp. 249–262).

4.7 Data collection and disaggregation

The ministry of education and other relevant authorities should ensure that education data are collected and disaggregated by disability and cover all the education services available, in both mainstream and special schools. Data should be collected on persons with disabilities enrolled, attending, completing, dropping out and out of school, and be appropriately disaggregated to monitor and track the experiences of persons with disabilities who belong to indigenous or minority populations, are migrants and those with diverse gender identities, sexual orientations or sex characteristics.

Recommendations

In order to monitor the inclusion of students with disabilities in education over time, the ministry of education should:

1. Establish policies and processes for identifying children with educational support requirements, including students with disabilities;
2. Systematize administrative data in order to be able to retrieve and analyse them (e.g. by improving the education management information system to enable disability disaggregation);
3. Coordinate closely with the national statistics office to ensure that all data collection systems are compatible, particularly regarding the identification modules in statistical operations (censuses, surveys and so forth). This would enable the measurement of enrolment ratios of students with disabilities out of the total population of persons with disabilities, which is estimated through censuses and household surveys;
4. Support research to understand the effectiveness of inclusive education, gaps and issues, and develop recommendations for improvements.

- Related indicators on the Convention: 24.27–24.30 and 31.2

See also part II, section 1.5 on data collection and disaggregation in the Foundations Guidance.

Screening and identification

South Africa adopted a national strategy on screening, identification, assessment and support in 2014 to provide standardized procedures. The policy, aligned with the Integrated School Health Programme, targets out-of-school children, as well as learners in mainstream and special schools who encounter learning barriers. Assessment and support are not based on predefined categories of disability but on the level and nature of learning requirements. At admission, teachers screen all children, record results in learner profiles and become case managers (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, p. 44).

Disability data in education management information systems

The evolution of the education management information system of Fiji is an instructive example of good practice in measuring disability-inclusive education. The system was expanded in 2013 to include a more sophisticated disability disaggregation toolkit based on the UNICEF/Washington Group Module on Child Functioning. Teachers receive a guidebook and training and are encouraged to complete a student learning profile for any child with significant functional difficulties and for those who consistently perform poorly. The form is completed with parents, taking into account clinical assessments when appropriate and agreements between teachers and parents on any need for targeted support.

Information on students in the system is complemented with information on the school, including that gained from an accessibility audit. Involvement by organizations of persons with disabilities and students with disabilities and their families is encouraged. The education management information system records information on the services needed and on those available (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, p. 84).

4.8 Accountability and complaint mechanisms

Recommendations

The ministry of education and relevant State structures should ensure the following:

1. The ministry of education should establish independent, effective, accessible, transparent, safe and enforceable accountability and complaint mechanisms that allow students with disabilities, parents and other relevant persons to channel their feedback, requests and complaints. These may include cases of discrimination, a lack of support, violence, harassment, corporal punishment and bullying, among others. Confidentiality and mandatory reporting processes are required and personnel should be trained in these areas. The ministry of education should establish sound administrative structures to provide timely and effective responses to complaints;

2. An independent complaint mechanism should be available, to be used when previous steps failed or were not satisfactory for the complainant (e.g. through the courts or the national human rights institution, such as the ombudsperson on education). The justice system should be prepared to address disability-based claims and to accommodate persons with disabilities. Independent monitoring mechanisms, including national human rights institutions, should monitor the progress of cases, identify structural gaps and promote remedial action, working together with the ministry of education;
3. In consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, the ministry of education should ensure that accessible information on the right to education and on how to challenge denial or violations is widely disseminated and publicized to persons with disabilities.

Related indicator on the Convention: 24.26

5. Other key actions by target

5.1 Access to, and completion of, inclusive quality education: targets 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6



Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

The general actions outlined in part II, section 4 are crucial for the achievement of targets 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6. In particular, target 4.1 highlights the completion of free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, with a focus on ensuring relevant and effective learning outcomes, as well as fostering interpersonal and social skills and positive values and attitudes.

Quality education

While there are different approaches to "quality education" at the international level, there is consensus around three key aspects: the need for more relevance, greater equity of access and outcomes, and proper observance of individual rights. Quality relates to more than simply learning outcomes, although these may catalyse increased investment, innovation and inclusion.

> "We commit to quality education and to improving learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. ... Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of

> the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED)." (Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All, para. 9)

This section focuses on actions to strengthen both access to, and the completion of, quality education by students with disabilities and on how to support them in achieving their learning outcomes.

FIGURE VI

Actions to strengthen access, completion and learning outcomes for students with disabilities

Assets

- Laws do not prevent access to general education (non-rejection clause).
- Administrative procedures do not exclude students with disabilities from general education.

Learning

- Students with disabilities benefit from individualized education plans.
- Learning outcomes are based on individual objectives.

Meaningful participation

- Students with disabilities have the necessary support to participate and learn.
- Reasonable accommodation is offered and provided on demand.

Completion

- Upon completion, students with disabilities obtain the same certification as other students.
- Students with disabilities are entitled and supported to pursue higher levels of education.

5.1.1 Adopt a non-rejection policy and prohibit admissions requirements

Children with disabilities are often denied access to general education through exception clauses in education legislation. These are made operational through administrative procedures, including exclusion on the basis of assessments of cognitive capacity (such as intelligence quotient testing) that automatically lead to referrals to special education schools.

Recommendations

Education authorities should:

1. Adopt a non-rejection clause (in law) and policy (in practice) that prohibits the denial of admission of a student with disability into mainstream schools. A non-rejection policy is a rule that prevents education systems from excluding students with disabilities from attending mainstream schools. It is a non-discrimination tool and has been expressly recognized by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
2. Prohibit admissions requirements that have the effect of excluding students with disabilities based on impairment, the degree of impairment, the presumed potential of the individual or an age limit on the completion of grades.

Related indicators on the Convention: 24.1 and 24.2

5.1.2 Foster inclusive learning environments

Currently, most general education systems and their evaluation methods are standardized, to be applied to all students. Such an approach assumes that all students should fulfil the same uniform expectations in terms of performance. This approach ignores the great diversity of students and their learning methods, and notably of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Inclusive education requires that students with disabilities engage in education in general schools, on an equal basis with other students. This comes with the requirement that learning environments and curricula be universally designed and that teaching methods and assessments be flexible to adaptation, to meet the requirements of the diversity of learners, including children with disabilities.

Furthermore, curricula for all students, including students with disabilities, should be reviewed to ensure coverage of the areas highlighted by the Sustainable Development Goals, in recognition that education is a key driver to achieving sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Goals: key thematic areas for education curricula and students with disabilities

Goals 4, 5, 12 and 13, as well as indicators 4.7.1, 5.6.2, 12.8.1 and 13.3.1, require education systems to include specific thematic areas in school curricula, throughout all levels of education. These are:

- Global citizenship education
- Sexual and reproductive health education
- Education for sustainable development, including on gender equality, human rights and climate change (particularly on mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning)

These areas should be explicitly included in national education policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessment. In particular, human rights education provides an important opportunity to include the rights of persons with disabilities.

Education systems should provide this content to all students in an inclusive manner to ensure that students with disabilities equally benefit from them.

Recommendations

Education authorities should:

1. Ensure that the national curriculum reflects the diversity of learning requirements and allows for adaptations tailored to each learner through the use of individual education plans, which outline goals and assessment processes, and the identification of reasonable accommodations and supports. Individual education plans should be developed with the participation of children with disabilities in accordance with their age and maturity;

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.7 and 24.16

2. Promote inclusive learning environments where students with disabilities are not discriminated against based on their impairment or language or subjected to violence and where they can participate equally. This requires education authorities to prepare teachers appropriately and to develop programmes that prevent violence, corporal punishment, harassment and bullying against persons with disabilities;

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.9 and 24.16

3. Ensure that all new school infrastructure incorporates the principles of universal design and is accessible to all learners, including those with physical and sensory impairments;

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.7, 24.8, 24.17 and 24.19

4. Ensure that curricula for students with disabilities also cover the following themes, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals: global citizenship education, sexual and reproductive health education and education for sustainable development, gender equality, human rights and climate change.

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.12, 8.6 and 30.4

5.1.3 Ensure support, including through reasonable accommodation

Inclusive education is not just about placing students with disabilities with other children, but about ensuring that all support measures are properly in place to enhance their development and meaningful participation, enabling the achievement of their educational goals. When universal design conditions are met, many students with disabilities require few or no individual adaptations or support to participate in the general education system. For those persons with disabilities who may require it, inclusive education must provide adequate, continuous and personalized support.

Support as part of inclusive education systems

Distinction from reasonable accommodation

Support measures include the provision of learning support assistants; augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication; specific learning tools; assistive and information technology; alternative/accessible formats; scholarships; transport assistance and financial resources. Support measures must be determined in collaboration with the student with disability and, where appropriate, with the parents or caregivers and relevant professionals.

Resource centres

Resource centres are centralized structures that provide mainstream education facilities with services to support inclusive education. These services vary and can include (a) technical support; (b) resources to ensure support measures; (c) support to teachers to enhance capability for inclusive teaching methods; and (d) pedagogic evaluation and support, including on how to ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation. Resource centres are not segregated spaces where students with disabilities are taken for education. Centralized resource centres can facilitate the provision of reasonable accommodation. These centres can cover more than one education facility and can be a quick solution when undertaking a transition towards an inclusive education system, by building on the existing resources in the special education system (see "Transitioning from special education to inclusive education").

How is "support" different from reasonable accommodation?

Supports, from the perspective of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are measures that are part of the education system and can be institutionalized over time. Reasonable accommodations are anti-discrimination tools that are aimed at providing immediate responses to the requirements of students. Students, either through support systems or through reasonable accommodation, have the right to have access to the tools necessary for them to complete their studies. Support should be seen as an ongoing investment, and reasonable accommodation as an emergency tool. As the system grows more inclusive, fewer reasonable accommodations will be required.

Reasonable accommodation in the context of education includes, among others, adjusted timetables to facilitate the participation of a student with disabilities; modifying the allocation of classrooms to ensure that the student with disability attends courses in an accessible room; the allocation of longer time for students with disabilities to take exams; the provision of assistive technology, including software, as required to ensure participation on an equal basis with others.

Meaningful participation of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in education

Many deaf persons express themselves through sign language. Sign language is, as every other language, a live and complex system of communication that uses visual gestures and signs (that depend on human interaction to develop) and involves the whole signing community. The use of sign language is also a cultural right of deaf persons and is essential to preserve and foster identity and community. The impact of limiting access to sign language for deaf children could have irreversible developmental consequences. In addition, forcing deaf children into oralist communities could lead to isolation and exclusion.

Meaningful participation in education for deaf students requires them to have the opportunity to express themselves in the language they choose, including with a signing community, throughout their education process. In this line, deaf and hard-of-hearing students must be provided with the opportunity to learn sign language and to learn in sign language from fluent teachers. Measures must also be taken to recognize and promote the linguistic identity of the deaf community.

See Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, paras. 35 (b), 35 (c) and 58.

Recommendations

Education authorities should:

1. Provide students with the support measures they may require to ensure inclusive learning (including assistive technology). Additional supports may include personal assistance during class and support teachers (the presence of additional support personnel in classrooms must not further marginalize students with disabilities);

   Related indicator on the Convention: 24.16

2. Ensure that reasonable accommodations are made in order to provide for the individual requirements of students with disabilities, in all settings. To do so, centralized funds for reasonable accommodation, or the provision of reasonable accommodation through resource centres, can be practical options, noting that students with disabilities should learn in classrooms alongside their peers;

   Related indicator on the Convention: 24.1

3. Ensure the accessibility of learning materials and means of communication, including through communication aids and assistive and information technology;

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.11, 24.17 and 24.30

4. Ensure the availability of education in national sign language, tactile sign language, tracking, tactile fingerspelling, print on palm, Tadoma, Braille, speech, plain language, Easy Read and speech reading, as required by students;

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.17–24.19

5. Ensure the provision of accessible life skills to all students with disabilities;

   Related indicator on the Convention: 24.12

6. Plan and develop systems and services, including through the development of in-school or centralized resource centres.

   Related indicators on the Convention: 24.19–24.21

5.1.4 Provide equally valid certification

Students with disabilities should receive a certification of completion of education levels, of equal value to others, that enables them to pursue higher studies. Grade promotion, the completion of an education level and the quality of learning outcomes of children with intellectual disabilities must be interpreted in connection with their individual education plan and curricular adaptations (including for the related indicator 24.29 on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

Currently, students with intellectual or developmental disabilities may be denied their certification of completion or provided with certification that is not of equal value to that of their peers, perhaps specifying that they had an individual education plan or curricular adaptations. As a result, once they complete primary or secondary school, these students may be denied the opportunity to pursue further studies of any kind, be it vocational, technical or at a university.

Recommendations

In this regard, education authorities should:

1. Ensure that the completion of an education level is guided by the individual education plan and is achieved based on individualized assessments that respond to the plan;
   - Related indicator on the Convention: 24.16
2. Ensure that the certification of completion is considered to be equally valid regardless of whether or not curricular adaptations or individualized goals are registered in the certification or diploma. It should enable persons with disabilities to pursue further studies;
   - Related indicators on the Convention: 24.27 and 24.28
3. Provide support to students with disabilities in transitioning to higher levels of education and employment.
   - Related indicators on the Convention: 24.5 and 24.27

Transitioning from special education to inclusive education

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for the implementation of an inclusive education system. Transforming an education system requires careful planning, policy development, time and sustained resources. The aim is to resource and build an inclusive education system that enables students with disabilities to have access to quality education together with all other students. Many students with disabilities can participate in existing regular education with few adjustments and supports. Other students, who may require higher support, also have the right to participate in regular education. It is important to note that, while many systems are transitioning towards inclusive education, not all mainstream schools are currently able to ensure effective, safe and supportive environments for students with disabilities. Governments should provide the supports and reasonable accommodations necessary for students to successfully transition within an enabling and safe environment, preventing exclusion and, ultimately, strengthening the inclusion process.

In order to move forward, the following key actions are required:

1. Allow students with disabilities to enrol in a regular school (non-rejection policy);
   - Related indicators on the Convention: 24.1 and 24.2
2. Develop an inclusive education plan that resources schools, trains teachers, establishes policy settings and provides relevant supports to enable students with disabilities to receive a quality education in regular schools;
   - Related indicators on the Convention: 24.3, 24.5, 24.14, 24.16, 24.21 and 24.28
3. Establish in-school or centralized resource centres for the provision of support to teachers and support staff for inclusive education, including to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to students with disabilities in regular schools;
   - Related indicators on the Convention: 24.3 and 24.18–24.21

Special education has traditionally been the main source of practice and knowledge on how to support students with disabilities. This resource should not be left behind and transition plans should benefit from the accumulated experience of existing special education systems. It should be noted that not all practices in special education will be beneficial for inclusive education.

Teachers with and without impairments working in the special education system will contribute to improving inclusive education. All teachers should have opportunities to build their capacity on inclusive education and the associated methodologies;

- Related indicators on the Convention: 24.6, 24.21 and 24.22

4. Establish a mechanism to enrol students with disabilities coming from special education institutions into mainstream education, monitoring the transition to ensure that they have quality support and any necessary adjustments are made to meet their individual requirements;
   - Related indicators on the Convention: 24.3, 24.7 and 24.16
5. Establish an accountability mechanism, enabling students with disabilities to claim the support and accommodation they may require.
   - Related indicator on the Convention: 24.26

Inclusive education is a right that every student with or without disabilities should be able to exercise. To that end, legislation should enable the above-mentioned actions. In addition, legislation should promote an inclusive education system and policies should ensure adequate resourcing to avert reliance on special education structures, such as special schools, separate classrooms, or settings exclusively for students with disabilities, including day-care centres, vocational training centres, residential institutions and early childhood education centres.

Partnership between resource centres and mainstream schools

In Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, blind students receive support for attending a mainstream school. Students who moved to the mainstream school reported missing the extracurricular activities and vocational training previously provided by the resource centre. In response, the centre and the school worked together, with the centre offering more support to the school, including through in-service teacher education (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*, p. 149).

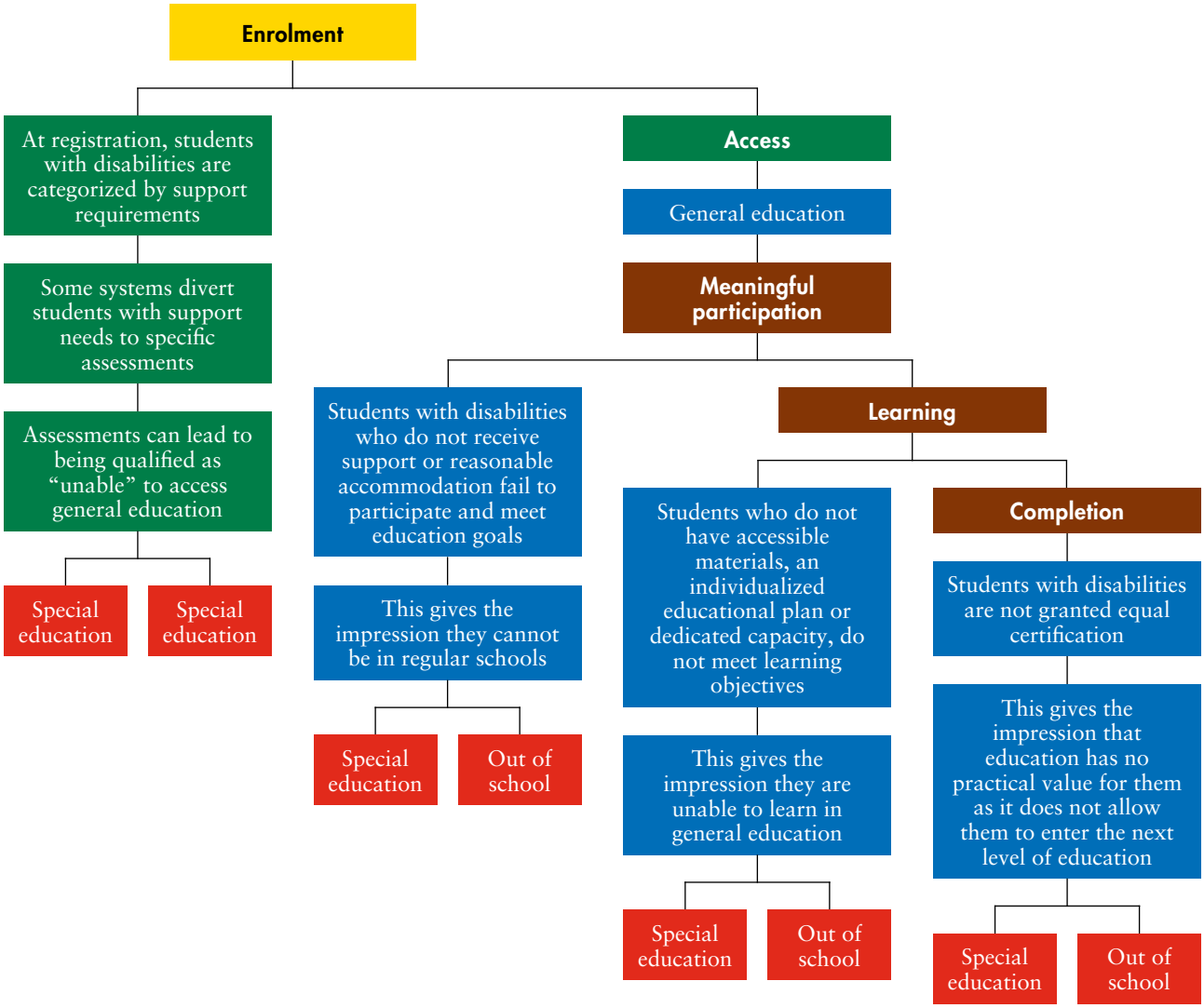
5.1.5 Identify and address gaps in the education trajectory of students with disabilities

Children and youth with disabilities are more likely to be out of school than other children and youth of school age. When they encounter the school system, they may be put on various pathways depending on how the system approaches students with disabilities. This includes how the system views and measures the potential of students with disabilities and whether or not measures of support and inclusion are offered, provided and adapted to the individual student and their learning requirements. Many education systems continue to operate on built-in pathways of exclusion for students with disabilities, thus preventing successful completion.

In most systems, students without disabilities register, have access to and participate in activities and education programmes, and complete their studies. In the same system, students with disabilities may fall into one of the common exclusionary trajectories shown in figure VII.

FIGURE VII

Common exclusionary trajectories for children with disabilities



Some common challenges faced by children with disabilities that lead to their exclusion in education, as well as actions to overcome them, are listed below:

1. **Out-of-school children:** Data on out-of-school children with disabilities are required to enable the tracking of progress of their inclusion in education.

   Action: Establish mechanisms to identify out-of-school students with disabilities and link them with the relevant education services. This may include steps to overcome barriers to enrolment at the local school, linking them with accelerated education service providers, and/or implementing outreach programmes to enable learning from home.

2. **Pedagogic evaluation:** At various times (often at the point of enrolment) schools may request that children with disabilities undergo a pedagogic evaluation (or a functional assessment, depending on the context). This can be useful in identifying educational support requirements and in informing the development of an individual education plan. However, the evaluation may sometimes be used to exclude students with disabilities from mainstream schools and divert them to special education, home schooling or social care institutions, or to selectively enrol only some students with disabilities in mainstream education settings, depending on the perceived ability of the child to adapt to the existing context. In places where there are no pedagogic evaluations or similar mechanisms, students with disabilities may be diverted to special education or enrolled in mainstream education without the appropriate supports or reasonable accommodations.

   > **Action:** Do not use pedagogic evaluations (or functional assessments) as a basis to deny access to mainstream education settings. Evaluations should be used to identify education support requirements and reasonable accommodation provisions, to enhance the participation of the student and to support the process of developing individual education plans.

3. **Obtaining measures for support and inclusion:** Include individual education plans and provide support and reasonable accommodation in general education. In many cases, education for students with disabilities is improved through the development of individual education plans. These often signal the provision of support measures or reasonable accommodation. Supports and accommodation should be available throughout each stage of education, and particular attention should be paid during transitions to subsequent levels of education – students with disabilities and their families should be supported in communicating their support and reasonable accommodation requirements to the new educational setting.

   > **Action:** Ensure the provision of individual education plans, supports and reasonable accommodation as required by the individual student. Closely monitor the situation of students to adapt supports and to ensure that resourcing is available to enable quality inclusive education. Monitor and support the school attendance of students with disabilities in order to provide for a successful education process and to prevent exclusion or diversion from mainstream education.

4. **Reaching completion, learning outcomes and transition:** To ensure that inclusive education is focused beyond the enrolment of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, education systems should track data on the proportion of students with disabilities completing education levels, transitioning from early childhood settings to primary, primary to secondary, secondary to post-secondary and between special education and mainstream settings. Outcomes can be tracked through general curricular assessment mechanisms, as well as through the achievement of individual education plan goals.

   > **Action:** Regularly monitor data on students with disabilities relating to learning outcomes, completion rates and transition rates.

5.1.6 Collect data to monitor and enhance inclusion

Well-developed information systems are key to measuring steps towards achieving target 4.1. Governments must ensure that administrative data or education management information systems enable the tracking of individual trajectories of students with disabilities. Improvements to education management information systems (including digitalization) are required in many countries to facilitate data disaggregation and improve the use of data to support inclusive education.

Besides identifying disability, education management information systems need to collect information, including on the need for, and provision of, educational supports, the use of accessible materials, barriers and the transition of students between classes and settings. Data must be collected for students with disabilities both in mainstream education and in special education.

In addition, education systems need to monitor beyond their administrative data and be able to implement policies that target all children with disabilities, including those who are out of school. This requires comparing education management information systems data to national population-level data. Coordinating closely with the national statistics office to ensure the compatibility of disability measurement across data collection systems is fundamental, particularly regarding disability identification modules in statistical tools (censuses, surveys and so forth) so that the overall inclusion of students with disabilities in schools can be assessed.

The Sustainable Development Goal indicators relating to targets 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6 require data on the enrolment of children and young persons in different grades and stages of education, as well as proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy (disaggregated by sex, disability and minority or indigenous background). Data on school facilities are required for indicator 4.a.1, including on adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; this information is important for understanding environmental factors that act as barriers or enablers to enrolment and achievement.

In addition, the indicators on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities require data on (a) the proportion of students with disabilities benefiting from individual education plans, support measures and other accommodations, (b) the proportion of deaf students receiving education in sign language, (c) participation in consultations, including by students with disabilities, and (d) the training and recruitment of teachers with disabilities.

Recommendation

Education authorities should collect data on enrolment and completion, disaggregated by disability status, and establish monitoring mechanisms in education management information systems to ensure action in response to irregularities within the trajectory of the student.

> Related indicators on the Convention: 24.11, 24.16, 24.17, 24.19, 24.28, 24.29, 31.8 and 31.10

5.2 Quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education: target 4.2



Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

5.2.1 Ensure quality early childhood support in inclusive and community-based settings

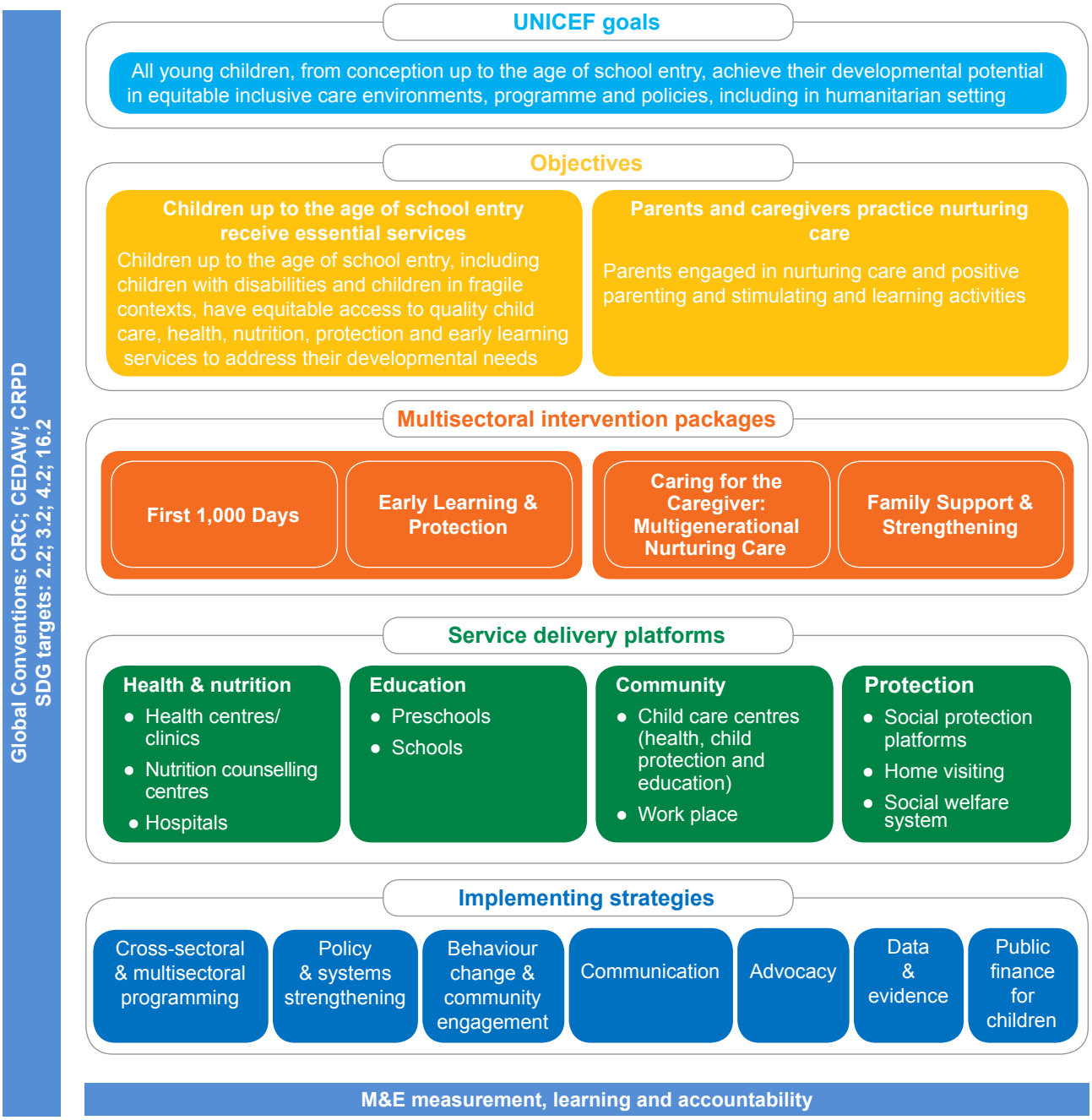
Early childhood interventions can be particularly valuable for children with disabilities, serving to strengthen their capacity to benefit from education and promoting their enrolment and attendance. All such interventions must guarantee respect for the dignity and autonomy of the child.

In many countries, these interventions, supports and services are not fully developed or they are limited in their scope and reach. Medical assessments continue to direct children with disabilities to institutionalized settings so they have access to recommended interventions and rehabilitation. As a result, children with disabilities are disproportionately represented in institutions, including residential educational institutions, where they are not only denied quality inclusive education but also deprived of their right to home and family life and inclusion in the community. Living independently and being included in the community are inherently linked to inclusive education, starting with quality support at an early age through community-based services. Governments are urged to ensure access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education through the development and support of an appropriately trained workforce, together with the provision of support and training for parents and caregivers of young children with disabilities. If identified and supported early, young children with disabilities are more likely to transition into pre-primary and primary inclusive education settings.

UNICEF proposes a comprehensive framework for early childhood development policies and programmes, which pertains to several Sustainable Development Goal targets and to all children. The framework goes beyond the education policy and highlights the need to coordinate all programmes (from different areas) that contribute to early childhood development, notably education, health and social policy. It addresses target 4.2 in conjunction with other targets that concern early childhood development. In doing so, it presents and links the different service delivery platforms providing services to preschool-age children.

FIGURE VIII

UNICEF framework for early childhood development policies and programmes



Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *UNICEF's Programme Guidance for Early Childhood Development* (New York, 2017), p. 15, figure 4.

In the context of target 4.2, an inclusive and community-based early childhood education system, coordinated with other sectors, and awareness among parents of children with disabilities are fundamental. To achieve this, Governments should take note of the points presented in the following sections.

Recommendations

For children with disabilities, measures addressing their requirements and supporting their early development must:

1. Be directed at enhancing the natural environment (parents and caregivers) of the child with disability to make it supportive of their development;
2. Be aimed at ensuring that children with disabilities always participate in inclusive settings with other children;
3. Look not only to the medical output of the identification of the impairment and to intervention measures but also to the social development of the child, including by addressing attitudinal (and other) barriers that may hinder their participation;
4. Be guaranteed within the community and protect the individual child's right to home and family, ensuring that no child is separated from their family on the basis of their disability;
5. Accelerate deinstitutionalization efforts that include children with disabilities equally with other children, and ensure the development of quality early childhood intervention services in the community by redirecting resources away from institutions;
6. Adopt a moratorium on all new admissions of children into institutions.

5.2.2 Provide awareness-raising, support services and training to parents and caregivers

Parents and caregivers constitute the natural and primary environment of children in their first years of life. They provide for their early development through nutrition, care, protection, interaction and play, among other things, and they interact with early education and other relevant services, including paediatric services. Their observations may trigger the search for services leading to the early identification of impairments, which can lead to timely access to early intervention services (see part II, section 5.2.3.).

Recommendations

For parents and caregivers to be able to effectively fulfil their duties and this essential supportive role, it is key for Governments to:

1. Raise their awareness about disability, education and human rights;
2. Establish mechanisms to provide them with specific information on early childhood development services;
3. Develop counselling and support services;
4. Promote their engagement with peer-support networks (family member organizations for persons with disabilities);
5. Promote collaboration between them and education, rehabilitation and social systems.

Related indicators on the Convention: 7.15, 8.2, 8.6, 8.7, 23.10, 23.16 and 24.23

5.2.3 Establish mechanisms for early identification and early intervention for inclusive early education

Historically, and notably in education, a focus on medical diagnosis has been used to exclude or segregate children with disabilities from their peers. Especially for those with intellectual and developmental impairments – who have been labelled as "uneducable", "unable" or "disruptive", among other things – this has led to low expectations, which perpetuated discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Coordination among early childhood education authorities and other services (including health services) is key for relevant information to be behind decisions on learning requirements and the provision of educational (or other) support. Education authorities should be proactive in case management, so as not to leave all the burden of administrative tasks and coordination among agencies and services to parents and caregivers.

Recommendations

Establishing an early identification and assessment system for the development of early intervention for children with disabilities requires Governments to ensure, among other things:

1. Awareness-raising and the dissemination of information on disability to parents and first-line staff in different sectors;
2. Clear procedures for referrals, when necessary;
3. The availability of a diversity of specialized services for assessment, including paediatric services and developmental screening;
4. The establishment of networks among government, communities, education services and civil society organizations (including organizations of persons with disabilities) to raise awareness, conduct outreach, encourage and facilitate access to services, and monitor early intervention programmes.

Related indicators on the Convention: 8.2, 8.7, 24.4, 24.10, 24.23 and 25.3

5.3 Access to higher education, including university, and the availability of scholarships for persons with disabilities: targets 4.3 and 4.b



Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Target 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

5.3.1 Ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodation in admission procedures

Accessing higher education starts by having admission procedures that treat persons with disabilities equally. This means ensuring the accessibility of, and having reasonable accommodation applied to, admissions procedures (e.g. admission exams in Braille or orally for blind persons (accessibility measure), more time for written exams as required (reasonable accommodation) and information on admissions in Easy Read formats for persons with intellectual disabilities (accessibility measure)).

As noted by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in paragraph 12 of its general comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education, learners with disabilities should receive support to ensure effective transitions from school to vocational or tertiary education and, eventually, to work. Governments should ensure that the capacities and confidence of learners are developed and that they receive reasonable accommodation. In addition, equality regarding assessments, examination procedures and the certification of their capacities and attainments should be guaranteed.

Recommendations

Education authorities should:

1. Raise awareness, among higher education institutions, on accessibility requirements;
2. Enforce protocols and coordinate with all higher education institutions to ensure both accessibility and reasonable accommodation in admission procedures for all courses and exchange programmes;
3. Propose that education legislation establish the obligation to offer both accessibility and reasonable accommodation in admission procedures for all technical, vocational and tertiary education institutions, including universities;
4. Establish admission procedures that are proportionate to, and consistent with, a student's individual education plan, when appropriate.

Related indicators on the Convention: 24.5 and 24.20

5.3.2 Adopt specific measures to increase the number of persons with disabilities in tertiary education

While data are scarce on persons with disabilities in tertiary education, persons with disabilities present lower completion rates in tertiary education when compared to other persons (*Disability and Development Report*, p. 81, figure II.31).

Specific measures focused on persons with disabilities are necessary to increase their participation in higher education, including in universities. Such measures are diverse and education authorities should promote, adopt, monitor and redesign them over time.

Recommendations

Education authorities, including technical, vocational and tertiary education institutions and universities, should consider, for instance:

1. Adopting affirmative actions that favour persons with disabilities, such as quotas (i.e. reserving places in admission procedures for persons with disabilities). This directly contributes to increasing their participation;

2. Establishing, within public authorities on higher education and within universities, offices to provide support to students with disabilities;
3. Developing scholarship programmes for persons with disabilities to aid in covering the cost of education and/or the extra cost of living relating to their disability;
4. Developing policies and building capacity to support the development of individual education plans for persons with disabilities, if required;
5. Establishing inclusive and diverse assessments and tests;
6. Providing individualized support, including psychosocial support, to any person with disability that may need it when transitioning to and/or at higher education;
7. Establishing outreach measures to inform and advocate for opportunities for tertiary education for persons with disabilities to identify potential candidates for higher education and to provide them with the support necessary for enrolment in higher levels of education;
8. Acting as a role model by employing persons with disabilities under their authority.

Related indicators on the Convention: 5.7, 24.5, 24.22, 24.23 and 24.27

Partnership between resource centres and mainstream schools

The University of Washington in Seattle, United States of America, developed the "Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT)" programme, targeting both students with disabilities from high schools and faculty staff and academic administrators, with the objective of increasing the successful participation of persons with disabilities in post-secondary education and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

5.4 Acquiring skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship by persons with disabilities: target 4.4



Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

The transition from the education system to the world of work and employment poses several challenges and barriers for persons with disabilities. Target 4.4 requires that youth and adults with disabilities be equipped with the relevant skills for this transition, in order to find a place in the economic life of the community – be it as employees or as self-employed individuals.

See the Policy Guidance on Sustainable Development Goal 8.

5.4.1 Adopt measures to make mainstream vocational training inclusive of persons with disabilities

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) can play a key role in equipping persons with disabilities with the relevant skills to join the economic life of the community, either in dependent employment or in self-employment. However, TVET is not usually inclusive of persons

with disabilities. Where persons with disabilities are able to have access to TVET, it is often in segregated settings and courses, which have lower quality standards. In addition, courses offered tend not to be connected to actual market requirements (see part II, section 5.4.2).

Recommendations

In the area of TVET, ministries of education and labour should coordinate to:

1. Adopt a policy strategy to ensure that mainstream TVET is inclusive of persons with disabilities and connected to the requirements of employers in the open market, with measurable goals and time frames and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
2. Ensure that eligibility criteria for TVET do not exclude persons with disabilities (e.g. through excessive requests for educational certifications or work experience);
3. Ensure that teaching methods and materials are accessible to persons with disabilities, including individual education plans, and that they are provided with support and reasonable accommodation as required;
4. Ensure that assessment methods are inclusive and consistent with individual education plans (where relevant) so that trainees with disabilities are not prevented from demonstrating their capacity or from completing and receiving certification for the training undertaken;
5. Make targeted training for persons with disabilities available, to support and facilitate their inclusion and retention in mainstream training (either before or in parallel with mainstream training);
6. Develop capacity-building programmes to enable the mainstream TVET workforce to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Related indicators on the Convention: 24.5, 24.20, 24.27, 27.3 and 27.12

See part II, section 5.2.1 on vocational and entrepreneurship training in the Policy Guidance on Sustainable Development Goal 8.

5.4.2 Adopt measures to provide on-the-job training or workplace learning

To establish a direct bridge between the education and training of persons with disabilities and employment markets, programmes on workplace learning can prove helpful, including through internships, traineeships, apprenticeships and industry attachments.

Recommendations

Education authorities, in coordination with other public agencies and the private sector, should:

1. Ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in any public programme of workplace learning (such as a public sector apprenticeship system);
2. Ensure that legal and policy frameworks provide for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in workplace learning schemes;

3. Promote coordination among relevant stakeholders (such as training institutions, employers and organizations of persons with disabilities), with a common understanding of how to address disability;
4. Provide guidance, incentives and support to different stakeholders to include persons with disabilities in their workplace learning schemes.

Related indicators on the Convention: 24.22, 27.3 and 27.12

5.4.3 Implement capacity-building strategies for self-employment

In many countries, where the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the open employment market remains low, self-employment may be the only realistic alternative that allows persons with disabilities to actively participate in economic life and obtain an income. Inclusive settings must therefore ensure the teaching and development of relevant skills for initiating and developing businesses, such as entrepreneurship and financial skills.

Recommendations

Education authorities, in coordination with existing employment authorities, should:

1. Ensure that any training offered to promote entrepreneurship and develop related skills is inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities by eliminating potential barriers and providing any required support;
2. Include, within training on entrepreneurship, capacity-building on financial and administration skills;
3. Facilitate access to information and communications technology and other accessible technologies and provide training for entrepreneurship;
4. Consider outreach measures to promote awareness of entrepreneurship and related training for persons with disabilities.

Related indicator on the Convention: 24.23

See part II, section 5.2 on self-employment in the Policy Guidance on Sustainable Development Goal 8.

Additional resources

Global Education Monitoring Report Team. *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and Education – All Means All*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2020.

International Disability Alliance. *What an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Education Means to Us: Report of the International Disability Alliance*. Geneva, 2020.

International Labour Office. *Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Vocational Training: a Practical Guide*. Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2013.

International Labour Organization. Making apprenticeships and workplace learning inclusive of persons with disabilities. Policy brief. Geneva, 2018.

_____. Making TVET and skills systems inclusive of persons with disabilities. Policy brief. Geneva, 2017.

Mont, Daniel, and Beth Sprunt. Adapting education management information systems to support inclusive education. In *The SAGE Handbook of Inclusion and Diversity in Education*, Matthew J. Schuelka and others, eds. SAGE Publications Ltd, 2019.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Education: resources.

_____. Guide for including disability in education management information systems: technical guidance. 2016.

_____. *The Right of Children with Disabilities to Education: a Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education*. Geneva: UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS), 2012.

_____. *UNICEF's Programme Guidance for Early Childhood Development*. New York, 2017.

United Nations, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. General comment No. 4 (2016) on the right to inclusive education.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities*. United Nations publication, 2019.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All. ED-2016/WS/28. Paris, 2016.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Bangkok. *Towards Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities: a Guideline*. Bangkok, 2009.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). *On the Road to Inclusion: Highlights from the UNICEF and IIEP Technical Round Tables on Disability-Inclusive Education Sector Planning*. Paris: UNESCO-IIEP, 2019.

United Nations, Human Rights Council. Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on empowering children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their human rights, including through inclusive education. 22 January 2019. A/HRC/40/27.

_____. Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the thematic study on the right of persons with disabilities to education. 18 December 2013. A/HRC/25/29.

World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank. *World Report on Disability*. Geneva: WHO, 2011.

Yoshikawa, Hirokazu, and Sarah Kabay. The evidence base on early childhood care and education in global contexts. Background paper prepared for the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2015.

Yusuf, Munawir, Erma Kumala Sari and Ravik Karsidi. Evaluation of the Inclusive Education Programme Implementation in Central Java Province. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Special Education (ICSE 2019)*. Atlantis Press, 2019.

Annex: Key concepts

This annex contains key foundational concepts referred to throughout the Policy Guidance for Inclusive Sustainable Development Goals. It is designed as a quick reference and refresher for readers as they use the Policy Guidance. An elaboration of these concepts is provided in the Foundations Guidance, which should be read prior to, or together with, the other guidance for a deeper understanding of the required foundations for inclusion.

Ableism considers certain typical characteristics of body and mind as essential for living a life of value. Ableist perspectives view impairments as undesired, which leads to unconscious bias, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion. Ableism is usually behind negative perceptions and stereotypes about persons with disabilities. See also part I, section 1.3 of the Foundations Guidance.

Accessibility is the quality that allows persons with disabilities to have access to and enjoy physical environments, transportation, facilities, services, information and communications, including new technologies and systems. When planning for accessibility, the principles of universal design should be used. See also part I, section 2.2 of the Foundations Guidance.

Assistive technology, devices and mobility aids are external products (devices, equipment, instruments and software), specially produced or generally available, that maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence, participation or overall well-being. Examples of assistive devices and technologies include wheelchairs, prostheses, hearing aids, visual aids and specialized computer software and hardware that improve mobility, hearing, vision or the capacity to communicate. See also part I, section 2.3 of the Foundations Guidance.

Awareness-raising actions are those that are aimed at informing about rights and changing negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities. They include training, campaigns and mass-media communications. Awareness-raising activities should target persons with disabilities and others and should involve persons with disabilities in their design and delivery. See also part I, section 2.5 of the Foundations Guidance.

Barriers: Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and the barriers in the environment around them. Barriers can be broadly categorized into the following:

1. **Environmental barriers,** which are imposed by the context. To clarify the categories and subcategories, this should be:
    a. **Physical barriers,** such as the presence of steps, preventing access for someone using a wheelchair or others with mobility difficulties.
    b. **Communication barriers,** such as the barriers to participation for a sign language user in a meeting if sign language interpreters are not provided, or the barrier to gaining access to information experienced by blind persons with written text if accessible formats are not provided.

c. **Policy barriers,** such as education systems that prevent the enrolment of children with disabilities in their local school.

2. **Attitudinal barriers,** such as the belief that persons with disabilities cannot learn or work. Attitudinal barriers can lead to apathy or inertia towards addressing other barriers.

In order for persons with disabilities to fully participate and to have opportunities for development, the barriers that limit their participation should be systematically addressed. Persons with disabilities themselves are experts in identifying barriers and the solutions to overcome them. See also part I, section 1.1 of the Foundations Guidance.

Disability discrimination is described in article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation. See also part I, section 2.1 of the Foundations Guidance.

Disability mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are embedded in all policy, assessing policy implications for persons with disabilities and ensuring their meaningful participation. It is the way of making the concerns and experiences of persons with disabilities an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that persons with disabilities have equal benefits, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve equality of outcomes and foster an inclusive culture. Disability mainstreaming should be combined with disability-specific actions (see the twin-track approach, described below). See also part II, section 1.2.1 of the Foundations Guidance.

Disability-related extra costs refers to the higher expenditure of persons with disabilities and their households when compared to that of the rest of the population. Extra costs commonly stem from specific goods and services (such as mobility aids, personal assistance and accessible housing) and/or a lack of access to general goods and services (e.g. having more expensive health insurance and using taxis where public transport is not accessible). Disability-related extra costs affect different policies. (For more information, view the videos "Understanding disability extra costs" and "Addressing disability extra costs" of the Centre for Inclusive Policy.)

International cooperation is the interaction of persons or groups of persons representing various countries and diverse international and regional organizations striving towards the common goal of realizing the rights of persons with disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Persons with disabilities, the organizations that represent them and policymakers collaborate through their ministries of international affairs to receive technical and financial support from international organizations and development banks. Financial support designated for international cooperation should not be used for measures contrary to the Convention and should be planned to be substituted with national funds to ensure policy continuation. Technical cooperation among countries with similar realities is important to identify effective solutions. See also part II, section 6 of the Foundations Guidance.

Intersectional discrimination refers to situations where discrimination is occurring on the basis of multiple and intersecting factors, including sex, gender identity, ethnicity, age, caste, class, faith, sexual orientation, sex characteristics or any other characteristic. Persons with disabilities also have a gender identity, may come from an indigenous group, be young, old, a refugee or living in poverty. See also part II, section 3.3 of the Foundations Guidance.

Legal capacity is the right to make legally valid decisions autonomously. Some countries restrict the right of adults with disabilities to manage their own financial affairs, including owning property, choosing where to live and work, and managing their relationships, health and well-being. Restricting or denying this right is against the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and has negative effects across all policies. See also part II, section 3.5 of the Foundations Guidance.

Organizations of persons with disabilities are led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities. They are established at the local, national, regional or international level to promote and/or defend the rights of persons with disabilities. The clear majority of the membership of such organizations should be recruited among persons with disabilities themselves. See also part I, section 2.4 of the Foundations Guidance.

Participation of persons with disabilities refers to the action of allowing and enabling persons with disabilities to take part directly, or through organizations of persons with disabilities, in decision-making processes, including the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies. To do so, persons with disabilities should be closely consulted and actively involved in all decision-making processes by being invited to give their opinions and to take part in implementation processes.

Participation is an obligation to be met under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for all aspects of policy. "Nothing about us, without us" is the motto that promotes this obligation, and it means that no policy should be developed or implemented without persons with disabilities. See also part I, section 2.4 and part II, section 2 of the Foundations Guidance.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Hence, persons with disabilities are persons with impairments who experience barriers that restrict their participation. See also part I, section 1.2 of the Foundations Guidance.

Reasonable accommodation refers to modifications or adjustments made for a person with disability who requires them in a particular case, to facilitate participation on an equal basis with others. Reasonable accommodation must be provided on demand – that is, entities responsible for providing it cannot deny it by saying that they are progressively implementing measures. If arbitrarily denied, this constitutes discrimination.

Some examples include adjustments to the school hours of a student, extended breaks to rest, the acquisition of computer software to read screens or a foldable ramp to overcome steps, or the provision of a sign language interpreter in a work meeting. See also part I, section 2.1 and part II, section 3.2 of the Foundations Guidance.

Support for persons with disabilities encompasses a wide range of formal and informal interventions, including live assistance and intermediaries, mobility aids and assistive devices and technologies. It also includes personal assistance, support in decision-making, communication support (such as sign language interpreters and alternative and augmentative communication), mobility support (such as assistive technology or service animals), living arrangement services for securing housing and household help, and community services. Persons with disabilities may require support to perform daily life activities and/or to use general services (such as health, education and justice) on an equal basis with others. See also part I, section 2.3 of the Foundations Guidance.

Supported decision-making is a type of support given to persons with disabilities in relation to legal decisions. This mechanism guarantees that (a) persons with disabilities exercise their legal capacity (see above) and can make their own decisions in every aspect of life, and (b) their decisions are not replaced by the decisions of guardians or others. Supported decision-making is voluntary and can include informal and formal support arrangements. For example, a person with disability may choose a trusted person to support them in making certain types of legal decisions. They may also resort to peer support or self-advocacy networks. Some persons with disabilities may have access to support to help in the communication of their will and preferences. See also part II, section 3.5 of the Foundations Guidance.

A **twin-track approach** is a policy development strategy that:

1. Systematically mainstreams the interests and rights of persons with disabilities in policy design and implementation, across all sectors and areas of life;
2. Adopts targeted policy and programming measures aimed specifically at persons with disabilities.

The balance between mainstreaming strategies and targeted support strategies should be tailored to address the needs of specific communities. See also part II, section 1.2.1 of the Foundations Guidance.

Universal design is the design and composition of products, environments, programmes and services that make them accessible, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability or disability, and without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The principles of universal design facilitate accessibility, including for persons with disabilities. See also part I, section 2.2 of the Foundations Guidance.

The **Washington Group Short Set on Functioning** is a set of six questions on functioning, designed to be used within national censuses and surveys, to provide comparable data cross-nationally for populations living in a variety of cultures with varying economic resources. While not exhaustive, the basic actions represented in this set of six questions are those that are most often found to limit an individual and result in participation restrictions. The information that results from the use of these questions will (a) represent the majority of, but not all, persons with limitation in basic actions, (b) represent the most commonly occurring limitations in basic actions, and (c) be able to capture persons with similar difficulties across countries. See also part II, section 1.5 of the Foundations Guidance.



Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Palais des Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland
Telephone: +41 (0)22 917 9220
Email: OHCHR-Infodesk@un.org
Website: www.ohchr.org