



## Disability and education: The longest road to inclusion

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### ABSTRACT

Children with disabilities are one of the many groups of children still not enrolled in primary education in developing countries. However, their educational exclusion and right to education are now receiving more policy attention. This paper reviews some of the key issues and challenges in relation to disability, education and development: definitions and data, policies, service delivery and finance, and capacity development. Drawing on a review of education sector planning and provision in 28 developing countries and other literature, the paper makes comparative reference to policy and practice in a number of developed and developing country contexts.

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### 1. Introduction

The 2008 Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, published mid-way between the Dakar World Education Forum of 2000 and the EFA target date of 2015, notes the substantial progress made towards universal enrolment and gender parity in primary education in developing countries. Progress has also been made on access to secondary education. However over 69 million children are still out of primary school, the quality of learning in many countries remains low and many significant social, geographic and other inequities remain, including those associated with disability (UNESCO, 2007, 2011).

Until recently, the impact of disability has been somewhat neglected in relation to education in the global south. But several factors are now contributing to a change in this situation. First, progress on general enrolment is enabling more attention to be given to children who are harder to reach, many of whom are disabled. Second, there is increasing awareness that universal primary education will only be achieved if the participation in schooling of such children is secured. Third, there is more recognition of the rights of people with disabilities, including the right of children with disabilities to education, due to advocacy at both national and international levels. Fourth, there have been associated changes in attitudes towards people with disabilities and their capabilities. Finally, an increasing emphasis on rights and inclusion in relation to disability in northern countries is having some influence on approaches to development, including in relation to education.

However, there are many gaps in policy and provision, and disability remains a significant factor in exclusion from schooling.

For example, as noted in our report for the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) in 2007,<sup>1</sup> it has been estimated that about one-third of the remaining children out of school are disabled, with fewer than 10% of children with disabilities in Africa attending school (World Vision, 2007:3). This report also concluded that out of 28 education sector plans endorsed by the FTI at that time, only 10 could be considered as having sound policy commitments and plans in relation to disability and education. A further 13 plans made some mention of disability issues and/or future strategies but 5 did not give any consideration to children with disabilities. Donor country comments on disability issues in plans made as part of the process of FTI endorsement were also limited or non-existent (World Vision, 2007:24, 21).

But even in those northern countries which could be considered to have addressed policy and provision for children with disabilities in a more comprehensive way, many inequities, and policy and resource dilemmas, remain. Advancing the inclusion in education of children with disabilities in all countries requires consideration of a number of complex issues surrounding definitions and data, policies, service delivery and finance, and capacity development. This paper will consider these issues in more detail, with comparative reference to policy and practice in a number of countries in the global south and to some countries in the north.

### 2. Definitions and data

Robust data across all countries are difficult to obtain, partly because of limited collection of information on disability and on

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the World Vision UK publication 'Education's Missing Millions: including disabled children in education through EFA FTI processes and national sector plans', which was researched and written by Hazel Bines and edited by Philippa Lei.

the educational participation of children with disabilities in southern countries and partly because definitions and contexts of disability vary across countries. Earlier approaches generally relied on a medical diagnosis, but disability is now generally defined in terms of the consequence for functionality of a physical, sensory or cognitive impairment and impact on social participation, including the barriers to such participation in particular societies. This social model is increasingly deployed in order to articulate both the interactive nature of disability, individual circumstances, physical and social environments, and the social consequences of many disabilities. In relation to development, it is also increasingly recognised that disability is closely related to poverty and to social exclusion. For example, a policy paper from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) defines disability as a 'long-term impairment leading to social and economic disadvantages, denial of rights and limited opportunities to play an equal part in the life of the community' (DFID, 2000:2). The same paper also emphasises the causal relationships between disadvantage and disability, including the impact on prevalence of poor nutrition, limited health care, conflict and natural disasters (DFID, 2000:3).

Within education, there has also been a gradual shift from medical to social models of disability. However, responses to the impact of impairments on children's learning still tend to focus on consequent individual learning needs rather than the school and societal environment. As will shortly be discussed in relation to policies, there is now more emphasis on inclusive schooling. However this may refer more to educating disabled children alongside their peers rather than recognising the impact which poor or inappropriate educational provision may have on learning and the need to develop schools to become more inclusive through acknowledging, and providing for, diversity.

Definitional debates and changes in northern countries have also had some impact on how disability is approached internationally. There has been a drive in some northern countries such as the UK to break down discrete and inflexible categorisations of disability through employing the more general concept of 'special educational need'. There has also been more emphasis on the range of learning and other difficulties presented by children, which may not be obviously linked to physical, sensory or intellectual impairment. Most commonly these concern limited or slow acquisition of reading and other skills and a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Thus, in countries such as the UK, recent policy has been based on an assumption that up to one in five of children may have a 'special educational need' at some time during their education. Although most provision in southern countries has focused to date on physical, sensory and intellectual impairments, this broader definition is having some impact, including adoption of similar terminology. However, some significant differences remain between northern and southern countries due to differences in health care and technology. In northern countries, the consequences for learning and other functions of certain impairments may be mediated by medical interventions and/or assistive devices not available in the south. At the same time, better health care also keeps alive in the north children who would normally die in southern countries, thus generating a higher demand for more specialist health and educational provision and expertise.

Definitions of disability and special educational need may therefore have very different educational import in different countries, leading to problems of data comparison. In addition, collection of data on disability is still at an early stage in many southern countries. Nevertheless, the United Nations has estimated there are 650 million people with disabilities worldwide, the majority of whom live in southern countries and of which about one-third are children (World Bank, 2007:3). As noted in the

introduction to this paper, it has also been estimated that about one third of the remaining children out of school are disabled, with fewer than 10% of children with disabilities in Africa attending school (World Vision, 2007:3). The UNESCO 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report noted that children with disabilities are much less likely than their peers to be in school (UNESCO, 2007:48). Filmer (2005) has suggested that the gap in school participation between children with and without disabilities is now larger than those associated with gender, rural residence or family wealth. Although robust data may not yet be available across all countries, there is sufficient indication of the need in many countries to address the educational participation of disabled children as a policy priority.

### 3. Policies

Three distinct (though often overlapping) approaches to policies on disability and education can be identified, based respectively on charity/welfare, rights and equity and utility (societal benefit and/or educational efficiency). Of these, charity is the most traditional and although increasingly less espoused now as an overt basis for policymaking, it was the basis for establishing many special schools in the past in both northern and southern countries and can still have an influence on both attitudes and provision. The associated welfare approach, which originated with the replacement of non-state charity by public service provision, is characterised by the assumption that an individual identified as having a 'need' would have that need met by the state. Approaches based on rights and equity are more recent, and can be linked to both international declarations on the rights of children, people with disabilities and other groups, and to dissatisfaction with the charity/welfare model's view of people with disabilities as passive recipients of benevolence and benefits. Approaches based on the utility of societal benefit and/or educational efficiency are usually put forward as additional and complementary rationales, most often to reinforce issues of rights and equity. Socially, they aim to demonstrate that it is in everyone's interest to improve policies and make more provision for people with disabilities, in order to increase economic productivity and reduce poverty and/or enhance social cohesion. Education has a role to play in this, while educating children with disabilities alongside their peers is argued as being likely both to be cheaper and to improve education for all children as education strategies necessary to include disabled children in learning improve learning for all children. Many programmes have shown these benefits. For example, in South East Europe teachers have collaborated on ways to support disabled children and produce their individual work plans, and this has promoted active, child-centred learning across their classes. In the Middle East and North Africa teachers have used tools such as the Index for Inclusion to improve school culture, infrastructure and teaching methods and so ensure that all children are welcomed and supported. In Lesotho, teachers who adopted inclusive approaches said this helped them improve school for all learners and made them 'better teachers'.<sup>2</sup> As such, inclusive education strategies are intrinsically linked with education quality.

In relation to disability and education in southern countries, approaches based on rights and equity have been both framed and strengthened by a number of international declarations, from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 to the most recent UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) which requires that:

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Handicap International, Sightsavers International and World Vision UK (2007) 'Getting Disabled Children into School: what donor governments must do to achieve Universal Primary Education' Policy briefing April 2007. All examples taken from the Enabling Education Network – [www.eenet.org.uk](http://www.eenet.org.uk).

States Parties... shall ensure that... persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live... receive the support required within the general education system to facilitate their effective education... are able to access tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning... (Article 24).

There is an emphasis here on both the right to education per se and to equity and inclusion in the main school system as part of that right. It is however interesting to note that most education sector plans in developing countries do not make explicit reference to these rights frameworks. Rather, the emphasis is on increasing the participation of children with disabilities (or those defined as having special educational needs, which is a more common terminology in such plans) as part of the strategy to achieve Education For All and the Millennium Development Goal 2 of universal primary education (World Vision, 2007:27). Although EFA and the MDGs are also concerned with rights and equity, it does seem that use of a rights framework for disability and education is implicit rather than explicit, and that the strongest political and policy link currently in developing countries is to particular international educational targets. It is also interesting to note a similar lack of an explicit rights basis in northern countries though some civil rights links in the US and disability discrimination legislation in the UK (DDA, 1995, 2005) and elsewhere, are now having a significant impact, in terms of access to public buildings, public transport and other public services, most importantly schools.

Yet rights may be more of a policy driver than appears to be the case, once consideration is given to the means through which access to education for children with disabilities is to be achieved, namely through inclusive education, based on a social, rather than a medical model of disablement, focusing on the barriers to inclusion, and no longer seeing impairment as the problem. As noted in a number of analyses, inclusion has become a dominant concept in both the literature and in policies, gaining currency and legitimacy through both international declarations and adoption as a policy basis in a number of countries. However, it is a complex issue and there is no one coherent approach. Rather, it involves a number of different goals and types of service provision and this applies in both northern and southern contexts (Peters, 2004; Singal, 2006).

Inclusion as an international policy basis was developed in the international Salamanca Statement of 1994 (UNESCO, 1994), which emphasised the importance of regular schools with an inclusive orientation as the best means of building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. It has since been developed as a concept in a number of ways. The UNESCO Guidelines for Inclusion define inclusion as being concerned with the right to non-discriminatory provision and a conviction that schools have a responsibility to educate all children. It also involves addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners and identifying and removing attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers to participation and learning (UNESCO, 2005). In most of the literature, inclusion is also seen as a process rather than a fixed state and to be beneficial for all learners.

However, it can be suggested that the origin and subsequent application of this concept differ according to country. In northern countries such as the UK, inclusion was developed as a counter to separate special educational provision alongside mainstream schooling (e.g., Dessent, 1987; Thomas et al., 1998; Hart et al., 2004). The broader benefits for all children were emphasised in the development of remedial provision into cross-curricular learning support for children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, involving changes in mainstream curricula and pedago-

gies as well as the continuing provision of individual learning interventions for particular pupils (Bines, 1986; Clark et al., 1995; Booth et al., 1992). Inclusion has thus been a response to the segregation of pupils as well as their teachers in both special and mainstream settings. As noted by Giffard-Lindsay, in the south, where coverage of special schooling is more limited, 'the discourse is concerned with inclusion being potentially the most cost and time-efficient way of improving access to educational institutions' (2007:5). Although reference may be made to rights and equity, the utility-related benefits are therefore particularly stressed. This trend can also be particularly identified in reports associated with various donor agencies, particularly the World Bank (e.g., Peters, 2004; Jonsson and Wiman, 2001). There is also an additional concern that developing countries should not mirror the development of special schooling, and then have to tackle subsequent de-segregation, as has happened in the north.

There is a further and very important difference between northern and southern countries in relation to how inclusive education is used in policy making. As Giffard-Lindsay goes on to note, inclusion in developing countries tends to be more broadly concerned with school access for a wider range of children than in the north, including girls, and children from ethnic minorities, poor and remote communities, as well as disabled children (Giffard-Lindsay, 2007:4). Though there are notable exceptions, for example, India (Singal, 2009), this point is well illustrated in the analysis of education sector plans in our report. For example, the education sector plan for Cambodia makes a commitment to inclusive education as part of 'child friendly schooling' but sees disability as just one cross-cutting issue to be pursued under this alongside issues of gender and ethnic minorities. Ghana's plan commits to an inclusive education system by 2015 in addition to focusing on increased enrolment of children with 'special educational needs' and Guinea identifies inclusive education with equity policies focused on poverty, urban/rural divide and girls education (World Vision, 2007). Indeed it could be suggested that these other groups of out-of-school or otherwise disadvantaged children have been the main focus of the drive to inclusion in developing countries, with children with disabilities, until recently, being somewhat neglected as a significant group. Inclusion in the global south is thus primarily concerned with access to schooling per se, whereas in the north it is more concerned with access to non-segregated schooling.

We have given the attention above to such differences between northern and southern approaches and developments, since lack of understanding of context, and history, can sometimes become a problem in policy implementation in developing countries, particularly where this is heavily influenced by donor agencies. As will be discussed in more detail below, a concern not to mirror the separate provision of the north can lead to an insistence on institutional change that is difficult to implement in settings where capacity is not always available to provide fully inclusive education. It can also be suggested that the international focus on rights does need to be complemented with advocacy on the utility, and in particular the efficiency, of inclusion, as this could have a powerful effect on governments seeking to achieve universal primary education with their more limited resources. Our review of country education sector plans (World Vision, 2007), and the points made by Giffard-Lindsay (2007) and others, also suggest that stronger links with other forms of exclusion could lead to greater policy impact.

It is also important to recognise, as noted earlier, that although inclusion may now dominate the discourse, it may still take many forms in particular countries. In particular, as Singal (2006) notes in relation to India, there can be an ongoing conflation of inclusion and integration, and a continuing individualisation of disability, which then tends to undermine recognition of the need for broader

institutional, curricular and pedagogical change to develop more inclusive education. There may also be conflation between inclusion in the education system as a whole, through a variety of provision options, and inclusion in local regular schooling, which is the more standard international interpretation. This may be due in part to insufficient theoretical and policy clarity internationally and in individual countries in relation to the concept of inclusion. It may also be linked to the challenges involved in implementing inclusion, to which we will now turn.

#### 4. Service delivery and finance

Despite increasing interest in disability and education in southern countries, there is as yet limited information on planning and provision across all countries and few detailed studies of the processes of developing more inclusive schools. Most of the information available comprises either that available in ministry planning documents, or practical guidelines on developing inclusion from various development agencies or summary, largely desk-based surveys, of the available literature, or short, practice-oriented accounts of particular initiatives. In many instances, provision in individual countries does not seem to be documented even for planning purposes.

In our review of the education sector plans of 28 countries as endorsed by the FTI (World Vision, 2007), not all plans made reference to more detailed policies which had been developed on inclusion while in relation to provision, information was provided on special schools and units but only rarely on how regular schools were operating in relation to inclusion. For example, Ghana's plan, although setting targets for the enrolment of children with special educational needs, training, better access to school buildings and inclusion of most children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, does not detail current provision or how the increased budget will be spent. While Ethiopia's plan, alongside which there is a more detailed special needs education policy focusing on inclusion, Kenya's plan and Lesotho's plan, make only cursory reference to current provision. And other countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal make no reference at all (World Vision, 2007:Appendix 4).

In relation to countries in Asia, while Mongolia's plan contains very little data on current specialist or inclusive provision, both Cambodia's and Vietnam's plans contain none. However, these two latter documents have been supplemented by more detailed national plans on inclusive education, which do make further reference to existing and planned provision. Cambodia's 2007 National Policy on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities includes plans for curriculum modification and teacher training, while Vietnam's National Inclusive Education Strategy, 2006–2015 mentions existing special schools and proposes 'full service schools' for the education of pre- and primary children experiencing 'complex barriers to development', school clusters and outreach services. Both the Kyrgyz Republic's and Tajikistan's plans make no mention of education provision for children with disabilities in mainstream schools but some mention of specialist provision. The Kyrgyz Republic's plan identifies 19 special schools providing education and training for 3000 children with various special needs, of which 14 are boarding schools, and Tajikistan's plan makes mention of special schools and the lack of resources leading to closures of orphanages and schools for children with disabilities (World Vision, 2007). There seems to be most information about India (which was not reviewed as part of the World Vision study as it has not submitted an education sector plan to the FTI for endorsement). A number of government education initiatives have focused on or included disabled children, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Elementary Education for All) programme, and there is a range of NGO and private

provision, both special and 'inclusive' but much of which is focused on one particular type of disability. As in other countries, robust data are not yet available on the incidence, and the school participation, of disabled children. However, there are a number of analytical papers available internationally, for example Singal (2006) and Giffard-Lindsay (2007).

Where data are available, they illustrate the challenge of developing inclusive education from the limited size and range of current provision. For example, Mozambique has identified planning for the development of three resource centres in a context of over 3 million primary enrolments, while Ethiopia has only 285 special classes, 15 special schools and an unknown number of regular primary schools which include some disabled pupils in relation to the plan's prediction of up to 3 million children of school age who may present some form of special educational need (World Vision, 2007). The numbers in India are also daunting, although they need to be considered in the context of one of the largest systems of education in the world. The need to develop an effective (quality, time and cost) approach to inclusive education is therefore critical. Yet few models have been comprehensively tested in practice in developing countries. Most actual and documented experience of system reform and management still comes from northern contexts, which may not be particularly apposite for all countries.

However, three key and common issues for service delivery can be identified, which have been, or need to be, configured in particular ways in particular countries. Such issues are also linked closely to the financing of services. They centre on the continuum between: (a) inclusive, twin track and separate models of provision; (b) the 'child-based' and the 'service' model; (c) national and decentralised responsibilities for policy, provision and financing.

As noted earlier, policy and provision in many northern countries are now based, at least in policy terms, on inclusion, as a way of both reducing separate special provision and responding to the range of learning needs in regular schools, although separated special schooling remains in many such countries, and may be increasing in some instances e.g. for certain emotional and behavioural difficulties. Strategies to effect transition to more inclusive provision in countries such as the UK have included: co-location of special and mainstream schools in order to increase social interaction and inclusion of pupils in special settings in some mainstream classes; development of special schools as centres of specialist resources and expertise to support regular schools; provision of peripatetic advisory and support services; development of learning support in regular schools, particularly learning support/teaching assistants for individual pupils; school-based advisory and training support from specialist teachers to help classroom teachers adapt curricula, teaching methods and assessment for a diversity of learning needs; clustering of schools to share expertise and training (Stainback and Stainback, 1990; Lunt et al., 1994; Cade and Caffyn, 1994). In southern countries, special provision is very limited, and the policy choice centres on whether to develop inclusive regular schooling and/or provide some interim specialist provision, as a 'twin-track' approach. In addition, influenced in part by northern practice, some countries are remodelling some of their existing specialist provision, for example, increasing the interaction between special and regular schools, developing special schools as resource centres and providing some peripatetic support services.

These models are both facilitated and reinforced by particular approaches to, and formulae for, the allocation of funds. They can be characterised in terms of three basic types. Child-based formulae tie funding to the number of individual pupils identified as having a disability or special educational need. Such funding is then distributed, often through a mediating local authority but

sometimes directly, to the institution where such pupils are enrolled. Resource-based 'service' models base funding on services provided, for example additional funding for schools which include children with disabilities. In addition to these 'input' and 'throughput' models, consideration is being given to the development of 'output-based' approaches, with funding linked to student outcomes and institutional performance. However, this last is difficult to implement fairly and is not widely used (Peters, 2004:23–25).

Each of these funding models indicates the significant trend over the last twenty years towards the decentralisation of education systems in both northern and southern countries with decision-making powers moving increasingly to local authorities and individual education institutions. As intimated above, a number of southern countries, such as Uganda, are beginning to make direct grants to schools as part of the decentralisation process. Such grants can be used to offer additional incentives to support inclusion without much increase in transaction costs through, for example, supporting greater accessibility in relation to school infrastructure, curricula and teaching methodologies.

This move towards decentralisation of education systems suggests that it is particularly important to identify the critical local service delivery unit which can then be developed as a locus for both resources allocation and capacity development in relation to inclusion. Some countries, such as Ghana, are developing school-level mechanisms to strengthen the role and capacity of individual schools in relation to children with disabilities. Other school-level strategies include the development of whole school policies on inclusion and at least one trained/specialist teacher per school, while wider local-level strategies include the provision of pedagogical and resource support to cluster schools.

In relation to policy, experience in higher and middle income countries suggests there should be both enabling and mandatory components to support inclusion. Enabling legislation, such as flexibility in curriculum and assessment frameworks, can encourage responsiveness and innovation at local level and the participation of families and communities in education planning and delivery. However, retaining certain statutory requirements may avoid the tendency for policy to be inappropriately modified by those implementing it in practice (see for example, Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977, on the US and Welton, 1989, on the UK).

Though there is no 'ideal model' for the inclusion of children with disabilities in education, lessons can be learnt from the experience of both southern and northern countries. Many of these have taken a twin track approach to service delivery to date and it may well be appropriate to continue to maintain some specialized provision until more inclusive practice, and support for it, is developed in regular schools in both contexts. However, in many southern countries most special schools are located in urban areas and increases in enrolment of children with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, will need different models due to the cost and practicalities of having separate provision in more remote rural areas.

Whole school policies and planning in relation to inclusion have been found to be a useful tool in developing more inclusive schools in some northern countries and were made statutory in the UK in the 1990s (Bines, 1993). The Index for Inclusion (Booth et al., 2000), which has been used in a range of northern and southern countries, suggests that it is useful to think in terms of schools needing to foster an inclusive culture, develop inclusive policies and evolve inclusive practices and points to the importance of drawing on the wider resources of parents and the community to support inclusion. However, individual school development needs to be complemented by effective local/district management of more specialist resources. The key service delivery unit for inclusion may therefore be a cluster of schools that share specialist support/

expertise, professional training and other resources. Such clusters have been useful in countries such as the UK (Lunt et al., 1994) and Cambodia and can also draw on the expertise of special schools where available.

There is also a need to develop models of targeted financing which both encourage and facilitate inclusion and also dovetail with other funding mechanisms to minimise increases in transaction costs. As noted by Peters (2004), the issue may not be additional resources (though increased enrolment and improved quality and services will increase budgets) but rather the allocation and distribution of funds, including incentives (or disincentives) to progress inclusion. Service-resource based models, which provide additional support for the inclusive school rather than the individual student, are becoming the trend in some OECD countries and are likely to be most suitable for developing countries, where child data are limited and transaction costs need to be kept low. This suggests a useful approach may be an additional inclusion element in school capitation formulae/development grants. It is also critical to ensure that decentralisation does not result in major differences in resource entitlements. Monitoring expenditure and its outcomes, including impact on effectiveness, is thus very important.

## 5. Capacity development

Improving the quality of education is one of the main issues related to inclusion. In turn, building the capacity of the education system, and the stakeholders within it, to effectively respond to diversity is a key issue in improving education quality. A number of countries now have teacher training programmes on teaching approaches for children with disabilities but curriculum and assessment frameworks remain inflexible and methods such as multi-level instruction and peer support are still not widely used, often because of large class sizes, insufficient textbooks and other learning materials and/or lack of teacher expertise.

Our analysis of education sector plans and local initiatives on inclusion identified that key issues related to capacity include teachers' concepts of educability, the use of appropriate teaching approaches, availability and diversity of teaching materials, relatively simple improvements in school environments, working with communities, co-location of specialist units and regular schools, particular methodologies such as Child-to-Child, and liaison between Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes and the education sector (World Vision, 2007). Our analysis also identified a need for more dissemination of 'what works' in relation to inclusion. For example, in Zambia, the co-location of a special unit and a primary school has gradually led to integration of both sites, inclusion of the children from the special unit in the primary school and collaborative teaching. A Child-to-Child project, which twinned disabled and non-disabled children, in Kabale Primary School, Mpika, and involved 16 primary schools, two of which have units for children with learning difficulties and hearing impairments respectively, led to new teaching and learning materials for students and new strategies to include children from special units in the life of mainstream schools (EENET, 1999).

The capacity of education systems and schools to respond to disability can also be supported by harnessing the resources of parents and the wider community. For example, in India, the Institute of Cerebral Palsy has worked in slums in Kolkata (Calcutta) to train members of the family and community, particularly women, to help teach children and also train other family and community members, supported by a training package (Sen and Goldbart, 2005). The International Deaf Children's Society (IDCS) has worked with parents of children attending a school for the deaf in Somaliland and with both young deaf people and their

parents in Kazakhstan, liaising with the Kazakh Deaf Association to offer free sign language training for parents and supporting them in developing a communication guide, and encouraging both parents and young people to advocate for service improvements (IDCS, n.d.).

Training and other capacity development also needs to include head teachers, education officers and other administrators and managers, both for managing aspects of the system such as data analysis and school inspection, and also, particularly in the case of head teachers, so they can act as key facilitators in the development of more inclusive schools. Some teacher educators may also require additional training to ensure they model inclusive approaches and can draw on experience of inclusion in practice.

## 6. Conclusion

Among the policy rationales on disability and education outlined earlier in this paper, the evidence of the World Vision report suggests the importance of encouraging approaches based on rights and equity, with other arguments, particularly utility, brought into play as additional and complementary. Without seeking to privilege disability, this issue does raise the deepest of inclusion dilemmas and presents a challenge to all educators to reconsider their ideas about, for example, educability, the importance of more differentiation in the classroom and increasing access to skilled specialist support. These issues link to teacher capacity in particular and thus to quality as a fundamental concern.

The evidence in this paper, drawing on the World Vision report, suggests the importance of recognising differences between northern and southern contexts. These span differences in health care and technology, differences in definition of disability and special educational need and can lead to problems of data comparison. However the evidence also points towards the importance of developing more two-way learning between the global south and north.

First, the links made in many developing countries between inclusion and many different groups of children and forms of exclusion make a significant point of comparison with the trajectory of development in the north. Although policies on disability in the USA were influenced in part by the civil rights movement, links in other countries such as the UK between disability and other forms of exclusion have only recently been more explicitly made. In education in the UK in particular, despite the known links between socio-economic status and learning achievement, and increasing concern over the connections between pupils' behaviour and social exclusion, the connections between policy on 'special educational needs' and other equity issues remain tenuous.

Second, the localised aspects of approaches to the development of inclusive education are increasingly recognised as vital to the success of the inclusion project in developed and developing countries alike. Much depends on commitment at national and local level to a solution focused, problem solving culture in the journey towards inclusion (Rieser, 2008) which takes local conditions into account and fosters and supports family and community initiative.

Finally, the paper emphasises that though steps have been taken towards educational inclusion for children with disabilities across a number of countries in the north and south, the road to inclusion remains a long one. Central to success on this journey will be current efforts to refocus the international development agenda on issues of equity and implementation of commitments to proactively address marginalisation in education. The recommendations in the World Vision report provide a useful starting point for the FTI and its partners in putting these commitments into action and may be adopted or developed in different ways. The critical issue is policy commitment, with related actions, rather than one

particular model of inclusion. The issues may be complex and the road not one easily travelled but, as this paper has shown, approaches to inclusion for children with disabilities can be usefully informed by practice in countries in both the global south and north and international experience more generally.

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