

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Including children with disabilities in quality
learning: what needs to be done?

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The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognizes the right to inclusive education for all persons with disabilities. But what does this actually mean? And what measures are needed to make it a reality?

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has produced a 'General Comment' on education - a document that explains what inclusive education means and sets out in detail what governments must do to make sure it happens.

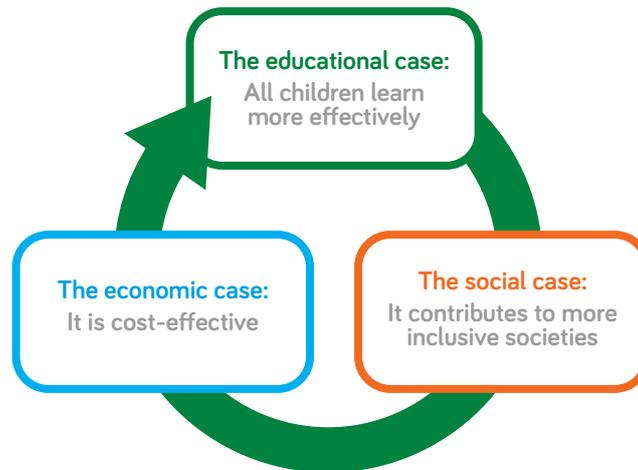
This document provides guidance on what Governments can do to create inclusive education systems.

What is inclusive education?

An education system that includes **all** students, and welcomes and supports them to learn, whoever they are and whatever their abilities or requirements. This means making sure that teaching and the curriculum, school buildings, classrooms, play areas, transport and toilets are appropriate for **all** children at all levels. Inclusive education means all children learn together in the same schools.

No-one should be excluded. Every child has a right to inclusive education, including children with disabilities.

Why is inclusive education important?



- It improves learning for all children – both those with and without disabilities.
- It promotes understanding, reduces prejudice and strengthens social integration.
- It ensures that children with disabilities are equipped to work and contribute economically and socially to their communities.

Inclusive education is connected to children with disabilities realizing other rights.

All human rights are interlinked. This includes the right to education. It is not possible to achieve an effective education unless other rights are realized. And if the right to education is fulfilled, it leads to the realization of other rights.



Governments should think about inclusive education alongside other children's rights. It cannot be introduced in isolation.

Inclusive education systems

Inclusive education involves transforming the whole education system - legislation and policy, systems for financing, administration, design, delivery and monitoring of education, and the way schools are organized.

It requires:



- **Commitment and investments from education ministries** – it takes time and money to change systems.
- **Support for teachers and students** – teachers need training and guidance, and students need to be provided with services to overcome barriers to learning.
- **Promotion of respect for diversity and inclusive learning** – action is needed to challenge negative attitudes and prejudice against children with disabilities.
- **High expectations of all students** – teachers need to invest in and support all children.
- **Safe and inclusive environments** – children cannot learn if they are frightened either of teachers or bullying from other children.
- **Partnerships between parents, organisations of people with disabilities and schools** – inclusive education will benefit from the widest possible experience and knowledge.
- **Systems to monitor progress** – it is vital to measure whether the situation is improving, and if not, what further changes are needed.

Requirements to make inclusive education happen

- An end to discrimination
- An end to excluding children with disabilities
- Access to primary and secondary education – with sufficient numbers of accessible and inclusive schools, including for children with disabilities caught in crisis and emergencies.
- Practical support or adaptations for students to enable them to learn – this is called '*reasonable accommodation*.'
- Individual education plans for children with disabilities setting out what accommodations and support they need.

- Services for specific impairments such as learning braille or sign language, classroom re-organization and accessible learning materials.
- Teachers adequately trained to work in inclusive schools.

A checklist of actions governments must take to make inclusive education a reality

- ✓ Commit all government departments to work towards inclusion
- ✓ Introduce laws and policies to end discrimination and guarantee the right to inclusive education
- ✓ Make a plan of action and timetable for introducing inclusive education
- ✓ Make money and resources available to enable the transition to inclusion
- ✓ Collect information and measure progress
- ✓ Bring an end to institutions for children with disabilities
- ✓ Provide early childhood care and education
- ✓ Provide teacher training for inclusive education.
- ✓ Introduce inclusive testing and assessment
- ✓ Introduce complaints procedures

States should be working as quickly as possible towards a full inclusive education system. This is called **progressive realization**. They should not do anything that slows progress or prevents this from happening without very good reason.

Although not everything may be possible straight away, there are certain things that States should act on immediately:

- Compulsory, free primary education for all children
- Non-discrimination: removing any forms of discrimination that stop people with disabilities from getting an education
- Reasonable accommodation: making adjustments to meet individual needs

For more information on inclusive education

1. General Comment No 4, Right to Inclusive Education. You can get hold of it at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/4&Lang=en It is available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. It is also available in word and pdf formats.
2. UNICEF has developed resources to support ministries of education to implement inclusive education: UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Inclusive Education Portal <http://www.inclusive-education.org/basic-page/inclusive-education-booklets-and-webinars>
3. The World of Inclusion website provides a large number of resources on inclusion: <http://worldofinclusion.com/resources/>

