

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



INCLUSION IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE WORLD BANK'S WORK IN EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD. THIS MEANS CREATING SYSTEMIC CHANGE FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO QUALITY EDUCATIONAL ACCESS, PARTICIPATION, LEARNING PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES FOR ALL LEARNERS.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The World Bank commits to removing barriers to inclusive education so that the right to education may be upheld for all children and youth, including learners from poorer households and/or rural and remote communities, persons with disabilities, ethnic- and linguistic minorities, Indigenous Peoples, refugees, sexual orientation and gender minorities, and other marginalized and/or vulnerable groups.

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM









- 244 million children and youth between ages 6 and 18 years are not in school today, and many marginalized children face barriers to learning even when they are in school.
- Over 40 percent of students who enroll in primary education do not make it to upper secondary school by the age they are expected to reach this level of schooling.
- Despite progress being made over the years, as of 2020, only 10 percent of countries had laws that help ensure full inclusion in education, and many countries still do not collect, report, or use data on those left behind.
- Marginalized groups face myriad barriers to accessing quality education, including inaccessible teaching and learning materials or classroom pedagogies, and stigma or discrimination. Often the most vulnerable learners are those with intersecting vulnerabilities.

The learning crisis and learning poverty—which have been exacerbated by COVID-19— cannot be tackled unless systemic barriers are addressed, and the diverse educational needs of all learners are met.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Inclusive education is a process that requires a profound cultural shift to attain **one education system for all learners** with the provision of supports inclusive of all marginalized and/or vulnerable groups. The process towards more inclusive education systems cannot happen overnight. It requires a holistic and targeted, whole-of-government approach, and consideration of specific minority, marginalized and/or vulnerable groups.

HOW TO ENSURE EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

 <p>Laws, Regulations, Policies, Finance</p> <p>To design legal frameworks and financing mechanisms that explicitly include marginalized groups.</p>	 <p>Training/Professional Development</p> <p>To equip all teachers, school leaders, and education personnel with relevant skills and knowledge.</p>
 <p>Institutional Building</p> <p>To strengthen education systems and capacities, foster partnerships with communities, and leverage cross-sectoral collaboration.</p>	 <p>Teaching and Learning Materials</p> <p>To make all teaching and learning materials, including educational technologies, non-discriminatory and accessible to all.</p>
 <p>Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)</p> <p>To optimize data and information systems for decision-making.</p>	 <p>Curriculum and Assessment</p> <p>To design accessible and flexible curricula and student assessment tools and systems.</p>
 <p>Construction and Renovation</p> <p>To ensure all educational facilities are accessible, safe, and protect students from hazards and harm.</p>	 <p>Awareness Raising</p> <p>To foster understanding and support for social inclusion, by shifting minds or combating stigma/discrimination.</p>



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION APPROACH OF THE WORLD BANK

The World Bank is working with governments around the world to support inclusive education of all marginalized and/or vulnerable learners. The Pathways to Inclusion and Equity Approach Paper (2024) provides guidance to the World Bank and other stakeholders on how to ensure that education sector operations become more inclusive and better serve marginalized learners. This Approach Paper introduces four guiding principles that can support the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs aimed at the inclusion of all learners, as well as targeted support for specific marginalized and discriminated groups.

Principle 1: Meet countries where they are on the pathway to inclusive education

There is no single method for planning or implementing inclusion in education. Context-specific environmental, social, and educational barriers should be identified and addressed early in the process of designing education programs. Meeting countries where they are may mean starting with small, low-risk interventions before phasing in larger scale implementation.

Action plans should be tailored to meet each country's specific needs. For some, it may mean developing the first-ever inclusive education policy or relevant laws and regulations; for others, it may mean focusing on capacity building, designing curricula and assessments that are fit for purpose, strengthening accountability mechanisms, or identifying and scaling innovative solutions. It is also important to conduct contextually relevant research and evaluate existing inclusive education interventions to inform decision making and build a stronger evidence base.

Principle 2: Provide an enabling environment through systemic change and a twin-track approach

An enabling environment for inclusion relies on systemic change in education reform efforts, ensuring a twin-track approach by:

1. Making the general education system in all levels of education (from pre-primary to tertiary education) more inclusive for all learners. This means, for example, mainstreaming disability inclusion in all education reform efforts (e.g., through legislation, policy interventions, inclusive curriculum and flexible assessment system mechanisms, regular support for teachers and school leaders).
2. Specifying targeted actions to support learners with different types of disadvantages. This ensures, for example, that learners with disabilities receive the additional support and reasonable accommodations they need, such as providing sign language users with appropriate support and resources to learn to read with the support of signs and sign language.

This requires the active engagement of governments, particularly ministries of education, and multisectoral collaboration among relevant line ministries such as health, finance, water, and social protection. To facilitate collaboration in achieving these goals, countrywide, disaggregated, and robust data about all learners must be systemically collected and made accessible.

Principle 3: Identify and support inclusive practices in schools, and other education settings

To support the inclusive education of countries, their traditional practices of exclusion, segregation, integration, and inclusion must first be analyzed. A tool that addresses placement, presence, participation, and progress (4Ps framework) can help identify how current practices can be improved and supported across the education system, at both the whole-of-school and classroom levels (including schools, technical and vocational education and training institutions, and universities). It is important to invest in teachers as a driving force for change by providing teacher training; introducing different models to support inclusive education, such as itinerant teachers or resource center models; securing focused financing; and ensuring an adequate skilled workforce. This includes having enough skilled and knowledgeable teachers and other school-based staff. Engagement of leadership in schools and other educational institutions is also essential for understanding, planning, and implementing inclusive education at all levels.

Principle 4: Collaborate with relevant stakeholders

With an increased emphasis on strengthening knowledge and understanding of a more inclusive education system, it is important that stakeholders recognize the potential benefits of inclusive education for all students. Stakeholders, local community leaders, teachers, parents, caregivers, community members, organizations for persons with disabilities (OPDs), and other civil society groups—play a critical role in driving demand for inclusion in education. Government leaders may be better positioned to empower stakeholders to implement innovative learning solutions that are effective and foster greater buy-in from all involved.



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OPERATIONS AND INITIATIVES OF THE WORLD BANK

Country and regional examples of World Bank's Inclusive Education work around the world include:

- **Sierra Leone Free Education Project** is designed to support the inclusion of children with disabilities through school- and system-level interventions. The project supports the government in developing and implementing an inclusive education policy; conducting anti-stigma campaigns which highlight the capacities and rights of persons with disabilities; training teachers, school leaders, and administrators on how to promote an inclusive education environment; and promoting universal access and design as part of the national school construction strategy. The project uses a multisectoral approach, whereby the Ministry of Education personnel work closely with civil society actors and other nongovernmental organizations.
- **Angola Girls' Empowerment and Learning for All Project** integrates inclusive education as a cross-cutting area, and employs various activities to support marginalized learners, including girls and learners with disabilities. Efforts to support girls include enhancing access to sexual and reproductive health services and providing remedial and second chance support for out-of-school girls. For learners with disabilities, the project is strengthening the governments' EMIS system with indicators to capture disability; providing capacity building for education personnel; developing a system for teachers to identify, assess, and monitor children with learning difficulties; designating inclusion champions in each school; and conducting anti-stigma campaigns on the capacities and rights of persons with disabilities.
- **Tuvalu Learning Project** focuses on early childhood education and developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills for all learners. A core component of the project is to train teachers in the use of play-based learning and provide ongoing mentoring support through lesson observations and specific targeted training on themes of inclusive education, including gender, gender-based violence, child protection, and disability inclusion. Public awareness campaigns and outreach efforts also help identify and address challenges with attendance and barriers to access including differences and similarities across gender and disability; and support is provided to parents to foster stimulating home environments and further scaffold early childhood development.
- **Romania Safer, Inclusive and Sustainable Schools** aims to foster more inclusive school learning environments so that all children have a fair and equal chance to develop skills needed to thrive. The project is underpinned by three cross-cutting areas: community inclusion, gender, and climate change. Project activities include constructing safe and accessible school infrastructure, and designing classrooms that are highly functional, age-appropriate, child-directed, and teacher-supported, to promote the individual and social development of all children.
- **The Inclusive Education Policy Academy Learning Exchange** 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 Academy provides an opportunity to strengthen country dialogue and peer support for more inclusive education system development. Rwanda, Ethiopia, The Gambia and Zambia have participated in the Inclusive Education Policy Academy 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 Inclusive Education Policy Academy live sessions. During 2024-2026 Inclusive Education Policy Academy activities focusing on disability inclusion will continue with the support by the Scottish Government for Malawi (Phases 1,2,3) and Rwanda and Zambia (Phases 2,3) through Foundational Learning Compact (FLC) Trust Fund.

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!

RESOURCES FOR POLICYMAKERS AND PARTNERS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

For additional project examples and more information on inclusive education at the world bank see our flyers on Disability Inclusion, Fragility Conflict and VIOLENCE, and the GIRLS' Education brochure.



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