

# EDUCATION FOR EVERY ABILITY

A Review and Roadmap

of Disability-Inclusive Education

in East Asia and Pacific Region





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# Foreword

It is time to reimagine the world for children with disabilities. We need to create a world where all children are in school and learning to meet their potential, as is their right.

East Asia and Pacific has made much progress towards achieving that vision. Yet, more work is needed. Before the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, 35 million children and adolescents remained out of school; and one in three students who remained in school, failed to obtain basic skills. A large number of the children excluded from education are those with disabilities.

In East Asia and Pacific, UNICEF estimates that there are about 190 million children with disabilities. Despite meaningful reforms in many countries in the region, most children with disabilities in East Asia and Pacific do not attend school. In fact, estimates show that, in some countries, only 1-2 per cent of children with disabilities attend school.<sup>1</sup> In cases where children with disabilities have access to education, issues with the quality of teaching and learning is a major concern.

This report analyses progress in the region towards advancing disability inclusive education and suggests a concrete roadmap for accelerating achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasises the importance of equal access to education at all levels for the vulnerable, including children with disabilities.

UNICEF strongly believes that every child and adolescent girl and boy, with or without a disability, has the right to education and to thrive and fulfil her or his potential. To this end, UNICEF in East Asia and Pacific is committed to supporting governments, partners, families, schools, and children and adolescents themselves, to make inclusive, quality education a reality for every child. We hope this report will help countries to take a step closer to realizing this vision.



Karin Hulshof  
Regional Director  
UNICEF East Asia and Pacific

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1 UNICEF EAPRO. (2003). Inclusive Education Initiatives for Children with Disabilities Lessons from the East Asia and Pacific Region.

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFS	Child-Friendly School	ILO	International Labour Organisation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	LAC	Learning Action Cells
CSO	Civil Society Organisation(s)	Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
CSE	Centre for Special Education (Viet Nam)	MoE	Ministry of Education
DAC	Disability Action Council (Cambodia)	MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Viet Nam)
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)	MPF	Ministry of Planning and Finance
DAISY	Digital Accessible Information System	MTB-MLE	Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education
OPD	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	NGO	Non-Government Organisation
EAP	East Asia and Pacific	NIES	National Institute for Education Science (Viet Nam)
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office	PTA	Parent Teacher Associations
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education	REAP	Rights, Education and Protection
ECD	Early Childhood Development	TCSF	Teacher Competency Standard Framework
ECI	Early Childhood Intervention	UN	United Nations
EMIS	Education Management Information System	UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ESDP	Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (Lao PDR)	UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
GC4	General Comment No. 4, Article 24, UNCRPD	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GID-TWG	Gender, Inclusion and Disability Technical Working Group	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
HIEP	Holistic Inclusive Education Programmes	UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific
HKI	Helen Keller International	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health	WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
IE	Inclusive Education	WHO	World Health Organisation
IEC	Inclusive Education Centre		
IECD	Integrated Early Childhood Development		



# Technical Summary

TRƯỜNG PTCS PHU THUAN QUANG  
MỸ NÚ TT1

## Background

Inclusion is anchored on the fundamental human right to education as enshrined in Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>2</sup> Various international legal frameworks endorse inclusive education. The Convention against Discrimination in Education<sup>3</sup> and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>4</sup> reaffirmed the rights of all children to quality education without discrimination. The World Conference on Education for All (EFA)<sup>5</sup> acknowledged for the first time that a substantial number of children are excluded in education and an inclusive strategy is imperative to successfully respond to the growing issue of marginalisation. Articulated in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action<sup>6</sup> is the first explicit commitment to guarantee inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. The treaty recognised inclusion as the ‘most effective means to combating discrimination, building inclusive societies and achieving education for all.’<sup>7</sup>

The United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has 17 goals that make up a “blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”<sup>8</sup> and in many of the SDGs, disability is referenced. Specifically, SDG 4: Quality Education, calls for inclusive quality education and lifelong learning in supported and accessible learning environments. Emphasis is given to ensuring equal access to education at all levels for the vulnerable including children with disabilities. Inclusive education is defined by UNESCO as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children.”<sup>9</sup> It is a transformative process that is founded on the principles of fairness, justice, and equity.<sup>10</sup>

Disability is only one of the many factors that contribute to exclusion in education, among other physical, social, political, and institutional barriers. This review focuses on disability-inclusive education, where disability is recognised as a “result of the interaction between long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments and various barriers in the environment that may hinder an individual’s full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”<sup>11</sup>. The concept of disability is complex and multidimensional. The framework developed by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) takes into account this multidimensional and interactive nature of disability. It takes away the focus on medical diagnoses and impairments and instead, looks at the interaction between impairments and personal and environmental factors.<sup>12</sup> Children with disabilities are among the most marginalised.<sup>13</sup> They are more likely to be out of school and less likely to complete education than their non-disabled peers and transitioning to an inclusive education system will help ensure their right to quality and equitable education.<sup>14</sup>

The East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region is home to around 580 million children, comprising one-third of the world’s population and more than one-quarter of the world’s children.<sup>15</sup> In all countries, a huge gap in terms

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2 United Nations.(1948). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3 UNESCO. (1960). Convention against Discrimination in Education.

4 United Nations (1989). Convention on the Rights of Children art 28 and 29.

5 UNESCO. (1990). World Conference on Education for All.

6 UNESCO. (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education pp 17-18. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Salamanca, Spain.

7 Ibid. p.9

8 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

9 UNESCO (2005) Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all, Paris

10 Slee, Roger. (2018). Paper commissioned for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, Inclusion and Education.

11 UNICEF. (2014). Conceptualizing Inclusive Education and Contextualizing it within the UNICEF Mission.

12 UNICEF. (2014). Collecting Data on Child Disability.

13 UNESCO. (2017). A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education

14 UNESCO. (2018). Education and Disability: Analysis of Data from 49 Countries.

15 UNICEF. (2015). UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF\\_EAPRO\\_Education\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF_EAPRO_Education_FINAL.pdf).

of access to education between children with and without disabilities is evident.<sup>16</sup> A survey in 51 countries by the World Health Organisation reports that only 51 percent of boys with a disability complete primary school compared to 61 percent of boys without a disability.<sup>17</sup> Among girls without disabilities, a 53 percent completion rate is observed while only 42 percent of girls with disabilities finish primary school.<sup>18</sup> Recently, a study by UNESCO revealed wide disparities in enrolment<sup>19</sup>. The largest gap was seen in Cambodia where one in every 14 children without disabilities are unable to access primary and lower secondary schools; and presenting a stark contrast, one in every two children with disabilities is out-of-school.

Children with disabilities are not a homogenous group. In many countries, school attendance rates for children with disabilities vary by disability type. Children that have difficulty remembering and children with mobility impairments have lower attendance rates than children with sight impairments. Children that have difficulty remembering and children that have difficulties with self-care are far less likely to complete primary school than children with other types of impairments. Boys with disabilities are also more likely to be excluded from education than girls with disabilities. Lower secondary and secondary school age adolescents with disabilities are far less likely to attend school than primary school children with disabilities.<sup>20</sup>

In EAP, segregated models of education delivery dominate where learners with disabilities are taught in special schools despite the significant progress in transitioning to more inclusive systems.<sup>21</sup> This practice is rooted in many interconnected variables but understanding of and attitudes towards disability primarily push the education system in this direction. There are reports from many countries that some children with disabilities are enrolled in the formal school system where they are either 'integrated' into mainstream classrooms or taught separately in 'special classrooms' within the regular school, but essentially remain isolated from the school community.

The region continues to move towards building inclusive education systems and evidence of promising inclusive practices exist in many countries, but much remains to be done in guaranteeing equitable access and meaningful participation in education for all children. The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to school closures across the region, is likely to increase the exclusion of children with disabilities from education and learning. A major risk exists that children with disabilities enrolled in school prior to the crisis, will not return to school or will return but with extended delay. This is because the crisis may have exacerbated the exclusion and isolation felt before the crisis. Parents of children with disabilities may also be concerned about the health risks for their children's return to school. Efforts to reopen schools may not include appropriate considerations for children with disabilities. Additionally, children with cognitive impairments and children who use learning aids and equipment that were not made available at home during school closures, are more likely to have missed out on their learning and thus fall farther behind their peers.

It is now more urgent than ever to accelerate progress towards achieving universal quality education for every child with a disability in EAP.

## Purpose

The Education Section of UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) commissioned a consultancy to undertake a review of the progress of countries and UNICEF programmes in the region in advancing inclusive education for children, as part of its continued commitment to enabling equitable access to and participation of all learners in high quality and inclusive education. The mapping has a

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16 UNICEF EAPRO. (2015). UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF\\_EAPRO\\_Education\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF_EAPRO_Education_FINAL.pdf)

17 WHO and World Bank. 2011. World Disability Report. Retrieved from Geneva.

18 UNICEF, 'State of the World's Children' (2013).

19 UNESCO. (2018). Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok: United Nations.

20 You, Y., et al. (2020). How various types of disabilities impact children's school attendance and Completion. International Journal of Education Development: vol. 77 102222.)

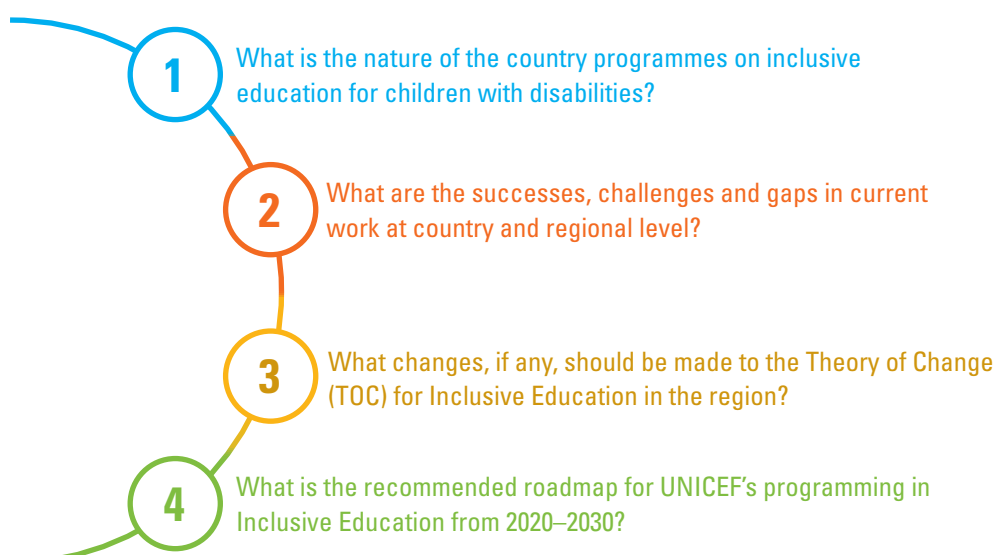
21 UNICEF, 'UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities' (2015).

particular focus on programmes targeted for children with disabilities of pre-primary and primary school age, implemented from 2015 to 2019. Specifically, the review aims to:

- review and document the nature, successes, innovative approaches, challenges, gaps and needs for technical support of Inclusive Education programmes for children with disabilities in EAP region, and
- inform the development of regional and country level strategies for advancing Inclusive Education for children with disabilities.

Geographically, the review intended to cover all UNICEF offices in the region, which includes 25 countries in East Asia and Pacific. However, UNICEF's operational and programmatic focus allow for the availability of information in only 15 countries, which were included in the mapping: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam. The review employed a mixed methods design which merged qualitative and quantitative research methods to generate reliable and better understanding of the evaluation question. Questions<sup>22</sup> set out in the Terms of Reference that the mapping exercise aims to address are as follows:

The review is structured by a theoretical framework that was developed for the purpose of the mapping. It conceptualises inclusive education based on a rights-based perspective and is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).



The framework consists of the following domains and dimensions:

## 1. Whole Systems Approach

- 1.1 Comprehensive Equity Legislation
- 1.2 Inclusive Education Law
- 1.3 Strategic National Action Plan on IE
- 1.4 Equitable Financing and Resource Allocation
- 1.5 Institutional Capacity Building
- 1.6 Awareness Raising and Community Involvement

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<sup>22</sup> Originally, question 1 in the TOR focuses on UNICEF-supported government programmes. Upon discussion with the education specialists in UNICEF EAPRO, the focus of the mapping shifted to the programmes initiated by the governments. A question on UNICEF's contribution to the achievement of the government's goals was added in the mapping tool used to cover UNICEF assistance to the countries.

## 2. Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

- 2.1 Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy
- 2.2 Inclusive Assessment
- 2.3 Learning Materials

## 3. Supported Teachers

- 3.1 Pre-service Teacher Education
- 3.2 In-service Teacher Education
- 3.3 Professional Competency Standards for Teachers and School Leaders

## 4. Learning-friendly Environment

- 4.1 Physical Accessibility of Learning Environment
- 4.2 Safe and Child-Friendly Learning Environment

## 5. Effective Transitions

- 5.1 Early Intervention and Support Services
- 5.2 Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- 5.3 Transition from Early Childhood Care and Education to Primary Education

## 6. Partnerships

- 6.1 Cross-sectoral Coordination
- 6.2 Coordination between National and Local Education Units
- 6.3 Participation of Civil Society / Disabled Peoples' Organisations

## 7. Data and Monitoring

- 7.1 Identification System
- 7.2 Education Management Information System (EMIS)
- 7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation System

Countries' progress in establishing an inclusive education system for children with disabilities were assessed according to the domains in the conceptual framework and then categorised against a four-level scale that was calibrated for each domain and dimension.



# Main Findings

## 1. Whole Systems Approach

General Comment No. 4 to the UNCRPD requires signatories to create an enabling environment through a whole systems approach to inclusive education where implementation is the responsibility of the whole education system. A whole systems approach entails strong national policies and systems to support implementation of those policies.

Under this domain, inclusive education initiatives in six dimensions were examined:

- 1.1 Comprehensive Equity Legislation
- 1.2 Inclusive Education Law
- 1.3 Strategic National Action Plan on IE
- 1.4 Equitable Financing and Resource Allocation
- 1.5 Institutional Capacity Building
- 1.6 Awareness Raising and Community Involvement

In general, results show that most countries reviewed have begun to make progress in establishing equity legislation and action plans that explicitly include inclusive education provisions. However, implementation rates and institutional capacity to implement remain low. Most countries are categorised as *Developing* (six countries) and *Establishing* (five) equity legislation. However, some existing legislations are of inadequate quality to comply with the requirements of the UNCRPD. Thus, some countries have started reviewing existing policies and developing legislative frameworks that establish the rights of persons with disabilities. These countries need to conduct further extensive reviews and establish or strengthen inter-sectoral coordination to ensure consistency among policies, alignment with principles of equity, and compliance with the UNCRPD.

All 15 countries reviewed allocate government budget for financial and human resources to support education for children with disabilities. However, based on the survey and desk review, allocation of funds in the majority of countries (12) is not directed towards support for children with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Funds are often allocated to education for children with disabilities solely in segregated settings and in some cases, support a combination of inclusive and segregated settings or on a case-by-case basis. These efforts and resources which support both inclusive and segregated classes as dual systems of education can perpetuate the exclusion of children with disabilities from the general education population.

In terms of institutional capacity building, countries are in different phases. Some countries are just Initiating (five countries) and creating institutions for inclusive education, some are *Developing* (five countries) institutional capacity and some are more advanced in *Establishing* (five countries) such capacity. Some countries have policies and plans in place that set out strategies to increase capacity in implementing inclusive education. For example, some countries have begun training their government officials at the national and provincial levels to use the Washington Group/UNICEF **Module on Child Functioning**.

Most countries reviewed have undertaken awareness-raising activities to educate the public on inclusive education, often with UNICEF support. Such initiatives aim to raise awareness on disability and inclusion and to influence positive change in attitudes and behaviours toward children with disabilities in school and society. However, many communication campaigns on inclusion in education of children with disabilities are weakened by references to segregated provisions and mixed messaging around special schools.

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## 2. Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

All children have the right to the same high quality, equitable inclusive curriculum.<sup>23</sup> The education system should ensure that curriculum and assessment mechanisms respond to the diverse needs of all learners including children with disabilities. There should be initiatives to systematise the implementation of inclusive child-centred pedagogy according to the principles of universal quality educational design. Curricula are considered to be accessible when they provide for reasonable accommodation and assistive and adaptive technology and pedagogical tools. In this section, the review will discuss the extent to which countries are progressing in three curriculum-centred dimensions:



### 2.1 Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy

### 2.2 Inclusive Assessment

### 2.3 Learning Materials

The review found that most countries are still in the early phases of Developing (seven countries) inclusive curricula and using learner-centred teaching strategies; however, a few countries have established important components of inclusive curricula. According to available data, few countries (five – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste) have established strategic action plans for inclusive curriculum reform. A few have taken steps to apply inclusive principles in their curricula and/or implement a new curriculum framework. Evidence suggests that although efforts to transform the curriculum exist in many countries, the practice of learner-centred pedagogies in the classroom remains limited. Teachers need ongoing professional development support to develop inclusive teaching methods.

UNICEF has provided technical assistance for disability-inclusive curricula in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. UNICEF's Inclusive Education programming facilitated the provision of communication tools, assistive devices, and inclusive learning materials for children with disabilities in many (five) countries in the region.

While countries are advancing in the domain of inclusive curricula, most countries recognise that current assessment arrangements are inflexible and unresponsive to diversity. Most countries in the region still employ national examination systems and/or national assessment system that are based on rigid measurement criteria and tools that do not support a diverse population of learners and, instead, perpetuate a culture where children with disabilities are unable to access the assessment.

However, data suggests that some (five – Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Vanuatu) countries have begun to organise a coordinated effort to plan the review and revision of their assessment systems to make them more inclusive. Enabling environments including policy reforms will be necessary to support and sustain the development of inclusive assessment systems and provisions for accessible learning resources.

Initiatives to ensure that children with disabilities learn from one flexible curriculum alongside their peers and are evaluated based on equitable and inclusive measures, are hindered by the continued provisions of specialised programmes for children with certain disabilities. These provisions tend to promote a medical segregated approach which does not meet the requirements of GC4.

Data indicate that there are limited to no available assistive devices and inclusive learning resources in most countries reviewed in the region. Where assistive devices are available, they are limited in number and are mostly used in special schools to provide support for children with specific types of impairments such as visual impairments.

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23 UNESCO. (2017). A Guide for Ensuring Equity in Education.



### 3. Supported Teachers

Teacher development is at the core of implementing inclusive education (Forlin, 2010a; Global Campaign for Education & Handicap International, 2013; Lewis & Bagree, 2013) and raising educational quality. General Comment No. 4 (GC4) to Article 24 of the UNCRPD requires governments to sufficiently train pre-service and in-service teachers and other relevant staff on core inclusive values and competencies to create inclusive learning environments. An inclusive culture should provide an accessible and supportive environment which encourages teacher development through action learning, collaboration, and problem-solving. There are three dimensions examined under this domain:

- 3.1 Pre-service Teacher Education
- 3.2 In-service Teacher Education
- 3.3 Professional Competency Standards for Teachers and School Leaders

Many countries in the region are undergoing extensive education reforms that involve an evaluation of their current pre-service teacher education curriculum, continuous professional development approaches, and teacher competency standards. While most of these countries have committed to improving their pre-service curriculum and in-service training programmes through the integration of inclusive approaches, gaps between teacher education and requirements of inclusive practice are still evident. Teacher education programmes in many countries still do not reflect inclusive pedagogies needed to enable future teachers to address the diverse needs of all learners.

Moreover, in-service training provisions are often ineffective. Often, trainings are limited to one training session with no follow up, are too short and/or delivered predominantly through cascade models, which have shown to have limited efficacy. Teachers and school leaders across the region should be provided with appropriate professional development support through collaborative action learning based on reflective practice, enabling school communities to work together and share effective inclusive practices. All in-service training should be followed up by regular mentoring and/or communication with teachers. Training for non-teaching school staff is and lacks quality.

Data on professional standards in the region is limited. In countries with available data, there is limited information on teacher professional competency standards specifically referring to inclusion and teaching diverse learners as performance indicators. Most classroom teachers do not have access to assistance or specialised services to support them in facilitating inclusive education in the classroom.

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### 4. Learning-friendly Environment

Governments that are state parties to the CRPD are mandated by the convention to ensure all learning environments are fully accessible to everyone without discrimination. GC4 stipulates that all learning environments must be designed to foster inclusion and guarantee equity. School facilities must be physically accessible, inclusive, and safe for all types of children.

Specifically, an inclusive classroom environment must ensure that reasonable accommodations are in place for children with disabilities. This includes not only providing accessible infrastructure, but also equipping learners with assistive devices and learning materials in accessible formats such as print in braille, tactile diagrams, and audiobooks. State parties must commit to the prompt introduction of Universal Design and provision of reasonable accommodation when necessary. In inclusive learning environments, everyone feels safe, supported, stimulated and able to express themselves, with a strong emphasis on student participation in building a positive school community. Schools must also recognise the importance of the social peer group in learning and build positive relationships, friendships and acceptance. Two dimensions are examined under this domain:

- 4.1 Physical Accessibility of Learning Environment
- 4.2 Safe and Child-Friendly Learning Environment

The review showed that most EAP countries are in the *Developing* stage in terms of having a physically accessible learning environment. In most countries, some schools are physically accessible, however it is not the norm. This means that some efforts are being made to ensure that learning environments are accessible and safe for children with disabilities and that reasonable accommodations are provided. For example, some countries have developed inclusive design guidelines and building standards, either subsumed in national legislations or as stand-alone policies, including provisions for disaster risk reduction and WASH facilities.

Physical accessibility and safety considerations are essential to advancing inclusive education in mainstream schools. Absence of accessibility measures can exclude children with disabilities from school completely, or if they are able to attend school, put them in danger. Also, a lack of capacity and awareness among policy makers on universal design approaches, creates a poor enabling environment for promoting change towards inclusive and accessible learning environments. Where there are existing policies and standards, implementation mechanisms are either lacking or weak.

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## 5. Effective Transitions

Children with disabilities have the same right as their non-disabled peers to a continuous non-segregated, equitable education. Governments should ensure that accommodations and adaptations are provided to children with disabilities to ensure a continuum of services from early childhood, through primary and secondary school and on to higher education tracks.

High-quality early intervention services, early childhood development and pre-school programmes are critical pillars in ensuring an inclusive primary school experience for children with disabilities. These services should be systematically extended and accessed in an equitable manner by children with disabilities. Early childhood programmes are crucial to ensuring access to primary school for children with disabilities, helping them to learn effectively in an inclusive environment and to progress through higher academic levels.

This study's scope focuses on the early years and primary school, however more research is needed on children's access to secondary, technical and higher education. Three dimensions were studied under the domain Effective Transitions:

### 5.1 Early Intervention and Support Services

### 5.2 Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

### 5.3 Transition from Early Childhood Care and Education to Primary Education

Countries reviewed in the region recognise the significance of Early Childhood Intervention and Support Services but still lack a systemic approach to multi-sector involvement, multi-disciplinary assessment, and a continuum of support services covering all age ranges from birth to school age. Eight countries rated themselves in the *Initiating* stage while seven are in the *Developing* stage. Data on most countries (Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Vanuatu), while limited, indicate several initiatives in developing and implementing early childhood intervention programmes in a limited scale and variably founded on the charity and medical models of disability.

Early intervention services and early education programmes in various forms are present in almost all countries in the region although most of them are in piloting phases where impact is still limited and viability to be scaled up remains to be seen. Examples of these are the Family Support Service Model for children with disabilities in Lao PDR<sup>24</sup> and state-sponsored early childhood care and education services<sup>25</sup> which UNICEF support through systems strengthening<sup>26</sup> in the Philippines. With the technical support of international aid organisations like UNICEF, a few countries such as Myanmar, Malaysia, and Vanuatu have

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24 UNICEF Lao PDR, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2018).

25 UNICEF Philippines, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2018).

26 UNICEF Philippines, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

engaged and capacitated local communities in hard to reach areas to bring early intervention services to more children with disabilities.

Most of the countries (13) reviewed rated themselves *Developing* in disability-inclusive Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programming. With UNICEF's continued technical support, there are ongoing reforms to strengthen and upgrade ECD and ECCE policies as newly established ECD and ECCE programmes are piloted and effective programmes scaled up. These efforts are complemented in many countries by the governments' development of strategic plans of action to support effective transition programmes from ECCE to primary education for children with disabilities. During this stage, the participation and input of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) with strong advocacy founded on the UNCRPD and the GC4 will be invaluable in ensuring that plans and policies are aligned with international conventions.

Based on the results of the survey, the majority of the countries (10) reviewed in the region are in the *Developing* stage of creating sound transition plans for children with disabilities in early childhood care to primary education. Results suggest that these countries have been formulating their plans and strategies to ensure accessible and efficient transition programmes. However, supporting data in this area was extremely limited and could be an opportunity for further investigation and research. Where there is available evidence, as in Malaysia, Mongolia, and Myanmar, there are ongoing advocacy efforts to review and enhance policies and programmes on inclusive kindergarten and their transition to primary and basic education.

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## 6. Partnerships

The realisation of inclusive education entails a multi-sectoral commitment and accountability across government at all levels of society. The relationship between the learning environment and other parts of government, society and community must be recognised as a route towards inclusive societies (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). This review looked at partnership between and within government sectors, civil societies, OPDs, parents, and the wider community; specifically, three dimensions were reviewed under this domain:

- 6.1 Cross-sectoral Coordination
- 6.2 Coordination between National and Local Education Units
- 6.3 Participation of Civil Society / Disabled Peoples' Organisations

Cross-sectoral and sub-national coordination remains one of the biggest challenges in implementing inclusive education in EAP. Effective and sustainable coordination and implementation mechanisms to ensure continuity and follow-through of action plans are lacking; those that exist generally have low capacity.

There are some good examples of collaboration in the region within and between government agencies and geographic levels. Another promising trend is that government is increasingly looking to OPDs and CSOs for technical guidance. However, the limited capacity of such organisations is also a challenge thus participation of OPDs is often ad-hoc and short-term, rather than being included in all stages of programme development, implementation, and evaluation. There is not enough evidence to validate whether the inputs of OPDs and CSOs in policy dialogues are strong enough to yield positive impact nor the extent to which they require further support and capacity building to be able to manage an advisory role to governments in policy development, programme implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

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## 7. Data and Monitoring

Quality implementation of Inclusive Education requires regular data collection, monitoring and evaluation. This requires governments to establish good identification systems, to include disability data in education

management information systems, using standardised methodologies and tools based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), and to create monitoring systems for new inclusive education interventions and policies, using disability-inclusive indicators. Monitoring should involve persons with disabilities, including children and persons with intensive support requirements, involving OPDs, as well as parents or caregivers of children with disabilities, where appropriate.

In this review, practices in the following dimensions were reviewed:

- 7.1 Identification System
- 7.2 Education Management Information System (EMIS)
- 7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation System

The region is confronted with a huge lack of reliable data on disability and education of learners with disabilities. Across the region, there is a pressing need to enhance identification, monitoring and evaluation, as well as modernise Education Management Information Systems to produce accurate and disaggregated information on individual children with disabilities and the contextual barriers to their learning and participation. Often when data on disabilities exists in administrative data systems and EMIS systems, they are based on a medical model of classification; this is in spite of international classification standards, such as the UNCRPD definition of disability and the set of questions on functional domains for children established by the Washington Group on Disability. A medical approach to collecting data on children with disabilities is linked with issues in legislative frameworks where a medical perspective of disabilities prevails. Obtaining data on children with disabilities is indeed a challenge globally.

The lack of reliable data is closely linked to a lack of appropriate identification systems. Parents and teachers are unequipped to identify signs of disabilities and refer their children and students to appropriate screening diagnostic services. In most countries, there is limited capacity among practitioners to screen children using internationally accepted frameworks and tools.

When children with disabilities remain unseen in data they also remain invisible in education sector plans and school improvement plans. They are thus often overlooked in monitoring and evaluation processes which are linked to education sector planning and resource allocation. Recent legislative reforms in many countries, related to data and monitoring, are aiming to strengthen accountability for inclusion in order to comply with international treaties. There is little evidence to indicate that any of the countries in the region are advanced in this domain. Nonetheless, ongoing efforts to build evidence bases through multi-sectoral approaches demonstrate that countries are taking steps in the right direction.

## Gaps & Challenges

Barriers to access inclusive and equitable quality education and interventions for children with disabilities continue to challenge governments and their partners. However, these barriers also provide opportunities to reflect and improve on current inclusive education programming. The key challenges in advancing Inclusive Education are synthesised in this section.

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### Negative Attitudes and Perceptions

Negative attitudes and discrimination toward children with disabilities in many layers of societies continue to hinder access to education and social services due to prevailing cultural perspectives on what it means to learn, rigid perceptions of success, and a lack of inclusive values. These negative views also persist among policy makers, which results in a lack of or weak policy provisions, segregation in schools, and non-participation in community life. Negative attitudes and perception are often caused by a lack of awareness and understanding of the rights of children with disabilities, the nature of disabilities and the principles of inclusion.

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## **Lack of Capacity**

The negative attitudes and lack of inclusive values is closely linked to generally low levels of knowledge and understanding of disability and inclusion. Moreover, this lack of awareness translates into a low capacity to design and implement national policies and programmes to advance Inclusive Education.

Findings note the lack of capacity of teachers in delivering a learner-centred curriculum is one of the key factors that impede learning outcomes of children with disabilities. While there are capacity building initiatives to improve knowledge on inclusive pedagogies and child-centred disability services, these tend to be based on a medical model of disability. In-service training appears to be predominantly delivered using outdated cascade training methods and there is little evidence of movement towards school or cluster-based models or school-based coaching and mentoring. Moreover, the content of these trainings often fails to advocate for children with disabilities to be successfully included in general education classes. Without knowledge of, and exposure to international best practices on inclusive interventions that show evidence of successful inclusion, it can be difficult for teachers or trainers to link inclusive principles to practical teaching in classrooms.

In addition, there is little evidence emerging from the review to indicate that technical capacity is high enough across Ministries to be able to fully implement the requirements of GC4. This lack of technical know-how impedes education professionals, medical/developmental specialists, faith-based organisations and community-based rehabilitation staff from planning for and creating fully inclusive learning environments, providing enabling learning environments or ICF compliant identification systems and efficient intervention services to children with disabilities.

Inclusive values and teacher agency should be instilled and nurtured within and throughout the education system. Inclusive practices can be developed and strengthened through a whole-systems approach and collaborative action learning where the school and the community work together in reflective practice to identify and break barriers to learning. Developing inclusive leaders from the national level down to the school level and establishing champions of inclusion throughout the school system are necessary to deliver transformative change in education.

The GC4 requirement to ensure the full involvement of OPDs, civil society and faith-based organisations is often undermined by the lack of technical capacity of these actors that makes it challenging for them to provide advice and guidance to government and/or to implement community-based projects effectively. Across the region, there is a lack of support to help civil society organisations develop their capacity to provide a more strategic, technical role.

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## **Medical Model of Disability**

The majority of policies and intervention programmes for children with disabilities in EAP remain rooted in the medical model of disability. For example, state-sponsored financial assistance programmes for persons with disabilities are most often based on a government recognised list of disabilities. These lists are often not compliant with the ICF, are restrictive and do not include non-visible or hidden disabilities. When there are interventions, there is more focus on the disability of the child and less on creating an equitable enabling environment for the child to fully participate in. A fully inclusive environment should recognise the learning needs of every child and provide supports and assistive devices accordingly. Support and interventions for children with disabilities should be inclusive by design, from planning to implementation and evaluation.

To achieve this, there should be a progressive shift from a medical to a social model of disability which will provide an inclusive lens to identifying barriers and planning strategies to remove them. This paradigm shift will require political will, advocacy, building champions of inclusion at all levels, capacity building, teacher agency, collaborative learning and knowledge transfer in the community.

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## Lack of Reliable Data

The review indicates an absence of standardised definitions and methodologies for collecting data based on a social model of disability and a lack of corresponding screening systems aligned with the ICF. Where there is data on children with disabilities, this is often inconsistent, incomplete, and unreliable. Data based on medical approaches is unreliable and leads to weak strategic planning. The lack of evidence on the prevalence of disability affects an equitable allocation of funds and development of inclusive education programming and interventions. There is also a lack of reliable data on the specific barriers encountered by persons and children with disability, which impedes effective and responsive policy development.

EMIS systems should be able to effectively collect disaggregated data on learning progress of children identified as having disabilities based on the ICF framework. This allows the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of teacher training approaches and inclusive interventions and support which will inform future IE programming.

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## Institutional Barriers

There is a lack of Inclusive Education policies and legislation that are GC4 compliant and explicitly articulate the rights of children with disabilities to inclusive education. Where there are Inclusive Education (IE) policies in place, systemic implementation guidelines and strategic plans are lacking. Weak inter-agency and cross sector coordination and collaboration, and lack of cooperation among different government agencies and ministries result in fragmented development of policies and delivery of intervention services.

The prevalence of dual modes of education perpetuate the segregation and exclusion of children with disabilities. While most countries in the region have been engaging in curricular reforms, there is little evidence to indicate that curriculum and assessment systems across the region are being developed which are GC4 compliant, accessible to all children and based on principles of Universal Design.

The lack of strong policies and plans contributes to insufficient financial support from the government resulting in the limited capacity of agencies and ministries to implement capacity building programmes, policy reform, and service delivery. Government allocation for disability and education services in many countries across the region remain inadequate. This indicates that despite positive rhetoric, inclusion in education is not among these governments' high priorities. As a result, implementation and sustainability of inclusive initiatives remain a challenge.

## Key Recommendations

### Whole Systems Approach

- Countries which have not yet ratified the CRPD should do so and commit to the protection of the rights and inclusion of children with disabilities.
- It is essential for countries to conduct a comprehensive mapping and cross-review of legislative frameworks to assess overarching principles of equity, both as a concept and a standard guideline consistent across policy documents. Evidence-informed legislation, policy and national strategic plans should explicitly set out a strategic vision and concrete actions to meet the requirement to phase out all exclusionary and discriminatory practices. Financing and resource allocation must support education provision in inclusive settings instead of perpetuating segregated models.
- Financial resources must be allocated according to equitable criteria based on the requirements of the GC4. This includes ensuring that all children with disabilities are receiving resource allocations which ensure they are accessing quality education on the same basis as other children
- Countries must work towards strengthening capacities and developing a shared understanding of definitions of disability and values/principles in inclusive education across all levels of the system,

especially among key decision makers in the government, and in line with international resources. The understanding that inclusive education is based on inclusive values should be developed at all levels of society especially among policymakers through advocacy, awareness campaigns, and capacity building initiatives.

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## **Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment**

- Countries should review curriculum and work towards reforms that apply Universal Design for Learning principles to ensure that curriculum design is accessible to all children and that teachers are employing inclusive child-centred pedagogy in order to ensure flexible access. Children with disabilities can be successfully included in regular schools where this is the case.
  - Not all schools may be ready to accommodate certain categories of disability, but resourcing identified regular schools within a district to include children with a particular functional limitation (e.g. providing sign language interpreters in general education classrooms for children with hearing impairment) alongside their peers is achievable even in low income settings and should be considered as a first step towards building fully inclusive systems. Establishing resource centres is being advocated by many countries as a way forward, but this is not recommended as these tend to become a form of segregated provision. They re-enforce the misguided notion that children with disabilities require a different pedagogy and/or curriculum from other children. This view is not supported by any evidence and distracts educators from examining the barriers which can be addressed in the general education classroom.
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## **Supported Teachers**

- Pre-service training courses should be reviewed and reformed to ensure that they are preparing new teachers in learner-centred teaching as well as inclusive strategies which enable the inclusion of children with disabilities.
  - More effective in-service training programmes need to be developed to provide a range of support experiences for teachers to include school-based teacher development and collaborative action planning and review; inputs which reflect a needs-based analysis of teachers' competence measured against the curriculum and inclusive criteria. This should also include whole school approaches and systems development as well as collaborative working across networks of schools, establishing communities of practice within schools but also at different levels of the education system.
  - National teacher standards should be established which reflect diversity and inclusion and are linked to assessment and support tools and systems which enable teachers to be evaluated against inclusive criteria and allow them to gradually introduce inclusive approaches into their practice.
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## **Learning-Friendly School Environment**

- Creating learner-friendly school environments requires the development of inclusive policies and leaders who are able to advocate for and introduce inclusive culture, values, and practices. Inclusive education does not develop in isolation but through individuals and communities learning from each other. This must be strategically planned for and supported at policy level.
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## **Effective Transitions**

- National strategies must have a clear focus on establishing and/or improving early identification, including child functioning screening and early childhood development services. Supporting children

with disabilities in their early years should be a priority for all governments as it can go a long way in preventing further marginalisation.

- The articulation of the importance of multi sector involvement in order to properly cover and implement early intervention services for all age ranges, starting from birth through school age and to lifelong learning must be strengthened at policy level, with clear definitions of roles of different government agencies involved.
  - Legislation and policies should provide clear guidance on effective transition from early childhood to basic education, ensuring that all children with disabilities are supported by a multidisciplinary team of professionals from the point of identification, with access to home support, pre-school placements in inclusive settings and supported transition to basic education and beyond. The fundamental goal of effective transition is to ensure that a positive effect to the child with a disability takes place.
  - Legislation should address the effective transition at later stages such as between Primary Grades, Secondary High School and Higher Education. International data indicates that children with disabilities are more vulnerable to experiencing barriers to effective transitions between different stages in education.
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## Partnerships

- Cross sectoral collaboration and coordination is at the heart of strong inclusive development. Inclusive education systems cannot be developed by Ministries of Education alone. Policy and legislation need to be developed through multi-disciplinary coordination, particularly between health, social welfare, and education.
  - This in turn should enable partnership working with civil society and OPDs. However, it is often the case that OPDs and civil society also need support and capacity building as international evidence demonstrates that these organisations can sometimes be unaware of the requirements of the UNCRPD and GC4. Further support and capacity building to these sectors are required to be able to manage an advisory role to governments in policy development.
  - Teacher associations, student associations, federations and OPDs, school boards, parent-teacher associations, and other functioning school support groups, both formal and informal, need to be supported to increase their understanding and knowledge of disability. Involvement of parents/ caregivers and the community must be viewed as assets with resources and strengths to contribute. The relationship between the learning environment and the wider community must be recognised as a route towards inclusive societies.
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## Data and Monitoring

- The lack of comprehensive, reliable, disaggregated data affects policies and programming on inclusive education. As such, a review of existing identification systems, as well as M&E systems is strongly recommended.
- The ICF should be utilised as the main tool for identifying and assessing disability. This will then lead to the restructuring of all forms of data collection and the development of new M&E systems.
- People with disabilities and OPDs should be involved in all aspects of data collection and monitoring.



# Part 1



**Inclusive Education  
Initiatives in East Asia  
and Pacific**

# 1.1 INTRODUCTION



## Section Overview

This section provides a regional overview of the situation of children with disabilities in education in East Asia and Pacific Region.

### 1.1.1 Emerging Paradigm Shift in the Region

**EXCLUSION** is where students are unable to access any form of education.<sup>27</sup>

**INCLUSION** is where there is recognition of a need to transform the cultures, policies and practices in school to accommodate the differing needs of individual students, and an obligation to remove the barriers that impede that possibility.<sup>28</sup>

**INTEGRATION** is when students are placed in schools or educational settings with peers of a similar age but students are required to adjust to the mainstream – no adjustments are made to meet their individual needs. This limits their ability to fully access or participate in learning. Integration is not necessarily a step towards inclusion.<sup>29</sup>

**SEGREGATION** is when groups of children are purposefully separated from the majority because of difference. For example, children with disabilities can be classified according to their impairment and allocated a school designed to respond to that particular impairment.<sup>30</sup>

The region is home to around 580 million children, comprising one-third of the world's population and more than one-quarter of the world's children.<sup>31</sup> Within the past two decades, the region has achieved significant economic development with a number of member states reaching middle-income status. However, evidence indicates that this has not translated to inclusive and equitable growth. Inequality is widening for most countries, aggravating the conditions of the most vulnerable sectors.<sup>32</sup>

Traditionally in EAP, persons with disabilities are predominantly viewed through a medically-oriented perspective and are regarded as 'recipients of charity'.<sup>33</sup> Disability used to be widely considered as an isolated concern of the social welfare and protection sector which explains the prevalence of the practice of institutionalisation in many countries. Most countries in the region provide education to learners with disabilities in segregated settings through special schools which perpetuate exclusion; or through integration in mainstream classes without providing reasonable accommodations or adjusting pedagogy, curriculum and physical accessibility.<sup>34</sup> However, the past few decades have seen a shift towards a more inclusive approach to education for children with disabilities.

Parallel to the drive around the world towards education for all, disability and inclusion are increasingly becoming inalienable parts of the overall human rights agenda in the region.<sup>35</sup> The inception of the Asian

27 UNESCO-IIEP, UNICEF. (2019). On The Road to Inclusion.

28 UNICEF. (2014). Conceptualizing Inclusive Education and Contextualizing it within the UNICEF Mission.

29 UNESCO-IIEP, UNICEF. (2019). On The Road to Inclusion.

30 UNICEF. (2014). Conceptualizing Inclusive Education and Contextualizing it within the UNICEF Mission.

31 UNICEF, 'UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities' (2015).

32 Ibid.

33 UNESCAP, 'Background of Disability-inclusive Development in the Region' (2017). The entire article can be accessed here: <https://www.unescap.org/disabilityhighlevelmeeting2017/history>

34 UNICEF, 'Inclusive Education Initiatives for Children with Disabilities: Lessons from the East Asia and Pacific Region' (2003).

35 UNESCAP, 'Disability at a Glance 2010: A Profile of 36 Countries and Areas in Asia and the Pacific' (2010).

and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002) set into motion positive changes across member states. Countries began to recognise that children with disabilities are entitled to a formal education and pledged to promote access to the mainstream system, reforming policies to align with inclusion principles, revising curricula and advancing awareness of the public on disability and inclusive education.<sup>36</sup> The subsequent Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2003-2012), implemented through the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and the Biwako Plus Five, strengthened the commitment in the region to support the fulfilment of the rights of children with disabilities by broadening the opportunities for them to participate in education. During this period, there was a strong belief that inclusive education is not only beneficial for children with disabilities but can bring about significant impact on learning outcomes and overall development of all children. Inclusion was slowly being understood as a process centred on eliminating barriers to participation and achievement by focusing on individual student needs and shifting to learner-centred teaching approaches.<sup>37</sup>

With the UNCRPD entering into force in 2006, governments became legally obligated to shift from a 'charity-based approach' to a rights-based paradigm of disability.<sup>38</sup> This commitment is upheld by the majority of countries in the region which signed (19 out of 26 EAP countries) and ratified (18 out of 26) the UNCRPD (Table 1). Upon conclusion of two consecutive Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons (1993-2003, 2013-2022), the new Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022)<sup>39</sup> as encapsulated in the Incheon Strategy "Make the Right Real," sets out a disability-inclusive ten-point post-2015 development agenda for the region.

**TABLE 1** Status of Ratification of the UNCRC and UNCRPD in the Region<sup>40</sup>

	Name of Country	Date of CRC Ratification <sup>41</sup>	Date of UNCRPD Ratification <sup>42</sup>
1	Cambodia	15 October 1992	20 December 2012
2	China	02 March 1992	01 August 2008
3	Indonesia	05 September 1990	30 November 2011
4	Lao People's Democratic Republic	08 May 1991	25 September 2009
5	Malaysia	17 February 1995	19 July 2010
6	Mongolia	05 July 1990	13 May 2009
7	Myanmar	15 July 1991	07 December 2011
8	Philippines	21 August 1990	15 April 2008
9	Thailand	27 March 1992	29 July 2008
10	Timor-Leste	16 April 2003	
11	Viet Nam	28 February 1990	05 February 2015
<b>Pacific Islands</b>			
12	Kiribati	11 December 1995	27 September 2013
13	Papua New Guinea	02 March 1993	26 September 2013
14	Solomon Islands	10 April 1995	23 September 2008 (signed)
15	Vanuatu	07 July 1993	23 October 2008

36 UNICEF, 'Inclusive Education Initiatives for Children with Disabilities: Lessons from the East Asia and Pacific Region' (2003).

37 Ibid.

38 UNESCAP, 'Disability at a Glance 2010: A Profile of 36 Countries and Areas in Asia and the Pacific' (2010).

39 Ibid.

40 The list only includes countries in the region that participated in this review.

41 List based on the Status of Treaties retrieved from [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&clang=en)

42 Ibid.

Building from the successes and lessons from its precursor frameworks and gains from the implementation of the UNCRPD thus far, the Incheon Strategy is envisaged to advance implementation of disability-focused development initiatives including expanding inclusive education with particular focus on measuring progress, strengthening data collection and cross-sector collaboration (see Incheon Strategy below).<sup>43</sup>

### The Incheon Strategy

*The Incheon Strategy was formulated based on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and include ten interrelated goals:*

- *Goal 1: Reduce poverty and enhance work and employment prospects*
- *Goal 2: Promote participation in political processes and in decision-making*
- *Goal 3: Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication*
- *Goal 4: Strengthen social protection*
- *Goal 5: Expand early intervention and education of children with disabilities*
- *Goal 6: Ensure gender equality and women's empowerment*
- *Goal 7: Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management*
- *Goal 8: Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data*
- *Goal 9: Accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and harmonisation of national legislation with the Convention*
- *Goal 10: Advance sub-regional, regional and interregional cooperation*

## 1.1.2 Prevalence of Disability

East Asia and Pacific Region shares similar challenges with the rest of the international development community in obtaining reliable information on the number of persons and children with disabilities. The difficulty in data collection is rooted in various complex factors such as inefficient data collection systems, social stigma, and narrow conceptualisations of disability, among others.<sup>44</sup> Disability is defined differently across countries and cultures<sup>45</sup> and there is not one definition used across the EAP region.<sup>46</sup> Efforts to define disability have been challenging, as people with disabilities are a diverse group.<sup>47</sup> The lack of clear definitions makes disability identification and screening systems weak.

The estimated number of persons with disabilities in the whole of Asia-Pacific is 690 million.<sup>48</sup> Many governments underestimate the number of children with disabilities.<sup>49</sup> In the 2019 Disability at a Glance Report from UNESCAP, EAP states have a regional average disability prevalence at 6.1 percent.<sup>50</sup> The WHO and World Bank (2011) estimate 15 percent of any general population will have a disability at some point in their lives, which increases where there are certain factors such as higher likelihood of conflict,

43 UNESCAP, 'Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific' (2012).

44 UNICEF (2013). The State of the World's Children. Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from New York.

45 UNICEF. (2012). The Right of Children with Disabilities to Education: A Rights-Based Approach to Inclusive Education. Position Paper. Retrieved from Geneva:

46 UNESCO, 'Towards Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities: A Guideline' (2009).

47 WHO & World Bank. (2011). World Report on Disability. Retrieved from Geneva.

48 UNESCAP (2019). Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific – Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development. Thailand.

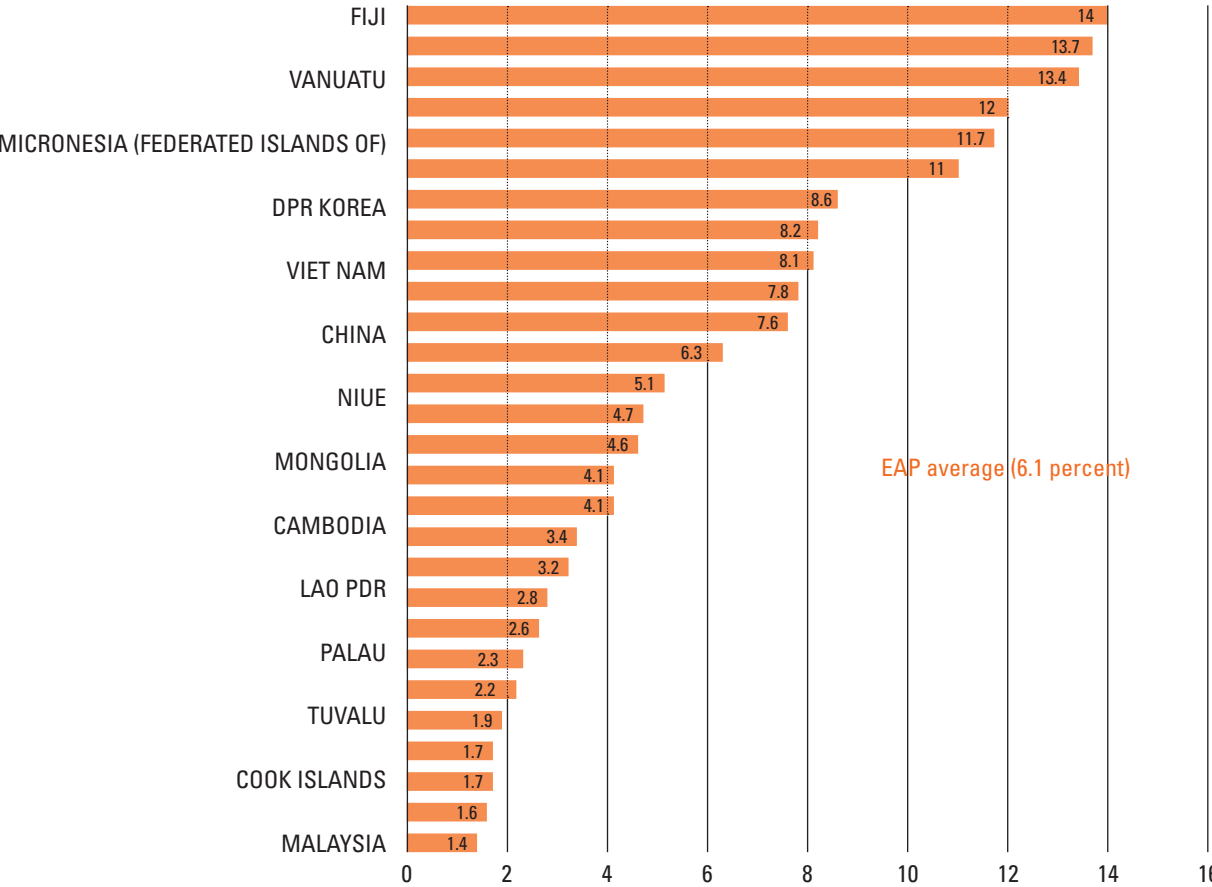
49 UNICEF EAPRO. (2015). UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF\\_EAPRO\\_Education\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF_EAPRO_Education_FINAL.pdf)

50 Total average was derived from the Disability Prevalence in Asia and the Pacific in UNESCAP Disability at a Glance 2019 Report. Due to the unavailability of data, estimate does not include Tokelau.

social inequality and poverty. Disability prevalence in the Asia-Pacific region varies greatly with 1.4 percent in Malaysia and 14 percent in Solomon Islands (See Figure 1).<sup>51</sup>

In general, it is estimated that on average, about 5.1 percent of the world’s children 0-14 years live with a moderate to severe disability and 0.7 percent of children have a severe disability.<sup>52</sup> UNICEF (2015) approximates that there are **190 million children with disabilities in East Asia and Pacific**. However, the majority of country data indicate very low prevalence. For example, a recent national survey in Viet Nam reports 2.79 percent of children aged 2-17 have a disability.<sup>53</sup> These significant deviations indicate serious gaps in identification systems and raises several development issues. Many children with disabilities and the issues hindering access to and participation in education remain invisible in government education strategic planning and programming due to very limited information. Across the region, definitions of disability, data collection methods and purposes differ from one country to another; hence there are no internationally comparable data sets and in general, disability prevalence is far below global estimates.

**FIGURE 1** Disability Prevalence in East Asia and Pacific Region<sup>54</sup>



51 UNESCAP (2019). Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific – Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development. Thailand.  
 52 UNESCO. (2014). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14. France.  
 53 UNICEF Viet Nam and General Statistics Office of Viet Nam, 'Children with Disabilities in Viet Nam: Findings of Viet Nam’s National Survey on People with Disabilities 2016-2017' (2018).  
 54 UNESCAP (2019). Disability at a Glance 2019: Investing in Accessibility in Asia and the Pacific – Strategic Approaches to Achieving Disability-inclusive Sustainable Development. Thailand.

### 1.1.3 Children with Disabilities and Education

In general, an increasing trend in enrolment of children with disabilities is seen in many countries in the region. However, children with disabilities experience more barriers in accessing formal education than their non-disabled peers, and so most learners with disabilities continue to be excluded from quality learning. Estimates show that for the 'majority of countries in the region, less than 10 percent of children with disabilities are enrolled in school, and in some countries, the estimates range as low as one to two percent.'<sup>55</sup> In cases where children with disabilities have access to education, issues with the quality of teaching and learning is a major concern, and completion rates are lower for them than children without disabilities.

In all countries, there is a large gap in access to education between children with and without disabilities.<sup>56</sup> A survey in 51 countries by the World Health Organisation reports that globally, only 51 percent of boys with a disability complete primary school compared to 61 percent of boys without a disability. Similarly, 53 percent of girls without disabilities complete primary school compared to only 42 percent of girls with disabilities.<sup>57</sup> Recently, a study by UNESCO (2018) revealed wide disparities in enrolment. The largest gap was seen in Cambodia where one in every 14 children without disabilities are unable to access primary and lower secondary schools; and one in every two children with disabilities is out-of-school.

Children with disabilities are not a homogenous group. School attendance rates for children with disabilities vary by disability type. Children that have difficulty remembering and children with mobility impairments have lower attendance rates than children with sight impairments. Children that have difficulty remembering and children that have difficulties with self-care are far less likely to complete primary school than children with other types of impairments. Boys with disabilities are also more likely to be excluded from education than girls with disabilities. Lower secondary and secondary school age adolescents with disabilities are far less likely to attend school than primary school children with disabilities.<sup>58</sup>

In East Asia and Pacific, segregated models of education delivery dominate, whereby most learners with disabilities are taught in special schools despite the significant progress taken to transition to more inclusive systems.<sup>59</sup> This practice is rooted in many interconnected variables but misunderstanding of and negative attitudes towards disability primarily push the education system in this direction. There are also reports from many countries that some children with disabilities are enrolled in the formal school system wherein they are either 'integrated' in mainstream classrooms or taught separately in 'special classrooms' within the regular school, but essentially remain isolated from the school community and quality learning.

Initiatives to expand access based on the principles of inclusion must be carried out alongside system-wide reforms and changes in school-level practices. Inclusion does not end in getting children with disabilities in classrooms. The process of establishing Inclusive Education involves ensuring the quality of teaching and learning. Participation of children with disabilities is often discontinued when they do not receive appropriate support services. It is necessary to work on an 'access to success' continuum for all children which involves responding to the diverse and individual needs of each learner.' Many children with disabilities are denied sustained access to basic education or do not receive the support they need to stay in school. Some children enter school but achieve poorly and are eventually 'pushed out' of the system.<sup>60</sup> Some children are able to complete primary school but do not enrol in secondary school due to multiple barriers. In 2018, UNESCAP reported a 52.7 percent drop in enrolment between primary and secondary school among children with disabilities in Asia and Pacific.<sup>61</sup>

55 UNICEF EAPRO. (2003). Inclusive Education Initiatives for Children with Disabilities Lessons from the East Asia and Pacific Region.

56 UNICEF EAPRO. (2015). UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities. Retrieved from [https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF\\_EAPRO\\_Education\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/UNICEF_EAPRO_Education_FINAL.pdf)

57 UNICEF, 'State of the World's Children' (2013).

58 You, Y., et al. (2020). How various types of disabilities impact children's school attendance and Completion. *International Journal of Education Development*: vol. 77 102222.

59 UNICEF, 'UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities' (2015).

60 Grimes, Peter; Heijnen-Maathuis, Els (2018), Inclusive Education Cross-Country Peer Review: Bangladesh (HOPE Project) and Indonesia (IDEAL Project), Save the Children (2018).

61 UNESCAP, 'Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific' (2018).

The region continues to move towards building inclusive education systems and evidence of promising inclusive practices exist in many countries, but much remains to be done in guaranteeing equitable access and meaningful participation in education for all children. The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to school closures across the region, is likely to increase the exclusion of children with disabilities from education and learning. A major risk exists that children with disabilities enrolled in school prior to the crisis, will not return to school or will return but with extended delay. This is because the crisis may have exacerbated the exclusion and isolation felt before the crisis. Parents of children with disabilities may also be concerned about the health risks for their children's return to school. Efforts to reopen schools may not include appropriate considerations for children with disabilities. Additionally, children with cognitive impairments and children who use learning aids and equipment that were not made available at home during school closures, are more likely to have missed out on their learning and thus fall farther behind their peers.

It is now more urgent than ever to accelerate progress towards achieving universal quality education for every child with a disability in EAP.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY



### Section Overview

This section addresses the purpose of the mapping exercise, its objectives, scope, limitations, and a brief description of the methodology.

### 1.2.1 Objectives and Scope

UNICEF in East Asia and Pacific is committed to enabling access to quality and inclusive education for children with disabilities through 'promoting accessible and inclusive learning spaces, investing in teacher development, involving the community, and building evidence, data and monitoring progress in mainstreaming disability.'<sup>62</sup> UNICEF in EAP commissioned a consultancy to undertake a review of the progress of EAP countries and of its programmes in the region in advancing inclusive education for children. The mapping focuses on programmes targeted for children with disabilities of pre-primary and primary school age, implemented from 2015 to 2019. Specifically, the mapping aims to:

- review and document the nature, successes, innovative approaches, challenges, gaps and needs for technical support of Inclusive Education programmes for children with disabilities in EAP region, and
- inform the development of regional and country level strategies for advancing Inclusive Education for children with disabilities.

Geographically, the evaluation intended to cover all countries where UNICEF operates in the region. However, availability of information allowed for only 15 countries to be included in the mapping: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam.

62 To learn more about UNICEF East Asia and Pacific, visit: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/what-we-do/children-with-disabilities>



## 1.2.2 Methodology

The review employed a mixed methods design which merges qualitative and quantitative research methods to generate reliable and better understanding of the evaluation questions. Questions<sup>63</sup> set out in the Terms of Reference that the mapping exercise aims to address are as follows:

- What is the nature of current programmes on inclusive education for children with disabilities?
- What are the successes, challenges and gaps in current work at country and regional levels?
- What changes, if any, should be made to the Theory of Change for Inclusive Education in the region?
- What is the recommended roadmap for UNICEF's programming in Inclusive Education from 2020-2030?

These questions served as the basis for the overall design of the methodology and the development of a theoretical framework for programme mapping and analysis.

## 1.2.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework was formulated to facilitate a clear and detailed review and analysis of disability-inclusive education programming derived from the key aspects of inclusive education set out in General Comment #4 to the UNCRPD (2016). The theoretical framework conceptualises disability-inclusion through seven domains representing the core features of an equitable and inclusive system.

	1. Whole Systems Approach
	2. Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment
	3. Supported Teachers
	4. Learning-friendly Environment
	5. Effective Transitions
	6. Partnerships
	7. Data and Monitoring

Each domain is explained further by a number of dimensions or milestones for safeguarding the right of children with disabilities to learn. All domains and dimensions are to be viewed as interrelated; a perspective that underscores the imperative to approach inclusive education in a holistic and systemic manner. Evaluation questions were formulated for each of the dimensions, explained in greater detail in Table 2. Cross-cutting issues such as gender and humanitarian issues have been included in the parameters of the mapping to capture the ways in which programming address these concerns.

<sup>63</sup> Originally, question 1 in the TOR focuses on UNICEF-supported government programmes. Upon discussion with the education specialists in UNICEF EAPRO, the focus of the mapping shifted to the programmes initiated by the governments. A question on UNICEF's contribution to the achievement of the government's goals was added in the mapping tool used to cover UNICEF assistance to the countries.

**TABLE 2** Mapping Domains, Dimensions and Research Questions

DOMAIN	DIMENSIONS	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. Whole Systems Approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1. Comprehensive Equity Legislation</li> <li>1.2. Inclusive Education Law</li> <li>1.3. Strategic National Action Plan on IE</li> <li>1.4. Equitable Financing and Resource Allocation</li> <li>1.5. Institutional Capacity Building</li> <li>1.6. Awareness Raising and Community Involvement</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Are there laws and policies in place that establish the right of all children to receive a quality and inclusive education?</li> <li>» To what extent are inclusive leadership, principles and cultures established at all levels of the education system?</li> <li>» Does the government have a national plan in place which guides the strategic implementation of inclusive education?</li> <li>» To what extent does the education ministry ensure that appropriate resources are invested toward advancing inclusive education?</li> <li>» How are negative attitudes towards disability and inclusion addressed?</li> </ul>
2. Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1. Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy</li> <li>2.2. Inclusive Assessment</li> <li>2.3. Learning Materials</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Is the country implementing national curriculum and teaching and learning methods that are flexible, inclusive and accessible to all learners?</li> <li>» Is the country implementing a national assessment system that is flexible, inclusive and responsive to all learners?</li> <li>» To what extent does the education ministry facilitate the adaptation of teaching and learning materials? Are reasonable accommodation and assistive learning materials provided to promote access to the curriculum for children with disabilities?</li> </ul>
3. Supported Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1. Pre-service Teacher Education</li> <li>3.2. In-service Teacher Education</li> <li>3.3. Professional Competency Standards for Teachers and School Leaders</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» To what extent does the national pre-service teacher education curriculum equip teachers to respond to diversity in the classroom?</li> <li>» Is inclusion an integral professional development area for in-service teachers? To what extent are teachers supported to develop inclusive values and practices?</li> <li>» Are there existing models of decentralised and ongoing teacher professional development?</li> <li>» Is the country implementing a national competency standard for teachers and school leaders which follow the principles of equity and inclusion?</li> </ul>
4. Learning Friendly Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Physical Accessibility of Learning Environment</li> <li>4.2. Safe and Child-friendly Learning Environment</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» To what extent does the government adhere to the principles of Universal Design for Learning in ensuring physical accessibility of learning environments?</li> <li>» Does the government have established systems for safeguarding, anti-bullying and child protection?</li> </ul>

DOMAIN	DIMENSIONS	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
5. Effective Transitions	5.1. Early Intervention and Support Services 5.2. Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) 5.3. Transition from Early Childhood Care and Education to Primary Education	» Is there a multi-sectoral early intervention system including support services accessible to children with disabilities in the country? » Is the government implementing a comprehensive ECD and ECCE programme linked with early intervention planning and provision of specialised services? » Are there mechanisms in place to ensure children with disabilities transition from ECCE to primary education?
6. Partnerships	6.1. Cross-sectoral Coordination 6.2. Coordination between National and Local Education Units 6.3. Participation of Civil Society / Organisations of Persons with Disabilities	» Does the government have an active coordination system among key government units concerned with delivering support services for children with disabilities? » Are there established mechanisms for coordination between national and local education units? » To what extent are OPDs and the general civil society engaged in education programmes for children with disabilities?
7. Data and Monitoring	7.1. Identification System 7.2. Education Management Information System (EMIS) 7.3. Monitoring and Evaluation System	» Is there an identification system in place aligned with the ICF and involves the cooperation among multi-disciplinary professionals? » Does the EMIS include data on enrolment, participation and achievement of children with disabilities in education? » Are there systems and mechanisms in place to periodically monitor and evaluate inclusion of children with disabilities?
8. Cross Cutting Issues	8.1. Gender 8.2. Humanitarian Contexts	» To what extent do initiatives address gender specific needs and barriers? » To what extent are initiatives specific to a particular country context (High Income Countries, Low Middle Income Countries, Low Income Countries, humanitarian, emergency)?

The framework furthermore aims to provide a formative assessment of the countries' progress toward increasing inclusion of children with disabilities. Initiatives are mapped against four levels of progress.



Measurement of progress is to be interpreted as indicative of the current situation in the country, rather than an absolute assessment. Results can point to areas of strength and aspects of the system needing further work or support. This view highlights the idea that inclusion is a continuous, on-going process of eliminating barriers to access and participation. Consequently, the analytical framework can be utilised by countries in their independent self-assessment to evaluate programmes and identify areas of action.

While this framework was principally developed for the purpose of the mapping, the hope is that it will also be useful for helping countries to take stock of their progress towards achieving disability-inclusive education.

## 1.2.4 Data Collection

Data were gathered through the following methodologies and sources:

- **Desk-based review and secondary data analysis:** A large number of documents were examined in this study, including prominent global, regional and country level literature (Annex A), statistics, policy and programme documents, strategy papers, studies and reports on disability-inclusive education. Documents were provided by the regional and country offices but relevant reports, studies, and project documentations found through online search were also included in the mapping. The evaluation questions guided the structure and focus of the desk review.
- **Online survey:** An online, self-assessment survey (Annex B) was used to collect primary data on the progress of disability-inclusive education implementation at the country level. The survey questionnaire is structured around the domains and dimensions identified in the theoretical framework elaborated according to the four levels of progress, and was administered to education programme specialists and officers in participating UNICEF country offices.

## 1.2.5 Data Analysis

A content analysis based on the theoretical framework was undertaken to analyse secondary data found through the desk review. Primary quantitative data collected from the online survey were interpreted using descriptive analysis which generated trends in each of the domains and dimensions (Annex C). Results of the online survey were used to corroborate qualitative findings.

During data analysis, promising practices and innovative approaches from the countries were identified following an adaptation of the OECD/DAC criteria.<sup>64</sup> The analyses were utilised to construct a regional Theory of Change and roadmap (Part II. The Way Forward, Pg. 80) aimed to guide the continuous efforts in the region to promote inclusion of children with disabilities in education.

## 1.2.6 Limitations and Mitigation

The methodology relied heavily on a desk review of available literature and input from UNICEF staff. This means that findings are completely dependent on explicit articulation of IE initiatives contained in the documents and the individual assessment of respondents on the countries' development. This approach led to some limitations on the review.

The online survey was accomplished by UNICEF staff and no primary data was gathered directly from any government office. While respondents are considered to be knowledgeable on the government's work on disability-inclusion, there is a possibility that ratings do not accurately reflect the country's overall status. In some cases, there are gaps between self-assessment results and desk review findings which can primarily be due to insufficient information available. However, triangulation of data sources helped alleviate the possible impact of these issues to the findings. The review put more emphasis and confidence on data gathered from published documents with the assumption that documents provided

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<sup>64</sup> The evaluation criteria developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee can be found here: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

have been quality assured, and in the case of government documents (e.g. policies, strategic plans) are considered official and authoritative sources of information.

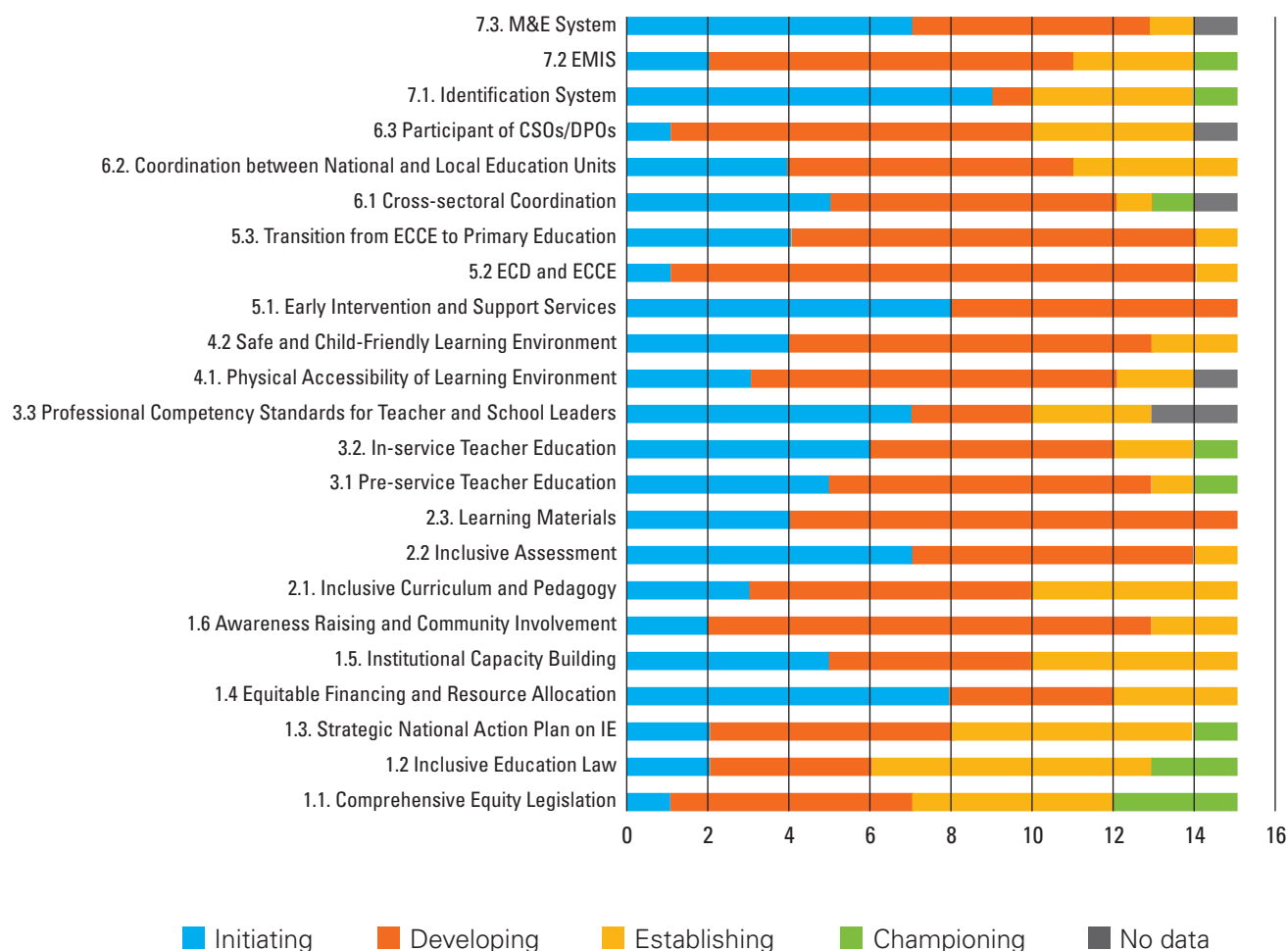
## 1.3 MAIN FINDINGS



### Section Overview

This section presents the major findings of the mapping and provides an overall picture of the region's progress in each of the domains and dimensions of the framework. In each domain, the discussion begins with an overview of the trends found across the different dimensions, followed by a detailed description of the progress the region is making. This also includes a discussion of UNICEF's support to country initiatives and examples of promising practices in the field.

**FIGURE 2** Status of Inclusive Education in EAP, by number of countries per framework category



## 1.3.1 Whole Systems Approach

### Section Overview

A radical, whole systems change is a pre-condition to enable sustainable improvement in access to and participation of learners with disabilities in education. Programmes for inclusive education are more likely to be successful, scalable and sustained if approached holistically wherein all aspects of the education system are addressed and where necessary, reforms are initiated. The region demonstrates an increasing recognition of how enforcing systemic changes, in terms of policies, culture and practices at all levels of the system is integral to enabling education for all.

Various interventions have been implemented across the region to ensure that equity legislation is in place to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities. While most countries reported that equity legislations exist, some of these legislations need to be reviewed and enhanced to align with the requirements of the UNCRPD. Technical assistance and capacity building on inclusive education development planning and policy making have been extended to most countries which ensures resource allocation for varied disability-inclusive programmes. Although resources are afforded to learning of children with disabilities, these are mostly supportive of education provisions in segregated settings. Funding is also often quite limited or only sufficient to support pilot runs of programmes. Evidence indicates that priority is given to combating stigma towards disability in the majority of the countries. Awareness raising in various forms and through multiple channels has been implemented and targeted for different stakeholders. While reports show positive changes in attitudes towards persons with disabilities, some messages remain mixed with reference to education in segregated settings.

### BOX 1 Dimensions and Progress Indicators: Whole Systems Approach

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>1.1 Comprehensive Equity Legislation</b>	Discussions are ongoing to review all policies concerning persons with disabilities and develop an equity legislation.	The government is reviewing all policies related to persons with disabilities to ensure equity in all aspects of society and compliance with UNCRPD.	The government, through the collaboration of relevant ministries, has enacted an overarching equity legislation which is UNCRPD compliant, but not implemented at scale.	The government has enacted and is implementing at scale an overarching equity legislation which is UNCRPD compliant.
<b>1.2 Inclusive Education Law</b>	There is no law / policy which specifically establishes the right of children with disabilities to education. Discussions are ongoing to review existing policies.	The government is developing a specific policy on the implementation of education for children with disabilities. There are policies on special education that contradict the principles of inclusive education.	There is a law/ policy establishing the right of all children to receive inclusive education, with an explicit mention of children with disabilities. Yet, the policy is not implemented at scale.	The government has and is implementing at scale a specific policy on the implementation of education for children with disabilities, based on rights-based perspectives. It articulates clear roles of special schools and services in inclusive education.

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>1.3 Strategic National Action Plan for IE</b>	Discussions are ongoing regarding the development of a multi-sectoral strategic plan for inclusive education.	There is a national plan and/or education sector plan but it speaks broadly to inclusion and does not explicitly include the provision of education for children with disabilities in inclusive settings.	National government has in place a national strategic plan and/or education sector plan that guides the implementation of inclusive education.	National government has in place and is implementing at scale a national strategic plan and/or education sector plan that guides the implementation of inclusive education.
<b>1.4 Equitable Financing and Resource Allocation</b>	Government allocates both human and financial resources for children with disabilities to support education in segregated settings and services reflecting a medical model of disability.	Human and financial resources are directed to supporting the education of learners with disabilities in inclusive settings, but also segregated settings and services reflecting a medical model of disability.	There is a defined human and financial resource allocation for the education of children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Programmes are properly financed and resources are available at the school level to support inclusion.	There is a defined human and financial resource allocation for the education of children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Actions have been taken to ensure that the distribution of resources is equitable and flexible.
<b>1.5 Institutional Capacity Building</b>	While there are capacity building activities for government leaders/education leaders, the perspective on inclusion remains based on the medical model of disability. Planning and discussions are taking place to address this.	Activities to increase the capacity of government and education institutions have been undertaken. Efforts to align the content and approach to capacity building with the principles of inclusion and equity are being done.	A strategic plan, aligned with the social view of disability, sets out systematically the government's approach to increasing capacity at all levels in implementing inclusive education. Initial capacity building activities have been undertaken.	The country strengthens capacities of government institutions to implement inclusive education, following a strategic plan based on the social model of disability. Government facilitates the establishment of inclusive leadership, principles and cultures through capacity building at all levels of the system.
<b>1.6 Awareness Raising</b>	There are no national or sub-national programmes in place to combat negative attitudes and increase awareness on inclusion and disability.	Activities to increase awareness of disability and inclusion have been implemented. However, messages are mixed and have reference to segregated provisions. Efforts to improve this issue are being implemented.	Strategic communication and advocacy plans are established at the national level to increase awareness of disability and inclusion. OPDs and children with disabilities are actively involved in advocacy activities.	Strategic programmes are widely implemented to increase community awareness and involvement in inclusive education, and address negative attitudes towards disability and inclusion at all levels of the system.

### 1.3.1.1 Comprehensive Equity Legislation

For the purpose of this mapping, an equity legislation is defined as a broad legislative framework that aims to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities and ensure equitable access to and participation in health, education and social protection.

Most countries reviewed in the region have equity legislation in place. In some cases, such legislation has been in place for decades. However, existing legislations are largely incomplete, outdated or inadequate to comply with the UNCRPD and other education rights frameworks. For instance, a large majority of countries still prescribe to definitions of disability from a medical perspective and legislations contain provisions which can hinder persons with disabilities<sup>65</sup> from fulfilling their rights. Following the global movement towards more inclusive societies, most countries are undertaking comprehensive reviews of national policies to ensure principles of equity are embedded, disability is conceptualised from a rights-based perspective, existing legal frameworks reciprocate each other and have strong alignment with international conventions.<sup>66,67</sup>

Malaysia, Mongolia and Vanuatu are examples of countries reporting to be well-advanced in this area (championing stage). These countries have enacted and are implementing laws, policies and strategic plans that safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities, including ensuring inclusion and access of children with disabilities to education.<sup>68,69,70</sup> The Law of Mongolia on Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlines interventions to provide children with disabilities equitable access to quality education. It furthermore stipulates the Mongolian sign language as the mother tongue of persons with hearing impairment and Braille as the standard writing system for persons with visual impairment.<sup>71</sup>

Vanuatu's National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025 was developed after a multi-sectoral participatory review of its predecessor policy implemented from 2008-2015.<sup>72</sup> The new strategy puts strong emphasis on the importance of early childhood education as a first step towards successful learning outcomes for children with disabilities. While this is a commendable step toward inclusion, Vanuatu still lacks an overarching equity legislation that protects the rights of persons with disabilities in all sectors.

While existing policies and strategic plans may necessitate continuous improvements to be fully inclusive, their establishment can be considered a critical step in pushing the inclusion agenda forward. For example, although Malaysia subscribes to a social definition of disability,<sup>73</sup> some provisions contradict this and still reflect the medical model segregating children according to disability.<sup>74</sup> The country has recently passed a Zero Reject Policy<sup>x</sup> which obliges schools to grant admission to all children, regardless of legal and disability status. However, Malaysia's loose definition of disability results in this policy not having the strength to adequately improve education access for children with disabilities.



65 UNESCAP (2012). Disability at a Glance 2012: Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific. United Nations Social Development Division, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

66 UNICEF. (2016). Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

67 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report for Papua New Guinea

68 Government of the Republic of Vanuatu. (n.d). National Disability Inclusive Policy 2018-2025.

69 Government of Mongolia and JICA. (2017). Disability in Mongolia 2017: Facts and Figures. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Mongolia and Japan International Cooperation Agency.

70 UNICEF. (2018). Country Annual Report 2018 for Malaysia.

71 Ibid.

72 Republic of Vanuatu. (2017). Interim Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy 2017-2018.

73 Ibid.

74 Retrieved from <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2018/12/442345/zero-reject-policy-all-students>



### 1.3.1.2 Inclusive Education Policy

An Equity Legislation is an important milestone towards achieving inclusion, in a broader sense. A specific legislation on Inclusive Education creates a strong policy direction for governments and relevant stakeholders. Having both an equity legislation and an inclusive education policy is imperative in the work towards the elimination of all types of barriers and towards a high quality and inclusive education for children with disabilities. Most countries in EAP have passed laws and policies on education where principles of inclusion are embedded and the rights of children with disabilities are explicitly mentioned.

Some countries are already establishing and championing Inclusive Education Policies. In Vanuatu, the enactment of an inclusive education law in 2009 guided the government in planning programmes to support the implementation of inclusive education. Specifically, the Inclusive Education Policy and Strategic Plan 2010-2020 facilitated the ongoing reforms that fosters a safe space for all children to learn.<sup>75</sup>

Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport passed a Policy on Inclusive Education in 2018 to equip persons with disabilities with the knowledge, skills and attitudes through educational services from kindergarten up to higher education. It sets out strategic directions with emphasis on ensuring early identification, assessment and timely intervention, professional development of teachers, awareness raising, and provision of quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all. A rapid policy analysis found that some terminologies and strategies stipulated in Cambodia's Policy on Inclusive Education (2018) still promote specialised curriculum and conditional inclusion; however, it still marks an important step forward. Impacts of policies such as this on increasing access and quality remains to be established as contradictions to principles espoused in the UNCRPD and capacity of implementers continue to be major challenges.

Other countries are in the process of developing and reviewing policies specific to the education of children with disabilities in inclusive settings. For example, China made amendments to its Regulations on Education for Persons with Disabilities (2017) to articulate provision for children with disabilities to receive education in mainstream kindergarten and primary schools.<sup>76</sup> In the Philippines, an Inclusive Education Bill has been drafted and a series of discussions with key stakeholders are ongoing.<sup>77</sup> Viet Nam has convened a policy dialogue to discuss reforms in its Law on Education and ensure that inclusive education for all children is explicitly stipulated<sup>78</sup>. In Papua New Guinea, the draft Inclusive Education Policy has been reviewed by stakeholders and is ready for Government endorsement<sup>79</sup>.

Overall, countries in EAP are well advanced in this dimension; very few countries report to be in the initiating stage. Even countries that do not have a particular policy on inclusive education have stipulations in the broader education law that establish the right of all children to education. In Mongolia, provisions in its amended Law on Education for capacity building, infrastructure, and funding to provide a learning environment for children with disabilities exist.<sup>80</sup> However, what lacks in many of the broader legislative texts is explicit articulation that education for children with disabilities must be provided in inclusive settings.

### 1.3.1.3 Strategic National Action Plan on Inclusive Education

Central to including all learners in education is deliberately including them in national strategic plans so that governments can systematically prioritise and implement disability-inclusive programming, allocate resources, and prompt multi-sectoral cooperation. In the region, the majority of countries have strategic national action plans in place which explicitly support mainstreaming children with disabilities in general inclusive schools.

Often, children with disabilities remain invisible in sector plans, largely due to the absence of accurate data on their prevalence and barriers. For example, many action plans continue to encourage education through

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75 Hunt & Farkas. (2016/2017). Situation Assessment of Children with Disabilities in the Pacific Islands, with a focus on Vanuatu

76 UNICEF. (n.d.). MTR Background Paper – Children with Disabilities

77 Philippine Network for Inclusive Education. (n.d.). PNIE Timeline: Inclusive Education Bill

78 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018 for Viet Nam

79 UNICEF. (2019). PNG REAP II Log Frame for PNG (for January-June 2019)

80 Government of Mongolia. (2006). Law of Mongolia on Education

special programmes in special schools. China's annual education plan emphasises the goal to achieve equity and quality education for all;<sup>81</sup> while also approving the Program for Promoting Special Education: Phase II (2017-2020).<sup>82</sup> This implies that dual systems of education will persist in the coming years.

While Inclusive Education is a process, and not all special schools can be closed at once, indications of progress towards Inclusive Education should be included progressively in national plans. Countries have varying approaches to planning, prioritising interventions, and operationalising inclusive education. Some countries are well advanced in that separate and focused strategic plans – particularly for inclusion of learners with disabilities are in place, in addition to their broader education sector plans where disability-inclusive services are merely mentioned. In addition to this, some countries have different approaches. Viet Nam<sup>83</sup> has a specific action plans in place for Inclusive Education; Cambodia has the Inclusive Education Action Plan 2019-23; Lao PDR's Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2016-2020) outlines strategies that include better access to quality education services for learners with disabilities as well as building the capacity of teachers and teacher education institutions and the forthcoming Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESSDP) 2021-2025 continues this focus<sup>84</sup>; while other countries are implementing education sector plans where inclusive education has been articulated.<sup>85,86,87</sup>

A number of countries have laid down different priority actions and approaches in implementing inclusive education. Examples of these strategies include provision of inclusive learning environments for all children<sup>88</sup>, delivery of quality curriculum inclusive of all learners<sup>89</sup>, and improvement in teaching and learning<sup>90</sup>. In some cases, education reforms towards inclusion are implemented in stages as pronounced in Malaysia's education blueprint, which proposes three stages: 1) 'early identification of special needs' (2013-2015); 2) inclusive education programme (2016-2020; and 3) review of initiatives and progress (2021-2025).<sup>91</sup>

National-level action plans are important in aligning the priorities and programming of service providers other than the government. Such is the case in Lao PDR where their Education Sector Development Plan served as a reference document for partner organisations in developing programmes to advance the education agenda of the government<sup>92</sup>. A few countries are currently undergoing development of multi-sectoral plans for inclusive education where discussions with relevant stakeholders and partner organisations are being conducted. For example, in the Philippines, the Department of Education is taking the lead in developing its national Inclusive Education Framework<sup>93</sup> to establish an overarching reference for the inclusion of all vulnerable children in education and replace traditional models of teaching and learning.

As issues on data-driven planning and programming persist in the region, responsiveness to diversity will continue to be a challenge. National situational analyses that comprehensively describe the context and reflect issues which may be unique to the country, will play a key role in influencing strategic directions and ensuring that programmes are evidence-based and address the needs of children with disabilities. In the Philippines, a holistic and integrated ECCD 'situationer' (A report on the Current State of Early Childhood Care and Development in the Philippines, 2019) served as the basis for the development of the costed national strategic plan for ECCD (Early Years First, 2019 – 2030) approved by the ECCD Council in 2019. Early childhood care and development outcomes for children with disabilities and developmental delays is one of the critical outcome areas of this long-term plan, which involves interventions towards inclusive early childhood education through varied programs and modalities that fit the needs of diverse learners. In parallel

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81 UNICEF. (2018). Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress

82 People's Republic of China. (2017). Second Special Education Promotion Plan (2017-2020)

83 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018 for Viet Nam

84 Lao People's Democratic Republic. (2015). Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2016-2020)

85 Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. (2011). National Education Strategic Plan 2011-2030

86 Republic of Vanuatu. (2017). Interim Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy 2017-2018

87 The Government of Malaysia. (2013). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Pre-school to Post-Secondary Education)

88 UNICEF. (2017). Situation Analysis of Children in Kiribati

89 Republic of Kiribati. (n.d.). The Kiribati Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2015

90 The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. (2016). National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021

91 The Government of Malaysia. (2013). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Pre-school to Post-Secondary)

92 Lao People's Democratic Republic. (2015). Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2016-2020)

93 The Inclusion Initiative. (2018). LGU Regional Advocacy Forum on Inclusive Education: Oriental Mindoro

to development research, the improvement of identification and data collection systems on disability must be systematically addressed to provide sound bases for policy reforms, planning and resource allocation.

## **BOX 2** Education for Children with Disabilities in Education Sector Plans

### **EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EDUCATION SECTOR PLANS**

An Education Sector Plan is an important instrument for governments to systematically tackle issues in equity in education, bring together stakeholders around a set of agendas, and ensure resources are properly allocated to inclusive, quality education. Data from published ESPs and the 2018 GPE Stocktake of ESPs<sup>94</sup> indicate that sector plans of all governments in the region illustrate a strong commitment to enabling full and meaningful participation of children with disabilities in education. All ESPs<sup>95</sup> identify disability-inclusive education as a key priority and outline strategies to increase enrolment, retention and achievement of learners with disabilities, with particular emphasis on primary and secondary levels. While all countries are explicit in promoting the provision of learning opportunities in mainstream settings alongside non-disabled children, this remains to be conditional on the basis of the children's abilities to cope with the regular programme. Some ESPs confuse "inclusive education" with "special education programmes and most countries still intend to retain the operation of special schools and integrated models, without a medium or long-term plan of phasing them out.

Information on Education Sector Analyses (ESA) processes and results are limited but evidence suggests that some countries have undertaken thorough surveys and reviews of the situation of children with disabilities, including those that are out-of-school, and the barriers they face in accessing education. Global initiatives such as the Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI)<sup>96</sup> and national studies have influenced the inclusion of the disability agenda in, and served as bases for sector planning. ESPs provide a broad framework but some countries have gone as far as crafting specific action plans on inclusive education.

While some ESPs only mention inclusive education, some ESPs incorporated particular interventions in advancing disability-inclusive education including:

- Strengthening teacher development at pre- and in-service levels
- Mandating regular schools to accommodate children with disabilities
- Increasing access to ECE and ECCD
- Improving early identification, disability screening, community based-rehabilitation and health services

#### **1.3.1.4 Equitable Financing and Resource Allocation**

The UNCRPD obligates governments to set out clear guidance to guarantee resources are allocated and used flexibly to support learning of children with disabilities in inclusive settings.<sup>97</sup> Research supports the economic argument for inclusion wherein it is less costly for governments to invest in inclusive education in the long-term than maintaining specialised schools catering to different groups of children.<sup>98</sup> Ensuring access to inclusive education means persons with disabilities will have higher chances to secure employment and will possess abilities to contribute to national productivity and economic growth.

94 Global Partnership for Education. (2018). Disability and Inclusive Education: A Stocktake of Education Sector Plans and GPE-Funded Grants. Global Partnership for Education, Washington, DC,

95 The Philippines does not have an Education Sector Plan at present. UNICEF has been appointed as the Grant Agent to support DepEd in developing a 5-year Education Sector Plan with potential funding support from GPE. The Philippine Development Plan (2011-2016/2017-2022) serves as the overarching blueprint of the country's development agenda, including education.

96 The Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) was founded and launched in 2010. It aims to support governments to develop and apply innovative approaches to better estimate the number of children that are excluded from educational opportunities, identify who the children are, and to develop solutions to bring the children back to school. OOSCI is a partnership between UNICEF, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). [Source: Formative Evaluation of the Out-Of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI). (2018). UNICEF, New York]

97 United Nations. (2016). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

98 Leonard Cheshire (2019). Inclusive education for persons with disabilities –Are we making progress? Background paper prepared for the International Forum on inclusion and equity in education – Every learner matters. Cali, Colombia.

In general, countries reviewed in the region are still at the early stages of establishing equitable financing systems. Eight out of 15 countries reviewed are *initiating* financing systems for inclusive education. Some countries already have both human and financial resource allocations to safeguard implementation of inclusive education. Provision of budget for social inclusion tools,<sup>99</sup> disability-related services such as, rehabilitation and education,<sup>100</sup> and development of inclusive learning programmes<sup>101</sup> are identified in the action plans of these countries. These programmes aim to warrant access to inclusive education and equitable opportunities for all, specifically for children with disabilities.<sup>102</sup> Timor-Leste's policies intend to employ an evidence-based, bottom-up planning and budgeting in providing resources for inclusive education.<sup>103</sup>

A small number of countries have financial and human resources allocated to support education of children with disabilities in both inclusive and segregated settings. However, while resource allocations are provided to support inclusion, budgets are usually limited. For example, in Malaysia, a model of financing being used is in the form of seed money to support education of children with disabilities on a case-by-case basis. The Ministry of Education assigns budgets and resources based on the requirements needed to implement pilot inclusion programmes. Successful pilot inclusion programmes are then scaled up and supported.<sup>104</sup>

Consistent with the findings on other dimensions in this report, results show that the majority of the countries in the region are financing education in segregated settings. Some countries have articulated in their action plans specific approaches to support education of children with disabilities. One example is scholarship grants for children with disabilities through the Inclusive Education Centre (IEC).<sup>105</sup> This means that few resources are available for schools that take initiative to include children with disabilities.

Other countries have secured resource allocations for inclusion work through equity-based planning. Papua New Guinea has developed a ten-year plan to improve the financial and budget performance of the disability sector as a whole<sup>106</sup> and Myanmar has developed an equity-based education plan and budget.<sup>107</sup>

In some countries, resource allocation to implement inclusive education for children with disabilities is strengthened by provisions through the local government units.<sup>108, 109</sup> In some provinces in Viet Nam, a guideline for districts and schools on budget allocation for the implementation of inclusive education was issued. Through this, implementation of inclusive education in all districts and schools was strengthened.<sup>110</sup>

Other general financial support comes in different forms such as, provision of social cash transfers as part of the social protection of some local government units<sup>111</sup> and disability grants for persons with disabilities living below the poverty line.<sup>112</sup>

### 1.3.1.5 Institutional Capacity Building

The level of capacity, which encompasses the knowledge, skills and attitudes within the sector in promoting inclusion in education is pivotal in driving reform. Yet the current level of awareness and capacity to develop inclusive education policies, plan and programmes, is generally low across the region

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99 Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. (2011). National Education Strategic Plan 2011-2030

100 UNESCAP (2015). Review of the Economic Costs of Exclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific

101 Republic of Vanuatu. (2017). Interim Vanuatu Education and Training Sector Strategy 2017-2018

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 The Government of Malaysia. (2013). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Pre-school to Post-Secondary)

105 The Inclusive Education Centre (IEC) was Established by the Government of Lao PDR Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) which aims to provide equitable, quality education to reduce and eventually eliminate disparities in access to education of disadvantaged groups, especially girls and women, ethnic groups, people with disabilities and people in socioeconomic difficulty. Retrieved: <https://sites.google.com/site/teamlaopdr/current-sub-grant-partners/inclusive-education-center-iec>

106 Independent State of Papua New Guinea. (2015). National Policy on Disability 2015-2025

107 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018 for Myanmar

108 UNICEF. (2017). Country Office Annual Report for Indonesia

109 UNICEF. (2015). Readiness for Education of Children with Disabilities in Eight Provinces of Viet Nam

110 Ibid.

111 UNICEF. (2018). Policy Brief No. 6: Children with Disabilities, Finding the Way to an inclusive Service Framework

112 UNICEF. (2018). Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress for Kiribati

and at all levels of education systems – from the national level to the school level. Unless there are radical shifts in attitudes and approach towards disability and inclusive education among key decision makers and implementers, children with disabilities will continue to be marginalised and deprived of the equal opportunities which they are entitled to.

The process of breaking barriers for children with disabilities is continuous, and complex but policy makers and practitioners across all levels of the system must be the initiators of change. This requires ‘enlarging their capacity to imagine what might be achieved and increasing their sense of accountability for bringing this about’.<sup>113</sup>

Some countries have systematically prioritised institutional capacity building within the government on fundamental concepts and principles of inclusion. This commitment can be seen in governments’ policies and strategic plans which contain a focus on increasing capacity of relevant government units to challenge traditional beliefs and approaches that view children with disabilities as charity cases, as opposed to rights holders. In Timor-Leste, strengthening the workforce in the Ministry of Education is one of the priority areas which sits within the country’s education reform agenda.<sup>114</sup> In Viet Nam, provision of training on the Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning at the national and provincial levels has been a key focus, involving representatives from the Ministries of Education, Health, Labour and Social Affairs and selected universities in the country,<sup>115</sup> and in collaboration with various development partners.

Various activities and programmes to build knowledge, skills and attitudes in government and education institutions on inclusive education are being implemented in a number of countries in the region. For example, equity-based budget planning has been participated by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning and Finance in Myanmar;<sup>116</sup> and strengthening of human resources to improve service delivery, and training of medical doctors to improve identification, management, and referral systems to prevent childhood blindness<sup>117</sup> was implemented in Papua New Guinea.<sup>118</sup> In the Philippines, training on inclusive education supported teachers, school heads, and supervisors in creating inclusive schools.<sup>119</sup> An extensive capacity building on inclusive education was conducted and participated by education professionals, decision makers, parents, students, and other members of the community in Mongolia. Reports indicate that the training helped change attitudes towards inclusive education for children with disabilities and led to the integration of new inclusive and equity-based provisions in school policies and plans, and activation of parents’ groups.<sup>120</sup>

One continuous challenge is the social norms and misunderstandings around children with disabilities; negative perceptions and discrimination are often at the root of capacity challenges. Governments need to confront limiting notions of disability if real and meaningful changes are to take place. Fundamental concepts in equity, the social model of disability, and the development of inclusive values and cultures must be given emphasis in capacity building programmes. There is little evidence that these have been substantially or sufficiently addressed in the region. One-third of the countries reviewed have conducted capacity building activities for government leaders but the prevailing perspective, as evident in government documents and



113 Ainscow, M. (2019). The UNESCO Salamanca Statement 25 years on Developing inclusive and equitable education systems: Discussion paper prepared for the International Forum on inclusion and equity in education – every learner matters. Cali, Colombia. p.24.

114 Government of Timor-Leste. (n.d.). National Policy for Inclusive Education

115 UNICEF. (2017). Country Office Annual Report 2017 for Viet Nam

116 UNICEF. (n.d.). UNICEF Myanmar Education Programme Strategy Note

117 The training focused on the prevention of Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), an eye disorder that can cause blindness in premature babies. The programme was funded by DFAT.

118 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report for Papua New Guinea

119 UNICEF. (2018). Programme Strategy Notes for UNICEF Philippines 2019-2023

120 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018 for Mongolia

strategy papers, is still based on the medical model of disability. In some countries, capacity building on inclusive education is often limited or not provided at all. One of the recurring challenges, is the lack of experts in the country who can support improving capacities of relevant institutions.

Capacity building should be targeted at all government agencies involved in ensuring that rights of children with disabilities to education and social inclusion are protected. This means that while it is important to increase capacities of personnel in education institutions, other Ministries such as Health, Social Protection, Planning and Finance, should also be equipped and capacitated. Government agencies must develop a comprehensive understanding of the UNCRPD, a deep appreciation of the importance of inclusion of all learners in the broader development agenda, and strengthen structures for multi-sectoral collaboration.

Support from various development partners from non-government and international development organisations have been particularly instrumental in increasing capacity of stakeholders. UNICEF is at the forefront of supporting the government in driving capacity development efforts in several aspects of the education system. In many countries, CSOs, OPDs and faith-based organisations are active players supporting training programmes, especially at the local and community level. Development partners, such as Save the Children, UNESCO, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) are significant contributors to strengthening systems in many countries in the region.

### 1.3.1.6 Awareness Raising and Community Involvement

Discrimination against persons with disabilities continues to be prevalent in many societies. Discrimination is mainly rooted in 'the lack of awareness, information or experience of living closely with persons with disabilities'<sup>121</sup>. An inclusive society is dependent on enabling education systems and communities to combat stereotypes and stigma, and promote respect for and value of diversity.<sup>122</sup> In the region, reports indicate that the lack of awareness of disability and the rights of all children to equal and equitable learning opportunities is among the primary obstacles, perpetuating the practice of specialised education. It is therefore vital to raise understanding of disability as a rights-based paradigm and challenge negative and limiting perceptions at all levels of the society. Across the region, there have been several initiatives aiming to achieve this.

Most countries report that they are in the *Developing* stage of raising awareness and have been implementing different awareness-raising activities to educate the public and engage the community in inclusive education. Through collaborations with different organisations such as UNICEF, governments have been able to launch a variety of awareness raising programmes. In Malaysia, campaigns are focused on the importance and benefits of children with disabilities learning alongside their peers<sup>123</sup>. Through these campaigns, parents of children with disabilities have been encouraged to enrol their children in Inclusive Education Programmes.<sup>124</sup> In the Philippines, some parents of children with disabilities are involved in the implementation of programmes run by the government and NGOs. These parents have been advocates for the implementation of inclusive education programmes.<sup>125</sup>

Countries used varied platforms in advocating the importance of inclusion, such as social media, development of books, videos and other visual communication materials, and holding events celebrating and advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, e.g. The International Day for Persons with Disabilities.<sup>126, 127, 128, 129</sup> Malaysia's series of social media campaigns such as the #ThisAbility, #StandTogether, and #LetterToMyPM, including a short film on inclusion, aimed to challenge the stigmatisation and discrimination of children with

121 Leonard Cheshire. (2019). Inclusive education for persons with disabilities –Are we making progress? Background paper prepared for the International Forum on inclusion and equity in education – Every learner matters. Cali, Colombia.

122 United Nations. (2016). United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Comment No. 4.

123 See campaigns here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpIjjuYrbc&list=PLnndm\\_XCdLdZTmIOVzN0HrmOMpiQr0fzO&index=15](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpIjjuYrbc&list=PLnndm_XCdLdZTmIOVzN0HrmOMpiQr0fzO&index=15); [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dE8AN0m5m\\_Y&list=PLnndm\\_XCdLdZTmIOVzN0HrmOMpiQr0fzO&index=16](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dE8AN0m5m_Y&list=PLnndm_XCdLdZTmIOVzN0HrmOMpiQr0fzO&index=16); and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DujZrYnWXJY&list=PLnndm\\_XCdLdZTmIOVzN0HrmOMpiQr0fzO&index=17](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DujZrYnWXJY&list=PLnndm_XCdLdZTmIOVzN0HrmOMpiQr0fzO&index=17)

124 Ministry of Education. (2018). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2017. Government of Malaysia

125 UNICEF. (2018). Study on the Situation of children with Disabilities in the Philippines.

126 Myriad Research. (2018, February). Formative Study on Disabilities and Inclusive Education. UNICEF Indonesia.

127 Ministry of Education. (2018). Malaysia Education Blueprint Annual Report 2017. Republic of Malaysia.

128 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Mongolia.

129 UNICEF. (2018). Output Ratings with Latest Progress, Thailand.

disabilities and shift mindsets from charitable medical model to social and rights-based model with greater attention on inclusion.<sup>130</sup>

Some countries are still at the stage of *Initiating and Establishing* awareness raising programmes. In Timor-Leste, awareness raising includes mainstreaming inclusion and diversity in governance through hiring of personnel from marginalised groups.<sup>131</sup> In Vanuatu, advocacy activities at the school level are included in the implementation strategies for policies on Inclusive Education and Child Safeguarding. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has conducted a series of awareness campaigns regarding both policies at the school and community level in 2015 and 2018. These policies are also linked to the national curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education, primary and, secondary schools. In Central and Western China, ongoing disability and equality training for OPDs, community-based staff, social workers, and community workers are being supported by UNICEF.<sup>132</sup>

Data on most countries indicate further need for advocacy efforts to communicate messages aligned with inclusion principles set by international disability rights frameworks, putting emphasis on the social model of disability. Awareness raising activities are often ad-hoc and fragmented, uncoordinated, and lacking medium to long-term strategic direction from the government. This can be due to the lack of a unified definition of disability that is social and rights-based. For example, although some countries implement awareness raising activities, segregated models of education provision are simultaneously promoted. Advocacy campaigns led by development organisations seem to be more prominent gaining wider reach.

### BOX 3 Promising Practices: Whole Systems Approach

#### Promising Practices

**Thailand** instituted policy reforms as early as the 1990s to improve education provision for children with disabilities. This began with a new constitution with provisions that guaranteed elimination of barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in society. Consequently, specific laws which protect the rights of persons with disabilities to education in accordance to the constitution were enacted. The following are the series of national reforms as part of the country's commitment to inclusive development:

- In 1991, the Rehabilitation Act for Persons with Disabilities was enacted.<sup>133</sup> This is the first law of Thailand on disability.<sup>134</sup> It mandated the establishment of the National Committee for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons; whose role is to provide advice on issues on disability.<sup>135</sup>
- In 2001, a new policy was issued by the government that stipulates educational opportunities for persons with disabilities. This policy is also considered a "long-term policy and educational goals for persons with disabilities."<sup>136</sup>
- The Persons with Disabilities' Quality Life Promotion Act (2007) was enacted in 2007 to repeal the Rehabilitation Act for Persons with Disabilities (1991). It is a comprehensive rights-based law for persons with disabilities, which also contains provision on anti-discrimination.<sup>137</sup>
- In 2008, the '**Education Provision for Persons with Disabilities Act B.E. 2551'** (2008) was enacted to provide equitable access to education and vocational training for all marginalised groups.<sup>138</sup>

130 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Malaysia.

131 Ministry of Education. (n.d.). National Policy on Inclusive Education. Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

132 UNICEF. (n.d.). MTR Background Paper – Children with Disabilities, China

133 UNICEF. (2003). Inclusive Education Initiatives for Children with Disabilities: Lessons from the East Asia and Pacific Region. UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

134 International Labour Organisations. (2009, July). Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Thailand.

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

## Promising Practices

**Vanuatu**, immediately following the ratification of the UNCRPD in 2008, enacted national policies and initiated strategic programmes to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities. The development of the National Disability Policy (2008-2015) led to a series of significant developments towards promoting disability inclusion in the country. These include the establishment of a Disability Desk which sits in the Ministry of Justice and Community Service (MJCS), development of the National Disability Inclusion Policy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2016-2020), and most importantly, the enforcement of the Inclusive Education Policy and a corresponding 10-year Strategic Plan (2010-2020). The Vanuatu National Disability Inclusive Development Policy (2018-2025) was developed to replace its predecessor strategy document. The current policy aims to “improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities.”<sup>139</sup> The national framework provided clear guidance to stakeholders on how they could support the initiatives of the government. This led to provision of support from donor partners, non-government organisations, disability organisations, and the private sector in implementing disability inclusive development in Vanuatu. The presence of collaboration among these organisations is also noticeable, where various organisations implemented joint work on disability inclusion. For example, organisations collaborated to implement a disability inclusive initiative in the disaster risk reduction sector.<sup>140</sup>

## BOX 4 UNICEF's Contribution: Whole Systems Approach

### UNICEF'S Contribution

UNICEF's strong advocacy for inclusion through technical inputs and advice on policy development contributed to the development of various new legislations around the region such as the “Zero-reject Policy” in Malaysia;<sup>141</sup> the ECE Bill in Kiribati;<sup>142</sup> the National Policy on Rights, Participation, and Development of People with Disabilities for 2017-2020<sup>143</sup> in Mongolia; Child Protection Policy and the Disability Authority Act of Papua New Guinea;<sup>144</sup> and Inclusive Education Policy in Timor-Leste,<sup>145</sup> among others. In Mongolia, **UNICEF also contributed to development and adoption of “A regulation to support the integration of children with disabilities in mainstream schools”, approved by the order #A/292 of Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Sports in 2019.**

UNICEF continues to work with governments and advocate for policy reforms in the region. UNICEF has likewise assisted most governments across the region in drafting new education plans and reviewing existing ones. A large part of UNICEF's advocacy work is raising awareness to eliminate discrimination and stigmatisation towards children with disabilities. UNICEF Malaysia has been actively campaigning on inclusion with their campaigns: #ThisAbility Makeathon,<sup>146</sup> We are All Special: A Carnival for All!, #StandTogether campaign, and #lettertomyPM.<sup>147</sup> A short film on inclusion was also produced by UNICEF Malaysia in collaboration with Manchester United Football Club, UNICEF Malaysia and UK, and children with disabilities and their families.<sup>148</sup> In Mongolia, to support the awareness raising campaign in the country, UNICEF developed videos and books on inclusive education shared through television and various social media channels. The materials produced have been distributed to schools nationwide.<sup>149</sup>

139 Ministry of Justice and Community Services. (2018). National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025. Government of the Republic of Vanuatu.

140 Ministry of Justice and Community Service. (2018). National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025. Government of the Republic of Vanuatu.

141 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Malaysia.

142 UNICEF. (2018). Policy Brief No. 6: Children with Disabilities, Finding the Way to an inclusive Service Framework.

143 UNICEF. (2018). Output Ratings with Latest Progress, Mongolia.

144 UNICEF. (2018). Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress, Papua New Guinea.

145 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Timor-Leste.

146 UNICEF. (2018). Output Ratings with Latest Progress, Malaysia.

147 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Malaysia.

148 Ibid.

149 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Mongolia.



## UNICEF'S Contribution

Different capacity building initiatives have been implemented by UNICEF across the region on key topics including equity-based planning and budgeting; training of education officers on inclusive, conflict-sensitive, disaster- and climate change sensitive planning, and management; monitoring and evaluation of education activities; concepts and models of disability; and analysing data on disabilities. These capacity building interventions involved policy makers, education professionals, decision makers, key members of the community, parents, and students.

UNICEF continues to build partnerships with various sectors while strengthening their capacity on social inclusion to gain more advocates and champions of inclusion in education. Support were given to key actors in the government and civil society to participate in important conventions and training on child rights<sup>150</sup> disability equality.<sup>151</sup> UNICEF has also been instrumental in bringing together OPDS, faith-based organisations, NGOs, and local governments to work on capacity building programmes enabling teachers, parents, and the community to have a broader understanding of disability and inclusion in education.

### 1.3.2 Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment<sup>152</sup>

#### Section Overview

Various initiatives to improve curriculum, pedagogy, assessment systems, and teaching and learning resources are evident across a majority of the countries in the region. However, these initiatives are undermined by the common prevalence of a dual-education systems.

In some countries, Inclusive Education (IE) initiatives are built on enabling policy environments. These same policies however, also support specialised education programmes that indirectly exclude children with disabilities. In some of these countries, there are education policies that support curriculum reform programmes while others have yet to draft their own education plans and strategies. Most countries have either ongoing curriculum reviews or in a few cases, few started to utilise their newly revised curriculum for both general education and specialised classes, but implementing learner-centred teaching methods, reform of assessment systems and development of inclusive teaching and learning materials seem to fall behind. There is little evidence of established policies that support and sustain the development of inclusive assessment mechanisms and provision of learning materials in accessible formats and languages. In addition, the lack of teacher capacity on UDL principles, emanating from a lack of structural support from the government, continue to be a challenge across the region. It is also important to reiterate that the little gains on creating more flexible curriculum, introduction of inclusive classroom strategies, and provision of accessible learning materials are diminished by their delivery to only specialised education programmes.

The UNCRPD General Comment #4 (GC4) states that the entire education system must be accessible and that translates to an inclusive curriculum, teaching and learning methods, assessment system and teaching and learning resources available for all students including children with disabilities, not only for a select population of students nor a certain class. Unless there is a progressive realisation of state parties to remove all forms of structural barriers that directly or indirectly exclude children with disabilities, all efforts of reform will continue to be ineffective in creating a fully inclusive education system.

150 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Lao PDR.

151 UNICEF. (2018). Output Ratings with Latest Progress, Malaysia.

152 Assessment pertains to examinations and national assessment system. This is different from disability assessment or screening which is discussed in Domains 5 (Effective Transition) and 7 (Data and Monitoring).

## BOX 5 Dimensions and Progress Indicators: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>2.1 Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy</b>	The national curriculum is rigid and does not respond effectively to the needs of all learners. The dominant approach teachers use in the classroom is rote learning.	Planning activities and discussions are ongoing to review and reform the national curriculum. Specialised curricula tailored to specific disabilities are in place. The belief that children with disabilities require a special pedagogy is the prevailing perspective within the education system.	Actions have been taken by government to reform the standard national curriculum to ensure it is flexible, adaptable and responsive to all learners. There are emerging practices of child-centred pedagogy following the principles of UDL. Implementation is limited.	The country is implementing an inclusive and flexible national curriculum accessible by all learners following the principles of inclusion and equity. There is no separate special curriculum for children with disabilities. Teaching and learning methods are child-centred and adapted to different strengths, requirements and learning styles. All children's learning needs are supported in schools and classrooms.
<b>2.2 Inclusive Assessment</b>	The national assessment system is rigid and does not respond effectively to the needs of all learners.	Planning activities and discussions are ongoing to review and reform the national assessment system.	Actions have been taken by government to reform the assessment system to ensure it is flexible, adaptable and responsive to all learners.	The country is implementing an inclusive and flexible assessment system responsive to all learners following the principles of inclusion and equity, which advocates the principles of universal quality educational design.
<b>2.3 Learning Material</b>	Assistive devices and materials are not generally available in schools. Books and other materials make no reference to children with disabilities.	Assistive devices and materials are available in special schools, but not in regular schools. A few books and other materials have positive references to children with disabilities.	Assistive devices and other materials are available in special schools but in less than half of regular schools. Books and other materials inclusive positive references to children with disabilities.	Ministry of Education facilitates the development/ adaptation of teaching and learning materials to fit the context and needs of individual learners. Books and other learning materials which include positive reference to children with disabilities are available. Assistive devices and materials are available in most regular schools.



### 1.3.2.1 Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy

Most countries reviewed in the region are at the phase of *developing* inclusive curricula. Almost all countries in EAP have initiated plans and taken actions to institutionalise child-centred pedagogy either through teacher trainings, policy provisions or an ongoing curriculum review and revision.<sup>153</sup> However, attempts at implementing inclusive curricula are incomplete and fall short of the UNCRPD standards as the operation of specialised programmes for children with certain disabilities continue and the application of universal design principles for learning into the overall curriculum and learning delivery remain limited.

Most countries continue to have rigid curricula that do not fully respond to the diverse needs of learners and that consider teachers as the sole source of knowledge and information while the students are passive receivers. Such curricula do not respond to the diverse learning styles and needs of learners by relying heavily on rote learning and content knowledge, and providing little opportunity for collaboration, creative thinking, and innovation. Curricula in most countries are compulsory and thus leave teachers little flexibility to innovate and adapt to children's needs.

In some countries, teachers accommodate differences in learning styles through the application of some Universal Design for Learning approaches in everyday classroom instruction. However, this practice remains divergent from the standard pedagogy utilised in the whole country. Some countries note that the implementation of a new and inclusive curriculum remains a challenge as teachers continue to lack support in gaining the required skills and knowledge to carry out inclusive pedagogies.

Curriculum review and reform has taken place in some countries in their efforts to ensure that the curriculum is responsive to all learners. In Myanmar, the government has established its National Curriculum Framework where learner-centred and reflective teaching approaches enable all learners, including children with disabilities, to learn under the same curriculum.<sup>154</sup> Simultaneously, the government has laid the groundwork to upgrade the professional competency of teachers through in-service trainings as mandated in the National Education Strategic Plan,<sup>155</sup> developed the national framework for Continuous Professional Development,<sup>156</sup> and finalised their Teacher Competency Standard Framework; this work remains ongoing.

Many countries have the building blocks of curriculum reform in place in the form of inclusive education policies that create a conducive policy environment for inclusive curriculum. For instance, Timor-Leste has a National Education Strategic Plan and a National Policy for Inclusive Education in place that oblige the Ministry of Education and other relevant agencies to: review existing curriculum, teaching approaches, and learning materials; conduct studies identifying the needs of children with disabilities; and integrate principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the curriculum, pedagogy and learning materials.<sup>157</sup> While the current curriculum is not yet fully inclusive, having the right policy environment is an important beginning to curriculum reform. This should be complemented by a clear and coordinated implementation strategy that should involve capacitating teachers on inclusive pedagogy through improved Pre-service and In-service programmes.

153 with the exemption of the Solomon Islands where no data on curriculum was available

154 UNICEF Myanmar, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

155 The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 'National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021' (2016).

156 UNICEF Myanmar, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

157 Government of Timor-Leste (2019). National Policy for Inclusive Education.

## BOX 6 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment

### INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Learner-centred curriculum and pedagogy is at the heart of inclusive education. Traditional curricula in many countries require all children to learn the same things at the same pace, through teaching methods which disregard differences in needs and abilities. In an inclusive system, learners are provided with a personalised education approach, support and reasonable accommodation rather than forcing the student to fit the system.<sup>158</sup> The Centre for Applied Special Technologies states that Universal Design for Learning<sup>159</sup> provides a “set of principles for creating instructional goals, methods, materials and assessments that work for everyone – not a single, one-size-fits-all solution, but rather flexible approaches that can be customised and adjusted for individual needs”.

The curriculum is not only about what is taught and learned but also about attitudes and beliefs attached to the teaching and learning process.<sup>160</sup> ‘Even the most pedagogically advanced methods are likely to be ineffective in the hands of those who implicitly or explicitly subscribe to a belief system that regards some students, at best, as disadvantaged and in need of fixing, or, worse, as deficient and, therefore, beyond fixing.’<sup>161</sup>

In Inclusive curricula:<sup>162</sup>

- Teachers believe that all learners are capable of learning and set high expectations for the success of all.
- Teachers design, plan and differentiate the curriculum using the principles of Universal Design of Learning where the learners’ needs, characteristics, learning styles and interests are at the core of the curriculum.
- Teachers differentiate content, lesson delivery, learning resources and assessment.
- The curriculum is accessible to all through assistive and adaptive technology and creating learning environments which provide opportunities for all children to be active participants in the teaching and learning process.
- Collaboration among teachers and special educators supports the development of a more inclusive curriculum.
- A variety of meaningful learning experiences to actively engage all learners in the learning process encourages inclusion.
- Adapt assessment methods and have students participate in designing assessment procedures.



158 UNESCO. (2017). A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education.

159 See Box 7 for further information on UDL

160 UNESCO (2009). Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education.

161 Ainscow, Mel. (2004). Developing inclusive systems: What are the levers for change? *Journal of Educational Change*.

162 Grimes, Peter. (2018). Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools in Kuwait: Good Practices Review.

## BOX 7 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

### UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

UDL provides a concrete approach to meeting the educational needs of all children from a rights-based perspective.<sup>163</sup> It is the guiding principle in educational provision including curriculum and teaching models which 'seek to make learning accessible to all students, particularly those students who have not been successful because of inflexible systems of learning'.<sup>164</sup> UDL aims to avoid a one-size-fit-all curriculum and helps educators identify barriers in the curricula and address these within the instructional environment.

The three principles of Universal Design for Learning include<sup>165</sup>:

- Multiple Means of Representation: Flexible approaches to design and delivery
- Multiple Means and Action and Expression: Flexible approaches for students to manage and demonstrate their learnings
- Multiple Means of Engagement: Flexible approaches to engage students to learn

UDL therefore facilitates the creation of a higher-quality education system through<sup>166</sup>:

- Developing flexible ways for students to learn
- Creating an engaging classroom environment
- Maintaining high expectations for all children, yet allowing multiple ways to meet expectations
- Empowering teachers to think differently about their own teaching
- Focusing on educational outcomes for all children, including those with disabilities

A majority of the countries reviewed are sustaining dual systems of education, specialised and mainstream education, and often have simplified curriculum for children with certain disabilities. This in itself is a contradiction of an inclusive curriculum even when accommodations or some UDL principles are applied in special classes. The UNCRPD strongly encourages the application of UDL principles and reasonable accommodation that provide teachers and education staff with a framework for creating adaptable and flexible learning environments for all learners. It recognises each learner's diverse ways of processing information, maintains a high level of expectation to all learners including children with disabilities, and provides them with various ways of reaching those expectations.<sup>167</sup> While it is recognised that deeply rooted segregatory provisions will take time to be completely abolished, a fully inclusive curriculum will remain a challenge unless the adaptation of UDL principles is institutionalised and conventionalised in a unified national curriculum and applied in a unified education system by supported teachers.

### 1.3.2.2 Inclusive Assessment

The region has a long way to go in establishing inclusive assessment systems in all schools. Countries in the region rely on rigid and high stakes examination and assessment systems. Based on available data, half of the countries assessed in the region have made efforts to build foundations for a responsive and inclusive national assessment system through policy review and development.<sup>168</sup> However, there is little evidence on the inclusiveness of new assessment systems.

163 UNICEF (2014). Access to School and the Learning Environment II – Universal Design for Learning: Webinar 10 – Companion Technical Booklet. New York.

164 Ibid.

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

167 UNCRPD, 'General Comment No. 4, Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education' (2016).

168 These countries include Myanmar, Timor Leste, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, and Thailand who rated themselves in the Developing stage.

Almost all of the countries express that their current assessment system, both national and classroom assessments, is rigid and unresponsive to learner diversity and needs reform. For instance, countries' approach to measuring learning achievements is content-based and requires a shift to a more flexible formative assessment. The mapping shows that current assessment systems "have been criticised as disproportionately measuring basic cognitive skills, which overemphasises content memorisation" and as overly "focused on academic knowledge and grade promotion". While there may be intentions to build more inclusive assessment systems, the general level of technical knowledge and capacity to develop them is quite limited in the region. Additionally, many such changes would require quite drastic shifts in assessment culture, which require specific prioritisation from governments if it is to be achieved.

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***"The right to non-discrimination includes the right not to be segregated."***

**UNCRPD GC4**

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In half of the countries reviewed in the region, an enabling policy environment is being created.<sup>169</sup> Many Education Ministries have and are drafting plans to review their current assessment systems with the intention of incorporating principles of inclusive assessment. Some countries have taken concrete steps in improving their assessment systems either through establishing a new assessment policy or incorporating provisions for assessment reform, as in Papua New Guinea,<sup>170</sup> or in their national inclusive education policies,<sup>171</sup> as in Timor-Leste. Other countries are just beginning to invite discussions on inclusive assessment through ongoing advocacy and capacity building efforts on assessment.

In Indonesia, for example, interventions developed by a local OPD to introduce a more flexible and responsive assessment tool have been piloted. Some schools in the country have applied some UDL strategies through the adaptation of the instrument for individual learning assessment and individual learning plan developed by Helen Keller International (HKI), a local OPD. This initiative should be monitored and evaluated against the UNCRPD principles of inclusion prior to scale up. Interventions like this indicate the motivation and will of educators to improve existing systems and should be noted by the government as opportunities to build strategic partnerships on IE initiatives.

It is important to include children and people with disabilities in all stages of planning and development to ensure that their needs are met and that the outcome will not cause further exclusion. One risk that has arisen in the region is that assessment tools can become an instrument to segregate students when education ministries utilise diagnostic assessment tools to identify "readiness" and literacy and numeracy of children with disabilities<sup>172</sup> to determine which among multiple special education programmes is appropriate for them.<sup>173</sup> This system works against the inclusive education principles in the UNCRPD GC4 where it states that "the right to non-discrimination includes the right not to be segregated."<sup>174</sup>

While most of the region is still developing their plans and strategies to create an inclusive assessment system, it is an opportune time for them to do this based on the standards required by the UNCRPD.

### **1.3.2.3 Learning Materials**

The UNCRPD highlights the necessity of providing assistive compensatory aids for learners with disabilities who need them, and learning materials in diverse accessible formats and languages to facilitate learning and improve participation of all students including children with disabilities.<sup>175</sup> Results of the mapping show that a majority of countries have provisions for inclusive learning materials and assistive devices that support the specific needs of children with disabilities only in specialised classes. These findings along with

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169 Ibid.

170 National Parliament of Papua New Guinea, 'Special and Inclusive Education Policy and Minimum Education Standards' (2018).

171 Government of Timor-Leste, 'National Policy for Inclusive Education' (2019).

172 The Government of Malaysia, 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2016' (2016).

173 The Government of Malaysia, 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025: Pre-school to Post-Secondary' (2013).

174 UNCRPD, 'General Comment No. 4, Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education' (2016, p. 6).

175 UNCRPD, 'General Comment No. 4, Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education' (2016).

scant evidence of inclusive learning resources in mainstream classes, show the prevalence of specialised curricula and specialised programmes despite the efforts of these same countries to move towards a more inclusive education system. Moreover, there is a lack of evidence of systematic structures that ensure the sustainable and equitable provision and distribution of accessible learning materials.

Findings from the mapping show that in most countries in the region there are limited to no available assistive devices and inclusive learning resources in the general and special education systems. Assistive devices are usually available for a limited number of schools, and mostly just special schools, and for certain types of impairments, such as for visually impaired children.

Reports from many of these countries show that teachers and education ministry staff participated in various forms of capacity building on production and development of accessible learning materials in diverse formats and languages, and utilisation of tools and assistive devices. The participation of teachers with and without disabilities, children with disabilities, and education ministry officials and staff in creating inclusive learning materials help ensure that teaching and learning materials are contextualised and adaptable. This consultative approach to the provision of accessible learning materials helps close the gap between end users, creators, and decision makers and contributes to the production of effective inclusive learning resources. To complement this, countries in the region need enabling policies that will support and sustain the provision of accessible teaching and learning materials as much as a systematic delivery and monitoring mechanism ensuring all children, with and without disability, benefit from flexible and inclusive education resources.

## **BOX 8 Promising Practices: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment**

### **Promising Practices**

UNICEF Mongolia worked with the Mongolian Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Deaf Education on creating innovations that facilitate learning and communication of children with disabilities. The collaboration resulted in the production of an audio-visual version of the 2016 sign language illustrated dictionary. This was integrated to the teacher training module on inclusive education developed with UNICEF Mongolia and the Mongolian State University of Education (MSUE) for early childhood education professionals in the provinces of Bayankhongor, Gobi-Altai, and Zavkhan. UNICEF also supported the development of a mobile phone app that facilitates communication of children with speech and language impairments.<sup>176</sup> The app was introduced to ECE teachers during their IE training sessions and was also shared through the [www.maamuu.mn](http://www.maamuu.mn) website, previously established with UNICEF's assistance, to widen its reach. UNICEF Mongolia further collaborated with the NGO "Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Deaf Education" and developed online lessons for parents with young children who have hearing difficulties in 2019. A practical manual how to work with CWDs was developed for ECE teachers and trained around 250 children in 2019-2020.

The Philippines' Department of Education distributed DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) audiobook readers and Swell Form Graphics Machines to all regions in the country to help create more accessible learning materials for visually impaired learners. The Department of Education conducted capacity building programmes to equip special education teachers, education specialists, and illustrators from the different regions and the DepEd Central Office, with the necessary knowledge and skills to design and develop tactile materials and quality assurance tools. Tactile materials developed during the workshops were made into inclusive resource toolkits and were immediately made available to special education teachers for use in their classrooms.<sup>177</sup>

176 UNICEF Mongolia, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

177 DFAT, 'BEST Programme 9th Six-Monthly Progress Report July-December 2018' (2019).

## BOX 9 UNICEF's Contribution: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

### UNICEF's Contribution

UNICEF contributes to making curriculum more responsive to the diverse learning needs of children in East Asia and Pacific. UNICEF continues to address child development issues in disability, gender, and ethnicity with the development of mother-tongue based multilingual education in some countries, a gender-responsive curriculum on nutrition literacy, and contextualised curriculum. UNICEF helps raise the quality of teachers through the development and revision of teacher education curricula capacity building on multi-lingual education.

UNICEF provides technical assistance in the development and institutionalisation of education quality assessment tools and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and education programmes. UNICEF also supports education stakeholders through capacity building on inclusive assessment approaches such as formative assessment and other tools that monitor learning achievements.

### 1.3.3 Supported Teachers



#### Section Overview

Teachers play a central role in creating inclusive learning environments and it is thus critical to provide them with relevant training and ongoing support in inclusive education implementation. Many countries in the region are undergoing extensive education reforms that involve an evaluation of their current pre-service teacher education curriculum, continuous professional development approaches, and teacher competency standards. Most of these countries have committed to improving their pre-service curriculum and in-service training programmes through the integration of inclusive principles and approaches.

However, it is still evident that most teacher education programmes in the region are not responding to the requirements of an inclusive education system. Teacher education programmes in many countries still do not reflect the inclusive pedagogy needed to enable future teachers to address the diverse needs of all learners. Teachers in the region are not equipped to teach children with disabilities and yet, are doing so without adequate preparation or support. Moreover, in-service training provisions are predominantly delivered through outdated cascade models which are not likely to lead to sustainable developments in teachers' practice. In some countries, training is provided to teachers working in special schools while teachers in mainstream and general education classes including children with disabilities are left unsupported.

Teachers and school leaders across the region should be provided with appropriate professional development support through coaching and mentoring, school-based training and development and collaborative action learning based on reflective practice enabling school communities to work together and share effective inclusive practices. As education systems transition to becoming more inclusive, incentives for schools and teachers who are including children with disabilities can be very effective in supporting motivation and encouraging sustainability. This can include professional development training and credits, and grants for the schools and community to continue to improve the school.

Data on professional standards in the region is limited. In countries with available data, evidence shows that only a few have taken examined the ways in which teacher professional competency standards can support and enable the development of teachers inclusive practice.



## BOX 10 Dimensions and Progress Indicators: Supported Teachers

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>3.1 Pre-service Teacher Education</b>	Inclusion is not an integral part of the pre-service curriculum. Teaching children with disabilities remain an issue that only special educators are expected to respond to. Pre-service programmes in special education are also limited in capacity and quality.	Planning activities and discussions have been undertaken to review the curriculum. Knowledge and experience from specialised training programmes are beginning to be transferred to mainstream teacher preparation.	Pre-service teacher education curriculum has been reformed. Both specialised services and inclusion are supported through pre-service programmes however quality/ capacity could be improved.	Government implements the revised national teacher education curriculum wherein inclusion principles are embedded. Strong training programmes exist for specialist teachers.
<b>3.2 In-service Teacher Education</b>	Training of teachers and support staff emphasises segregated provision of education for children with disabilities. Teacher training supports the medical model of disability. In-service programmes for special educators are also limited in capacity and quality.	Teacher training on catering to children with disabilities have been implemented which puts emphasis on provisions in inclusive settings but combined with some references to segregated provisions. Knowledge and experience from specialised training programmes are beginning to be transferred to mainstream in-service training.	The government ensures teachers and support staff receive ongoing training on inclusive education. Training content supports the social model of disability. Both specialised services and inclusion are supported through in-service programmes however quality/ capacity could be improved.	A national policy for school-based teacher professional development is established, where IE is a key focus area. Teachers, including teachers with disabilities receive continuous professional development. Strong in-service training programme also exists for specialist teachers who are positioned as inclusive education advisory teachers.
<b>3.3 Professional Competency Standards for Teachers and School Leaders</b>	Discussions are taking place on reviewing/ developing professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders to ensure alignment with inclusion and equity principles.	Programmes/ activities to develop and/or review existing professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders are being undertaken to ensure it reinforces equity and inclusion.	The Ministry of Education has reformed their national professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders to embed the principles of equity and inclusion.	The country has established and is implementing professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders which follow the principles of inclusion and equity.

### 1.3.3.1 Pre-service Teacher Education

When teachers are well-prepared and have actual experience of, and exposure to, inclusive pedagogy, they will also develop more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with disabilities. In order for all teachers to respond to the diverse needs of children, they need to build their capacity in identifying barriers to learning and participation as early as possible.<sup>178</sup> Overall, data indicates that pre-service preparation programmes for teachers working with children with disabilities in inclusive classroom are largely non-existent in most countries; most teacher preparation programmes concerning children with disabilities focus on specialist skills for special school settings, yet even these are scarce. Given the widespread reports of low teacher capacity, the quality of both types of programmes appears insufficient in equipping future teachers with the knowledge, skills and values to teach all types of learners effectively. That being said, evidence suggests that extensive efforts are ongoing to improve pre-service teacher education in many countries.

Most countries are undertaking comprehensive reviews of their national pre-service curriculum for teacher education to build the capacity of teachers on inclusion. For example, Myanmar has an ongoing sector reform in education which includes pre-service curriculum review and capacity assessment.<sup>179</sup> The country 'strategic plan (2016) outlines capacity building for pre-service teachers which will require the: "(i) development of a specialist knowledge base including higher education specialisation and specialised teachers, through development of degree courses and inclusive education modules; (ii) identification of a number of existing basic education schools to become resource schools for inclusive education; and (iii) roll-out of a general training module on inclusive education (including for children with disabilities) for education colleges and in-service teacher training programmes."<sup>180</sup>

In Viet Nam, a pre-service curriculum aimed at supporting the transition of children with disabilities from special schools to mainstream schools has been developed, piloted, and finalised.<sup>181</sup> In Papua New Guinea's Inclusive Education Policy, the government has committed to reorienting their pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes for both general and special education to align with inclusive approaches and enable teachers to teach diverse learners.<sup>182</sup>

In some countries however, inclusion is still gradually being introduced to become an integral part of the pre-service curriculum. In Indonesia, data notes that a number of pre-service teacher education institutions have adopted an improved curriculum to support diverse learners.<sup>183</sup>

In Cambodia, there are two sets of inclusive education preservice training; first with the support from UNICEF, the ministry developed an inclusive education training curriculum for pre-service training, conducted a Training of Trainers in 2017 which trained 62 representatives from teacher training colleges, MOESY's Special Education Department and Teacher Training Department and staff from NGO partners. The training curriculum being used for pre and inservice teacher training in the country. Secondly UNICEF collaborated with Krousar Thmey supporting the ministry developed specialised training curricula on deaf and blind, being used by the national institute for special education/ NISE rolling out their special diploma course.<sup>184</sup>

In Timor-Leste, review and revision of existing pre-service programme and curriculum are among the priority programmes set out in the national education strategic plan. The revision of the pre-service programme and curriculum will be executed to incorporate inclusive pedagogical principles and teaching strategies.<sup>185</sup> Mongolia has undergone revision and refinement of pre-service curriculum to create a foundation that would enable the shift from exclusion and segregation to a fully inclusive education system aligned with the requirements of the UNCRPD.<sup>186</sup>

178 Leonard Cheshire (2019). Inclusive education for persons with disabilities –Are we making progress?: Background paper prepared for the International Forum on inclusion and equity in education – Every learner matters. Cali, Colombia.

179 Ministry of Education. (2016). National Education Strategic Plan 2016-202. The Government of the Republic of Union of Myanmar

180 Ibid.

181 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018 for Viet Nam

182 Department of Education. (2018, October). Special and Inclusive Education Policy and Minimum Standards. Independent State of Papua New Guinea.

183 UNICEF. (2017). Country Office Annual Report RAM Draft for Indonesia 2017

184 Pitt, K. and Bohan-Jacquot. (2017). Technical assistance to revise the current curriculum and materials used for the teacher training module on inclusive education in Cambodia Krousar Thmey: Training of Trainers' Training Report. Kampot, Cambodia.

185 Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. (2019). National Policy on Inclusive Education

186 UNICEF. (2018). Output Ratings with Latest Progress 2017 for Mongolia

Lao PDR's Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2016-2020) details its teachers education strategy where teacher education curriculum contains inclusive pedagogies and is complemented by parallel programmes for in-service teachers.<sup>187</sup> While Vanuatu has reformed their pre-service curriculum, the aspect of training teachers on inclusion is still weak. There are ongoing initiatives to improve teacher training with particular focus on teaching children with disabilities.

Overall, the region still has a long way to go in establishing inclusive systems for pre-service teacher training. Reforms may be approached in various ways but an embedded approach wherein inclusive education is a part of the compulsory curriculum for all student teachers is more effective in ensuring teachers develop inclusive values and feel responsible to teach all children.<sup>188</sup> Pre-service teacher education programmes need to be closely linked to in-service programmes and structured so that teachers can meet the requirements of the national teacher competency framework which should include a requirement to ensure all children are being taught inclusively and equitably. In addition, all pre-service programmes should ensure that trainee teachers are given the opportunities to be exposed to and practice high quality inclusive teaching in real schools.

### 1.3.3.2 In-service Teacher Education

Inclusive education requires a continuum of relevant professional development support for teachers and school leaders.<sup>189</sup> In-service teachers should be equipped with inclusive values, reflective practice, child-centred pedagogy, and use of appropriate technologies to implement inclusive education effectively<sup>190</sup>. These can be achieved through different methods, aside from traditional training programmes, such as mentoring and through the development of professional learning communities at the school level.<sup>191</sup>

In-service training on inclusive education in most countries in the region is delivered within dual systems of education where children with disabilities are taught in segregated provisions. The prevalence of special education approaches deeply-rooted in the medical model of disability is a critical barrier to promoting and developing inclusive approaches among teachers and school leaders.

However, many countries have been engaging in efforts to improve in-service training programmes integrating inclusive approaches to teaching all children. This is evident through policies set out by governments, such as Malaysia, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea, outlining the need to improve teacher quality and provide capacity building, including inclusive education awareness and pedagogical trainings. In Malaysia, for example, both mainstream and special education teachers are provided training on inclusive education teaching strategies and tools that would support them to address the needs of children with disabilities.<sup>192</sup>

Different approaches to capacitate teachers on inclusive education are also being practiced in some countries. In Malaysia, a pool of master trainers, through the Master Trainer Course, was created to help train teachers at the district level on Holistic Inclusive Education Programmes (HIEP).<sup>193</sup> Special education teachers also participate in various trainings to help refine the HIEP modules. Through this initiative, in-service teachers are given support on how to improve the quality of teaching. In the Philippines, capacity building on inclusive education is conducted through school and cluster-based teacher development groups or professional learning communities. This initiative is part of the "Building Inclusive Education Champions programme" where teachers in selected schools are mentored on inclusive attitudes and practice, reflective processing of challenges and successes, and strategies on building inclusive education classrooms. The programme also develops inclusive education leaders and champions among teachers and school leaders through a mentoring project.<sup>194</sup>

187 Lao People's Democratic Republic. (2015). Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (2016-2020)

188 Forlin, C. (2010). Reframing Teacher Education for Inclusion. In C. Forlin (Ed.), *Teacher Education for Inclusion. Changing Paradigms and Innovative Approaches* (pp. 3-12). London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

189 Cheshire, L. (2019). Inclusive education for persons with disabilities –Are we making progress?: Background paper prepared for the International Forum on inclusion and equity in education – Every learner matters. Cali, Colombia.

190 UNICEF. (2003). *Inclusive Education Initiatives for Children with Disabilities: Lessons from the East Asia and Pacific Region*

191 Cheshire, L. (2019). Inclusive education for persons with disabilities –Are we making progress?: Background paper prepared for the International Forum on inclusion and equity in education – Every learner matters. Cali, Colombia.

192 The Government of Malaysia. (2018). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2017*

193 Ibid

194 Inclusion Initiative, Inc. (2018). *The Traveling Inclusive Education Mentorship Project*

Through school-level professional learning communities such as Learning Action Cells where sessions on inclusive education are conducted, challenges encountered by teachers are addressed through a collective effort and effective inclusive practices are shared. This process allows teachers to continuously develop their professional capacity and share knowledge while recognising organically present inclusive practices. It is important for teachers to realise and appreciate that inclusive values cannot be learned in traditional training workshops but are instilled and nurtured in each teacher's everyday practice.

In some countries, teacher training is delivered only to special education teachers and emphasises the segregated provision of education for children with disabilities. While developing a corps of specialists in specific approaches to teaching children with certain disabilities is important, this should not be the primary focus. Overall, the evidence indicates that most in-service training programmes do not reflect a rights-based, social model of disability and governments are not addressing the limitations of the special education system. In Myanmar, training of special education teachers is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education but of the Ministry of Social Welfare which makes it difficult to strategically address segregation and the prevailing medical approach to disability in education.

The mapping indicates that while there are teacher education trainings on inclusion, these are often donor-initiated and funded and are not institutionalised across the education system. Despite on-going development of the in-service teacher education policy framework and guidelines to sustain the teacher professional development programme,<sup>195</sup> there is not enough data to say that these are compliant with the requirements of the UNCRPD.

Many countries at the *Establishing* stage have implemented in-service trainings incorporating principles and core values of inclusion and inclusive classroom practices. However, the trainings on inclusive education are not implemented on a large scale and there are no functioning quality assurance and monitoring of these trainings. In Viet Nam, 65 percent of teachers reported not having received trainings related to inclusive education, special education, or disability.<sup>196</sup> This indicates that while there are initiatives to equip teachers in teaching inclusive education, a large majority of teachers are still to be reached and capacitated.

In summary, efforts to improve teacher capacity are evident across the region, but positive impact is hindered by the prevalence of a medical model of disability and deeply-rooted special education approaches. Teacher capacity should be strengthened through a whole systems approach, providing teachers with needs-based and school-based development programmes through building communities of practice, coaching and mentoring, in-class support and establishing collaboration and referral mechanisms between teachers and providers of specialised services for children with disabilities.

### **1.3.3.3 Professional Competency Standards for Teachers and School Leaders**

In practicing inclusive education, it is important that teacher competency standards are aligned with principles of inclusion and equity. This will ensure that professional development of teachers and school leaders are based on the skills and competencies required to implement inclusive education effectively.

In many countries, establishment, review, and revision of professional competency standards for teachers have been taking place. Some countries are reported to have either identified the need to revise the current teacher competency standards while others are undertaking ongoing review and revision. The National Policy for Inclusive Education (2017) of Timor-Leste acknowledged the need to revise its Teacher Competence Model and include the professional development of inclusion-oriented teachers.<sup>197</sup>

In Malaysia, revision of teacher standards aims to improve the perception of the teaching profession through elevating teacher quality.<sup>198</sup> In some countries, UNICEF has provided technical support to ministries of education in developing their new competency standards. Data from the survey notes that with technical inputs from UNICEF Myanmar, the recently approved Teacher Competency Standard Framework

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195 UNICEF (n.d.). UNICEF Myanmar Education Programme Strategy Note (CPD 2018-2022)

196 UNICEF. (2015). Readiness for Education of Children with Disabilities in Eight Provinces of Viet Nam

197 Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. 'National Policy for Inclusive Education' (2017).

198 The Government of Malaysia. 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2017' (2018).

(TCSF) for head teachers and education officers has specific competency for demonstrating understanding of individual students' needs and for demonstrating respect for social, linguistic and cultural diversity of the students. In China, UNICEF has been one of MoE's technical partner in improving their teacher professional competency assessment tool.<sup>199</sup> Nine countries<sup>200</sup> in the region have endorsed the Southeast Asia Teachers Competency Framework containing inclusive values and principles such as equity, respect for diversity, and learner-centred pedagogy.<sup>201</sup> Member countries agreed to incorporate such competencies in their national standards for teacher education, recruitment, and professional development.

Based on the results of the survey, there are many ongoing developments and revisions of professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders across the region. However, there is limited data on this domain to validate country ratings and little evidence to conclude that standards and competency frameworks reflect diversity, inclusion and equity. On-going revisions of national competency standards should be supported by appropriate technical inputs ensuring new frameworks are based on inclusive approaches and are aligned with inclusive teacher evaluation criteria and support mechanisms.

### **BOX 11 Promising Practices: Supported Teachers**

#### **Promising Practices**

Capacity building of teachers through in-service teacher education is supported by the Government of Malaysia. The government aims to improve the competency of teachers in implementing inclusive education through the Holistic Inclusive Education Programmes (HIEP). As part of the programme, a Master Trainer course was organised to create a pool of master trainers. The role of master trainers is to train teachers in 44 pilot schools on HIEP module. A total of 220 teachers from 44 pilot schools received the training. Special education teachers also participate in various trainings to refine the HIEP Training Module.<sup>202,203</sup>

### **BOX 12 UNICEF's Contribution: Supported Teachers**

#### **UNICEF's Contribution**

UNICEF continues to support teacher development, through its partnership with teacher education institutions, in creating pre-service training curricula to help future teachers address the diverse needs of children especially children with disabilities. UNICEF also works with Education ministries and NGOs in capacitating in-service teachers, principals, and other stakeholders in the areas of inclusive education, education management approaches, gender responsiveness, building professional communities of practice, and creating safe learning environments for all learners.

UNICEF also provides technical support to Education ministries in establishing teacher professional competency assessment tools, teacher quality standards, and professional development frameworks that would help raise the quality of teachers in the region.

199 UNICEF China. 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

200 Endorsing countries include Thailand, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Timor Leste, Malaysia, and Myanmar. The complete list of High Officials endorsing the competency framework can be seen here: <https://www.seameo-innotech.org/about-seameo-details/#high-officials>

201 For a detailed look at the Southeast Asia Teachers Competency Framework, go to: [https://www.seameo-innotech.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/SEA-TCF\\_Nov2017.pdf](https://www.seameo-innotech.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/SEA-TCF_Nov2017.pdf)

202 Ministry of Education. (2018). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2017. The Government of Malaysia.

203 Ministry of Education. (2017). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2016. The Government of Malaysia.

### 1.3.4 Learning-Friendly Environment



#### Section Overview

While the data from several countries indicate policies and guidelines that contain provisions for accessible and safe learning environments, implementation is still limited and positive impacts on the learning experience of children with disabilities are yet to be demonstrated. There are countries requiring support in increasing technical capacity on the rights of children with disabilities (based on the UNCRPD and GC4) and universal design principles to enable positive changes in attitudes and perceptions towards children with disabilities. A collaborative partnership between policy makers, OPDs, and communities should be built and strengthened to develop needs-based plans, programmes, and policies that respond to the diverse needs of children with disabilities.

#### BOX 13 Dimensions and Progress Indicators: Learning-friendly Environment

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>4.1 Physical Accessibility of Learning Environment</b>	Almost all schools and education facilities are physically inaccessible for children with disabilities.	Government has started drafting a national guideline/ policy to guarantee all school buildings, facilities, resources and services are accessible to all learners. Some schools have been reconstructed to comply with accessibility standards following the principles of universal design.	National guidelines based on universal design are in place to ensure full equitable access to buildings, facilities, resources, and service, and provision of reasonable accommodations that remove all physical barriers for children with disabilities.	National guidelines based on universal design are in place to ensure that students with disabilities have full equitable access to buildings, facilities, resources, and services.  School infrastructures are assessed based on the principles of UDL. Needed adjustments are included in the school improvement plan.
<b>4.2 Safe and Child-friendly Learning Environment</b>	The Government acknowledges the importance of developing inclusive school communities to tackle stigmatisation, bullying, abuse and discrimination but guidance is weak or still based partly on the medical model of disability.	The Ministry of Education has in place procedures for safeguarding the rights of children but are not widely implemented.	The Ministry of Education has institutionalised procedures for safeguarding the rights of children based on the principles of inclusion and equity. Effective measures to prevent abuse and bullying are in place at the school level.	The Ministry of Education has institutionalised procedures for safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse and ensuring child protection. All children's learning needs are supported in the schools and are enabled to feel safe, supported, stimulated and able to express themselves as part of a positive and inclusive school community.

### 1.3.4.1 Physical Accessibility of Learning Environment

Learners with disabilities face a multitude of barriers that prevent them from participating in quality inclusive education. The UNCRPD requires state parties to ensure fully accessible learning environments for all; and the GC4 explicitly states that the learning environment of children with disabilities must be 'designed to foster inclusion and guarantee their equality throughout their education. This includes safe and accessible transportation, clean water and sanitation facilities including hygiene and toilet facilities, accessible and inclusive public spaces such as school cafeterias and sports/play spaces. The GC4 also requires state parties to commit to the prompt introduction of Universal Design and provision of reasonable accommodation, wherever necessary. Most countries reviewed in the region are in the *developing stage* and report employing some initiatives to make learning environments physically accessible to children with disabilities while others still need technical support on universal design principles to institute assessment and reform of existing policies.

Data indicates that inclusive school infrastructure design guidelines and accessible learning resource provisions, including WASH facilities, are either subsumed in education policies or as stand-alone policies. For instance, in Myanmar, a Safe and Child-friendly School Construction Guideline was developed where accessibility, Disaster Risk Reduction and emergency concerns are central to the design, construction, and renovation of new and existing schools.<sup>204</sup> In some countries, an accessibility audit was conducted on schools as mandated by a national education legislation. While in another country, inclusive design standards for school buildings that articulate disability accessibility requirements ensure structures such as schools, IE resource centres, as well as furniture, are PWD-friendly and age appropriate.<sup>205</sup> Other services provided to children with disabilities by some countries are teacher assistants, assistive devices, and learning materials in accessible languages and formats.<sup>206</sup> Countries that have WASH programmes are mainly focused on addressing gender-specific issues and only a few indicated compliance to or consideration of universal design for accessibility.

In some countries that indicate poor accessibility, children with disabilities are not able to attend school due to mobility barriers<sup>207</sup> which compound their already limited opportunities to attend mainstream schools. Schools are either too far, available transportation is not PWD-friendly, or schools lack access facilities such as ramps and handrails. This indicates the need to capacitate communities and education authorities on universal design approaches and encourage consultation with children with disabilities and OPDs in creating policies that impact learning environments.

### 1.3.4.2 Safe and Child-friendly Learning Environment

Despite limited evidence, the majority of the countries report that procedures and initiatives that safeguard the rights of children with disabilities to safe and child-friendly learning environment, including following accessibility/universal design standards for education infrastructures, are established albeit not widely implemented.

Some countries have put forward significant stories of successes describing how current initiatives ensure the wellbeing of their learners. A small number of countries highlighted the support of UNICEF in the development and implementation of their inclusive education programmes aimed at ensuring safe and child-friendly learning environments. China has included the successful experience of the child-friendly Schools initiative in their implementation of a five-year plan in several cities, as part of a social economic development goal.<sup>208</sup> In Timor-Leste, initiatives in securing safe and child-friendly learning environments are demonstrated through orientation of teachers on the rights of all children, including children with disabilities while also through integration of positive discipline in their in-service programmes.<sup>209</sup> A study was also conducted about "violence against children in and around the educational setting" while also developing a national decree on teacher discipline.<sup>210</sup> A well-coordinated implementation and monitoring mechanism of these initiatives however should be established and strengthened to ensure positive impact on learners.

204 Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 'National Education Strategic Plan' (2016).

205 UNICEF Timor-Leste, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

206 UNICEF Timor-Leste, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

207 Pacific Disability Forum, 'From Recognition to Realisation of Rights: Furthering Effective Partnership for an Inclusive Pacific 2030' (2018).

208 UNICEF China, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

209 UNICEF Timor-Leste, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

210 Ibid.

## BOX 14 Promising Practices: Learning-friendly Environment

### Promising Practices

Universities in Malaysia offering Design and Architecture courses have integrated universal design and barrier-free architecture subjects in their curriculum. The aim is to create awareness of accessibility issues that persons with disabilities face on a daily basis. The International Islamic University in Malaysia-IIUM, has included barrier-free architecture in their Bachelor of Architecture curriculum in order to introduce universal design concepts to new architects and planners.<sup>211</sup> The Kulliyyah School of Architecture and Urban Design (KAED) focused on promoting rights and access for persons with disabilities through public awareness and education, and research and development of inclusive designs and technologies.<sup>212</sup> This practice is considered as a good model for other education institutions to assess their own curriculum and integrate universal design in their core subjects. This will enable future designers and developers to build more accessible infrastructure and create opportunities for persons with disabilities.

As part of China's MoE's efforts to promote quality teaching and create more enabling and protective learning environments for children, UNICEF China is supporting the expansion and refinement of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Model. It promotes four dimensions: 1) inclusiveness and equality; 2) effective teaching and learning; 3) safe, healthy, and protective environment; and 4) participation and harmonisation.<sup>213</sup> This multidimensional approach presents a holistic intervention to improve learning outcomes of vulnerable children in target areas. The pilot implementation's success will be used to strengthen advocacy for replication and policy changes at the national level.<sup>214</sup>

## BOX 15 UNICEF's Contribution: Learning-Friendly Environment

### UNICEF's Contribution

UNICEF has been successful in influencing legislations that ensure and promote child friendly spaces in many countries such as the Child-Friendly City Initiative (CFCI) in many cities in China<sup>215</sup> and the Child-Friendly Local Governance Audit (CFLGA)<sup>216</sup> in the Philippines. UNICEF has also been actively delivering disability-friendly WASH services across the region. UNICEF works with governments and OPDs to apply universal design principles in design and infrastructure standards in building accessible WASH facilities, school buildings, and public spaces such as parks and playgrounds. UNICEF has also pushed for wider spatial access to WASH facilities from the household to schools and health centres as well as transport terminals, markets, and parks.

As part of UNICEF's advocacy on creating safe and child-friendly learning spaces, UNICEF has commissioned studies on the knowledge, attitudes, and perception on children with disabilities. Results from the such studies help inform communication and campaign strategies as well as evidence-based inclusive education programming. The KAP survey conducted in Vanuatu identified 4 key barriers<sup>217</sup> to inclusion that require policy attention. These findings contribute to the development of new guidelines and policies on safe and accessible learning spaces for children with disabilities in the country.

UNICEF conducted awareness raising campaigns and workshops at the central government level encouraging positive changes in attitudes and behaviour towards children with disabilities and influence decision makers to create equal opportunities for them. Multi-media campaigns were also conducted to promote positive behaviour and perception change. These campaigns aimed to challenge the stigmatisation and discrimination of children with disabilities and help shift mindsets from medical to social and rights-based model of disability with greater attention on inclusion.

211 WHO, 'World Report on Disability' (2011).

212 Ibid.

213 UNICEF China, 'Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

214 Ibid.

215 UNICEF China, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

216 UNICEF Philippines, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2018).

217 Mati, Jacob. (2018). Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) on Children with disabilities in Vanuatu Study. Fiji, 2018.





### 1.3.5 Effective Transitions

#### Section Overview

The region has started to establish a number of Early Childhood Development and Early Childhood Care and Education initiatives as governments begin to appreciate the importance of early intervention, care, and education in ensuring all children have equitable opportunities to realise their full potential. Evidence indicates the existence of several programmes on early intervention and ECD services however, the data points to these being limited to financial support, clinical interventions and programming based on charitable and medical models of disability. Intervention and support services are mostly limited to children with visible disabilities. In order for early intervention services to reach all children, there needs to be a paradigm shift towards the introduction of an ICF-based screening system and the social model of disability.

ECCE programmes around the region are beginning to shift towards more inclusive approaches. At the early stages of development and implementation, a systemic and multi-sector approach enjoining local governments and communities is necessary for stronger and wider delivery of support services. Transition plans and implementation mechanisms require strong cross sector, technical direction. The inclusion of children with disabilities as well as plans and strategies on their transition from ECCE to primary and towards the completion of all levels of education should be clearly articulated in all policies and programmes.

## BOX 16 Dimensions and Progress Indicators: Effective Transitions

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>5.1 Early Intervention and Support Services</b>	The government recognises the importance of early intervention but is unclear on a systemic and multi-sectoral approach to assessment and a continuum of provision which covers all age ranges.	Discussions on developing a multi-sector plan/ programme has been undertaken. Some form of early intervention services but access for children with disabilities remain limited.	A national programme is in place and widely available which ensures accessibility of early intervention services for families of children with disabilities.	A national programme is in place and widely available which ensures accessibility of early intervention services for families of children with disabilities. Government mechanisms are in place to support or strengthen cross-sector systems for early intervention and other specialised support services.
<b>5.2 Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)</b>	ECD and ECCE programmes largely exclude children with disabilities.	Planning and discussions to review ECD and ECCE programmes to be more inclusive are taking place.	Government has a comprehensive and inclusive ECD and ECCE programme.	The government is implementing a comprehensive ECD and ECCE programme linked with early identification, assessment, early intervention planning, and provision of specialised services.
<b>5.3 Transition from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to Primary Education</b>	There are no mechanisms in place to ensure children with disabilities transition from ECCE to primary education.	Planning and discussions are taking place to formulate a strategy to support the effective transition from ECCE to primary education for children with disabilities.	The Ministry of Education provides accommodations and adaptations to ensure children with disabilities transition from early childhood care and education to primary education.	The Ministry of Education provides accommodations and adaptations to ensure children with disabilities transition from ECCE to primary education, as enshrined in a national policy.

### 1.3.5.1 Early Intervention and Support Services

Most countries recognise the significance of early childhood intervention but still lack a systemic approach to multi-sector involvement, multi-disciplinary assessment, and a continuum of support services covering all age ranges from birth to school age. Although limited, data on most countries indicate several initiatives in developing and implementing early childhood intervention programmes in a limited scale and mostly founded on the charity and medical models of disability.

There are early intervention services and early education programmes present in various forms for children with disabilities in almost all countries in the region although most of them are in piloting phases where impact is still limited and viability to be scaled up remains to be seen. For instance, the Family Support Service Model for children with disabilities in Lao People's Democratic Republic had been piloted in two provinces through a programme that combines advocacy, screening, care, rehabilitation, and referral.<sup>218</sup> In the Philippines, UNICEF work towards systems strengthening in the provision of quality early childhood education coincide with various state-sponsored<sup>219</sup> early childhood care services<sup>220</sup> UNICEF Thailand notes that while guiding policies for the provision of inclusive ECI services are present, explicit articulation is necessary. Proper monitoring and evaluation of these interventions based on international standards should be conducted prior to nationwide implementation while making sure that OPDs are involved in the process.

While most countries in the region are in the early stages of programme implementation, others have already established early intervention programmes at a national scale. Most of these countries have functioning government-funded and initiated prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programmes that respond to children with certain disabilities.

However, multi-sectoral coordination and service delivery systems still need to be developed and strengthened. Children with disabilities in remote locations are still unable to avail most programmes even when these are government funded and managed. In Indonesia for instance, only 4 percent of persons with disabilities are able to access medical rehabilitation services.<sup>221</sup> A few countries, with the technical support of international aid organisations, have engaged and capacitated local communities in hard to reach areas to bring early intervention services to more children with disabilities. In Vanuatu, a UNICEF-supported early intervention programme implemented by the country's Society for Persons with Disability prepares children with disabilities for integration into mainstream schools and sports activities, while equipping parents and caregivers with nurturing and learning stimulation skills. An expansion of this partnership has created synergies and valuable collaborations with other agencies and ministries to improve the situation of children with disabilities.<sup>222</sup> Young children with disabilities in isolated islands and villages, in conflict and calamity afflicted areas, are the most vulnerable and should be consciously and intentionally included in early intervention services planning and programming.

### **1.3.5.2 Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

Data from most of the countries demonstrate efforts to develop a more inclusive Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programming for children with disabilities in the region. Most of these initiatives are in the planning stage where countries have or are drafting their national ECD and ECCD strategic plans while others are piloting programmes or preparing for gradual expansion. However, with most of the countries utilising outdated models of disability screening and identification, ECD and ECCD programmes are limited to visible disabilities resulting in a large population of children with a diverse range of non-apparent disabilities being excluded.

Many countries in the region have undertaken steps to revise their ECD and ECCE policies to be able to provide more equitable and quality early education services to children with disabilities. These countries are either piloting their inclusive ECD/ECCE programmes in select regions or are scaling up effective programmes. In China, there has been improved access to ECD and ECCE via the strengthened government commitment to children with disabilities, as well as testing of a new integrated ECD service supported by UNICEF. This program combines health, nutrition, education, stimulation, and protection services targeting children from birth to three years old. National guidelines on different ECD and ECCE programs were developed to improve quality and access to early childhood care along with the expansion

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218 UNICEF Lao PDR, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2018).

219 UNICEF Philippines, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2018).

220 UNICEF Philippines, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

221 Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance, 'Disability in Indonesia: What can we learn from the data?' (2017).

222 UNICEF Pacific Island Countries, 'Country Office Annual Report 2017 for Pacific Island Multi-Country Programme, EAPRO' (2017).

of the multi-sectoral cooperation.<sup>223</sup> National and local teachers, professionals, and experts in the areas of early childhood development and monitoring were capacitated to raise the quality of ECD and ECCE services,<sup>224</sup> while a plan to establish a National Advisory Group comprised of experts was outlined to create partnerships and enhance advocacy.<sup>225</sup> In Indonesia, UNICEF has supported the development and implementation of a quality ECD model in some disadvantaged districts,<sup>226</sup> while Myanmar has begun the national roll out of its new child-centred kindergarten curriculum.<sup>227</sup>

Similar initiatives aiming to strengthen ECD and ECCE provisions can be seen across the region. However, available data indicates a lack of clear and explicit articulation of focus on all children with disabilities in plans and policies. To be able to reach all children with disabilities, the country also needs to evaluate its definition of disability against the recommendations of the UNCRPD. There is a required paradigm shift to the ICF definition of disability on which an inclusive ECD and ECCE framework can be built. A screening and identification design based on the ICF complemented with efficient intervention and support referral mechanisms will enable an array of specialised services to reach a wider population of children with disabilities.

### 1.3.5.3 Transition from Early Childhood Care and Education to Primary Education

The majority of the countries in the region have been formulating their plans and strategies to ensure accessible and efficient transition programmes for all learners from early childhood care and education to primary education. Data was extremely limited in this area and so could present an area for further investigation and research. However, based only on survey results, most of the countries in the region appear to have some kind of ongoing planning activities to support the effective transition of children with disabilities from ECCE to primary education.

On countries where there is available evidence, continuing advocacy efforts were identified to review and enhance policies and programmes on inclusive kindergarten and their transition to primary and basic education. In Malaysia, the government partnered with NGOs and private agencies to lead awareness campaigns on preschool education and services to increase registration and to minimise student dropout.<sup>228</sup> They also developed an instrument to identify students at risk of dropping out as well as contributing factors. The results show that poverty and low numeracy and literacy of students contribute to student attrition. These findings inform the Ministry of Education's intervention programmes.<sup>229</sup> In Mongolia, a joint committee consisting of education, health and social policy experts has been organised in the local level to identify children with disabilities and monitor and ensure their transition from ECCE to primary education. UNICEF provided technical assistance to Myanmar in establishing a kindergarten programme, promoting easy transition from pre-school to primary school that will facilitate a standardised education system for all, including children with disabilities.<sup>230</sup> These initiatives however are in their early stages and have not yet reached nationwide implementation. Stakeholders of these programmes need to outline a systematic implementation mechanism that clearly articulates screening and identification of children with disabilities, teacher development, community engagement, and monitoring and evaluation strategy



223 UNICEF China, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

224 UNICEF China, 'Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

225 UNICEF China, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

226 UNICEF Indonesia, 'Country Office Annual Report RAM Draft' (2017).

227 UNICEF Myanmar, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

228 The Government of Malaysia, 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2016' (2017).

229 Ibid.

230 UNICEF Myanmar, 'Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar' (2016).

## BOX 17 Promising Practices: Effective Transitions

### Promising Practices

While most interventions and programmes have elements that demonstrate a medical model of disability, and access to services continue to be a challenge, some countries' systematic and multi-sectoral collaboration to provide early intervention and early childhood education services for children with disabilities are showing evidence of transition to a more inclusive approach.

Myanmar's integrated Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Strategic Plan was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Ministry of Education, with support from UNICEF. The ECI programme provides intervention to children from 0-5 years of age through early detection of developmental delays, abnormal behaviours, disabilities, and malnutrition.<sup>231</sup> Partner agencies participated in capacity building activities on developmental screening and intervention services for children vulnerable to developmental delays and disabilities. Communities under the programme were capacitated to become active partners in the ECI programme. Volunteers from seven pilot sites across four states were given training to serve as paraprofessionals in their communities to conduct outreach programmes for developmental screening and referral to ECI services. Institutionalisation of the ECI programme in the Ministry of Education is in progress.

In China, with the support of UNICEF, the multi-sectoral Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Project focusing on children under three years was scaled up to 14 counties in five provinces. Together with the National Health Commission, the IECD project addresses early monitoring, identification and interventions for young children with suspected developmental delays by utilizing a simplified national screening tool for birth to six years old.<sup>232</sup> This strategy combines the delivery of early detection, counselling, education, support, and referral services.<sup>233</sup> UNICEF further supported the program through identification and mapping of ECD specialists, local and national experts for improved delivery and advocacy of integrated ECD services.<sup>234</sup>

## BOX 18 UNICEF's Contribution: Effective Transitions

### UNICEF's Contribution

Together with ministries of education, health, and social work, in several countries in the region, UNICEF continues to help improve mechanisms to identify, screen, and monitor children with disabilities. UNICEF supports the development of integrated ECCD services in many countries in the region. Inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral partnerships were built to help develop and improve delivery of a continuum of ECD services that include, identification, screening, monitoring, rehabilitation, intervention, and education for children with disabilities and their families. UNICEF collaborated with different ministries, OPDs, NGOs, international aid organisations, and communities. UNICEF also helped establish a number of community-based early childhood education centres in hard to reach areas to increase access to child care and education services.

UNICEF brought together senior government officials and development partners to strengthen advocacy for inclusive ECD and gather commitments from key decision makers to develop and improve ECD policies. UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance to various Education ministries in the development of inclusive ECD and ECCE policies, national quality assessment standards and guidelines for ECE, development and implementation of quality ECD models; development of inclusive curriculum, curriculum reform and in-service training for pre-primary school teachers.

231 UNICEF Myanmar, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

232 UNICEF China, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

233 UNICEF China, 'Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

234 UNICEF China, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).



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### 1.3.6 Partnerships



#### Section Overview

Throughout the region, there are evidences of collaboration within government at national and subnational levels and with OPDs, CSOs, and communities. This multi-sector work requires a multidimensional approach to planning interventions and services suitable for the complex needs of children with disabilities. There are indications of coordination systems although a review and improvement of these should be conducted to optimise their impact on IE programming. While there have been many inter-ministerial collaborations in the region, participation of OPDs and CSOs in most countries is still not strongly established practice. The engagement of OPDs and CSOs are often short-term. The technical capacity of some organisations also needs to be developed especially in understanding and application of the UNCRPD and GC4 to effectively provide guidance on national policies and plans.

Effective committees and working groups that include OPDs and members of the community should be institutionalised into councils through policies that clearly articulate goals, roles, and responsibilities, to ensure continuity regardless of who is in office. Across the region, collaboration and consultative practices still need to be reinforced to enhance planning and monitoring of the quality of services for children with disabilities.

## BOX 19 Dimensions: Partnerships

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>6.1 Cross-sectoral Coordination</b>	There is no system/mechanism for cross-sectoral coordination among government departments (such as health and social protection) relating to education and support for children with disabilities.	The Ministry of Education is initiating the establishment of a system/mechanism for cross-sectoral coordination which sets out clear responsibilities of government departments relating to education and support for children with disabilities.	The Ministry of Education has an established working system for cross-sectoral coordination including the development of multi-disciplinary support services for children with disabilities.	The Ministry of Education has an established and working system for coordination among government. Multi-disciplinary support services for children with disabilities are established and provide support to children with disabilities in inclusive schools.
<b>6.2 Coordination between National and Local Education Units</b>	There is no system/mechanism for coordination between schools and higher education units of the government.	There is a system/mechanism for coordination between schools and higher education units of the government. However, implementation could be improved.	The Ministry of Education has an established mechanism for coordination between national and local education government units. The mechanism enables regular exchange of information.	The Ministry of Education has an established mechanism for coordination between national and local education government units. The mechanism promotes regular consultation, increases collaboration and enhances planning and monitoring of the quality of education services.
<b>6.3 Participation of Civil Society Organisations / Disabled Peoples' Organisations</b>	Participation of CSOs/OPDs in programmes relating to education of children with disabilities is low and need to be strengthened.	The government has taken initial steps to increase the participation of CSOs/OPDs in programmes relating to children with disabilities.	Legislation, policy and national programmes relating to children with disabilities have been developed through extensive consultation with OPDs. Partnerships with CSOs are established.	Legislation, policy and national programmes relating to children with disabilities have been developed through extensive consultation with and implemented with active participation of OPDs/CSOs. Children with disabilities and their families at the centre of all support processes and in all decisions and plans regarding the education of children with disabilities.

### 1.3.6.1 Cross-sectoral Coordination

Countries across the region have been establishing inter-ministerial working partnerships to harmonise inclusive education plans and initiatives. There are a number of countries who have created committees or technical working groups at the national level commonly comprised of ministries in charge of education, health, and social welfare. In some countries, goals and responsibilities of the committee and its members are well defined. The cross-sector work done by these committees help achieve consistency in the implementation of policies and efficiency in the delivery of disability services.

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health collaborated to establish a multi-disciplinary team of doctors, therapists, and other specialists that support teachers in hospital learning centres under the Schools in Hospitals programme.<sup>235</sup> Cross-sectoral collaboration led other countries to establish teams that facilitate dialogue between the government and OPDs,<sup>236</sup> ensure and monitor harmonisation and consistency of IE policy and standards implementation,<sup>237</sup> and develop and influence policies on IE and disability services.<sup>238</sup>

Governments across the region, however, still need to gain an understanding of the interaction and complementarity of the functions and roles of different sectors in ensuring services and interventions are holistic. The region, has to establish and strengthen communication mechanisms that allow information and knowledge-sharing to inform plans and programmes across sectors, as well as integrate the expertise from the different disciplines to be able to respond to needs of all children in a comprehensive manner. To ensure sustainability and continuity of disability work, it is important to formalise inter-sectoral partnerships through legislation where roles are clearly outlined and responsibilities of each ministry and implementing office in supporting inclusive education are well defined. Furthermore, the region needs to establish a system to monitor government accountability

### 1.3.6.2 Coordination between National and Local Education Units

Data is limited on the status of coordination mechanisms between national and local level education offices. Based on the results and available data on some countries, there is some demonstration of coordination systems between education ministries, local education units, and schools but improvements in implementation are necessary to maximise its impact on Inclusive Education (IE) programming. The vertical disconnect between different levels of government seems to be a challenge mostly in countries with decentralised education systems or in countries where social services do not extend sufficiently to the local level.

For example, in Papua New Guinea, the Inclusive Education Policy requires school authorities, stakeholders, and partners to coordinate all inclusive education related projects to the National Department of Education and consult with the provincial division of education on its different activities.<sup>239</sup> In Myanmar there is a clear vertical information sharing and instruction mechanism within the government, from central Ministry of Education to their local school level authorities. In some countries, policies describe a decentralised approach to IE programming where delivery capability and capacity of local authorities are enhanced<sup>240</sup> and they have control on plans and budgets.<sup>241</sup>

However, implementation of these mechanisms needs to be strengthened to ensure a systematic and mutual exchange of information between national and local units. An effective coordination system enables evidences from schools and local education units to inform policies in the national level that in turn support and strengthen contextualised IE programmes in schools.

235 The Government of Malaysia, 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2017' (2018).; Through this collaboration, the Schools in Hospitals (SDH) programme was established. The SDH are learning centres, located in hospitals, specially structured to provide continuous education for children with disabilities and undergoing long-term or repeated treatments.

236 UNICEF China, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

237 UNICEF Philippines, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2018).

238 UNICEF Thailand, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

239 Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 'Special and Inclusive Education Policy and Minimum Standards' (2017).

240 The Government of Malaysia, 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2017' (2018).

241 Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 'National Policy on Disability 2015-2025' (2015).



### 1.3.6.3 Participation of Civil Society / Disabled Peoples' Organisations

The majority of the country respondents recognise the important roles of OPDs and CSOs in policy dialogue and coordination. In these countries, governments have started to encourage the participation of OPDs and CSOs in IE programme planning for children with disabilities at the national and/or at the sub-national level. However, such participation is largely unstructured and thus based on ad-hoc invitations from ministries.

Governments across the region have begun engaging OPDs and CSOs as well as private corporations, through Corporate Social Responsibility offices, in programmes relating to children with disabilities. At the local and sub-national levels, OPDs, CSOs, and communities are involved in local development planning processes. In Indonesia for instance, OPDs are invited in policy-making activities, local development planning sessions, and consulted in village regulations development. In Myanmar, parents and the extended community, play an active role in the development, coordination, and monitoring of school improvement plans.<sup>242</sup> PTAs are also involved in key decisions on all school policies that directly affects learning achievement of students.<sup>243</sup> At the national level, governments partner with OPDs and CSOs to provide technical inputs in national policies on disability-related services. In China for example, a disabled people's federation supported the government by providing a third-party assessment on the county's education plan.<sup>244</sup> In Viet Nam, UNICEF facilitated consultation sessions with CSOs to revise the country's disability measurement and identification system.<sup>245</sup>



In a few countries, inclusive policies explicitly require collaboration with OPDs and CSOs especially on disability-related matters. Networks and coalitions of OPDs were established to facilitate coordination. For example, one country mentioned that their IE policy calls for government agencies, NGOs, other development partners and OPDs to establish strong collaboration to achieve the goals of the legislation.<sup>246</sup> In Lao PDR, a technical working group called the Gender, Inclusion, and Disability Technical Working Group (GID-TWG), chaired by the Director of Inclusive Education centre and co-chaired by a development partner, was established.<sup>247</sup> The GID-TWG advances the right to disability-inclusive education and gender responsiveness through strategic direction and technical inputs in government plans and programmes. While Timor-Leste has a formed network of CSOs advocating for rights of children to support and monitor the implementation of CRC and promotion of child rights-sensitive budgeting in the country.<sup>248</sup>

In most countries, participative roles are short-term and organised around one off activities or projects. Capacity of OPDs are of varied levels, often very low. For instance, findings suggest that, while OPDs and CSOs are often implementing services at the grassroots level for children with disabilities, they demonstrate a lack of technical capacity of OPDs to advise and influence policies. While the region has seen an increased participation of OPDs and CSOs in the recent years, coordination mechanisms at the regional level still need to be improved and collaborative relationships strengthened and sustained.

242 Republic of Myanmar, 'National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021' (2016).

243 Ibid.

244 People's Republic of China, 'Mid-term evaluation of the Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan Special Education Thematic Assessment Report' (2015).

245 UNICEF Viet Nam, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

246 Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 'Special and Inclusive Education Policy and Minimum Standards' (2018).

247 UNICEF, 'UNICEF East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities' (2015).

248 UNICEF Timor-Leste, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

## BOX 20 Promising Practices: Partnerships

### Promising Practices

China has an active federation of disabled people organisations: China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF). Considered as a quasi-government organisation, the federation is expected to coordinate with other state agencies in order to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities, to access government services.<sup>249</sup> They also manage a certification scheme which enables persons with disabilities to access additional social protection and government services. Currently, over 34 million persons with disabilities benefit from this certification scheme.<sup>250</sup> Specific to education, CDPF formed an evaluation team to conduct a third-party assessment of the special education in education planning.<sup>251</sup> The CDPF ensures that persons with disabilities are represented in key reforms involving their welfare.

An organisational model has been developed in Cambodia to facilitate, coordinate and promote private and public provision of services to disabled persons including education.<sup>252</sup> The Disability Action Council (DAC) is an active multi-sectoral council established in 1997 as a national coordinating body responsible for safeguarding the rights of and facilitating service provisions to persons with disabilities in the country. One of its functions is to serve as a unified advising body to the government, national and international agencies, NGOs, businesses, as well as religious and local communities of the rights of people with disabilities. DAC have had impact by raising awareness and bringing national attention to the issues that people with disabilities face.<sup>253</sup> DAC was also able to revolutionise the humanitarian and development sector by having NGOs effectively coordinate their work with one another which at that time was uncommon in the field.<sup>254</sup>

UNICEF Malaysia partnered with the private sector through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to promote inclusion. Petrosains Discovery Centre, a science learning centre, is UNICEF Malaysia's first "Champion for Inclusion."<sup>255</sup> Petrosains mainstreamed inclusion in their core business wherein they trained their management team and staff members on Children's Rights, Disability Equity, and the importance of building universal spaces that are accessible to children with disabilities.<sup>256</sup> Sime Darby Property became a corporate champion on inclusion by partnering with UNICEF to build the first inclusive playground in Malaysia that will set the standard for universal public spaces for children with disabilities.<sup>257</sup> The formation of the Malaysian Partnerships of Children with Disabilities which was supported by UNICEF Malaysia also brings together governments, civil society organisations, and experts to address gaps in advocacy initiatives for children with disabilities.<sup>258</sup>

A multi-sectoral Early Childhood Development committee was established in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea. This multi-sector working group is composed of UNICEF, other international aid organisations, church-based organisations, the Departments of Education, Community Development, Health, and Planning which has become a model for other provinces to emulate. In 2019, 2,380 young children (Girls: 1,248) were enrolled in the 70 new Inclusive Early Childhood Development (IECD) centres in Madang and Morobe provinces, bringing the total number to 8,065 young children (Girls: 3,517) learning in 230 IECD centres across Central, Madang, Milne Bay, Morobe, and Simbu provinces as well as the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and the National Capital District. These 230 IECD centres, established in close collaboration with church partners and non-governmental organizations also catered for 91 children (girls 49) with disability.<sup>259</sup>

249 UNICEF China, 'MTR Background Paper on Children with Disabilities' (undated).

250 Ibid.

251 People's Republic of China, 'Mid-term evaluation of the Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan Special Education Thematic Assessment Report' (2015).

252 UNICEF EAPRO, 'Inclusive Education Initiatives for Children with Disabilities: Lessons from East Asia and the Pacific Region' (2003).

253 Ibid.

254 Ibid.

255 UNICEF Malaysia, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2017).

256 UNICEF Malaysia, 'Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

257 UNICEF Malaysia, 'Output Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

258 UNICEF, 'UNICEF in East Asia and Pacific: Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents, and Children with Disabilities' (2017).

259 UNICEF Papua New Guinea, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2019).

## BOX 21 UNICEF's Contribution: Partnerships

### UNICEF's Contribution

UNICEF continues to build and maintain partnerships across various sectors that include the government, international donors, private organisations, OPDs, CSOs, international aid organisations, media, children with disabilities and their families in a concerted effort to advance the understanding of disability as a social and rights issue and address stigmatisation and discrimination of children with disabilities. In some countries, UNICEF has brought together different ministries to work on greater cooperation and alignment between education agencies at the national and sub-national levels ensuring harmonisation and consistency of policies, standards, and programmes across agencies. Collaboration with CSRs help strengthen advocacy and boost awareness campaigns through the support of popular corporations and private companies. CSOs, OPDs and other aid agencies help improve access to education of children with disabilities through their technical inputs in policy development, evidence-based programming, and consultative planning.

## 1.3.7 Data and Monitoring

### Section Overview

A lack of reliable data on disability and education of learners with disabilities is one of the major barriers that hinders successful inclusion. Robust data and evidence must be collected to inform planning, programming and ensure accountability among government units. As a continuing process, inclusive education must be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that segregation or integration is not happening either formally or informally. Monitoring should involve persons with disabilities, including children and persons with intensive support requirements, through OPDs, as well as parents or caregivers of children with disabilities, where appropriate. Governments must commit to improving identification systems, include disability data in education information management systems, use standardised methodologies and tools based on the ICF and the Washington Group Questions, and generate reports using disability-inclusive indicators.

Across the region, there is a pressing need to enhance identification, monitoring and evaluation, as well as modernise Education Management Information Systems to produce accurate and disaggregated information on children with disabilities and the contextual barriers to their learning and participation. There is little evidence to indicate that any of the countries in the region are advanced in this dimension. Nonetheless, ongoing efforts to build evidence bases through multi-sectoral approaches demonstrate that countries are taking steps in the right direction. Recent legislative reforms in many countries, related to data and monitoring, are aiming to strengthen accountability for inclusion in order to comply with international treaties.

### 1.3.7.1 Identification System

The identification of persons with disabilities in national surveys and education information systems remains a challenge, principally due to the lack of a uniform definition of disability.<sup>260</sup> Despite international conventions setting standards such as the UNCRPD definition of disability and the set of questions on functional domains established by the Washington Group on Disability<sup>261</sup>, globally-comparable data is still scarce. Evidence indicates that adoption and use of the frameworks and implementation vary per country.

#### BOX 22 International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

##### INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF FUNCTIONING, DISABILITY AND HEALTH (ICF)<sup>262</sup>

- The ICF is WHO's framework for health and disability. It is a universal classification of disability. ICF is named as it is because of its stress is on functioning, rather than on disability.
- Traditional disability terminology conceptualises disability as a problem belonging to a person. It does not take into consideration the barriers in the environment. Inclusive education is about creating enabling environments. Descriptions of disabilities, therefore, need to provide information on how this can be done.
- The ICF developed by the World Health Organisation goes beyond medical and social models and provides a more meaningful framework to understand disability. As a framework, it provides a language to describe disability in the context of environmental facilitators and barriers. The ICF describes situations of people, not people themselves. The ICF provides definitions for the components of functioning and disability, but it does not prescribe or dictate who is normal and who is disabled.
- Functioning and disability are understood as the result of complex interactions between biological, psychological and social factors. The ICF offers a common language to study the dynamics of these components and their consequences and therefore a basis to understand levers to improve the life situation of people experiencing disabilities.

For more information on ICF, visit:

<https://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/>

Findings of the review note the existence of some form of identification systems in some countries, however, there is little evidence that these reflect a correct understanding of the ICF and definitions of disability and inclusion appear to be unclear at the national level. In countries where there are existing child functioning screening toolkits, these do not cover all age brackets. For example, in China, the lack of reliable and easy-to-use screening tools for children aged six years old and above is identified as one of the major gaps<sup>263</sup> in obtaining information on children with disabilities at the primary level. In Mongolia, there are still no reliable and disaggregated data on disability; this continues to impede the development of evidence and equity-based plans, programmes, and policies in the country. There is no standard definition of disability or methodology in place that would guide in defining and assessing types of disability.<sup>264</sup>

260 UNESCO. (2018) Education and Disability: Analysis of Data from 49 Countries. Retrieved from <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/ip49-education-disability-2018-en.pdf>

261 The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) is a United Nations (UN) sponsored City Group commissioned in 2001 to improve the quality and international comparability of disability measures. The main purpose of the WG is the promotion and co-ordination of international co-operation in the area of health statistics focusing on disability measures suitable for censuses and national surveys. The major objective is to provide basic necessary information on disability which is comparable throughout the world. To that end the WG has developed a short set of disability measures, suitable for use in censuses, samplebased national surveys, or other statistical formats, for the primary purpose of informing policy on equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities." (Source: UNICEF, (2017). UNICEF/Washington Group on Disability Statistics Module on Child Functioning.)

262 UNICEF. (2014). Definition and Classification of Disability, Webinar 2 – Companion Technical Booklet.

263 UNICEF. (n.d.). MTR Background Paper – Children with Disabilities

264 UNICEF. (n.d.). Theory of Change for Inclusive Basic Education Component of UNICEF Mongolia's Education Programme 2017-2021 (Draft)

## BOX 23 Dimensions and Progress Indicators: Data and Monitoring

Dimension	Progress Indicators			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
<b>7.1 Identification System</b>	Multi-disciplinary identification systems for children with disabilities have not been established. There is limited understanding of the ICF. Definitions of disability and inclusion are not clear at the national level.	There is an existing identification system. The government is working towards aligning the system with the ICF and ensuring that it is cross-sector and is based on the involvement of multi-disciplinary professionals.	The government has established an identification system aligned with the ICF which is cross-sector, involving line ministries for Health, Social Protection and Education and aims to ensure that identification of children with disabilities is based on the involvement of multi-disciplinary professionals.	The government utilises identification systems aligned with the ICF. The system is cross-sector, involving line ministries for Health, Social Protection and Education and identification of children with disabilities is based on the involvement of multi-disciplinary professionals.
<b>7.2 Education Management Information System (EMIS)</b>	There are no data on children with disabilities in the routine EMIS.	There are some data on children with disabilities in the school system, but it is characterised by medical diagnosis. No reports on enrolment of children with disabilities are produced, except for special schools.	There are some data on children with disabilities in the school system, but it is characterised by medical diagnosis. Reports are produced on enrolment and achievement of children with disabilities.	The routine EMIS contains data on children with disabilities, using ICF based definitions of disability. Reports are produced on enrolment and achievement of children with disabilities based on assessments which have been adapted according to universal design principles.
<b>7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation System</b>	There are limited arrangements for monitoring the participation and achievement of all learners. The main source of information on children with disabilities is national surveys which are based on medical definitions of disability and do not report sufficient data on the type and quality of education provision for children with disabilities. Discussions are ongoing to address this.	The government has a system for monitoring the education quality and achievement of learners and is starting to improve the system to include data on children with disabilities. However, there are still references to the medical definitions of disability in surveys and identification systems and there is no development of disability-inclusive indicators.	The government has a system in place to monitor the participation and achievement of all learners, including children with disabilities within the education system. Surveys and screening processes are aligned with the ICF. Disability-Inclusive Indicators are being developed which are aligned to the 2030 SDGs.	The government has a working system in place to monitor the participation and achievement of all learners, including children with disabilities within the education system. Disability inclusive Indicators aligned to the 2030 SDGs. are used and reports are produced on children with disabilities. The country involves people and children with disabilities and other marginalised groups as well as their families and caregivers in monitoring.

Despite persistent difficulties, a number of countries demonstrate substantial attempts and ongoing initiatives at addressing the gaps in this area through the creation of policies that will advance the development of effective and multi-sectoral identification systems, including early identification and intervention. Lao PDR committed to improved data collection and monitoring to better identify children with disabilities, both in and out of school, as articulated in their Education and Sports Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2016-2020.<sup>265</sup> The government noted that they are particularly challenged in identifying children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.<sup>266</sup> In Papua New Guinea, the Inclusive Education Policy identifies that a disability disaggregation toolkit shall be used to screen children.<sup>267</sup> However, it is not clearly established whether the toolkit follows the ICF.

In 2018, Cambodia issued a Guideline<sup>268</sup> which mandates schools to identify and collect information on children with disabilities. However, schools face difficulties operationalising their role in this process as institutional structures and standards are not in place. There are currently no ICF-aligned identification and data collection tools and capacity of school staff on disability inclusion and identification is limited. However, identification tools are under development in addition to an existing inter-ministerial guideline on the disability classification. In cases where schools are able to collect data about children with disabilities, the information does not usually reach the national government to influence policy development and education planning.<sup>269</sup>

Some countries in the region have established an identification and data collection system based on the ICF and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics Module on Child Functioning. For example, Indonesia adopted the Module in its National Disability Survey, the results of which served as inputs in the establishment of a policy and programme planning for children with disabilities.

The Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia has adopted the ICF and used The Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning in obtaining data on disability. Use of tools based on these modules are evident in the results of the 2018 National Socio-Economic Survey and Basic Health Survey. Similarly, Viet Nam's recent National Survey on People with Disabilities (2016-2017) fully incorporated the Washington Group Extended Set of disability questions for adults and The Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning.<sup>270</sup> Results revealed a very low disability prevalence (2.79 percent) among children and this serious under-estimation may reflect issues in the way in which the data collection methodology was applied.

Malaysia is undertaking a review of existing identification systems. While the country employs a disability classification system<sup>271</sup> developed by the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development (MWFCD), there is no systematic collection and collation mechanism being implemented. The Ministry of Health, the Department of Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Education also gather data on disability and these have to be coordinated in a systematic manner.

Another challenge for identification is that many children with disabilities are not registered at birth because of stigma and/or weaknesses in birth registration systems. Birth registration in some countries involves a complicated and sometimes expensive process resulting in families choosing to not register their children, especially those with disabilities. In China for instance, the registration system requires a complex diagnosis and certification, along with anticipated stigma and discrimination, and this prevents many families from registering. As a result, limited information is captured by the system.<sup>272</sup>

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265 Lao People's Democratic Republic. (2018). ESDP 2016-2020: Mid-Term Review Report

266 Lao People's Democratic Republic. (2018). ESDP 2016-2020: Mid-Term Review Report

267 Independent State of Papua New Guinea. (2018). Special and Inclusive Education Policy and Minimum Standards

268 Guideline 22 (no further information on the title of the guideline available)

269 UNICEF, Open Institute, NGO Education Partnership and MISEREOR. (2018). An Assessment of Children with Disabilities in Accessing Primary Education in Cambodia: Understanding Challenges, Opportunities, and Ways Forward. Cambodia.

270 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018 for Viet Nam

271 Disabilities are classified in seven categories: hearing, visual, speech, physical, learning, psychosocial, and others.

272 UNICEF China, 'MTR Background Paper on Children with Disabilities' (undated).

## BOX 24 Washington Group of Questions

### WASHINGTON GROUP (WG) QUESTIONS<sup>273</sup>

- The Washington Group on Disability Statistics designed the WG question sets to provide comparable data cross-nationally for populations living in a great variety of cultures with varying economic resources.
- The Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Child Functioning, finalised in 2016, covers children between 2 and 17 years of age and assesses functional difficulties in different domains including hearing, vision, communication/ comprehension, learning, mobility and emotions.
- To better reflect the degree of functional difficulty, each area is assessed against a rating scale. The purpose is to identify the subpopulation of children who are at greater risk than other children of the same age or who are experiencing limited participation in an unaccommodating environment. The set of questions is intended for use in national household surveys and censuses.<sup>274</sup>
- The WG group then developed a separate set of Questions for children in the 2-5 age group and children in the 5-17 age group. The WG Questions do not provide a diagnosis of disability. It provides an indicator of what children may be having or may be at risk of developing certain types of disabilities.

For more information on WG Questions and to download the Child Functioning Modules, visit:  
<http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/child-disability/>

### 1.3.7.2 Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Various promising practices are present in the region in this area but much needs to be done in terms of fully adopting the ICF as the main classification system, integrating this into EMIS and generating comprehensive information such as the level of disability and learning outcomes of children with disabilities. For example, The Ministry of Education of Indonesia has developed a database<sup>275</sup> system that captures reports from public schools which uses criteria for measuring and categorising disability which differ from the ICF. Thailand has an established EMIS, used in gathering data on children with disabilities who are in school but this does not cover those who are not in school.<sup>276</sup>

Papua New Guinea's National Education Information System contains data relevant to education which is being used to inform policy, planning, and budgeting; but insufficient information is available to assess effectiveness and impact.<sup>277</sup> Data is used to analyse issues and barriers children with disabilities encounter as well as in planning equity-based interventions. In Lao PDR, templates based on the Washington Group Child Functioning Module for data collection have been developed.<sup>278</sup> Currently, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is also in the process of establishing a data collection system for children with disabilities in ECE.

Vanuatu is a Champion in this area, having already established an EMIS that captures primary and secondary education enrolment rate, as well as the actual number of children with hearing impairment who have received sign language instruction. The data collection tools are reported to be based on ICF and Washington Group module on Child Functioning.<sup>279</sup>

In general, EMIS of countries in the region need to be strengthened and modernised to enable relevant and timely data collection and regular generation of reports containing reliable data on each individual child

273 Ibid.

274 <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/child-disability/>

275 DAPODIK is Indonesia's database system. No information available to spell this out.

276 UNICEF. (2018). Output Ratings with Latest Progress for Thailand

277 Independent State of Papua New Guinea. (2018). Special and Inclusive Education Policy and Minimum Standards

278 Lao People's Democratic Republic. (2018). ESDP 2016-2020: Mid-Term Review Report

279 Government of Vanuatu. (2018). National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2018-2025



with disabilities. Almost all countries have functional EMIS in place which enables storage and retrieval of information on children in mainstream education, but there are significant weaknesses in terms of including data on enrolment, the learning progress of children with disabilities, and especially individual child data that helps provide a comprehensive view of child functioning. Children with disabilities remain unseen in many sector plans and school improvement plans, and this is rooted in poor identification systems and limited capacity among practitioners to screen children using internationally accepted frameworks and tools.

### 1.3.7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation System

Governments are mandated by GC4 to the UNCRPD to set out a clear rationale and guidelines for monitoring and evaluating inclusive education to ensure that there is no evidence of segregation or integration on a formal or informal basis. A functional M&E system must be in place to monitor the participation and achievement of all learners, including children with disabilities within the education system.

Most countries in the region do not have an established system for monitoring the participation and achievement of children with disabilities. In cases where an M&E system exists, it needs to be enhanced to include a clear focus on inclusion, rather than integration or segregation. Disability-inclusive indicators must be developed consistent with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and reports must be produced periodically on children with disabilities, in collaboration with OPDs, relevant civil society organisations and stakeholders from the health, social and child protection and education sector. Most countries have limited arrangements for monitoring the participation of all learners and the main source of information on disability is national household surveys and housing census. Some countries have used the Washington Group module and/or the UNICEF Child Disability Questions in gathering data on disability.<sup>280, 281</sup> For example, data on persons with disabilities in Lao PDR has been obtained through population and housing census where the Washington Group's short set of questions are used during data collection.<sup>282</sup>

280 Lao People's Democratic Republic. (2015). Results of Population and Housing Census 2015

281 \_\_\_\_\_. (2019). Systems for Prevention, Early Identification, Referral and Intervention of Delays, Disorder and Disabilities in Early Childhood

282 Ibid.



In the absence of an M&E system, there are countries which rely on situational analysis reports to obtain information on children with disabilities, as in Papua New Guinea and Myanmar.<sup>283, 284</sup> Malaysia uses a National Pre-school Information System to monitor schools implementing Inclusive Education Programmes. Data obtained from this are used in identifying gaps and in improving teaching and learning strategies.<sup>285</sup>

A fundamental problem in countries where there are existing M&E systems in place is the continued practice of referring to medical definitions of disabilities. This is linked with issues in the legislative frameworks where a medical perspective of disabilities prevails. In addition, there is no evidence that countries systematically engage children with disabilities as well as their families and OPDs in monitoring activities which can improve the quality of information gathered about them, and their unique situations. Clearly, a strategic approach in improving monitoring and evaluation is necessary, including strengthening statistical capacity of governments in identifying and monitoring disability and ensuring that M&E processes and systems are compliant with the UNCRPD GC4.

## BOX 25 Promising Practices: Data and Monitoring

### Promising Practices

The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) in **Viet Nam**, and selected universities received support from UNICEF on the use of the WG/UNICEF Child Functioning Module. The training provided the participants with deeper understanding on the concepts and models of disability and knowledge on how to read and interpret disability data.<sup>286</sup> Viet Nam, through the support from UNICEF, was one of the first countries in the world to fully incorporate the Washington group's extended set of disability questions for adults and the child functioning module for children in its National Survey on People with Disabilities. Results of the survey provided important datasets on disability: "prevalence rate of children with disabilities with full disaggregation, key data on access to basic services and social assistance, and social attitudes toward disability in Viet Nam."<sup>287</sup>

The child functioning module was successfully included in the 2018 national disability survey of Thailand. This paved the way for a shift from a medical to social approach in measuring disability, aligned with the Washington Group Questions. Data gathered from the survey informed policy analysis and strategic planning for children.<sup>288</sup>

## BOX 26 UNICEF's Contribution: Data and Monitoring

### UNICEF's Contribution

UNICEF provides technical support to governments in developing plans to improve systems for identification and monitoring of children with disabilities. UNICEF further supports governments in this area through enhancing national capacity in collecting, analysing, and using data on children with disabilities. UNICEF has provided inputs in the development and implementation of ECI system, national surveys, national registration and certification of persons with disabilities in some countries.

283 UNICEF. (n.d.). UNICEF Myanmar Education Programme Strategy Note (CPD 2018-2022)

284 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018 for Papua New Guinea

285 The Government of Malaysia. (2018). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Annual Report 2017

286 UNICEF. (2017). Country Office Annual Report 2017, Viet Nam

287 UNICEF. (2018). Country Office Annual Report 2018, Viet Nam

288 UNICEF. (2018). Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress, Thailand

## 1.3.8 Cross-Cutting Issues

### Section Overview

This section summarises the extent to which gender and humanitarian issues are addressed in disability-inclusive programmes in the region.

#### 1.3.8.1 Gender

According to the Global Partnership for Education, “exclusion in education is still predominantly female and not a single country is on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of gender equality by 2030.”<sup>289</sup> Young girls with disabilities from poor households are most vulnerable to experiencing all exclusionary barriers including sexual abuse and violence.<sup>290</sup>

UNICEF has been supporting initiatives that address gender issues in many countries across the region, taking a lead on gender mainstreaming and advocacy. Most of the initiatives are focused on providing gender-responsive and gender-sensitive programming. Some countries include gender as a thematic priority under child protection or other sections. In Viet Nam, UNICEF has commissioned a mapping and assessment study focused on community-based protection for children with disabilities who were victims of exploitation, abuse, and domestic violence.<sup>291</sup> Results from the study will support the government in the implementation of a national policy on delivery of comprehensive services for children with disabilities at the community level.<sup>292</sup>



Similar initiatives can be found across the region, however, there is little evidence found demonstrating disability inclusive and targeted interventions in gender-related programming in education. Children, especially girls, with disabilities are most likely to be overlooked and left behind when data about them and their needs are not explicitly articulated in programming plans and strategies. More effort is needed by UNICEF and other partners to ensure that girls and boys with disabilities are considered in the design of gender programmes.

#### 1.3.8.2 Humanitarian

Most country offices that participated in this review provide humanitarian support in different forms and levels with the region being prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, typhoons and pandemics. As co-lead of the global education in emergency cluster, UNICEF is mandated to take the lead in ensuring effective and efficient responses to emergencies in the education sector. In EAP, every year, UNICEF plays a lead role in supporting countries to respond to emergencies and to prepare national emergency plans and strategy documents that focus on emergency and disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction. Most recently, UNICEF supported nearly all countries in the region impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to design, implement, and monitor emergency responses to the crisis.

289 Gillard, Julia (2019), Reaching gender equality: Start with redesigning education systems for girls, Global Partnership for Education [website], (accessed 6 November 2019).

290 UNFPA, 'Young persons with disabilities: Global study on ending gender-based violence, and realising sexual and reproductive health and rights' (New York: 2018).

291 UNICEF Viet Nam, 'Terms of Reference: Assessment of Community Based Protection, Education, Health Care and Rehabilitation Services for Children with Disabilities in Kontum Province and Da Nang City' (2019).

292 Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 'Decision: Approving the Project to promote access to community-based protection, care and education services among children with disabilities in the period of 2018-2025' (2018).

It is important that children with disabilities are included in all levels of humanitarian response to ensure that humanitarian aid and services reach them.<sup>293</sup> Assessment and data collection on children with disabilities in disaster and emergency situations will inform the kinds of support (such as accessible WASH facilities, information and learning materials in accessible formats and languages, adaptive utensils, etc.) that response teams will need to prepare and provide. However, they are often overlooked.

UNICEF advocates for children with disabilities to be included in emergency responses. For example, as part of the response to the COVID-19 crisis, UNICEF developed a set of guidelines to support countries to consider the needs of children with disabilities when designed school safety protocols and distance learning programmes.

In Indonesia, awareness raising and advocacy for disability inclusion as part of education-in-emergency and child-protection-in-emergency efforts were conducted.<sup>294</sup> UNICEF Indonesia's humanitarian response to the earthquakes and tsunami in Central Sulawesi and Lombok included disability-friendly WASH services, and training of local stakeholders such as teachers, school administrators, and other front liners on disability inclusion in emergency response training.<sup>295</sup> During the current COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF EAP has strengthened its WASH programmes in the region, prioritizing access of the most disadvantaged including children with disabilities to clean water and sanitation facilities.<sup>296</sup> UNICEF also provided technical support to the Indonesian government to increase visibility of children in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation programmes.<sup>297</sup>

Aside from Indonesia, no evidence on the inclusion of children with disabilities in humanitarian response was found in other countries in the region.

## 1.4 GAPS AND CHALLENGES



### Section Overview

The following section outlines the gaps and challenges found across the region in building more disability-inclusive education systems.

### 1.4.1 Negative Attitudes and Perceptions

Negative attitudes and perceptions toward children with disabilities are often caused by a lack of awareness and understanding of their rights, the nature of their disabilities, and principles of inclusion and universal design. Many countries across the region noted that exclusion happens due to stigma and discrimination towards children with disabilities. In some cases, families choose to keep their children with disabilities at home because of violence, abuse, and bullying in and on the way to schools.<sup>298</sup>

Within and among communities and the government, traditional and cultural perspectives on learning, some religious beliefs, as well as negative attitudes toward children with disabilities, hinder their access to education and social services. Non-inclusive values and the lack of awareness of the rights of children with disabilities across all sectors of society, especially among government leaders and decision-makers, result in lack or weak policy provisions, segregation in schools, and non-participation in the community.

293 UNICEF, 'Including Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action: General' (2017).

294 UNICEF Indonesia, 'Country Office Annual Report' (2018).

295 Ibid.

296 UNICEF EAP's blueprint for action on the COVID-19 pandemic can be accessed here: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/recover-rebound-reimagine>

297 UNICEF Indonesia, 'Outcome Ratings with Latest Progress' (2017).

298 UNICEF, 'Readiness for Education of Children with Disabilities in Eight Provinces of Viet Nam' (2015).

## 1.4.2 Lack of Capacity and Resources

Capacity to develop, design and implement inclusive education policies, practices and interventions is limited across education systems in the region. There is little awareness of inclusive values and inclusion is rarely enacted at different levels of the education systems in the region. This indicates that there is a generally low level of knowledge and understanding about up to date approaches to inclusion and disability.

Teachers in general lack capacity to deliver learner-centred curriculum and assessment systems; this is one of the key factors that impede learning outcomes of children with disabilities. This is linked to the fact that many countries lack teacher education degree programmes, including inclusive UDL approaches. While there are capacity building initiatives to improve the knowledge on inclusive pedagogies and child-centred disability services, these tend to be based on a medical model of disability. In-service training appears to be pre-dominantly delivered using outdated cascade training methods and there is little evidence of movement towards school or cluster-based models of teacher support with built-in coaching and mentoring.

Moreover, there is little evidence that shows current training approaches recognise that children with disabilities can be successfully included in general education classes where learner centred teaching approaches and universal design for learning principles are implemented. Without knowledge of and exposure to international best practices on inclusive interventions that show evidence of successful inclusion, it can be difficult for teachers or trainers to link inclusive principles to practical teaching in classrooms.

In addition, the review indicates that technical capacity is not high enough across Ministries to be able to fully implement the requirements of GC4. For instance, Vanuatu has an Inclusive Education Policy in place, but institutional capacity building is weak due to a lack of technical expertise in the country. In Viet Nam, 86 percent of the schools do not have access to a disability advisor<sup>299</sup> and within the government, there is poor understanding of the national and international disability legislation and standards.<sup>300</sup> In the Philippines, there is a limited number of developmental paediatricians who have the expertise to diagnose children's' impairments.<sup>301</sup> This lack of professional capacity impedes policy makers, education professionals, medical/developmental specialists, and community-based rehabilitation staff from creating fully inclusive learning environments, providing enabling learning environments or ICF compliant identification systems and efficient intervention services to children with disabilities.

The GC4 requirement to ensure the full involvement of OPDs and civil society is often undermined by the lack of technical capacity of these actors which makes it challenging for them to provide advice and guidance to government. Across the region, civil society organisations require more support to develop their capacity to provide a more strategic, technical role.

The lack of financial resources compounds the lack of capacity to implement policies that would otherwise provide technical advisors, fund reforms, properly compensate medical and education professionals, procure and develop accessible learning materials and tools, and conduct capacity building programmes. In many countries across the region, the budget for education is significantly below UN recommended percentages of GDP and continues to be reduced to fund other government priorities. Because of this, education reform and implementation remain to be a challenge.

## 1.4.3 Medical Model of Disability

Individual perspectives, policies and intervention programmes remain rooted in the medical model of disability. With this model, disability services and state provisions tend to be limited and exclusionary. Various state-sponsored disability financial assistance programmes are provided to persons whose disabilities are included in government recognised lists of disabilities. These lists are often not compliant with the ICF, are restrictive and do not include non-visible or hidden disabilities. Screening programmes and interventions are often limited to only a number of health conditions and disabilities, leaving behind children with hidden

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299 Ibid.

300 Ibid.

301 System for Prevention, Early Identification, Referral, and Intervention of Delays, Disorders and Disabilities in Early Childhood (2019).

disabilities. Sometimes, screening and identification tools are used to determine eligibility for general education programmes. Students who do not reach a certain literacy or numeracy rating are placed in specialised programmes under a different and simplified curriculum. This practice perpetuates a traditional and misleading belief that children with disabilities cannot learn the same concepts and achieve the same learning goals as their non-disabled peers and would need a different set of curricula. Denying children with disabilities the right to learn under the same curriculum and in the same inclusive learning environment as their peers is denying them of opportunities to reach their full potential.

Under a medical model of disability, policies, programmes, and interventions exclude children with hidden or non-apparent disabilities. When there are interventions, the focus is on “correcting” the disability of the child and rehabilitating the person but neglects to address the environmental and social barriers that limit children with disabilities from functioning and contributing to society.

#### 1.4.4 Lack of Reliable Data

There is an absence of comprehensive identification and screening systems in the region that are aligned with the ICF. In some countries, there is no official data on persons with disabilities.<sup>302</sup>

Countries lack standardised definitions of disability and ministries do not work together to create a systemised identification process and data collection. Out-dated medical approaches lead to unreliable data on disability and weak strategic planning of interventions and disability services. The lack of reliable data on specific barriers encountered by persons with disability, impedes effective and responsive policy development.<sup>303</sup> The lack of evidence on the scale of disability affects the equitable allocation of funds and implementation of inclusive education programming and interventions.<sup>304</sup> Where there is data on children with disabilities, this is often inconsistent, incomplete, and unreliable. In education, disaggregation of basic education statistics is not yet fully established and most EMIS systems do not include data on children with disabilities and their participation and achievement in school. Where there is data, the overall finding is that it is not based on the ICF.

#### 1.4.5 Institutional Barriers

Inclusive policy and legislative provision across the region are generally not GC4 compliant and do not explicitly state the rights of children with disabilities to education. Despite the ratification of the UNCRPD in many countries, existing national laws, policies, and services still do not fully consider persons with disabilities. Where there are IE policies in place, systemic implementation guidelines and strategic plans are either lacking or ineffective. This gap between policy and practice needs to be closed by capacity building, appropriate funding, and efficient inter-agency and multi-sectoral coordination. The lack of strong policies contributes to insufficient financial support from the government resulting in the limited capacity of agencies and ministries to implement capacity building programmes, policy reform, and service delivery.

Weak inter-agency/cross sector coordination and collaboration, and lack of policy development cooperation among different government agencies and ministries result in fragmented delivery of intervention services. In some countries, interventions reach a limited number of children with disabilities due to a lack of a systematic referral mechanisms as well as a poorly coordinated delivery system. Weak or non-existent mutual support and communication systems between national and sub-national government units make it difficult for disability and education services to reach children with disabilities living in poor and remote communities. Where there is coordination, local governments would be better able to provide evidence that will inform policy development and strategic planning to enable provision for inclusive education facilities, accessible transportation, rehabilitation services, capacity building, etc.

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302 Independent State of Papua New Guinea, ‘Situation Assessment of Children with Disabilities in Papua New Guinea’ (undated).

303 Cameron, Lisa; Suarez, Diana (2017), Disability in Indonesia: What can we learn from the data?, Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance, (2017).

304 System for Prevention, Early Identification, Referral, and Intervention of Delays, Disorders and Disabilities in Early Childhood (2019).

In almost all countries around the region, the prevalence of dual modes of education perpetuate the exclusion of children with disabilities. In one country, there are three schooling options for children with disabilities stated in the national education plan. These options are special education schools, special education integration programmes, and inclusive education programmes.<sup>305</sup> In some countries, there are demonstrated cases of special institutions and schools, funded and managed by NGOs, that do not adhere to the principles of inclusion. While most countries are undergoing curriculum reforms to work towards inclusion, there is little evidence to indicate that the curriculum and assessment systems across the region which are being developed are GC4 compliant, accessible to all children, and based on principles of Universal Design.

## 1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS



### Section Overview

This section sets out strategic recommendations arising from the findings of the review.

### 1.5.1 Whole Systems Approach

- Countries who have not yet ratified the CRPD should immediately do so and commit to the protection of the rights and inclusion of children with disabilities.
- A comprehensive review and mapping of policies is recommended to ensure overarching principles of equity, both as a concept and standard guideline, are consistent, re-enforced and institutionalised.
- Legislation, policy and sector plans should clearly set out the requirement to progressively phase out all segregatory and discriminatory practices, supported with flexible and equitable financing. More research on budgeting and national financing is recommended to investigate in detail the ways in which national resources are supportive, or otherwise of the inclusive education agenda. For example, there is emerging evidence in a number of countries that equitable finance allocated to families of children with disabilities through social protection sectors, can support the provision of services which support inclusion of children in mainstream society (e.g. Cambodia, Vietnam, Timor-Leste). However, such approaches require further research and close monitoring to ensure they do not encourage segregatory provisions and corruption within the financial allocation processes.
- Countries should establish a shared understanding of definitions of disability and principles in inclusive education through consultative processes with all key decision makers in the government and CSO and OPD partners. Strengthening capacities of stakeholders especially the decision-makers at all levels is pivotal to affect lasting changes in the education system.
- The understanding that inclusive education is based on inclusive values should be developed in all levels of society including policymakers through advocacy and awareness campaigns and capacity building initiatives, to positively change the attitudes of people towards disability. Countries must develop a comprehensive communication strategy informed by a study on knowledge, attitudes and practices towards persons with disability to synergise efforts and ensure messages are clear and aligned with inclusive principles.

### 1.5.2 Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

- To address the challenge of ensuring that all children have access to the same curriculum, countries must review the current curriculum to ensure it is accessible to all children and that it is flexible

<sup>305</sup> The Government of Malaysia, 'Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Pre-school to Post-Secondary)' (2013).

enough to respond to diversity. In many countries, the provision of special programmes for children with disabilities means they are not following the same curriculum as their peers.

- Universal Design for Learning principles should be applied to ensure that the curriculum design and assessment is accessible and that teachers are employing inclusive child centred pedagogy. Children with disabilities can be successfully included in regular schools where this is the case.
- Teachers should be provided capacity building opportunities on formative assessment and inclusive pedagogies. Teacher education institutions must also review their curriculum and ensure that inclusive assessment approaches are part of the core subjects. It is highly likely that most countries would continue to sustain the operation of special schools as gradual transitions to a fully inclusive education system are being made. Governments should take advantage of the knowledge and skills in special schools and provide structures for collaboration and sharing of expertise between mainstream and special education teachers to strengthen capacities in catering to diverse learners.
- Learning materials for children with disabilities should be increasingly developed, adapted from other contexts and made available in regular classrooms across the region through careful evidence-informed strategic planning.
- An inclusive classroom, where principles of universal design of learning are applied, should be able to provide all children, with or without disability, the experiences, knowledge and tools they need to learn. Resource centres that segregate children should be progressively phased out in favour of inclusive education. (Resource centres are not recommended as a good practice because these centres are a form of segregation and are not GC4 compliant. They reinforce the idea that children with disabilities require a different pedagogy and curriculum from that of other children.)
- Not all schools may be ready to accommodate certain categories of disability, but resourcing identified regular schools within a district to include children with a particular functional limitation (e.g. providing sign language interpreters in general education classrooms for children with hearing impairment) alongside their peers is achievable even in low income settings and should be considered as a first step towards building fully inclusive systems.

### 1.5.3 Supported Teachers

- Pre-Service Training courses need to be reviewed to ensure that they are aligned with the national curriculum. Teachers must be prepared in learner centred teaching as well as inclusive strategies which address barriers to learning and enable the inclusion of children with disabilities.
- In-Service Training courses need to be developed to provide a range of support experiences for teachers to include school-based teacher development and collaborative action planning and review; inputs which reflect a needs-based analysis of teachers' competence measured against the curriculum and inclusive criteria. This should also include whole school approaches and systems development as well as collaborative working across networks of schools, establishing communities of practice within schools but also at different levels of the education system.
- National teacher standards should be established which reflect diversity and inclusion, and are linked to assessment and support tools and systems which enable teachers to be evaluated against inclusive criteria and allow them to gradually introduce inclusive approaches into their practice.

### 1.5.4 Learning-friendly Environment

- Creating learner-friendly school environments requires the development of inclusive policies and leaders at all levels of the system who are able to introduce and embed inclusive culture, policies and practices: classroom teaching and relationships, governance meetings and processes, teacher supervision, counselling services and medical care, school trips, budgetary allocations and any interface with parents of learners with and without disability when applicable, the local community or the wider public.
- This requires support for the development of whole school approaches and collaborative networking between schools to develop inclusive communities of practice. Inclusive education does not develop in

isolation but through individuals and communities learning from each other. This must be strategically planned for and supported at policy level.

### 1.5.5 Effective Transitions

- National strategies should focus on establishing and/or improving early identification, including child functioning/disability screening and early childhood development services. Supporting children with disabilities in their early years should be a priority for all governments as it can go a long way in preventing further marginalisation.
- Countries must take steps toward multi sector involvement to strategically plan and implement early intervention services for all age ranges, starting from birth through school age and to lifelong learning must be strengthened at policy level, with clear definitions of roles of different government agencies involved.
- Legislation and policies should be revised to provide clear guidance on effective transition from early childhood to basic education, ensuring that all children with disabilities are supported by a multidisciplinary team of professionals from the point of identification, with access to home support, pre-school placements in inclusive settings and supported transition to basic education and beyond. The fundamental goal of effective transition is to ensure that a positive effect to the child with a disability takes place.
- Legislation should address the effective transition at later stages such as between Primary Grades, Secondary High School and Higher Education. International data indicates that children with disabilities are more vulnerable to experiencing barriers to effective transitions between different stages in education.

### 1.5.6 Partnerships

- Cross sectoral collaboration and coordination is at the heart of strong inclusive development. Inclusive education systems cannot be developed by Ministries of Education alone. Policy and legislation need to be developed through multi-disciplinary coordination, particularly between health, social welfare and education.
- This in turn should enable partnership working with civil society and OPDs. However, it is also often the case that OPDs and civil society also need support and capacity building as international evidence demonstrates that these organisations can sometimes be unaware of the requirements of the UNCRPD and GC4. Currently, there is not enough evidence that OPDs, CSOs and NGO are technically capable to support government effectively. Further support and capacity building to these sectors are required to be able to manage an advisory role to governments in policy developments.
- Teacher associations, student associations and federations, school boards, parent-teacher associations, and other functioning school support groups, both formal and informal, need to be supported to increase their understanding and knowledge of disability. Involvement of parents/caregivers and the community must be viewed as assets with resources and strengths to contribute. The relationship between the learning environment and the wider community must be recognised as a route towards inclusive societies.

### 1.5.7 Data and Monitoring

- A review of existing identification systems, as well as M&E systems is recommended, to address the lack of comprehensive, reliable, disaggregated data affects policies and programming on inclusive education.
- The ICF has to be established as the main tool for identifying and assessing disability. This will then lead to the restructuring of all forms of data collection and the development of new M&E systems.
- People with disabilities and OPDs should be involved in all aspects of data improvement.



# Part 2



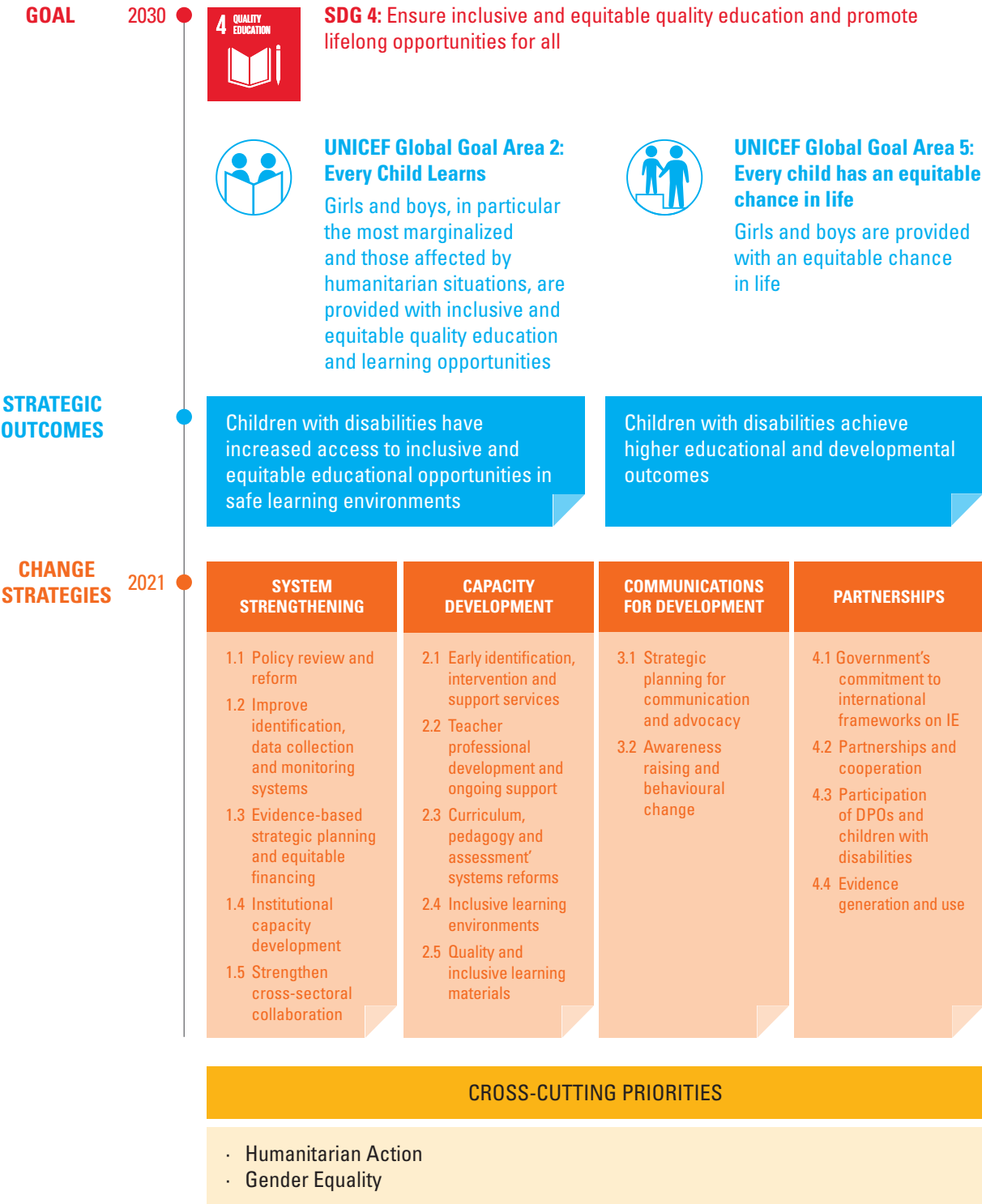
# The Way Forward

A Roadmap for  
Accelerating Progress  
Towards Disability-  
Inclusive Education in EAP

# 2.1 REGIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE TOWARDS DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Based on the stock taking, challenges and recommendations presented in Part 1 of this document, the UNICEF Regional Office for EAP prepared a roadmap or way forward to guide countries on concrete actions that can be taken to advance disability inclusive education in EAP. The roadmap is anchored by the Theory of Change shown in Figure 3 that is rooted in UNICEF’s Global Strategic Plan and the Global Education Strategy.

**FIGURE 3** Theory of Change



The Roadmap presented below in Figure 4 operationalises the Theory of Change and aims to set out concrete strategies to drive disability-inclusive education forward. Developed in the context of General Comment No. 4 to Article 24 of the UNCRPD and the findings of the regional mapping, the roadmap outlines recommendations for the region with emphasis on key priority areas crucial in achieving optimum results for children with disabilities. The roadmap, along with the theoretical framework used in this mapping can serve as a guidepost for UNICEF, Ministries of Education and their partners to move from one level of progress to the next, in identified domains of inclusion. Identified action steps and corresponding timeline should be viewed as suggestions rather than absolute recommendations. Considering economic and social diversity across the region, activities identified should be adapted and adjusted to local country contexts.

**FIGURE 4** Roadmap

1.0 SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
1.1 Policy review and reform	Equity Legislation established, aligned with the UNCRPD outlining clear inter-ministerial responsibilities to enable equitable inclusion of children with disabilities in all aspects of society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with relevant stakeholders especially persons with disabilities</li> <li>Review of existing national policies related to provision of equitable services for persons with disabilities and international best practices in equity legislations</li> <li>Capacity building on equity and inclusion for key decision makers and policies</li> <li>Drafting of equity legislation</li> </ul>	No. of countries that have established equity law compliant with the UNCRPD			
	National inclusive education law enacted, with explicit reference to children with disabilities educated in mainstream settings and moves towards removing segregated models of provision and mandates the establishment of well-resourced schools with inclusive cultures; includes implementation plan and costing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with relevant stakeholders, especially OPDs</li> <li>Mapping of existing education policies</li> <li>Drafting of inclusive education law</li> </ul>	No. of countries that have enacted a law on inclusive education which articulates education for children with disabilities in mainstream settings established			

1.0 SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
1.1 Policy review and reform (continue)	Financing plans for Inclusive Education, that provide specific measures for Inclusive Schools	Consultation with stakeholders to establish equitable financial indicators and processes which can be integrated into criteria for inclusive schools (these should include specific requirements for schools to receive adequate funding and establishment of requirements for schools and local authorities to ensure the provision of specific support related to different functional difficulties – e.g. visual, hearing, physical, etc)	No. of countries which have established clear guidelines setting out the requirements for transparent equitable financing of inclusive provision for children and schools.			
	Policies relevant to education for children with disabilities reviewed and amended	Mapping of policies related to children with disabilities	No. of countries that conducted a review of policies related to children with disabilities  No. of policies amended and aligned with international human rights frameworks			
1.2 Improve data collection and monitoring systems	National identification, data collection and monitoring systems are established/ updated in accordance to the ICF	Review of the national identification, data collection, and monitoring systems  Reform of the systems to align with the ICF and UNCRPD  Capacity building of relevant personnel in key units of the government and OPDs on the national identification, data collection and monitoring system	Review and revision in target EAP countries is participated by key sectors of the government and OPDs  No. of countries with reformed national identification and data collection systems that are ICF and UNCRPD compliant and aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda  Number of stakeholders trained in target countries			

1.0 SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
1.3 Evidence-based strategic planning and equitable financing	Baseline study on children with disabilities with emphasis on provision and quality of educational opportunities, including barriers to education and learning, conducted	Conduct baseline study in partnership with key government offices (i.e. education, health, social protection)	No. of countries that have conducted a national baseline study  National baseline study in target countries includes voices of children with disabilities			
	Evidence-informed education sector plans with reference to disability-inclusive education developed	Capacity building for government officials on disability-inclusive planning  Drafting of education sector plans	No. of countries with education sector plans which include inclusive education as a national priority  Funding for inclusive education secured in national sector plans in target countries	Will depend on respective planning periods of governments		
1.4 Institutional capacity building	Capacity building for key government officials and policy makers and OPDs on essential principles contained in human rights legislation with focus on the CRC, UNCRPD General Comment #4, ICF and international best practices on inclusion	Training Needs Analysis of key policy makers and government officials/OPDs  Design and Implementation of a series of workshops with the goal of capacitating policy makers/OPDs and government officials in inclusive leadership and on their role in protecting the rights of children with disabilities to education on an equal basis with others	Key government officials, especially at the top level, have an improved understanding of inclusive education from rights-based perspectives in target countries  Number of policy makers trained in target countries  Number of government officials trained in target countries  Number of OPD representatives trained in target countries			
1.5 Strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration	System for inter-sectoral collaboration for inclusive education established	Mapping of cross-sector linkages  Establish an inter-ministerial committee for inclusive education with systems, processes and clear delineation of functions oriented towards holistic development of children with disabilities	Inter-ministerial committee for inclusive education established in target countries  Mechanism for collaboration among different sectors in target countries (i.e. education, health, child protection, social protection) is in place and sets out responsibilities relating to education for children with disabilities			

1.0 SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
1.5 Strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration (continue)		<p>Training needs analysis of the committee for Inclusive Education in inclusive education, essential components of human rights legislation, CRC, ICF, and UNCRPD in relation to their role</p> <p>Capacity building of Committee for Inclusive Education on inclusive education and their role in leading inter-sector collaboration towards the holistic development of children with disabilities</p> <p>Intersectoral planning workshop to create joint vision and to articulate inter-sectoral target outcomes and outputs</p>	<p>Number of government officials trained in target countries</p> <p>Inter-ministerial committee’s vision and target outcomes and outputs articulated by target countries</p>			
	Mechanism for coordination between national and local education government units established	<p>Review of existing vertical coordination mechanisms between national and local education authorities, down to the school level</p> <p>Establishment of coordination mechanism that involves the schools and promote periodical consultation and information sharing regarding education services for children with disabilities</p>	Vertical coordination improved in target countries			

## 2.0 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
2.1 Early identification, intervention and support services	Early identification, intervention systems and support services for children with disabilities delivered through multi-disciplinary approaches	<p>Review and reform of assessment framework and procedures for early identification and referrals against the ICF and based on clear standards for service delivery</p> <p>Key ministry officials and staff are capacitated to provide holistic assessment and community-based services for children with disabilities</p> <p>Monitoring early identification and intervention systems such that there are internal and external quality assurance measures to ensure that systems and practices are UNCRPD compliant and aligned to the ICF Framework</p>	<p>Assessment and referral processes are ICF and UNCRPD compliant in target countries</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary support services for children with disabilities are established and providing support to children with disabilities in non-segregated inclusive schools in target countries</p> <p>Number of government officials trained in target countries</p> <p>Mechanism for regular monitoring established in target countries</p>			
2.2 Teacher professional development and ongoing support	Pre-service curriculum is reviewed and aligned with the requirements of the UNCRPD	Review and reform of pre-service teacher education curriculum, including special education, to include inclusive education principles, starting with pilot teacher training institutions	Pre-service curriculum in identified programmes in pilot teacher training institutions reviewed			



2.0 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
2.2 Teacher professional development and ongoing support (continue)		Integration of inclusive education principles in pre-service curricula in teacher training institutions	No. of pre-service programmes/courses wherein the inclusive education principles/modules are embedded			
		Capacity building of teacher educators in the new pre-service curriculum	Number of teacher educators trained			
		Implementation of the revised pre-service curriculum				
	In-service training curricula includes key principles of inclusive education	Develop teacher development programmes focused on key principles in inclusive education, reflective practice and collaboration and, learner-centred teaching approaches	No. of governments that have adopted an inclusive in-service training curricula			
	Establishment of a policy for the implementation of continuous, school/work-based professional development activities for teachers on diversity, learner-centred pedagogy, and development inclusive school cultures and learning environments	<p>Baseline study on current school-based in-service professional development practices and review of international best practices</p> <p>Consultation workshops with stakeholders</p> <p>Formulation of policy on school-based teacher development</p> <p>Implement school-based teacher professional development activities to support teachers develop inclusive classroom strategies with ongoing support through peer learning, coaching and mentoring</p>	<p>No. of countries that conducted baseline study</p> <p>No. of countries that formulated a policy on school-based teacher professional development in consultation with relevant stakeholders especially teachers</p> <p>Number of pilot schools implementing school-based approach to teacher development in target countries</p>			

## 2.0 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
2.2 Teacher professional development and ongoing support (continue)	Development of professional standards for teachers and education leaders to include focus on disability and inclusive education	<p>Capacity building for professional standards developers and reviewers on IE, UDL and UNCRPD to ensure professional standards include focus on disability and inclusion</p> <p>Review of current standards and research on international best practice on teacher standards and school leadership standards and inclusion</p> <p>Development and finalisation of teacher standards and school leaders professional standards including support tools such as self-assessment, classroom observation and performance management tools and processes</p>	<p>Capacity building for standards reviewers and developers conducted in target countries</p> <p>No. of personnel trained</p> <p>Increased understanding of inclusive principles among standards developers</p> <p>Review of curriculum current standards and research on best practices conducted</p> <p>Teacher professional standards developed</p> <p>Teacher professional standards include capacity for foundational skills in building an inclusive school community and learner-centred pedagogy aligned to the UDL and UNCRPD</p> <p>School leader's professional standards developed</p> <p>School leader's standards reflect school leader's capacity to support teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices for inclusion through the effective implementation of systems for school-based professional development such as mentoring and coaching, instructional supervision, and communities of practice</p>			

2.0 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
2.3 Curriculum and assessment systems reforms	National curriculum, assessment procedures are reviewed and reformed following the principles of child-centred teaching approaches, Universal Design for Learning and the CRPD	<p>Strengthen the capacity of government units responsible for the development of national curriculum and assessment systems and creation of instructional materials on inclusive education and universal design for learning</p> <p>Guidelines for the review of curriculum and assessment systems developed</p> <p>Review national curriculum and assessment system</p>	<p>Number of government officials trained in target countries</p> <p>Curriculum and assessment system revised and aligned to UDL and UNCRPD in target countries</p> <p>Guidelines for curriculum and assessment review developed in target countries</p>			
2.4 Inclusive learning environments	Learning environments and infrastructures are adapted to ensure equitable access for children with disabilities	<p>Development of guidelines and assessment tools for adapting learning environments and infrastructures in alignment to UNCRPD</p> <p>Assessment of learning environments and infrastructures integrated into school improvement planning processes</p>	<p>Guidelines and assessment tools developed in target countries</p> <p>Number of schools assessed in target countries</p> <p>Assessment process integrated into school improvement planning processes in target countries</p> <p>Learning environments and infrastructures in schools adapted to ensure equitable access and participation in target countries</p> <p>Number of personnel and OPD representatives trained in target countries</p>			

## 2.0 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
2.4 Inclusive learning environments	National policy setting infrastructure standards aligned with universal design established	Capacity building of key government officials, including education, health and social protection sectors on universal design  Inter-sectoral review of policies related to accessibility of infrastructures and formulation of recommendations for policy development	National policy developed in target countries			
2.5 Quality and inclusive learning materials	Learning materials which are inclusive following the principles of UDL and fit the needs of a wide range of learners are available	Review of teaching and learning materials in primary level  Adaptation and revision of teaching and learning materials to reflect positive references to children with disabilities  Provision of assistive devices, including innovations and digital platforms	Teaching and learning materials, including textbooks include positive references to children with disabilities and aligned with UDL in target countries  Number of learning materials reviewed in target countries  Number of learning materials revised and made available nationwide in target countries  Number of assistive devices provided in regular and special schools in target countries			
	National guidelines and assessment tools for adapting learning environments and infrastructures developed, based on UDL	Develop national guidelines and assessment tools for adapting learning environments and infrastructures based on universal design and the CRPD to ensure equitable access to buildings, facilities, resources and services. Guidelines should mandate the integration of assessment of learning environments and infrastructures into school improvement planning process	Number of countries that developed and implemented national guidelines aligned with UDL			

2.0 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
2.6 Developing inclusive schools and communities	Well-resourced schools with inclusive cultures and inclusively aware communities developed	Support the development of inclusive schools which are adequately resourced to meet the needs of diverse learners and able to cater to the most prevalent disabilities	Number of pilot schools supported through a phased approach in target countries			

3.0 COMMUNICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT						
CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
3.1 Strategic planning for communication and advocacy	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Study towards children with disabilities conducted, including a review of international best practices on communication for social change	Conduct of KAP study to towards children with disabilities and inclusive education	Number of countries that have conducted a KAP Study on children with disabilities			
	National Communications for Social Change strategic plan developed through multi-sectoral cooperation	Development of national Communications for Social Change strategic plan utilizing the findings of the KAP study  Implementation of communication for social change strategic plan and development of campaign materials	Strategic communication plan has clear outcomes and outputs and the content/strategies identified adhere to the UNCRPD, ICF, and UDL principles in target countries  OPDs are consulted and key sectors are represented in the in the planning process and implementation in target countries  Content of advocacy and campaign materials reflect UNCRPD, ICF and UDL principles in target countries  Reach of advocacy campaigns in target countries			

### 3.0 COMMUNICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
3.2 Awareness raising and behavioural change	Awareness raising programmes to tackle stigma and promote positive attitudes towards disability and IE are implemented in accordance to the strategic plan	<p>Conduct of awareness raising programmes promoting clear messages on the social model definition of disability and the rights of children with disabilities to education</p> <p>Engaging the wider school community in creating inclusive school cultures</p>	<p>Number of advocacy programmes implemented in target countries</p> <p>Reach of awareness raising programmes in target countries</p> <p>Increased uptake and demand for inclusive, quality education in target countries</p> <p>Positive shifts towards children with disabilities and inclusive education observed in target countries</p> <p>Number of schools engaging active community participation in the implementation of inclusive education in target countries</p>			

### 4.0 PARTNERSHIPS

CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
4.1 Government's commitment to international frameworks on IE	Ratification of the UNCRPD and UNCRC in EAP countries that are yet to commit to key international frameworks on IE	<p>Ratification of the UNCRPD</p> <p>Ratification of the UNCRC</p>	<p>27 countries in the EAP region have ratified the UNCRPD</p> <p>27 countries in the EAP region have ratified the UNCRC</p>			
4.2 Partnerships and cooperation	Regional technical working group on IE organised	Establishment of regional technical working group on IE	<p>Asia Pacific regional working group established</p> <p>Increased sharing of evidence bases, lessons learned among countries in the region</p>			
	Partnerships forged and strengthened with key development organisations	Stakeholders analysis to identify existing partners and opportunities for partnerships conducted	Increase in number of partnerships with key development organisations in the field of IE			

#### 4.0 PARTNERSHIPS

CHANGE STRATEGY	OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIMELINE		
				Short-term 2020–2021	Medium-term 2022–2025	Long-term 2026–2030
4.3 Participation of OPDs and children with disabilities	Increased engagement of OPDs and children with disabilities in policies and programmes related to disability inclusive education	Strategic planning for increasing participation of OPDs and children with disabilities	Strategic plans/ country programme documents include strategies for involving OPDs and children with disabilities in policy development and programme design and implementation			
	Capacity building of OPDs on inclusion supported					
	Mechanism that ensures voices of children with disabilities influence all programming established		Processes at the subnational and national level for involving children with disabilities established in target countries			
4.4 Evidence generation and use	Researches on children with disabilities and the barriers they face in accessing education conducted	<p>Stock taking of existing researches on disability-inclusive education and identification of research gaps</p> <p>Conduct of researches on identified priority research agenda</p> <p>Use of evidence bases in policy development and sector planning</p>	<p>Percent of programme funds allocated to evidence generation on disability-inclusive education</p> <p>No. of countries that have conducted researches on identified research gaps</p> <p>Number of countries that utilised evidence generated from UNICEF-supported researches/studies in policy development and sector planning</p>			



# Annexes



# ANNEX A: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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# ANNEX B: ONLINE SURVEY TOOL

## Review and Roadmap of UNICEF’s Inclusive Education Programming in East Asia and Pacific Region

### Welcome

The Education Section, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office has commissioned a consultancy to map the progress of countries and UNICEF programmes in the region of East Asia and Pacific in advancing inclusive education for children. The study will take stock of disability-inclusive education in the region by reviewing and documenting the nature of countries’ progress, successful practices, innovative approaches, gaps and needs for technical support. This survey seeks countries’ input in examining current inclusion initiatives, assessing where gaps exist, and identifying actions required to further the implementation of inclusion of children with disabilities in education. The findings of the mapping will inform the development of a regional Theory of Change and roadmap for inclusive education and future programming in the region.

### Structure of the Survey

- The survey focuses on seven (7) core features of an inclusive education system set out in General Comment No. 4 to the UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Each core feature is broken down into different dimensions.
- Each dimension is described through four indicators of progress:
  - Initiating,
  - Developing,
  - Establishing, and
  - Championing.

### How to Complete the Survey

For each of the dimensions:

- **Step 1:** Review the statements in the indicators of progress.
- **Step 2:** Tick the progress indicator that best describes the current state of implementation of disability-inclusive education in the country. This will be pooled with all countries’ responses and no country will be singled out on their progress. The ratings are for internal purposes only and will not be published.
- **Step 3:** The “comment” column is for you to elaborate on the country’s progress and status. Add details to explain the rating which may include barriers and/or ongoing work.

### Basic Information

1. What is your full name?

2. Which country office are you responding for?

3. What is your role in UNICEF?

## 1. Whole Systems Approach

General Comment No. 4 to the UNCRPD calls on states to adopt a “whole systems approach” to inclusive education, where implementation is the responsibility of the entire education system. For the purpose of this mapping, a whole systems approach will be viewed as an enabling environment where:

- laws and policies are in place that establishes the right of all children to receive a quality education, with an explicit mention of children with disabilities in inclusive settings;
- inclusive leadership, principles and cultures are well-established at all levels of the education system with specific reference to the full inclusion of children with disabilities;
- a national plan is in place that guides the strategic implementation of inclusive education;
- education ministries ensure that appropriate resources are invested toward advancing inclusive education, and toward introducing and embedding the necessary changes in institutional culture, attitudes, policies and practices; and
- negative attitudes towards disability and inclusion are addressed through institutional capacity building and awareness raising programmes.

**Please rate your country according to the indicators described below.**

### 1.1 Comprehensive Equity Legislation

Initiating	There is no equity legislation which clearly establishes the rights of persons with disabilities to all aspects of society. Discussions are ongoing to review all policies concerning persons with disabilities and develop an equity legislation.
Developing	The government is reviewing all policies related to persons with disabilities to ensure equity in all aspects of society and compliance with CRPD.
Establishing	The government, through the collaboration of relevant ministries, has enacted an overarching equity legislation which is CRPD compliant and clearly sets out the rights of persons with disability in regard to all aspects of society and governance. Yet, the policy is not implemented at scale.
Championing	The government has enacted and is implementing at scale an overarching equity legislation which is CRPD compliant and clearly sets out the rights of persons with disabilities in regard to all aspects of society. The legislation requires institutional and systemic changes to ensure equity in all aspects of the society and addresses issues that hinder access to and participation in health, education, social and services.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

### 1.2 Inclusive Education Law

Initiating	There is no law / policy which specifically establishes the right of children with disabilities to education. Discussions are ongoing to review existing policies related to education provisions for children with disabilities.
Developing	The government is developing a specific policy on the implementation of education for children with disabilities which sits within the equity policy. It has an explicit reference to children with disabilities. There are policies on special education that contradict the principles of inclusive education.
Establishing	There is a law/policy establishing the right of all children to receive an education, with an explicit mention of children with disabilities. The policy mandates the provision of education in inclusive settings. Yet, the policy is not implemented at scale.

Championing	The government has and is implementing at scale a specific policy on the implementation of education for children with disabilities. The policy includes an explicit reference to children with disabilities. It defines disability and inclusive education from a rights-based perspective and articulates clear roles of special schools and services in inclusive education. It mandates the development of resourced regular schools with non-segregated provision including specialised support in the regular classroom for children with disabilities. The law sets out measures to remove ability grouping, streaming, setting, repeating grades and other approaches which can create barriers to children with disabilities accessing equitable quality education.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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### 1.3 Strategic National Action Plan for IE

Initiating	Discussions are ongoing regarding the development of a multi-sectoral strategic plan for inclusive education.
Developing	There is a national plan and/or education sector plan but it speaks broadly to inclusion and does not explicitly include the provision of education for children with disabilities in inclusive settings.
Establishing	National government has in place a national strategic plan and/or education sector plan that guides the implementation of inclusive education.
Championing	National government has in place and is implementing a national strategic plan and/or education sector plan that guides the implementation of inclusive education. Strategies are in place and being implemented to remove and phase out all segregated, institutionalised and home-based schooling for children with disabilities.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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### 1.4 Equitable Financing and Resource Allocation

Initiating	Government allocates both human and financial resources for children with disabilities to support education in segregated settings and services reflecting a medical model of disability.
Developing	Human and financial resources are directed to supporting the education of learners with disabilities in inclusive settings, but also segregated settings and services reflecting a medical model of disability.
Establishing	There is a defined human and financial resource allocation for the education of children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Programmes are properly financed and resources are available at the school level to support inclusion.
Championing	There is a defined human and financial resource allocation for the education of children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Actions have been taken to ensure that the distribution of resources is equitable and flexible with a particular focus on children with disabilities.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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## 1.5 Institutional Capacity Building

Initiating	While there are capacity building activities for government leaders/education leaders, the perspective on inclusion remains based on the medical model of disability.
Developing	Activities to increase the capacity of government and education institutions have been undertaken. Efforts to align the content and approach to capacity building with the principles of inclusion and equity are being done.
Establishing	There is a strategic plan that sets out systematically the government's approach to increasing capacity at all levels in implementing inclusive education. The plan is aligned with the social view of disability. Initial capacity building activities have been undertaken.
Championing	The country strengthens capacities of government institutions to implement inclusive education, following a strategic plan based on the social model of disability. Government facilitates the establishment of inclusive leadership, principles and cultures at all levels (national, subnational, district, schools, etc.) of the education system through capacity building with specific reference to the full inclusion of children with disabilities.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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## 1.6 Awareness Raising

Initiating	There are no national or sub-national programmes in place to combat negative attitudes and increase awareness on inclusion and disability.
Developing	Activities to increase awareness of disability and inclusion have been implemented. However, messages are mixed and have reference to segregated provisions. Efforts to improve this issue are being implemented.
Establishing	Strategic communication and advocacy plans are established at the national level to increase awareness of disability and inclusion. OPDs and children with disabilities are actively involved in advocacy activities.
Championing	National or sub-national programmes are implemented to provide support to increasing community awareness and community involvement in inclusive education. The programme addresses negative attitudes towards disability and inclusion at all levels of the system including the general public.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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## 2. Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

All children have the right to the same curriculum. The curriculum is the primary means for realizing equity and inclusion in education (UNESCO, 2017). The education system must ensure that curriculum and assessment systems respond to the diverse needs of all learners including children with disabilities. The ministry of education must institutionalise and promote the implementation of inclusive child-centred pedagogy according to the principles of universal quality educational design. The curriculum must be accessible to all through the provision of assistive and adaptive technology and reasonable accommodation.

**Please rate your country according to the indicators described below.**

### 2.1 Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy

Initiating	The national curriculum is rigid and does not respond effectively to the needs of all learners. The dominant approach teachers use in the classroom is rote learning.
Developing	Planning activities and discussions are ongoing to review and reform the national curriculum. Specialised curricula tailored to specific disabilities are in place based on the medical model and applied in special school settings. The belief that children with disabilities require a special pedagogy is the prevailing perspective within the education system.
Establishing	Actions have been taken by government to reform the standard national curriculum to ensure it is flexible, adaptable and responsive to all learners. There are emerging practices of child-centred pedagogy following the principles of universal design for learning.
Championing	The country is implementing an inclusive and flexible national curriculum and accessible by all learners following the principles of inclusion and equity. There is no separate special curriculum for children with disabilities. The Ministry of Education advocates the principles of universal quality educational design. Teaching and learning methods are child-centred and adapted to different strengths, requirements and learning styles. All children's learning needs are supported in schools and classrooms.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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### 2.2 Inclusive Assessment

Initiating	The national assessment system is rigid and does not respond effectively to the needs of all learners.
Developing	Planning activities and discussions are ongoing to review and reform the national assessment system.
Establishing	Actions have been taken by government to reform the assessment system to ensure it is flexible, adaptable and responsive to all learners.
Championing	The country is implementing an inclusive and flexible assessment system responsive to all learners following the principles of inclusion and equity. The Ministry of Education advocates the principles of universal quality educational design. Assessment methods are adapted to different strengths, requirements and learning styles.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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## 2.3 Learning Materials

Initiating	Assistive devices and materials are not generally available in schools. Books and other materials make no reference to children with disabilities.
Developing	Assistive devices and materials are available in special schools, but not in regular schools. A few books and other materials have positive references to children with disabilities.
Establishing	Assistive devices and other materials are available in special schools but in less than half of regular schools. Books and other materials inclusive positive references to children with disabilities.
Championing	Ministry of Education facilitates the development / adaptation of teaching and learning materials to fit the context and needs of individual learners. Books and other learning materials are accessible and include positive reference to children with disabilities. Assistive devices and materials are available in most regular schools.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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## 3. Supported Teachers

Teacher development is crucial in implementing inclusive education (Forlin, 2010a; Global Campaign for Education & Handicap International, 2013; Lewis & Bagree, 2013) and raising educational quality. GC4 to Article 24 of the CRPD requires governments to sufficiently train pre-service and in-service teachers and other relevant staff in core inclusive values and competencies to create inclusive learning environments. This requires adaptation of both pre- and in-service teacher training (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). All teachers and other staff receive education and training giving them the core values and competencies to accommodate inclusive learning environments, which include teachers with disabilities. An inclusive culture should provide an accessible and supportive environment which encourages working through collaboration, interaction and problem-solving.

**Please rate your country according to the indicators described below.**

### 3.1 Pre-service Teacher Education

Initiating	Inclusion is not an integral part of the pre-service curriculum. Teaching children with disabilities remain an issue that only special educators are expected to respond to. Pre-service programmes in special education are also limited in capacity and quality.
Developing	Planning activities and discussions have been undertaken to review the pre-service teacher education curriculum to ensure teachers are supported to respond to diverse learners. Knowledge and experience from specialised training programmes are beginning to be transferred to mainstream teacher preparation.
Establishing	Pre-service teacher education curriculum has been reviewed and reformed to ensure teachers are supported to respond to diverse learners. Both specialised services and inclusion are supported through pre-service programmes however quality/capacity could be improved.
Championing	Inclusion principles are integrated in the national teacher education curriculum. Government implements the revised curriculum which prepares teachers to respond to diversity and equips them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to create inclusive classrooms. Strong training programmes also exist for specialist teachers.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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### 3.2 In-service Teacher Education

Initiating	Training of teachers and support staff emphasises segregated provision of education for children with disabilities. Teacher training supports the medical model of disability. In-service programmes for special educators are also limited in capacity and quality.
Developing	Teacher training on catering to children with disabilities have been implemented. Training content puts emphasis on supporting children with disabilities in inclusive settings but combined with some references to segregated provisions. Knowledge and experience from specialised training programmes are beginning to be transferred to mainstream in-service teacher development programmes.
Establishing	The government ensures teachers and support staff receive ongoing training on inclusive education. All teachers have received basic training on fundamental concepts and principles in inclusion, core inclusive values, and basic inclusive classroom practices. Training content supports the social model of disability. Both specialised services and inclusion are supported through in-service programmes however quality/capacity could be improved.
Championing	The government has established a national policy for school-based teacher professional development. Inclusive education is explicitly stated as a key area for professional development. Teachers, including teachers with disabilities receive continuous professional development. They receive the necessary support to develop inclusive values and meet diverse learning needs in the classroom. Strong in-service training programme also exists for specialist teachers who are positioned as inclusive education advisory teachers.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

### 3.3 Professional Competency Standards for Teachers and School Leaders

Initiating	Discussions are taking place on reviewing/developing professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders to ensure alignment with inclusion and equity principles.
Developing	Programmes/activities to develop and/or review existing professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders are being undertaken to ensure it reinforces equity and inclusion.
Establishing	The Ministry of Education has reformed their national professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders to embed the principles of equity and inclusion.
Championing	The country has established and is implementing professional competency standards for teachers and school leaders which follow the principles of inclusion and equity.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

## 4. Learning-friendly Environment

Learners with disabilities face various types of barriers. Governments are mandated to ensure all learning environments are fully accessible to everyone, without discrimination. GC4 stipulates that all environment of students with disabilities must be 'designed to foster inclusion and guarantee their equality throughout their education, including for example, school transport, which should be inclusive, accessible and safe; water and sanitation facilities, including hygiene and toilet facilities; school cafeterias; and recreational spaces. State parties must commit to the prompt introduction of Universal Design and provision of reasonable accommodation when necessary. Inclusive learning environments create an accessible environment where everyone feels safe, supported, stimulated and able to express themselves, with a strong emphasis on involving students themselves in building a positive school community. Recognition is afforded to the peer group in learning, building positive relationships, friendships and acceptance.

**Please rate your country according to the indicators described below.**

### 4.1 Physical Accessibility of Learning Environment

Initiating	Almost all schools and education facilities are physically inaccessible for children with disabilities.
Developing	Government has started drafting a national guideline/policy to guarantee all school buildings, facilities, resources and services are accessible to all learners. Some schools have been reconstructed to comply with accessibility standards following the principles of universal design.
Establishing	National guidelines based on universal design are in place to ensure that students with disabilities have full equitable access to buildings, facilities, resources, and services. It supports schools to have accessible classrooms and/or reasonable accommodations that remove all physical barriers (including accessible toilets and recreation areas) for children with disabilities.
Championing	National guidelines based on universal design are in place to ensure that students with disabilities have full equitable access to buildings, facilities, resources, and services. School infrastructures are assessed based on the principles of UDL. Needed adjustments are included in the school improvement plan.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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### 4.2 Safe and Child-friendly Learning Environment

Initiating	The Government acknowledges the importance of developing inclusive school communities to tackle stigmatisation, bullying, abuse and discrimination but guidance is weak or still based partly on the medical model of disability.
Developing	The Ministry of Education has in place procedures for safeguarding the rights of children but are not widely implemented.
Establishing	The Ministry of Education has institutionalised procedures for safeguarding the rights of children based on the principles of inclusion and equity. Effective measures to prevent abuse and bullying are in place at the school level.
Championing	The Ministry of Education has institutionalised procedures for safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse and ensuring child protection. Effective measures to prevent abuse and bullying are in place. Programmes aimed at creating inclusive, safe and positive learning environments in the schools are implemented. The Ministry reinforces peer group in learning, building positive relationships, peer to peer mentoring and coaching, friendships and setting out strategies to tackle stigmatisation at the school level. All children's learning needs are supported in the classrooms and are enabled to feel safe, supported, stimulated and able to express themselves as part of a positive and inclusive school community.



I'm not sure  
(please explain why)

Comments:

## 5. Effective Transitions

Learners with disabilities have the same rights to non-segregated education and lifelong learning as their non-disabled peers. Governments must set out accommodations and adaptations to ensure this takes place in an equitable manner. Children and young people with disabilities should receive the necessary support to transition from early intervention services to early childhood education, to basic education, vocational and tertiary education, and finally to work. Assessment and examinations are adapted according to the principles of universal quality educational design (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Evidence from research and experience of many countries show that investing in early childhood development, especially for children with developmental delays or with disabilities increases the likelihood that children become healthy and productive adults (WHO & UNICEF, 2012). Provision of inclusive early childhood education offers children with disabilities opportunities for optimal growth through child-focused learning, play, participation, peer interaction and formation of friendships (WHO & UNICEF, 2012). This mapping focuses on national programmes which address transition from early childhood care and education to primary education.

**Please rate your country according to the indicators described below.**

### 5.1 Early Intervention and Support Services

Initiating	The government recognises the importance of early intervention but is unclear on a systemic approach to multi-sector involvement, multi-disciplinary assessment and a continuum of provision which covers all age ranges from birth to school age.
Developing	Discussions on developing a multi-sector plan/programme has been undertaken, participated by government departments concerned with children with disabilities. Some form of early intervention services but access for children with disabilities remain limited.
Establishing	A national programme is in place and widely available which ensures accessibility of early intervention services for families of children with disabilities.
Championing	A national programme is in place and widely available which ensures accessibility of early intervention services for families of children with disabilities. Government mechanisms are in place to support or strengthen cross-sector systems for early intervention services. Ministry of Education facilitates access of children with disabilities to specialists on inclusive education, speech and occupational therapists and other support services.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

## 5.2 Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Initiating	ECD and ECCE programmes largely exclude children with disabilities.
Developing	Planning and discussions to review ECD and ECCE programmes to be more inclusive are taking place.
Establishing	Government has a comprehensive and inclusive ECD and ECCE programme.
Championing	The government is implementing a comprehensive ECD and ECCE programme linked with early identification, assessment, early intervention planning, and provision of specialised services.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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## 5.3 Transition from Early Childhood Care and Education to Primary Education

Initiating	There are no mechanisms in place to ensure children with disabilities transition from ECCE to primary education.
Developing	Planning and discussions are taking place to formulate a strategy to support the effective transition from ECCE to primary education for children with disabilities.
Establishing	The Ministry of Education provides accommodations and adaptations to ensure children with disabilities transition from early childhood care and education to primary education.
Championing	The Ministry of Education provides accommodations and adaptations to ensure children with disabilities transition from early childhood care and education to primary education. This is enshrined in a national policy. Collaboration among ECCE providers and primary schools are well established.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

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## 6. Partnerships

The realisation of inclusive education entails a multi-sectoral commitment and accountability across government at all levels of the society. The GC4 mandates all relevant ministries, commissions to work collaboratively towards advancing inclusion. Governments must forge partnerships with civil society organisations and encourage active participation of children with disabilities and their families through Disabled Peoples Organisations (OPDs). 'Teacher associations, student associations and federations and Disabled Peoples Organisations (OPDs), school boards, parent-teacher associations, and other functioning school support groups, both formal and informal, are all encouraged to increase their understanding and knowledge of inclusive education. Involvement of parents/caregivers and the community must be viewed as assets with resources and strengths to contribute. The relationship between the learning environment and the wider community must be recognised as a route towards inclusive societies' (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

**Please rate your country according to the indicators described below.**

**6.1 Cross-sectoral Coordination**

Initiating	There is no system/mechanism for cross-sectoral coordination among government departments (such as health and social protection) relating to education and support for children with disabilities.
Developing	The Ministry of Education is initiating the establishment of a system/mechanism for cross-sectoral coordination which sets out clear responsibilities of government departments (such as health, social protection, specialised services) relating to education and support for children with disabilities.
Establishing	The Ministry of Education has an established working system for cross-sectoral coordination (such as health and social protection, specialised services) which sets out clear responsibilities among government departments relating to education for children with disabilities including the development of multi-disciplinary support services for children with disabilities.
Championing	The Ministry of Education has an established and working system for coordination among government departments (such as health and social protection, specialised services) which sets out clear responsibilities relating to education for children with disabilities. Multi-disciplinary support services for children with disabilities are established and providing support to children with disabilities in non-segregated inclusive schools.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

**6.2 Coordination between National and Local Education Units**

Initiating	There is no system/mechanism for coordination between schools and higher education units of the government.
Developing	There is a system/mechanism for coordination between schools and higher education units of the government. However, implementation could be improved.
Establishing	The Ministry of Education has an established mechanism for coordination between national and local education government units, down to the school level. The mechanism enables the regular exchange of information.
Championing	The Ministry of Education has an established mechanism for coordination between national and local education government units, up to the school level. The mechanism promotes regular consultation, increases collaboration and enhances planning and monitoring of the quality of services for children with disabilities
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

**6.3 Participation of Civil Society / Disabled Peoples' Organisations**

Initiating	Participation of CSOs/OPDs in programmes relating to education of children with disabilities is low and need to be strengthened.
Developing	The government has taken initial steps to increase the participation of CSOs/OPDs in programmes relating to children with disabilities.

Establishing	Legislation, policy and national programmes relating to children with disabilities have been developed through extensive consultation with Disabled Peoples' Organisations. Partnerships with CSOs are established.
Championing	Legislation, policy and national programmes relating to children with disabilities have been developed through extensive consultation with Disabled Peoples Organisations. CSOs are actively involved in the implementation of inclusive education. Policies and programmes place children with disabilities and their families at the centre of all support processes and ensure that they are fully involved in all decisions and plans regarding children with disabilities.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

## 7. Data and Monitoring

Lack of reliable data on disability and education of learners with disabilities is one of the major barriers that hinder successful inclusion. Robust data and evidence must be collected to inform planning, programming and ensure accountability among government units. As a continuing process, inclusive education must be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that segregation or integration is not happening either formally or informally. Monitoring should involve persons with disabilities, including children and persons with intensive support requirements, through OPDs, as well as parents or caregivers of children with disabilities, where appropriate. Governments must commit to improving identification systems, include disability data in education information management systems, use standardised methodologies and tools based on the ICF, and generate reports using disability-inclusive indicators.

**Please rate your country according to the indicators described below.**

### 7.1 Identification System

Initiating	Multi-disciplinary identification systems for children with disabilities have not been established. There is limited understanding of the ICF. Definitions of disability and inclusion are not clear at the national level.
Developing	There is an existing identification system. The government is working towards aligning the system with the ICF and ensuring that it is cross-sector and is based on the involvement of multi-disciplinary professionals.
Establishing	The government has established an identification system aligned with the ICF which is cross-sector, involving line ministries for Health, Social Protection and Education and aims to ensure that identification of children with disabilities is based on the involvement of multi-disciplinary professionals.
Championing	The government utilises identification systems aligned with the ICF. The system is cross-sector, involving line ministries for Health, Social Protection and Education and identification of children with disabilities is based on the involvement of multi-disciplinary professionals.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

## 7.2 Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Initiating	There are no data on children with disabilities in the routine EMIS.
Developing	There are some data on children with disabilities in the school system, but it is characterised by medical diagnosis. No reports on enrolment of children with disabilities are produced, except for special schools.
Establishing	There are some data on children with disabilities in the school system, but it is characterised by medical diagnosis. Reports are produced on enrolment and achievement of children with disabilities.
Championing	The routine EMIS contains data on children with disabilities, using ICF based definitions of disability. Reports are produced on enrolment and achievement of children with disabilities based on assessments which have been adapted according to universal design principles.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

## 7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation System

Initiating	There are limited arrangements for monitoring the participation and achievement of all learners. The main source of information on children with disabilities is national surveys which are based on medical definitions of disability and do not report sufficient data on the type and quality of education provision for children with disabilities. Discussions are ongoing to address this.
Developing	The government has a system for monitoring the education quality and achievement of learners and is starting to improve the system to include data on children with disabilities. However, there are still references to the medical definitions of disability in surveys and identification systems and there is no development of disability-inclusive indicators.
Establishing	The government has a system in place to monitor the participation and achievement of all learners, including children with disabilities within the education system. Surveys and screening processes are aligned with the ICF. Disability-Inclusive Indicators are being developed which are aligned to the 2030 SDGs.
Championing	The government has a working system in place to monitor the participation and achievement of all learners, including children with disabilities within the education system. Disability inclusive Indicators aligned to the 2030 SDGs. are used and reports are produced on children with disabilities. The country involves people and children with disabilities and other marginalised groups as well as their families and caregivers in monitoring.
I'm not sure (please explain why)	

Comments:

Final Comments

Do you have any final comments or reflections?



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សៀវភៅ ដែល យើង បាន

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# Notes

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