

DISABILITY INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

THE WORLD BANK HAS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT ALL EDUCATION INVESTMENT PROJECT FINANCING (IPF) WILL BE DISABILITY INCLUSIVE.

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society, on an equal basis with others.

- Children with disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to never go to school than their peers.
- An estimated 291.2 million children and adolescents globally live with a disability, and approximately 95 percent of these young people live in low- and middle-income countries.
- At least 50 percent of all young people with disabilities living in low- and middle-income countries are excluded from education; in some contexts, the figure is closer to 90 percent.

World Bank analysis indicates that the learning crisis and learning poverty cannot be tackled unless systemic barriers are addressed, and the diverse educational needs of all learners, including persons with disabilities, are met.

THE WORLD BANK'S CRITERIA TO DISABILITY INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

The World Bank fosters equity and inclusion in education by ensuring systemic change and strengthening inclusive education systems. This means ensuring quality and equitable education opportunities for all learners, including learners with disabilities, through the provision of necessary supports at all levels of the education system. Following the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework and Disability Inclusion and Accountability Framework, a multisectoral approach to disability inclusion is critical.

The World Bank announced its 10 commitments on disability inclusion in the Global Disability Summit in 2018, and reaffirmed this commitment in 2022 with the institutional goal of ensuring that **all Investment Project Financing (IPFs) in education will be disability inclusive**. Projects must comply with the four key criteria related to: stakeholder engagement, analysis, project design activities, and monitoring/reporting.



Criteria 1: Stakeholder Engagement

Include meaningful consultations with relevant stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, and beginning with project preparation.



Criteria 2: Analysis

Draw on disability-disaggregated data and disability inclusive or inclusive education legal frameworks in the country.



Criteria 3: Inclusive Project Design

Contain at least one inclusive design feature in a general education activity or one specific activity targeted to benefit and empower learners with disabilities.



Criteria 4: Monitoring/Reporting

Collect and report feedback on both process and outcomes for project beneficiaries with disabilities.



GUIDANCE NOTE FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION IN EDUCATION PROJECTS:



SUPPORTING THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

The Inclusive Education Policy Learning Exchange (IEPLE) is a hands-on professional development program to engage with partner institutions and multi-sectoral stakeholders on a specific thematic challenge or priority area that countries are addressing, in the process of strengthening inclusive education systems.

Joining multi-country cohorts of Inclusive Education Policy Learning Exchange (IEPLE) with the focus on disability inclusion provides an opportunity to strengthen country dialogue and peer support for more inclusive education system development.

For example, Rwanda, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Zambia and Malawi have participated in the Inclusive Education Policy Learning Exchange (IEPLE) Phase 1, focusing on disability inclusion in education. Selected and relevant inclusive education and disability inclusion themes such as identification and referral of learners with disabilities, data needs, an inclusive education management information system (EMIS), inclusive teacher education, curriculum, teaching and learning materials, and inclusive school management and leadership were explored during the IEPLE live sessions. During 2024-2025 Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia completed the IEPLE Phase 2 and proceeded to Phase 3 involving participation in the global and regional forums, implementing country action plans, strengthening Community of Practice at country and regional levels and continuing professional learning journey. These activities are supported by the Scottish Government through Foundational Learning Compact.

Disability Inclusion is also a cross-cutting theme of the Foundational Learning Compact (FLC), which aims to improve learning outcomes for all children. FLC is a multi-donor umbrella trust fund for early childhood, primary and secondary education. See the FLC flyer for more!

Contact

inclusive_education@worldbank.org



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