



Recommendations from the Disability Inclusive Education Forum.

This document represents the outcome of the “Disability Inclusive Education Forum - Reaching the most marginalised” held on 4th December, 2020. The organizers and co-hosts¹ of the Forum will use these messages² to ensure that disability inclusive education - particularly in emergencies, is high on the agenda for action ahead of the 2022 Global Disability Summit, to be hosted by the Government of Norway. We know the world is better off when children with disabilities are included, in school, and reaching their full potential. To realize this vision, particularly in emergencies, States, donors, development and humanitarian actors should enhance disability inclusion in legislative and institutional frameworks, programming and service delivery. These recommendations point to responsibilities actions that are needed in these areas to achieve SDG4 for, by, with children with disabilities and to uphold the right to education for all.

I. Enhancing disability inclusive education.

I.i Laws and policies

Governments should strengthen policy and planning to create an inclusive education system and enabling environment for children and young people with disabilities, as well as teachers and education personnel with disabilities in emergencies. Immediate and sustained policy measures are needed to ensure disability inclusive education is adequately financed and operationalised.

Governments should clearly articulate inclusive education in line with the [Cali commitment to equity and inclusion in education](#) (2019)³ and [General Comment 4 2016 \(CRPD\)](#), They should draw on guidelines from the UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning and UNICEF.

All States must ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), notably Article 24 (right to education at all levels with no discrimination) and the guidance provided by General Comment 4 (2016).

Governments should make policy and legislative commitments as a first step to move away from provisions in education separating children and young people based on ability and/or identities.

¹ Government of Norway, Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the Global Campaign for Education (GCE-US), Special Olympics, International Disability Alliance (IDA), International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). Inclusion International, Light for the World, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and The Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network acted as technical advisors.

² The Global Campaign for Education-US (GCE-US) community of practice and Humanity & Inclusion have provided valuable feedback on the recommendations. Along with the co-hosts and technical advisors, the Amal Alliance and Association d'Aide à l'Éducation de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH) also support these recommendations.

³ “inclusion is a transformative process ensuring full participation and access to quality learning opportunities for all children, young people and adults, respecting and valuing diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination in and through education. A commitment to making preschools, schools, and other education settings, places in which everyone is valued and belongs, and diversity is seen as enriching.”

I.ii Meaningful engagement

States, humanitarian and development actors must commit to work with persons with disabilities - children and young people, their parents, teachers, and their organizations (OPDs) - ensuring that they are engaged meaningfully and inform decisions on policy and practice in relation to disability inclusive education in all contexts, including emergency settings, in line with Article 4.3 of the CRPD. Engagement shall meet the [INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response and Recovery](#).

I.iii Coordination

Humanitarian education coordination mechanisms and systems must be adequately resourced and strengthened to ensure that persons with disabilities have access, participate and thrive into an inclusive, quality education system on an equal basis with others.

Efforts should focus on vertical (institutional and organizational layers) and horizontal coordination (between actors and policy areas) to enhance complementarities, improve the effectiveness of disability-specific interventions, and mainstream disability inclusion across education systems.

Promotion of multisectoral coordination to enhance inclusive education is key. The Ministry of Education (MoE) should be committed to and responsible for promoting and operationalizing disability inclusive education. The MoE should make available necessary resources and promote changes to mind-set, policies and practices, as well as establishing comprehensive disaggregated data and tracking systems. The MoE should also guide and work with other Ministries to operationalize a whole child approach, including early interventions, which enhance children inclusion in education and the realization of their full potential.

II. Making education (in emergencies) programming disability inclusive

II.i Planning

All States, humanitarian and development actors must make emergency response plans and recovery fully inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, including plans related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Inclusion must be mainstreamed across all Disaster Risk Reduction and humanitarian sectors. Commitments in the Charter for 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action' and the [IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#) must be implemented, particularly engagement of OPD in all stages.

Humanitarian and development actors should work with Member States (re)build Education Management Information Systems that assess disability inclusion in education and at school, as well as to improve the measurement of learning outcomes, particularly in emergency settings. To disaggregate results at the child level, Member States, humanitarian and development actors should collect data on all disabilities by leveraging increasingly the Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning.

II.ii Finance

Funding

Donors must support public, free, quality education for all and increase funding for disability inclusive education, particularly in emergency settings, including resources for ECW and GPE. Donors shall require that disability inclusion be part of all projects, in line with Article 24 (CRPD) and General Comment 4.

In development contexts, monitoring and evaluation markers must be aligned with the OECD DAC disability marker, to track percent of funding allocated to disability and percent of beneficiaries with disabilities, as per gender reporting.

All donors, funders and multilateral organisations provide resources and technical advice to enhance coordination, as well as to strengthen national ownership and capacity for the design and management of

disability inclusive education systems enhancing quality learning opportunities for all children and adolescents, particularly in emergency settings.

Governments need to mobilize domestic resources in line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action⁴, and local planning coordinated, including meaningful involvement and funding of organizations of persons with disabilities.

Projects⁵

At least 10% of education in emergencies project budgets should be allocated towards addressing the rights and meeting the requirements of children with disabilities, through a twin-track approach that promotes system wide reforms and disability specific measures, particularly to learners at highest risk of exclusion, such as those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities or who are deafblind.

Donors should establish proposal development requirements and selection criteria for funding aimed at mainstreaming disability inclusive education and early childhood education in emergencies, as well as targeted measures for children with disabilities. Funding for disability inclusive education should cover data collection to disaggregate results by disability, support to teachers and inclusive education teacher training including Universal Design for Learning, as well as reasonable accommodation and support for children with disabilities and their families.

II.iii Safe and integrated service delivery

States, humanitarian, and development must

Integrate and connect services across agencies, including those related to education, health, nutrition, protection, livelihoods and distribution of assistive devices in emergency settings. Meaningfully engage OPDs in service delivery and work through a single point of delivery such as schools to facilitate uptake and cater to the multiple requirements and needs of the most marginalized children.

Strengthen the capacity of local actors, including school administrators and teachers, to use inclusive methods and tools and help deliver in-school mental health and psychosocial support, particularly in emergency settings.

Ensure that teachers, children, and families have greater familiarity with the practice and possibilities of home-based and distance education – including virtual and low/no tech modalities – as these represent transitory measures avoiding disruption of access to education and learning during school closures.

Adopt Universal Design for Learning and enhance accessibility of infrastructure, learning materials, content and teaching, particularly in the framework of distance learning. Also, provide reasonable accommodation for children with disabilities, especially in emergency settings.

Ensure that educational activities do not increase risk of COVID-19 transmission for children, particularly those who may have weakened immune systems / greater vulnerabilities. The actors must provide Adequate Personal Protective Equipment along with thorough training for educators / support staff.



⁴ Meeting the benchmarks that commit governments to allocating efficiently at least 4-6% of Gross Domestic Product and/or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure to education (see [Paragraph 14, p.9](#)).

⁵ See INEE's tools and resources on [Inclusive Education](#)