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Evaluation of Norway's inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation

Desk report



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NIRAS Sweden

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Content

Foreword	4	3. Findings	24
Executive Summary	5	3.1. Organisational structure and key partners	25
1. Introduction	11	3.2. Policy level achievements	27
1.1. Background and aims	12	3.3. Implementation challenges observed by other studies	29
1.2. Context: Understanding disability inclusion	13	3.4. Factors influencing effectiveness and coherence	31
2. Approach and methodology, including limitations	16	3.5. Portfolio management	35
2.1. Evaluation questions	17	3.6. Aid administration performance	36
2.2. Approach	18	3.7. International partnerships and policy implementation	39
		3.8. Country level portfolio analysis	43
		3.9. Relevance in relation to national policies and processes	47
		3.10. Country level portfolio analysis results 2010-2020	49
		3.11. County level outputs/outcomes	52
		3.12. Sustainability through ownership	55
		4. Conclusions	57
		5. Recommendations	61
		Acronyms and abbreviations	64



Foreword

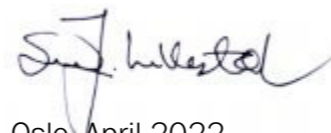
Over the last ten years, Norway has strengthened its commitment towards persons with disability in numerous ways. Norway ratified the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability in 2013 and is- together with the rest of the UN members states- committed to the Sustainable Development Agenda. In addition, Norway's commitment has been elevated through the adoption of two white papers on education and human rights. The most recent commitment was published in the form of a strategy called 'Equality for all'.

This evaluation report is the second in a series of three reports exploring Norway's efforts to include persons with disability in development cooperation. The report focuses on two issues: 1) the organization of and the capability of the Norwegian development administration to meet the normative commitments related to inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation and 2) country level results in the education sector in Nepal, Malawi, South Sudan, and Uganda. The report finds a positive development on the normative level but concludes that normative commitments on disability inclusion have not yet translated into practice.

The first report provided an overview of Norway's normative commitments and the budgetary allocations to include persons with disabilities in development cooperation over the period 2010-2019. While the third report will provide an indepth study of the achievements made and remaining challenges regarding inclusion of persons with disabilities in selected projects in Nepal and Malawi. This report will be finalised during the fall of 2022.

We hope that the findings in this report, both on its own and together with the other two reports, will provide useful inputs for the Norwegian aid administration in their endeavours to leave no one behind.

The evaluation was carried out by the consultancy agency NIRAS Sweden.



Oslo, April 2022

Siv J. Lillestøl

Acting Director, Department for Evaluation



Executive Summary

Overview

This evaluation was commissioned by Norad's Department for Evaluation. It is intended as a follow up of the evaluation of Norwegian efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities published in 2012 and it builds on the findings of the Mapping Study of disability inclusive disbursements and policy initiatives published at the start of 2021. The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- “Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational set up of the Norwegian aid administration to meet the commitments to disability inclusion”;
- “Assess and document the results of Norway's inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation” – with a particular focus on the education sector;

- “Identify lessons learnt that can contribute to improving the planning, organization and implementation of future interventions to better include persons with disabilities in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation”.

The report assesses the disability inclusion efforts made by the Norwegian aid administration and its key partners, during the period 2010-2020, with specific focus on the education sector generally and in Malawi, Nepal, South Sudan and Uganda in particular. Since many respondents refer to developments during 2021, these have been referred to when relevant. The next phase of the evaluation will look more at the programme/project level outcomes, progress towards sustainability and lessons at country level and will serve to triangulate some of the initial findings in this report.

The findings in the evaluation are based on an extensive document review, analyses of the statistical database and interviews with key respondents in Norad and the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as major partners in the education sector in Norway, internationally and in the four selected countries. The analysis of findings was made against three sets of partly overlapping frameworks:

- The evaluation questions primarily assessing relevance, effectiveness and coherence;
- The reconstructed theory of change, to determine if the underlying assumptions on how to achieve disability inclusion were valid and effective;
- Tailored frameworks to assess disability inclusion in the aid administration (drawing on the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy monitoring framework) and to assess progress towards inclusiveness of education systems in partner countries (drawing on the International Disability Alliance Inclusive Education criteria framework).



Findings

THE NORWEGIAN AID ADMINISTRATION

The organisational structure and capability of the Norwegian aid administration has generally not been able to effectively translate policies on disability inclusion into practice. The evaluation notes the following obstacles:

- Until very recently there was no strategy for disability inclusion. Notably the new strategy does not yet have an operational and monitoring framework or a budget.
- There is a lack of systems to facilitate and ensure compliance with disability inclusion objectives internally and consistently with all of Norway's partners.
- There is an absence of institutional structures to ensure strategic clarity and compliance with commitments to disability inclusion, which has led to a reliance on champions within the organisations and the political leadership.

- There are many levels of sub-granting to agencies with their own priorities and systems that further dilutes strategic direction.
- Knowledge and information systems exist to guide programming and support staff capacities, but they are insufficiently utilised.
- Disability inclusion has been given very limited attention in humanitarian assistance.
- Awareness of disability and its implications for addressing poverty, human rights and equity is uneven. This leads to inappropriate preconceptions (seeing disability as a health/medical issue) and attitudes that encourage 'flexibility' in adhering to commitments.
- An organisational culture prevails that accepts and perhaps underpins this 'flexibility' in adhering to policy commitments and ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated for disability inclusion in general and inclusive education in particular.

In sum, even in the education sector, which is the sector with the greatest share of disbursements to interventions with significant or principal focus on

disability (around 30%), there is limited evidence of a coordinated, systemic and strategic effort. The theory of change has provided broad goals, but the outcomes in terms of disability inclusion in the portfolios have ultimately depended on committed individuals or partners rather than strategic overall management.

DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Norway has sought to regularly champion the rights of persons with disabilities and disability inclusion in education and has been an active driver in global fora. The engagement in inclusive education broadly aligns with the Norwegian general policies and priorities for education and application of a human rights-based approach. The engagement has yielded some visible results at the global policy level, with increased commitments towards disability inclusion.

However, given that there are no strategy or targets associated with inclusive education and little systematic monitoring of results, it has been difficult for Norad/MFA to determine if the supported programmes are contributing towards these commitments. The tracking of the quantity and quality of inclusion of children with various disabilities on the ground has been hampered by poor data collection and monitoring mechanisms

– especially in the global level contributions to multilaterals. Models of good practice in local level pilots exist, where results have been tracked by Norwegian civil society organisations (CSOs). Positive outcomes have been found in the holistic “Inclusive Learning Approach” developed by the Norwegian Association of Disabled in collaboration with the Enabling Education Network. It is now used by a range of CSOs, including Redd Barna/Save the Children. Through community engagement and ownership and involvement of and accountability to organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), sustainability and relevance are being systematically pursued at local levels. However, these pilots are yet to be connected to national level efforts, such as the UNICEF supported education sector programmes and the monitoring and information system, which is being introduced in a range of countries.

COUNTRY LEVEL RESULTS

In both Nepal and Malawi, Norwegian bilateral support to the education sector and support to inclusive education has been a key priority. The share of education disbursements that have disability markers has been substantial, at around 60-80%. The support has been aligned with national education programmes

to ensure relevance and ownership in the national context. In Uganda, although the education sector has not been a strategic priority for Norway, the support has still been consistent and the share of education disbursements that have disability markers is around 50%. In South Sudan the education sector has been a priority since 2015, and in 2020 as much as 30% of education disbursements had a disability marker, due to the Together for Inclusion Initiative.

There is evidence at the country level that the bilateral education programmes supported by Norway have been consistently implemented through national coordination efforts, which has avoided duplication, especially in Nepal and Malawi. Norway has played an active role in supporting, coordinating with and adding value to support in the education sector in these countries alongside other actors. With regard to sustainability, both Nepal and Malawi indicate that the Norwegian support has enhanced national and local ownership for disability inclusion.

Norwegian support provided via the global multilaterals is generally not integrated with overall bilateral efforts. In both Malawi and Nepal, bilateral agreements have been entered with UNICEF, in addition to the global contributions. This may result in insufficient

coordination and coherence. In Nepal for example, both UNICEF and the Inclusive Education Initiative/ Multi-Donor Trust Fund (heavily funded by Norway at the global level) are active partners to the government in piloting various inclusive education efforts. These are not always coordinated with the Norwegian bilateral support – or known to partners.

Norwegian support to implementing partners has added value in the education sector, with contributions to policy level changes and successful pilot projects in inclusive education. Reporting from partners shows significant results in both Nepal and Malawi, while in Uganda there is evidence of some progress. In South Sudan, due to the short period of implementation, more limited progress has been made. Among Norway's global partners, the reporting is often output based, with the reported outcomes for persons with disabilities being either anecdotal or very minimal.

Regarding impact level results, the enrolment rates of children with disabilities are still low in all countries studied, ranging from below 1% in Nepal to 4% in Uganda. This indicates that the approaches taken so far have not yet addressed the key systemic obstacles to inclusion in these countries.



To assess if the supported programmes have a potential to contribute to such systemic changes, programme outcomes have been assessed against criteria of an inclusive school system according to International Disability Alliance. In very general terms it can be concluded that policy level reforms had often been achieved, while concrete implementation measures were lagging behind, including school accessibility, sign language environment, support services, prejudice and school culture. Examples include:

- **Nepal:** Laws and policy frameworks are largely in place and some aspects of inclusive education have been promoted, with Norway having played an active role with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and Save the Children/Redd Barna. Nonetheless, the upcoming sector plan includes construction of new special schools for children with disabilities. The general education quality in Nepal is low. Factors that hinder a successful development of inclusive education include poverty, topography/ infrastructure, cultural values and attitudes towards disability.
- **Malawi:** There has been progress in promoting inclusive education since 2017, which has

received further momentum since the development of the National Inclusive Education Strategy implementation plans and budget since 2020. The country struggles with a huge shortage of teachers and classrooms, which is a serious obstacle to realisation of an inclusive school system.

- **Uganda:** Despite progressive policy development, the focus remains on separate special needs education efforts in schools. Norway is perceived as an active advocate for inclusive education and has contributed via Save the Children/Redd Barna and Atlas Alliance to successful pilots.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on learners with disabilities who were already experiencing social and educational disadvantage, with as many as half of the estimated 65 million primary and lower secondary-school age children with disabilities in developing countries already out of school before COVID-19 and with learners with disabilities also least likely to benefit from distance learning solutions. COVID-19 also affected Norwegian disbursements to education and inclusive education negatively.

Conclusions

Within the Norwegian aid administration there has been an increase and steady support to disability inclusion since 2018. This has been largely due to strong political leadership and to individual champions working in the MFA/Norad/Embassies. However, commitment across the administration is uneven. Disability inclusion is not yet part of institutional norms and processes, with four key components missing:

- Consistent messaging across the leadership on disability inclusion as a key priority which is not optional.
- A strong strategic policy framework underpinning the communication, setting out a common approach to disability inclusion with operational objectives, targets and guidelines for different parts of the administration in terms of e.g., dialogue with partners, programme assessments and the design of projects and programmes.
- A tracking system for monitoring real progress for persons with disabilities in partner practices and in their respective programme and sub-granting outcomes.

- An institutional structure and internal systems to ensure that persons with disabilities are routinely considered, supported by capacity and human resource management to foster stronger and sustainable capacities across the administration.

The evaluation has not managed to track inclusive education results in the multilateral programmes supported by Norway during the period. The present monitoring and evaluation systems of the multilaterals are not designed to systematically track initiatives, budgets and results for girls and boys with disabilities – and Norway has not yet made it a condition for support.

Despite these strategic and administrative gaps, there is evidence of consistent efforts to support inclusive education through multilaterals and through Norwegian CSOs at the country level, particularly in Nepal and Malawi. This has been driven by individual champions in implementing partners, particularly Redd Barna/ Save the Children, UNICEF and Atlas Alliance/Together for Inclusion. With regards to coordination, this has been anchored in a strong sense of national ownership in Nepal and effective national coordination between donors in Malawi. In both countries there has clearly been progress made from inclusive education pilots at a sub-national level to the development of inclusive

education policy, through to initial steps towards national education sector level implementation of this policy. Nevertheless, the implementation is slow and the share of children with disabilities attending primary education remains low (1-4%) in these countries. Completion rates are even lower, indicating that progress is very slow in terms of actual implementation. The reason for this will be further explored in the next phase of the evaluation. It is already clear that an insufficiently holistic approach, addressing the multitude of obstacles to inclusive education simultaneously and the lack of a sufficiently long-term engagement appear to be key problems. Sustainability and relevance also require involvement of, and accountability to, OPDs. There are positive examples of efforts in this regard, but more systematic engagement with and capacity development of national level OPDs to enable them to take on a leading role is needed, especially in the multilateral programmes.

Recommendations

- Norway should develop an operational framework outlining how to achieve the commitments made in the new Strategy, including annual targets, tools and guidelines, human and financial resources and monitoring/tracking tools.
- The Norwegian leadership should consistently communicate that disability inclusion and the commitments made in the strategy are a priority, and not just an option.
- The capacity of the aid administration should be strengthened by employing disability experts in key functions, appointing disability focal points in key departments and formalising the role of the Disability Inclusion Network. The Network should be given a clear role in implementation of the new Strategy.
- The commitments made in the Strategy must be translated into explicit demands on partners to be disability inclusive, to track and report on outcomes for persons with disabilities and to be accountable to OPDs. This must be accompanied by capacity development efforts that empowers OPDs and rights



holders to engage meaningfully in co-creation of programmes and monitoring of results.

- There needs to be greater efforts to ensure that disability inclusion becomes part of core humanitarian commitments by Norway, especially in education. This includes acting on neglected existing commitments. The new Strategy is rather silent on this matter, suggesting that particular guidance is needed to fill this gap.
- A formal consultation platform between OPDs and the aid administration should be established in Norway. All programmes supported by Norway should ensure that national/local OPDs are invited to take part in planning and monitoring in a meaningful manner.
- The focus on policy level reforms supported by partners to promote inclusive education should be coupled with contextually relevant support measures, addressing the implementation obstacles identified using a holistic and long-term approach.



1

Introduction



1.1 Background and aims

This evaluation was commissioned by Norad's Department for Evaluation in 2021. It is intended as a follow up of the evaluation of Norwegian efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities published in 2012¹ and building on the findings of the Mapping Study published at the start of 2021². The report assesses the institutional set-up and the efforts made by the Norwegian aid administration to promote and ensure disability inclusion, by direct engagement, and through support to partners (Work Package 1), with specific focus on the education sector in general and the efforts made on the country level in Malawi, Nepal, South Sudan and Uganda, in particular (Work Package 2), as set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR) (Annex 1). After the completion of this step, it is intended that a third Work Package will follow, looking at the results and lessons learnt at the programme/ project level in Malawi and Nepal. The evaluation covers the period 2010-2020. However, as many respondents refer to important developments during 2021, these have been referred to when relevant.

The evaluation has been commissioned by the Department for Evaluation at Norad, with the main purpose, "to provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with information that can be used to improve future efforts to include persons with disabilities in Norwegian development and humanitarian assistance. " The objectives set out in the ToR (Annex 1) are to:

- "Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organizational set up of the Norwegian aid administration to meet the commitments to disability inclusion" - The Norwegian aid administration includes Norad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), embassies, and implementing agencies;
- "Assess and document the results of Norway's inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation" – with a particular focus on the education sector;
- "Identify lessons learnt that can contribute to improving the planning, organization and implementation of future interventions to better

include persons with disabilities in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation".

The 2011/12 Evaluation of Norway's efforts to promote the rights of persons with disabilities 2000-2010³ concluded that:

- Mainstreaming of disability had not been implemented despite a parliamentary decision to do so, as well as adoption of policy and development of guidelines in support of this decision. The examples of good practice seemed to depend on personal interest from individual staff members in MFA/ Norad rather than being institutionalised.
- Despite large resources being invested in the educational programs funded by Norway through multilateral, bilateral and civil society partners, children with disabilities had, with few exceptions, not been included even if the programmes were called 'inclusive'. In the main, 'inclusion' meant the inclusion of girls (especially at UNICEF). Sometimes 'inclusion' meant children in rural/poor areas, working children, children from ethnic minorities or

¹ Norad Department for Evaluation (2012) Mainstreaming disability in the new development paradigm. Evaluation of Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities 2000-2010

² Norad (2021) Mapping of Norwegian Efforts to include persons with disabilities in development cooperation 2010-2019

³ Norad Department for Evaluation (2012), Mainstreaming disability in the new development paradigm. Evaluation of Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities



low caste; it seldom meant inclusion of children with disabilities.

- Few programmes captured results that were disaggregated (except for gender). There were no explicit goals or targets for persons with disabilities and no disaggregated indicators or reporting from programmes. In education, enrolment rates were still the main indicator, while completion and retention rates would be more relevant indicators.

The current evaluation seeks to explore the extent to which these shortcomings have been addressed in guidance and capacity development since 2010. Specifically, the report looks at several recommendations that were made to address these gaps, focused particularly on leadership and management systems; enhancing the capacity of duty bearers and rights holders to engage; and, the establishment and use of disability specific goals, targets, indicators and budgets to underpin policy commitments.

This report covers the following:

- Understanding disability inclusion and context
- The approach and methodology, including limitations;

- The findings in relation to the key areas of analysis;
- Conclusions; and
- Recommendations.

1.2 Context: Understanding disability inclusion

The evaluation is informed by the understanding of disability inclusion as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD): “the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights into the work of the Organization, the development of disability-specific programmes and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”.

It is further informed by Article 24 of the CRPD and the CRPD Committee’s General Comment 4,⁴ which both entrench State parties’ obligation to ensure education systems at all levels are inclusive of people with disabilities and provide a framework for the design and delivery of inclusive education. The comment acknowledges that inclusive education is a progressive

right that will be implemented gradually according to contexts. There are, however, some minimum requirements:

- States parties must take urgent steps to remove all legal, administrative and other forms of discrimination impeding the right of access to inclusive education. The key elements of an inclusive legal and policy framework are detailed in the text. Failure to provide reasonable accommodation constitutes discrimination on disability grounds.
- States parties must take all appropriate measures to guarantee the right to compulsory and free primary education to all.
- States parties must adopt and implement a national educational strategy which includes provision of education at all levels for all learners, on the basis of inclusion and equality of opportunity.

⁴ UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner: Committee On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/GC.aspx>

Box 1. Article 24 of the CRPD and the CRPD Committee's General Comment 4

Exclusion occurs when students are directly or indirectly prevented from or denied access to education in any form. Segregation occurs when the education of students with disabilities is provided in separate environments designed or used to respond to a particular or various impairments, in isolation from students without disabilities. Integration is a process of placing persons with disabilities in existing mainstream educational institutions, as long as the former can adjust to the standardized requirements of such institutions.⁴ Inclusion involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences. Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion.

Comment number 4 notes that many State parties are failing to make appropriate provision for persons with disabilities, particularly persons on the autism spectrum, those with communication impairments and with sensory disabilities, such as learning braille, being taught in a sign language environment, or having a safe, quiet and structured learning environment. The report "Tracking Inclusion", published by Atlas Alliance and the

Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research in 2022⁵, summarises some of the challenges (p12):

- "UNESCO⁶ notes that there are two existing unresolved conflicts. First, the idea of equal learning for absolutely all children is by some argued to be too idealistic. This argument necessarily raises the uncomfortable question of where to draw the

line for what 'all' would mean in a practical setting. The second dilemma inevitably concerns the financial constraints and the practitioner's need to prioritise activities considering the resources at hand. UNESCO proposes that the gap between normative standards and the reality on the ground can be bridged by a focus on achieving gradual progress through an ongoing process of identifying and changing the mechanisms of exclusion more broadly.

- As rights-based inclusive education is the overarching goal and indicates the direction for action, the possibility for documenting the results depends on having reliable baseline data on the school enrolment and educational achievements of children with disabilities before action is taken. According to UNESCO, rough estimates suggest that some 33 million children with disabilities are not in school in low and middle-income countries, while those who attend school tend to score lower in reading and math tests than children without disabilities⁷. Good national and local data, however, are in many places missing.

⁵ Fafo (2022) Tracking Disability Inclusion in Multilateral Organizations

⁶ UNESCO (2020) Concept Note for the Global Education Monitoring Report

⁷ UNESCO (2020) Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and Education



- Currently a set of shared challenges prevent disabled children in most countries from attending mainstream schools. In addition to local exclusion mechanisms, these include adequately identifying children with disability and their individual needs, promoting more universal designs and removing barriers to access by accommodating such needs, the assignment of enough adequately trained teachers, the adaptation of appropriate physical infrastructure and learning materials, and, more generally, a mobilization of the necessary resources. A study using census data from 19 countries suggested that the gaps in educational outcome between children with and without disabilities is increasing and that children with disability are 10–17 percent less likely than children without disabilities to enrol in school, complete primary or secondary education, and become literate⁸.”

In 2020, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) issued a report on their understanding of inclusive education and its obstacles “What an equitable inclusive education means to us”⁹. The key message of the report was that: *An inclusive education system*

is the only way to achieve SDG 4 for all children – including children and youth with disabilities – wherever and wherever they are. Inclusive education requires an educational transformation, which is unachievable if it is considered an add-on to existing education systems rather than a basis for educational transformation”. The report also outlines some key criteria of an inclusive education system. This evaluation has used these criteria as a yard stick to evaluate the level of inclusion achieved by Norwegian partners in education – (see Annex 3), recognising that inclusive education is a gradual process.

In our understanding a learning environment should be adapted to be as enabling and inclusive as possible to support each child to develop skills and knowledge that supports them to be included in their communities and in society at large. This may require, for example, learning in a sign language environment or a smaller group.

Box 2. Definition of inclusive education

While inclusive education is a term that applies equally to all marginalised or excluded groups, this evaluation focuses on disability inclusion. The team has used IDA’s Inclusive Education Global Report to define ‘inclusive education’ for the purposes of this evaluation: A system where all learners with and without disabilities learn together with their peers in schools and classes in their local community. They all receive the support they need, from preschool to tertiary and vocational education, in inclusive and accessible schools that are responsive to cultural and community values, evidence and best practices, and individual preferences. This definition is rooted in Article 24 of the CRPD and informed by the experience of OPDs, and shaped by Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

⁸ Male & Wodon (2017) The price of exclusion: Disability and Education – Disability Gaps in Educational Attainment and Literacy, GPE/WB

⁹ International Disability Alliance (2020), What an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Education Means to Us

2

Approach and methodology, including limitations



2.1 Evaluation questions

This evaluation is based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability, with a set of more detailed questions, drawn from the ToR. The evaluation questions and sub-questions provide the main framework for the evaluation and an evaluation matrix (Annex 2) provides a summary of the data collection and analysis structure that has been used in developing responses to the evaluation questions. This report is structured around key findings that reflect the evaluation questions. Overall responses to the main evaluation questions are presented in the conclusions.

Table 1. Evaluation questions

Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions
Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the organisational set up and capability of the Norwegian aid administration suitable to meet the commitments for disability inclusion? 2. To what extent are the existing education programmes aligned with Norwegian policies (specifically human rights), national policies and local needs and priorities of persons with disabilities? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How is the Norwegian aid administration set up and what is its capacity and competence, procedures/practices to meet the normative commitments to disability inclusion? b. What kind of education programmes, have focused on or included disability (theory of change, target groups: age, type of disability, gender) and how well do they respond to national key gaps in preconditions for inclusion? c. How is the multidimensional and intersectional nature of disability reflected in the portfolio at large?
Coherence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Internal Coherence - To what extent are existing programmes designed and utilised to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate outputs? 4. External Coherence - To what extent does Norwegian support coordinate with and add value to support in the education sector by other actors, while avoiding duplication of effort? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How well do the education interventions fit in relation to other ongoing processes and initiatives in support of disability inclusion nationally, internationally and in terms of Norwegian support?
Effectiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To what extent have the existing programmes achieved their outputs and is there any evidence of contributions to outcomes and to possible impacts? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What, if any, are the barriers to meeting the normative commitments to disability inclusion in the aid programmes in various sectors? What are the enabling factors? b. What are the results of the programmes and projects in the education sector on disability inclusion? c. What are the main lessons learnt regarding disability inclusion in education in humanitarian assistance and development assistance projects?
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Has Norwegian support influenced national and local ownership/ processes for disability inclusion? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do national and local government and civil society partners have the ownership, competencies and capacities to maintain the benefits of the interventions after completion of the interventions?



2.2 Approach

The evaluation has applied a theory-based approach drawing on a reconstructed theory of change (ToC) for the implementation of Norway's commitments to disability inclusion, alongside a mapping of the key stakeholders for this implementation. A theory-based approach seeks to make explicit the logic model, or ToC, identifying the assumed links from activities and outputs to outcomes and results, and thereby showing expected drivers and causal relations. In this evaluation the theory-based approach provides an opportunity to explore both explicit and underlying assumptions about how policies are rolled out and implemented. The evaluation seeks to identify where progress has been made against this ToC and analyse any significant gaps or divergence from the theory that have become apparent during the period of implementation, 2010 to 2020.

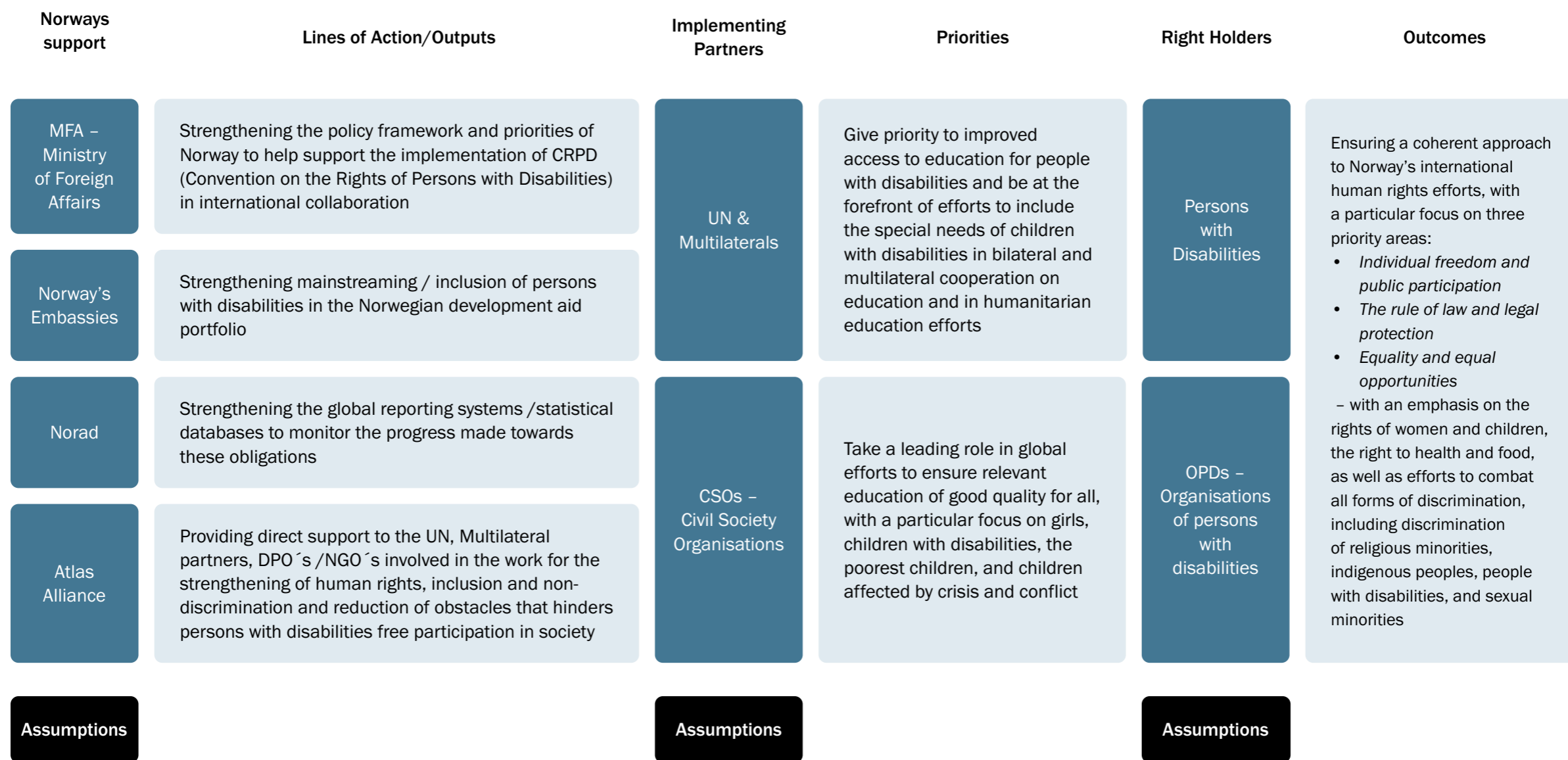
The ToC was reconstructed (see Figure 1), using the Mapping Study and drawing on the Human Rights White Paper¹⁰. The ToC starts with the main stakeholders, as set out in the stakeholder analysis and sets out the four general lines of action/outputs by Norway for the period of the evaluation. The next level of implementation consists of the main implementing partners, who in turn are expected to deliver the key education sector priorities, as set out in the Human Rights White Paper¹¹. Finally, there are the rights holders, persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and the general outcomes, again, as set out in the Human Rights White Paper. One of the key aims of evaluation has been to gain a deeper understanding of the drivers and assumptions underlying the ToC.

¹⁰Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015), Meld. St. 10 (2014–2015), Report to the Storting (white paper). Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway's Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation,

¹¹Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2015), Meld. St. 10 (2014–2015), Report to the Storting (white paper). Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway's Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation



Figure 1. Reconstructed Theory of Change



The approach to this evaluation (and answering the evaluation questions) has been to explore the four lines of action in the ToC to understand if they did indeed lead to partners' increased application of disability inclusion in policy and practice, especially in the education a sector, and if this was done in a manner that achieved positive educational outcomes for girls and boys with various disabilities. The four lines of action are:

- Strengthening the policy framework and priorities of Norway to help support the implementation of CRPD in international collaboration;
- Strengthening mainstreaming / inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Norwegian development aid portfolio;
- Strengthening the global reporting systems / statistical databases to monitor the progress made towards these obligations;
- Providing direct support to the UN, multilateral partners, OPDs and civil society organisations (CSOs) involved in strengthening of human rights, inclusion and non-discrimination and reduction of obstacles that hinder persons with disabilities' free participation in society.

2.2.1 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

For the assessment of the institutional set up and capability of the Norwegian aid administration, an analytical framework informed by the UN Disability Inclusion Accountability Framework (Annex 3) has been used. The analytical framework includes a subset of 10 separate elements related to the 15 indicators in the UN's Accountability Framework. The aim of this analysis has been to assess what progress has been made against these indicators and to identify gaps in both performance and relevance of the ToC, and to delineate areas where further efforts are required.

For the assessment of the Norwegian contributions to the education sector in Malawi, Nepal, Uganda and South Sudan, a framework based on a subset of criteria established by the International Disability Alliance has been used to assess how education systems in these countries are developing. This includes outlining the necessary features of an inclusive education system and assessing if/how the support from Norway has contributed to progress observed. The framework looks at 13 different aspects of the inclusive education system. (Annex 3)

2.2.2 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected in four main ways:

- *Review of policy level documents and reports in Norway.* Documentation was collected from numerous sources, through an iterative process to understand how disability inclusion was developed over time. The Mapping Study provided a starting point. In relation to the institutional analysis, the main documentation that has been reviewed is high level and strategic, such as White Papers, charters and other international commitments signed by Norway as well as evaluations, studies and audits carried out during the period. See Annex 4 for a full list of documents reviewed.
- *Statistical analysis of disbursements to education*
 - to identify agreements and assess the share of funding going to initiatives coded with a disability marker totally, per country and per type of partner
 - using Norad's database of contracts for the period 2010 to 2020. The list of agreements from the Mapping Study was updated with data covering 2020. The agreements at the country level were reviewed in dialogue with staff at the embassies. Based on this final list of disability inclusive agreements was collated.



- *Review and analysis of agreements, policies/guidelines, annual reports and evaluations of the largest recipients of Norwegian aid to the education sector.* In-depth analysis of documentation related to initiatives coded with a disability marker and on education initiatives supported in the four selected countries.
- *Key informant interviews, with three main groups of stakeholders MFA/Norad/Embassy staff and the most prominent partners internationally and nationally (largest recipients of Norwegian funding), to further explore the results achieved and the set-up of the Norwegian Aid Administration to meet the obligations towards the CRPD/SDG 4.* The interview guides are presented in Annex 6

2.3 Scope and limitations

2.3.1 SCOPE

The *institutional analysis* included policies, systems and practices at Norad, MFA, Embassies and key partners in the education sector. The *analysis of contributions to inclusive education* included global, regional and country level agreements between Norway and partners (so called portfolios). The country level analysis is limited to projects and programmes marked as country level agreements in the management system of the Norwegian aid administration. Multilateral partners with Norwegian support from global and regional level

allocations, have been interviewed and reports analysed to shed light on the outcomes of Norwegian support in the period. The evaluation notes that some multilaterals and international CSOs are funded by Norway through global, regional and bilateral agreements, all with the purpose to support inclusive education initiatives in the same countries. The evaluation covers a substantial part of Norway's efforts to reach and include persons with disabilities. As shown by Figure 2 and 3, the education sector represents the majority of disability related disbursements during the period of review. Other sectors have addressed disability marginally, as outlined in the Mapping Study.

Figure 2. Disbursements to disability inclusive initiatives marked as 2010 – 2020 (1 000 NOK)

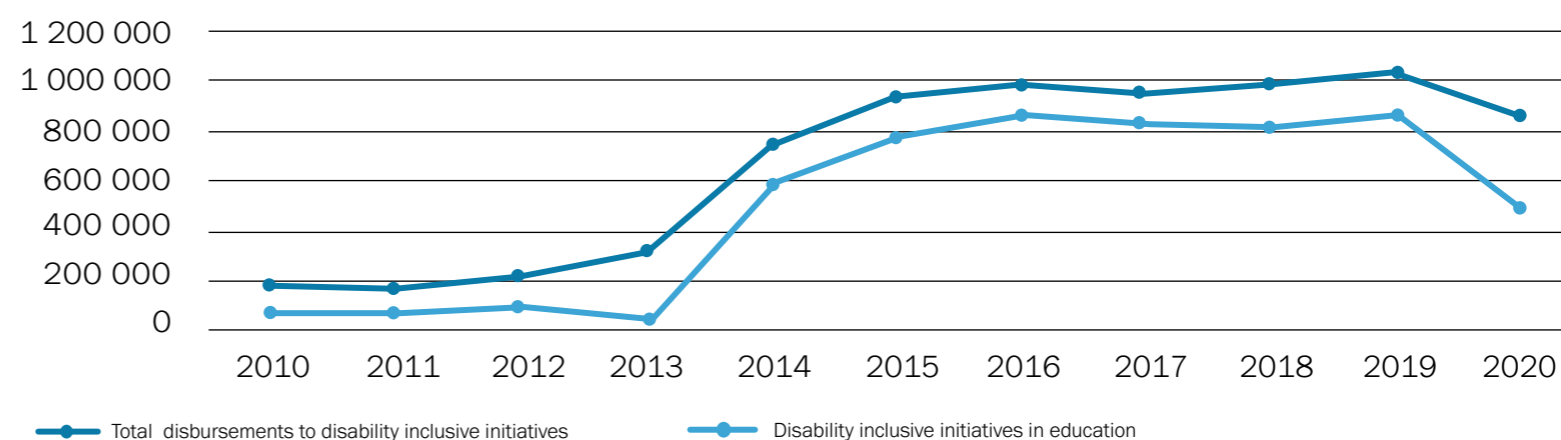
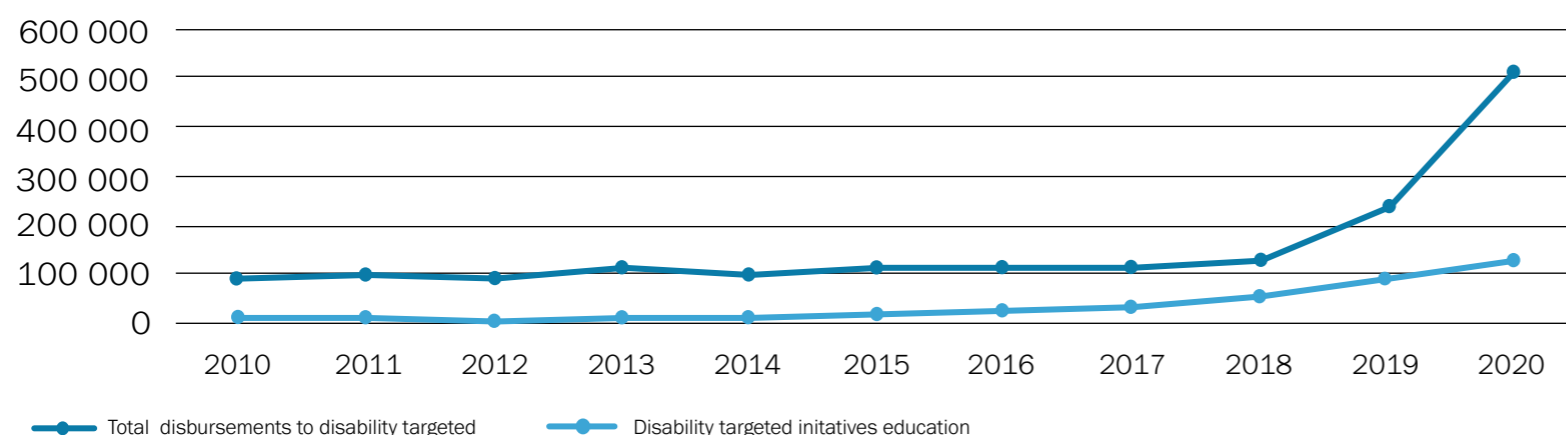


Figure 3. Disbursements to disability inclusive initiatives marked as principal



2.3.2 LIMITATIONS

The limitations encountered during this stage of the evaluation and the efforts made to mitigate, are set out in table 2.

Table 2. Limitations and mitigation efforts

Limitations	Mitigation Efforts
The difficulties in identifying projects and programmes in the education sector with a focus on disability inclusion	Significant efforts were made to cross-check the identification of projects and programmes with MFA, Norad and implementing partners in the Mapping Study. For this study the Embassies were asked to review the list of projects and programmes and Norad was asked to provide the statistical data for 2020.
Access to stakeholders with experience of implementing projects and programmes - with institutional memory	The focus on a small number of countries enabled the team to identify a range of stakeholders for interview to provide context and experience in implementation over time.
Limited reporting on implementation and particularly on results	The review of documents was complemented by interviews with a range of stakeholders, which helped in identifying further data and/or documentation. However, this still remain a significant limitation particularly for the findings for EQs 4 (Effectiveness) and 5 (Sustainability).
Inconsistencies in the use of the disability marker in the statistical system. As noted in the Mapping Study, the marker was only taken into use in 2018. Older contracts were coded using word search (refined during the mapping study). Also, the interpretation of “significant” contribution was not consistently interpreted by partners.	The interviews and document review have enabled the team to make some corrections of the coding of bilateral contracts in the 4 countries studied. Mostly it has been removal of the code.



It can be noted that the focus of the evaluation itself, in many respects, concerns the links and gaps between policy and practice. As such, the evaluation has documented the existence (or lack) of evidence of causal linkages between policies and practice as a central aspect of the findings.

Finally, it should be stressed that this is primarily a desk report drawing heavily on review of a diverse variety of documentation wherein evidence presented of outcomes and impacts is generally weak. This has inevitably meant that the confidence level of some of the finding may be mixed. The evaluation team judges, however, that the key findings related to most of the evaluation questions are well supported by the data and that a sufficient degree of triangulation has been possible across the data sources. We note however, that the scope of data available has limited the confidence level of responses to the evaluation questions related to sustainability. It is expected that further data collection as part of WP3 will be important to explore these aspects further.



3

Findings

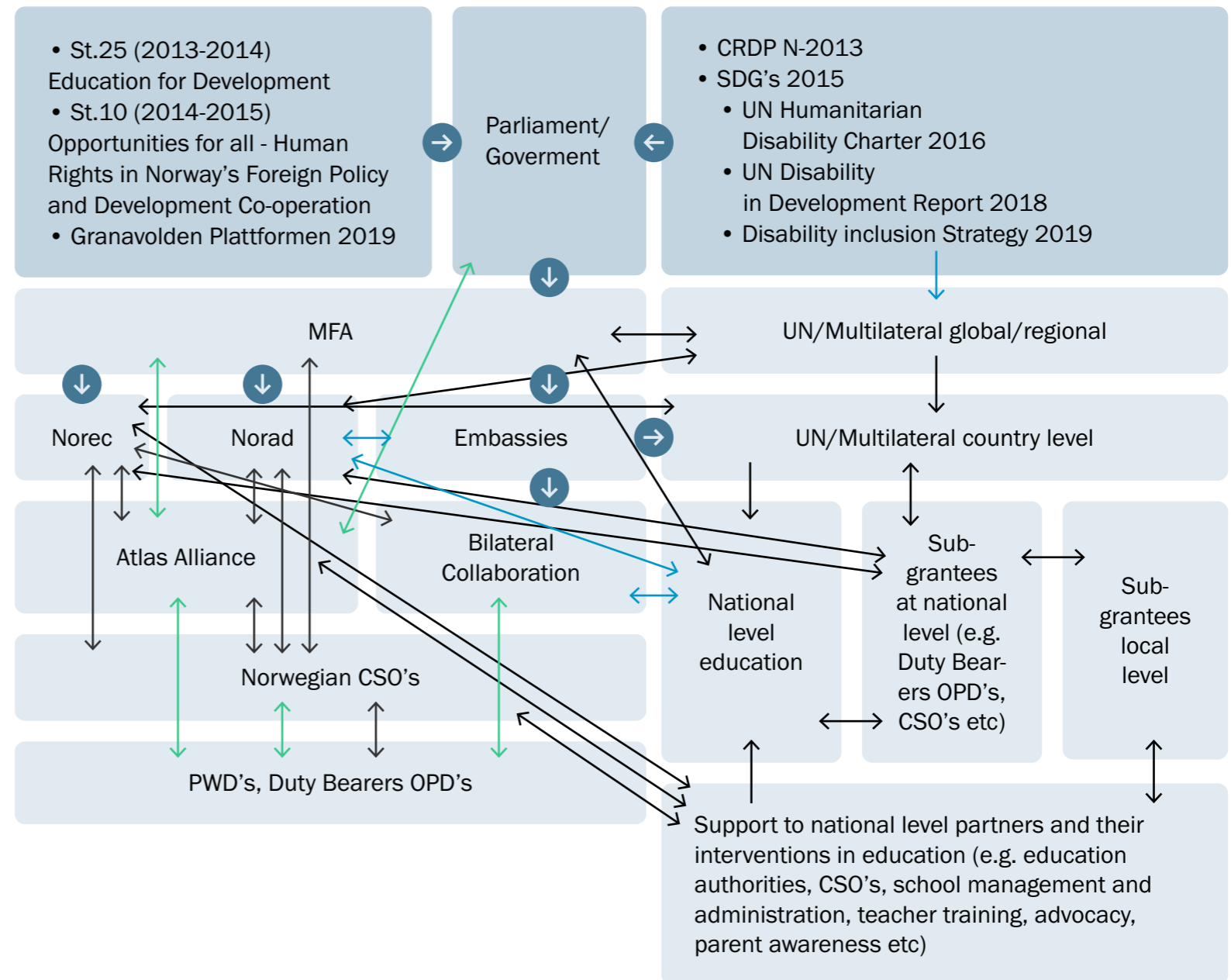


3.1 Organisational structure and key partners

An institutional map of Norway's aid administration illustrating the range of stakeholders engaged in the efforts for the inclusion of persons with disabilities for the period 2010-2020 (within and beyond the education sector) is presented in Figure 4. The model is informed by findings from the Mapping Study, Norad reports and input from stakeholders in the evaluation. The black arrows in the model mark channels of funding/formal partnerships, while green arrows mark lines of advocacy, influence and accountability processes.

The MFA leads the strategic and budgetary work of the Norwegian government. It is the main partner for dialogue and agreements with UN agencies and multilateral banks, as well as international organisations and CSOs on global and regional initiatives. The MFA is responsible for negotiating these global agreements and for the reporting from partners. It is also the contracting partner for bilateral collaboration, where the management and follow up to reporting is delegated to Royal Norwegian Embassies (RNE). It is therefore of great importance that staff at MFA have sufficient

Figure 4. Institutional Map of Norway's Support



guidance, capacity and understanding of disability inclusion to be able to negotiate such aspects in agreements and reporting, and to be able to develop and monitor budgets for disability inclusion.

The Embassies have the delegated authority to enter into agreements with partners directly at the country level. They also need to have guidance, capacity and understanding of disability inclusion to be able to negotiate such aspects in agreements and reporting.

Norad provides expert advice about thematic issues to the embassies, and it is responsible for statistical analysis, quality assurance and evaluations of the Norwegian development and humanitarian aid. Norad is the main source of expertise for disability issues and has established Network on Disability to support its advisory role. Norad is also responsible for providing grants to Norwegian organisations within civil society, research, and higher education for their development cooperation engagement. Norad staff therefore would be expected to have sufficient guidance, capacity and understanding of disability inclusion to be able to negotiate such aspects in agreements and reporting, and to be able to develop and monitor budgets for disability inclusion.

The Norwegian Agency for Exchange Co-operation (Norec), is an executive agency under the administrative authority of MFA providing grants, follow-up and training to organisations, institutions and private businesses in Norway, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Support is provided to exchange of personnel between international partners who want to use the exchange model to learn from each other. The support provided to exchange of personnel projects, between international partners who want to use the exchange model to learn from each other and develop, facilitates and involves participation of persons with disabilities.¹²

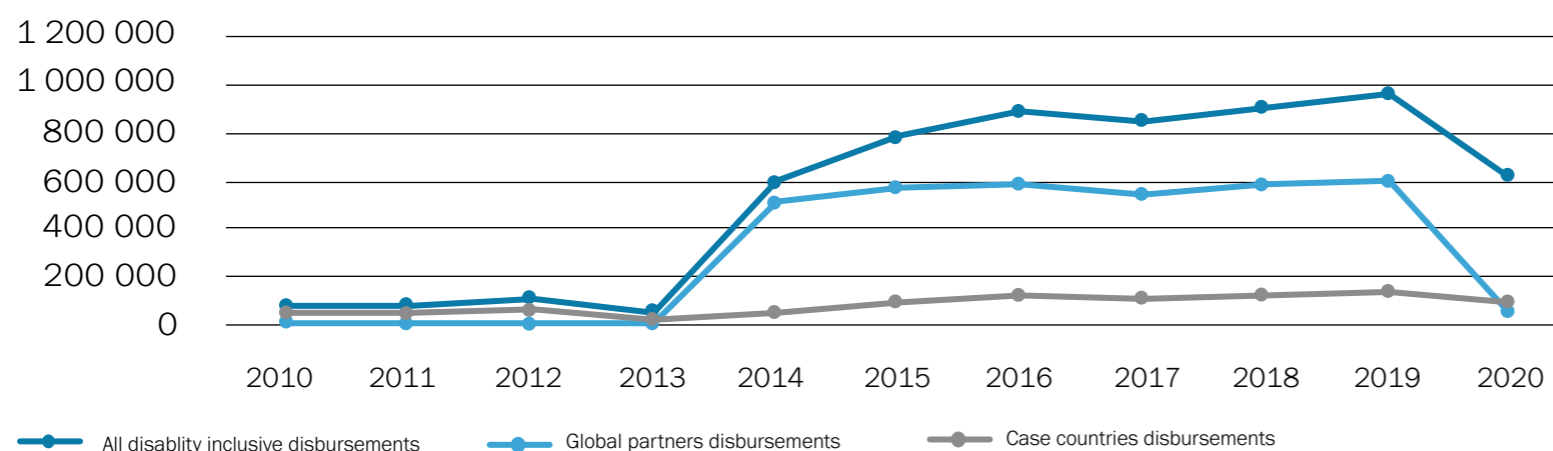
The Atlas Alliance is an umbrella organisation consisting of Norwegian OPDs that are involved in international development work and humanitarian aid. The Atlas Alliance as an advocacy body has a dual role, in both promoting the rights of persons with disabilities towards governments and as a partner of MFA and Norad in development programmes/projects. The Atlas Alliance also manages and monitors funding to Norwegian OPDs and CSOs allocated through framework agreements with Norad.

The above Norwegian agencies and organisations all channel the funding to multilateral, bilateral and CSO development partners, who in turn subgrant Norwegian contributions to other implementing partners such as national level ministries, international CSOs or national CSO partners. Some of these may, in turn, forward the funding to other institutions, district authorities, training institutions or local level CSOs. In earlier mappings, up to six levels of forwarding of funding have been identified. The longer implementation chain, the more difficult it is to ensure and monitor if and how disability inclusion is understood and implemented. Key partners in education during the period of review have been UNICEF and Save the Children.

Figure 5 shows that in the last ten years disability inclusive disbursements remained at a similar level from 2014 to 2019 but that there has been a major decline in both principal and significant disability inclusive disbursements from 2019 to 2020, especially for multilateral partners. The main cuts are related to trends in global level disbursements in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹² According to annual reports, it has facilitated and involved participation of persons with disabilities. In total 6 agreements out of 630 have involved persons with disabilities (1%), while 2% of the disbursements in the period went to these exchanges.

Figure 5. Disbursements to education initiatives with principal and significant focus on disability (1 000 NOK)



3.2 Policy level achievements

During the period of review and in 2021/22, Norway has strengthened its commitments towards persons with disabilities. The following major policy level commitments are notable:

- The ratification of the CRPD in 2013.
- This was followed up with the development of guiding commitments, including White papers on Education

for Development (2013-2014) and Human Rights (2014-2015). In the Education for Development White paper, the Norwegian government states that it will: *include the needs of children with disabilities in its bilateral development co-operation, and be a driving force in ensuring that their needs are also addressed in multilateral and humanitarian efforts in the field of education; and help to ensure that the needs of children with disabilities are integrated into national education plans.* This led to substantially increased disbursements to education in general

and to inclusive education in particular.¹³

- Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of Agenda 2030 in 2015, which commits to leave no-one behind. Goal 4 and its target 4.5 specifically speaks to the inclusion of children with disabilities: *By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.*
- The signing of the Humanitarian Disability Charter in 2016 and the Charter for Change at the Global Disability Summit in 2018, committing to stepping up disability inclusion efforts in humanitarian assistance.
- Active participation in the Global Disability Summit in 2018, making firm commitments towards inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation. The increased focus on disability was spearheaded by the highest political leadership and earmarked disbursements of 700 Mill were provided for disability inclusion in 2019-2023.

¹³ An expert group on disability led by Ann-Marit Sæbønes (2015) published; Towards a Disability Inclusive education: Background paper for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development, 2015. The paper directed the lines of action of the Norwegian IE efforts in the years to follow.

Focus on vulnerable groups was communicated as a key priority by the political leadership.

- Adoption of a political platform, Granavolden, of the government,¹⁴ for its development aid policy. The platform focuses on combatting violence and oppression - with priority to vulnerable groups such as women, children, religious minorities, persons with disabilities and sexual minorities.
- Norway started to use the OECD/DAC disability markers from 2018 and participated in the UN work to develop a UN disability inclusion strategy (UNDIS) in the same year.
- Norway's current role as an active member of the Global Alliance on Disability (GLAD) and co-host (with Ghana and IDA) of the Global Disability Summit in 2022. Norway is an active member in the GLAD working group on inclusive education.
- The adoption of a strategy for disability inclusive development 2022-2025, *Equity for all*. In this strategy the Norwegian government outlines three strategic action areas for driving change towards

disability inclusive development: changing attitudes, increasing accountability and promoting meaningful engagement and makes 21 specific commitments, but so far without attaching an implementation and monitoring framework or a budget.

The Mapping Study carried out in early 2021, showed however that there was limited correlation between the above-mentioned policy commitments and priorities and actual disbursements to interventions with a principal or significant focus on disability inclusion – except for the earmarking in 2013 and 2019. The share of disbursements to such interventions compared to the total budget is small throughout the period. Nevertheless, there have been some developments.

- First, the increase in disbursements to inclusive education, which coincided with the adoption of the White Paper on education and the earmarked allocations to inclusive education. In 2019 32% of the total disbursements to the education sector had a disability marker, which far exceeded other sectors that were only 0 - 5%.
- Second, the disbursements for interventions

with disability inclusion as the principal focus doubled in 2019 as a follow up of the priorities of the government made in the “the Granavolden declaration”. The Atlas Alliance¹⁵ has been and remains the main partner for these targeted disbursements.

The Mapping Study concluded that there has been correlation between policy and disbursements, mainly in connection with earmarked funding. Policy commitments such as the signing of charters and declarations or stating high ambitions in plans and guidelines do not seem to be sufficient incentives for change in disbursements. It is notable that 78% of education interventions and 95-99% of other sector interventions do not reflect efforts towards disability inclusion. The most striking discrepancy is seen in the humanitarian sector and in the support to women's organisations, where policy level commitments and processes are not reflected in disbursements to disability-targeted or inclusive initiatives.

¹⁴ <https://hoyre.no/content/uploads/2020/12/Granavolden-Platform-English.pdf>

¹⁵ The Atlas Alliance is an umbrella organisation consisting of Norwegian organisations of people with disabilities, parents and patients that are involved in international work.



3.3 Implementation challenges observed by other studies

Several studies on disability inclusion education efforts of Norway and partners have identified challenges faced in transforming good intentions into practice, as well as in identifying valid evidence of progress.

The Norwegian Office of the Auditor General's investigation of reported results on disability inclusion in education aid through multilateral channels, 3:10 (2018-2019)¹⁶, found that:

Only 4 out of 17 projects that claimed to focus on inclusion of children with disabilities reported on disability outcomes. To be able to provide any information on whether an aid project has helped to improve the education available to children with disabilities, for example, it is necessary to have access to performance data relating to children with disabilities, not just data relating to children in general. The review of the projects shows that most of them are designed so that the results can be broken down into boys and girls, allowing the gender distribution of

various measures to be assessed. However, targets or indicators that are able to measure the effect for other vulnerable groups are not particularly prevalent, even though these groups are emphasised as target groups in the project's application documents or the decision document.

The study, Making Evaluation Work for Achievement of SDG4 Target 5 Equality and Inclusion in Education, UNESCO, 2019, stated that:

Despite the strong inclusion of overall equity objectives across evaluations, they have little to say on promoting equity for disabled students. Even in those interventions that included inclusive education or disability as a target or objective, evaluators frequently noted that no evidence was provided or available to allow them to evaluate relevant outcomes. Perhaps more hopefully, evaluations argued the need for better data on children with disabilities and encouraged donor organisations to ensure that these are supported within national systems and through their own monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Tracking Inclusion in Norwegian Development Support to Global Education, Kathleen M. Jennings, Fafo¹⁷ for Atlas Alliance, 2017, found that:

While Norway has played an important normative role in advocating for disability inclusion in global education, it is nevertheless the case that these efforts have, thus far, resulted in few verifiable results. In particular:

- *Norwegian government promises in relation to inclusive education and disability inclusion are broad, vague, and non-binding, making it difficult to hold the Norwegian government accountable – even though the Parliament has asked the government to devote more attention and development assistance to persons with disabilities, and to report more precisely and systematically on the allocation and use of resources for disability inclusive education.*
- *While it is possible to trace specific Norwegian bi- and multi-lateral development funding flows down to a project level, it is extremely difficult to assess how much of this funding is used on inclusive education, much less on children with disabilities.*

¹⁶ Office of the Auditor General (2019), The Office of the Auditor General's investigation of information on the results of education aid

¹⁷ Fafo is an independent research institution, Fafo.no: Om Fafo



The report further found a global “implementation gap” with respect to disability inclusive education: *Disability inclusion is not (yet) an integral and necessary component of the global education agenda, as evidenced by the fact that disability inclusion is not mainstreamed at the programmatic, sectoral, or strategic levels in Norway, partner countries, or implementing agencies. There is also a troubling lack of decent data on the extent to which children with disabilities have access to education in developing countries. Meanwhile, donors – including donors who have adopted inclusive education as a priority focus, such as Norway – are unwilling to make a requirement of disability inclusion in the programs, projects, sectoral plans, and reporting that they fund. There is also a lack of knowledge on, and capacity to implement, disability inclusive education in partner countries, donor countries, and implementing agencies alike.*

The report “Tracking Inclusion in Multilateral Organisations”, commissioned by Atlas Alliance 2022, points out three challenges. The first is the lack of baseline data for persons with disability coupled with the challenges of estimating the prevalence of disabled persons. Second, the twin-track approach to include persons with disabilities distinguishes between

targeted and mainstreamed approaches. While targeted initiatives are easy to monitor, the mainstreamed/inclusive are hard to monitor and often do not have disaggregated monitoring data on how many persons with disability are reached and benefit from the intervention. Third, while the multilaterals (UNICEF, UNHCR and World Bank) have intentions to monitor and track disability inclusion, their systems are different and are yet to be fully implemented.

In summary, these studies conclude that there is limited data on children with disabilities in most countries, there is no common understanding or agreed definition/assessment criteria on disability, no common understanding across education programmes of inclusive education and what it entails, and disaggregated monitoring indicators in results frameworks are not used. There is therefore no consistent implementation of inclusive education and no significant reporting on educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

An example from this study that illustrates the above findings are that of children with disabilities being emphasised in the decision document, but without this being reflected in the results framework, is the agreement that the Norwegian Embassy in South

Sudan has with UNICEF. The project target was to ensure access to education for 40,000 children and young people. In the decision document for NOK 48 Mill of funding, the Embassy writes that it has held discussions with UNICEF on the results framework, and that as a result of this, UNICEF has included indicators for children with disabilities. However, the project’s results framework and subsequent reporting do not include activities or indicators aimed at children with disabilities. In 2018, the Embassy stated that it has no good explanation as to why this has not been done. Neither UNICEF nor the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) disaggregate performance data for children with disabilities, even though MFA emphasises that funding for UNICEF and the GPE is a key mechanism for providing schooling for children with disabilities.



3.4 Factors influencing effectiveness and coherence

An overall finding of this evaluation is that Norwegian aid administration has not been sufficiently able to translate policies and commitments on disability inclusion into practice. The main factors in Norwegian aid administration standing in the way of translating policies into practice are:

- Until very recently there was no strategy for disability inclusion. Notably the new strategy (as other high-level commitments made by Norway) does not currently appear to have an operational and monitoring framework or a budget.
- There is a lack of systems to facilitate and ensure compliance with disability inclusion objectives internally and consistently with all of Norway's partners.
- There is an absence of institutional structures to ensure strategic clarity and compliance with commitments to disability inclusion. This has led to
 - a reliance on champions within the organisations and the political leadership.
- There are many levels of sub-granting to agencies with their own priorities and systems that further dilutes strategic direction.
- Knowledge and information systems exist to guide programming and support staff capacities, but they are insufficiently utilised. Internal training courses on disability /inclusion are not offered as part of the wider competence development programme of MFA. The role of the internal Disability Inclusion Network as a resource hub or help desk is not formalised and there is limited disability inclusion expertise in Norad/MFA/Embassies.
- Disability inclusion has been given very limited attention in humanitarian assistance.
- Awareness of disability and its implications for addressing poverty, human rights and equity is uneven. This leads to inappropriate preconceptions (seeing disability as a health/medical issue) and attitudes that encourage 'flexibility' in adhering to commitments.
- An organisational culture prevails that accepts and perhaps underpins this 'flexibility' in adhering to policy commitments and ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated for disability inclusion in general and inclusive education in particular.

The lack of an operational framework and/or guidance detailing a common approach to disability inclusion has obstructed disability inclusion from being mainstreamed or embedded across Norway's aid administration as envisaged in the ToC.

With regard to education, most interviewees reported that White Paper 25¹⁸ is currently Norad's and MFA's main reference point. White Paper 25 provides a clear commitment to giving "priority.... [to] children with disabilities". Most of those interviewed amongst Norad and MFA staff stated that they wanted more guidance on how to operationalise White Paper 25. The evaluation also could not find more detailed guidance that supports them to act on the findings of White Paper 25. The lack of a clear operational framework and/or guidance for disability inclusion was highlighted as a challenge already in the 2011 evaluation¹⁹, where it was suggested to learn from the gender

¹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Meld. St. 25 (2013–2014) Report to the Storting (White Paper) from MFA. Education for Development (2014)

¹⁹ Norad Department for Evaluation (2012), Mainstreaming disability in the new development paradigm. Evaluation of Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities (2012)



mainstreaming work that had been more successful. The newly adopted strategy; "Equity for all", establishes what needs to change (attitudes, accountability and participation) and in which sectors disability inclusion should be a priority. Still, as with the White Paper, the operational guidelines, targets, monitoring frameworks and budgets are not (yet) in place.

Successful aspects of recent Norwegian efforts around disability inclusion have been reliant on strong political leadership. Most Norad and MFA interviewees indicated that the previous Minister for Development was an active champion of disability inclusion, which had been key to their own and the broader aid administrations focus on disability inclusion. Norway's ongoing support for disability inclusion appears to remain fragile and reliant on strong leadership and/ or individual staff champions. Most interviewees report that any reduction in political leadership on disability inclusion will lessen the focus on the issue in Norway's aid administration. At the time of data collection, the transition to a new Government was underway. While the timing of this transition falls outside the scope of this evaluation, interviewees (both individuals working within Norad or MFA and individuals external to Norway's aid administration) underscored that uncertainty about whether the political leadership on

disability would continue under the new Government. So far the leadership has communicated mainly about food security as a key priority. All interviewees argued that, without strong political leadership on disability inclusion, Norway's focus on the issue would be significantly lessened. The establishment of a formal dialogue forum between the MFA leadership, Norad and OPDs could help underpin a continued high-level engagement beyond the Global Disability Summit 2022.

A lack of internal compliance and accountability systems (e.g., requirements for disaggregated goals, targets and monitoring indicators) to ensure that persons with disabilities are routinely considered) stands in the way of disability inclusion being mainstreamed. Although grant management routines differed during the period under review, Norad and MFA interviewees reported that they are not required to consider specific groups or intersectionality when discussing funding with grant recipients. Those interviewed also reported that funding decisions or programmes are not routinely based on an analysis that identifies the most marginalised groups or of the societal barriers that are shared by marginalised groups in different contexts. Looking at accountability, while Norway's Disability Policy Marker is the key disability measure for Norway's aid administration, no other

routine monitoring or data collection exists for disability inclusion. It should also be noted that, as the Mapping Study found, this marker is not consistently used by the aid administration.

This lack of compliance mechanisms is reflected in how partners describe their adherence to overall disability inclusion objectives. Reports from CSOs are expected to provide information on their approach to human rights. However, a prompt regarding disability is not included in the report template. Therefore, any data provided on disability inclusion typically reflects a CSO's level of commitment to the issue. Some interviewed stressed that Norad and MFA need to be more prescriptive, to ensure disability inclusion is considered by funding recipients and particularly to ensure that persons with disabilities are not unintentionally overlooked or actively omitted. Some of those interviewed also suggested that persons with disabilities are one of many vulnerable groups competing for finite resources, implying that disability inclusion would not be routinely considered.



Box 3. Example of an approach to ensure policy compliance

One study of USAID's projects, for example, found that to better ensure disability inclusive programming, disability needs to be a specific component of projects supported and identified as a selection criteria and/or a routine reporting requirement it. A desk review found that previous reviews and evaluations have emphasised the need for internal reporting mechanisms to be put in place that make disability inclusion a specific component of reporting processes.

See, Office of the Auditor General, The Office of the Auditor General's investigation of information on the results of education aid (2019)

The Norwegian aid administration is mainly in control of the policy level interventions, while the implementation of programmes and handling of disbursements is the responsibility of partners and their sub-grantees and beyond. Compliance with Norwegian priorities and principles is ensured through

agreements, dialogue, reporting requirements etc. In line with the aid effectiveness agenda however, Norway often opts to provide core funding or flexible programme funding to allow for local initiative and ownership. The downside of this is that Norwegian priorities on disability inclusion may not be carried through. Limited understanding and capacity of partners and their sub-grantees on disability is often a key obstacle. Norway has managed rather well to explain its policy and enhance capacity of partners and sub-grantees on gender equality. The same consistent, hard work, supported by conditions in agreements, dialogue, capacity development and earmarked budgets would be needed to ensure disability inclusion. So far, disability is seen by many in the aid administration and among partners and their sub-grantees as one of many priorities, and that is optional.

Norad and MFA interviewees acknowledged that there is currently 'considerable space' for staff across Norway's aid administration to make decisions that do not align with the CRPD. This can be partly attributed to the absence of a clear definition of what is meant by inclusion and specific objectives,

with targets and indicators, together with insufficient systems to ensure routine consideration of disability across Norway's aid administration. Data collected suggests there is thus inconsistency in the extent to which Norway's aid administration aligns with the CRPD. For example, some documents equate an impairment with a disability²⁰, whereas the CRPD emphasises that a disability stems from an impairment together with societal barriers²¹. Some Norad and MFA staff interviewed also appeared to understand disability inclusion in a way that does not align with the CRPD and a human rights-based approach: for example, multiple interviewees focused only on medical interventions when discussing disability programmes and funding. These findings thus suggest that divergence from the ToC for implementing policies can be attributed to both a lack of compliance mechanisms and also limited awareness and understanding of disability inclusion.

Lack of awareness and inappropriate attitudes about the implications of a human rights-based approach appear to affect coordination and coherence across Norway's aid administration. While some of those interviewed viewed the absence of a clear strategy,

²⁰ For example, document titled Utlysningstekst Norad engelsk (2019)

²¹ For example, see Utlysningstekst Norad engelsk (2019)



Box 4. Response to Covid-19

Even under normal circumstances, persons with disabilities are less likely to access health care, education, employment and to participate in the community. They are more likely to live in poverty, experience higher rates of violence, neglect and abuse, and are among the most marginalised in any crisis-affected community. COVID-19 has further compounded this situation, disproportionately impacting persons with disabilities both directly and indirectly. A report from the COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor, based on testimonies from around the world, showed that governments failed to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, such as the rights to life, health, liberty; freedom from torture, ill-treatment, exploitation, violence, and abuse; the rights to independent living and inclusion in the community; and the right to inclusive education. There were inadequate measures to protect persons with disabilities in institutions; significant and fatal breakdown of community support; disproportionate impact on underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities; and, denial of access to healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on learners with disabilities who were already experiencing social and educational disadvantage. As many as half of the estimated 65 million primary and lower secondary-school age children with disabilities in developing countries were already out of school before COVID-19. The exact number of students with disabilities that continue to be left behind due to the pandemic is unknown due to poor data systems in many countries. Clearly, most recovery programmes are yet to be disability inclusive. Learners with disabilities are also least likely to benefit from distance learning solutions, as recently noted in a policy brief on 'Persons with Disabilities and COVID-19'.¹

See [Policy-Brief-A-Disability-Inclusive-Response-to-COVID-19.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

operational framework or guidance to disability inclusion as a positive (suggesting it gave staff across Norway's aid administration the flexibility to develop context-specific agreements and programmes), most interviewees emphasised negative consequences of being able to disregard these aspects of a rights-based approach. Norad and MFA interviewees suggested there is currently significant ambiguity in guidance that allows staff across the aid administration significant flexibility and leeway to address or ignore disability inclusion. As a result, Norway's aid does not 'speak with one voice'.

This is compounded by poorly functioning accountability mechanisms and lack of formal coordination mechanisms among the multilateral agencies and CSOs that channel funding and implement programmes. Norad, MFA, the Embassies, the World Bank, UN agencies and CSO partners using Norwegian funding may have separate agreements with the same partner but not share information, lessons or knowledge. While most agencies have accountability frameworks, that include commitments to the inclusion of persons with disability as well as obligations to track and monitor such efforts, these are not sufficiently

used in practice, as highlighted in the Tracking Inclusion Report, and information is not shared among agencies. Current tracking and monitoring efforts are still far from providing sufficient documentation on how many persons with disabilities are being reached by both targeted and mainstreaming programs aiming for disability inclusion. The report concludes that *"it remains difficult for stakeholders and donors to make well-informed choices on where to most efficiently allocate available funding to best contribute to meeting the rights to inclusion of persons with disabilities"*.



Knowledge and information systems exist to guide programming and support staff capacities, but they are insufficiently utilised. Norad's Disability Inclusion Network is an effort to institutionalise the issue within the aid administration. However, the Network has to date not been used as a major resource for Norad, MFA and Embassy staff for disability expertise²², by helping staff across the administration ensure persons with disabilities are routinely considered. Interviewees emphasised that for the Disability Inclusion Network to provide technical assistance across the aid administration would require clear signposting and agreement for Network members to spend a greater proportion of their time responding to queries regarding disability. Recent developments in the digital platform for applications and management of support and reporting, as well as the statistics guidelines of 2021, are positive additions to the administration as they provide the staff with more details and digitally disaggregated data to be utilised in their work with the annual workplans and knowledge base for portfolio, policy and strategy development. However, it is not clear if and how these tools can help overcome the problem with lack of coordination at country level of Norwegian funded initiatives in support of disability inclusion.

²²Norad (2020) Evaluation of the Norwegian Aid Administration's Approach to Portfolio Management (2020)

3.5 Portfolio management

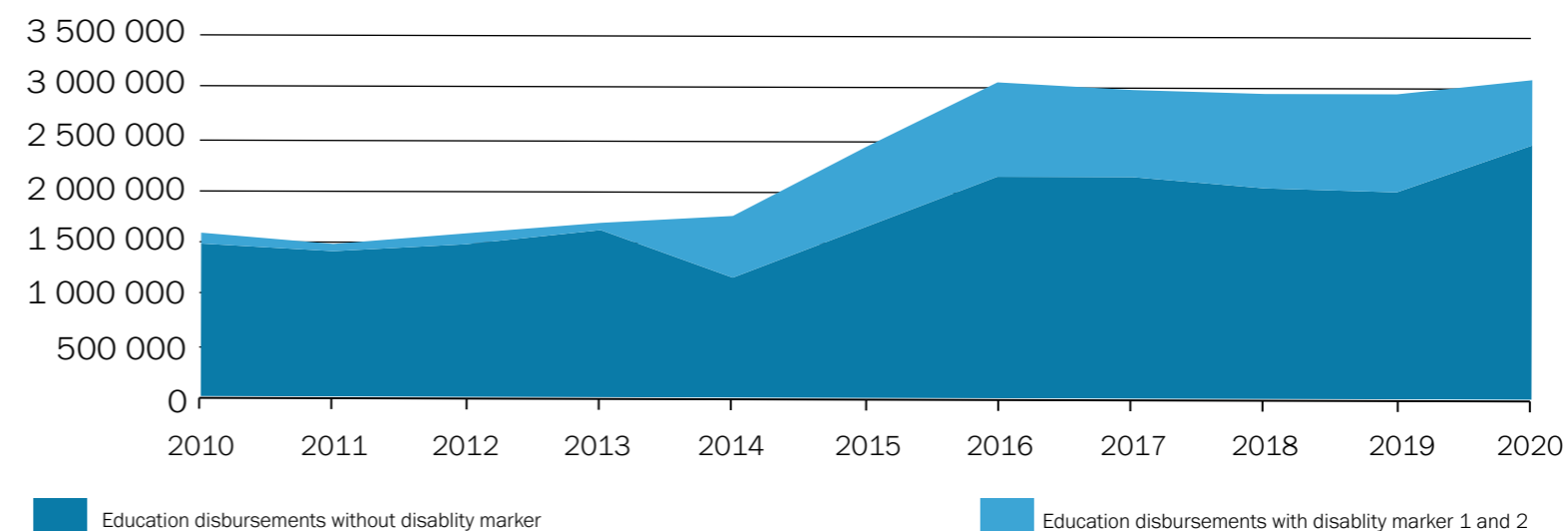
As a proportion of total education support from Norway, disbursements with a disability marker of 1 and 2 have been between 29-34% from 2014-2019, with a decline to 20% in 2020, as shown in Figure 6.

There are several existing instruments and processes within the aid administration that provide the framework for overall portfolio management. These include: the government budget (Proposition 1), grant scheme rules, the grant management cycle and manual, delegated

funding authority between MFA and Norad, MFA and Embassies, and the central government guidance on results-based management. In order for disability inclusion to be implemented, all these instruments and processes must be clear on how and why to include persons with disabilities and simple enough for staff to use in their work. Respondents indicate that this is not the case and that there is room for improvement.

A coordinated and strategic approach to the development of the portfolio is hard to discern and this can be attributed to the complexity of the system. Developing an overview of global and national level

Figure 6. Share of total education support with disability marker (1 000 NOK)



support to inclusive education has required getting a perspective on the range of agreements and contracts in support of inclusive education, to build up a more comprehensive picture of the portfolio and how it has developed over time. This has entailed speaking to multiple stakeholders - both within the MFA and Norad and with the numerous partners. The portfolios have been assembled by different stakeholders/individual dedicated personnel working over a longer period of time. The analysis above of the organisational structure noted challenges around coordination and coherence across Norway's aid administration. It is likely that Norad, MFA, Embassies and key multilateral and International CSO partners using Norwegian funding may have separate agreements with the same partner but not share lessons or knowledge.

A recent evaluation of the approach to portfolio management in Norway's support²³ identified a range of problems, including:

- While there have been efforts to improve portfolio management, and notable progress in some areas, there continues to be weaknesses in the aid administration's approach that are hindering

the effective and efficient management of aid resources. These include continued challenges in the use of evidence in the management of portfolios, the lack of a single agreed approach to portfolio management, weak portfolio governance arrangements, and inadequate investment in portfolio management capacities.

- This is leading to sub-optimal portfolio decision making, ineffective portfolio coordination, unclear accountability for portfolio delivery and performance, and under-resourced portfolio management functions.
- As a result of these weaknesses, the aid administration is undermining the benefits of working through a portfolio approach, and as such, risks not having as significant an impact on development outcomes as it could.

Following up on the recommendations made in the 2011 Evaluation (see Section 3.4), and particularly the establishment and use of disability specific goals, targets, indicators and budgets to underpin policy commitments, there is little evidence that the development of the programmes in inclusive education

has been made with reference to such targets and indicators. The evidence is rather that the lines of action/outputs set out in the reconstructed ToC have provided broad goals, but that the specific aspects of the portfolio have been developed by committed individuals or partners, as noted above. On balance, it appears that Norway's aid administration has not ensured that existing programmes produced a greater combined effect. This has been due to the assumption that broad goals rather than specific targets and indicators were sufficient to guide projects and programmes.

3.6 Aid administration performance

To further analyse whether the organisational set up and capability of the Norwegian aid administration – MFA/NORAD/Embassies - is suitable to meet the commitments for disability inclusion, the review team developed an analytical framework that utilises 10 elements critical to disability inclusion within an organisation – see Annex 3. The 10 elements are primarily based on the team's prior experience (and influenced by the UN Disability Inclusion Accountability Framework). Table 3 presents a summary of the

²³ Norad (2020) Evaluation of the Norwegian Aid Administration's Approach to Portfolio Management (2020)

relevance of the organisational set up and apparent capability of Norway's aid administration, using this analytical framework.

Table 3. Summary observations in relation to the Elements of Disability Inclusion Analytical Framework – a preliminary traffic light system has been used

● Fully in place ● Evidence of some progress ● No evidence of progress

Key element	Summary Observations
1 Leadership commitment [senior managers demonstrating their personal commitment to disability inclusion].	Minister for Development is widely perceived to have provided essential political leadership on disability inclusion. Ongoing political leadership from the current Minister and senior leaders in Norad and MFA would be needed for the sustainability of disability inclusion.
2 Policy and practice [policies and practices to mainstreaming disability inclusive grant-making are in place, including but not limited to procurement].	The Disability Policy Marker helps to track disbursements committed to disability inclusion, but there is uneven use of the marker, and the definition of “significant” contribution is unclear. There are no set targets for Norwegian contributions in terms of disability inclusion, nor any requirement that grants routinely consider persons with disabilities.
3 Strategic planning [adequate reference to mainstreaming disability inclusion in main strategic plan or equivalent, including disaggregated data in reporting].	Commitments to disability inclusion and/ or persons with disabilities are made in some strategic documents (e.g., White Paper 25) and the new Equity Strategy adopted in 2022. These commitments are not repeated in all strategic documents and remain very high-level. Implementation of disability inclusion would require that the strategy is linked to an action plan and that it is budgeted for.
4 Human resources management [provisions to recruit, retain and advance careers of employees with disabilities, including provision of reasonable accommodation as per Article 2 of the CRPD].	Unable to identify any provisions targeting recruitment of persons with disabilities nor specific policies to help retain and advance careers of employees with disabilities. Unable to verify formal processes for reasonable accommodations, including the level of staff satisfaction with the application and decision-making process.



Table 3. Summary observations in relation to the Elements of Disability Inclusion Analytical Framework – a preliminary traffic light system has been used

● Fully in place ● Evidence of some progress ● No evidence of progress

Key element	Summary Observations
5 Programmes and services [programmes/ services include disability in addition to targeting disability, i.e., twin track]. ●	Norad, MFA and Embassies have provided disability-inclusive and disability specific grants, but the share of the total aid remains very low – as illustrated by the mapping study; evidence suggests programmes are not regularly using a twin track approach. Contributions may not routinely align with the CRPD.
6 Staff culture, capability and motivation [e.g., familiarity with CRPD and compliant approach to disability, disability leads]. ●	A more medical model understanding of disability (focusing on impairments) persists, but most staff are able to articulate a rights-based understanding of disability. Persons with disabilities may be viewed by some staff as one marginalised group competing for finite resources.
7 Accessibility [accessibility policy/ targets and assessments and improving accessibility]. ●	No evidence obtained of a policy or expectations around accessibility; no targets appear to be set and no assessments appear to be routinely conducted on accessibility of programme outputs or Norway's infrastructure or communications.
8 Budgeting / finance [budgets anticipate costs of inclusion - both central and at field office level, within operations and programs/services]. ●	Coordination is weak across Norway's aid administration. Policy commitments are not always followed by budgets for their implementation. Budgeting for accessibility or provision for reasonable accommodation (necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments to ensure persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms) does not appear to be routine.
9 Community engagement [close consultation and work with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)]. ●	Consultations with Atlas Alliance appear to be undertaken by NORAD on a regular basis. According to the quantitative study ²³ , Atlas Alliance advocacy has been an important factor behind Norwegian policy level commitments towards disability. The level of consultations with OPDs at the national level (by embassies) remains to be studied in work package 3.
10 Communications [internal and external facing communications are disability inclusive]. ●	Some external and internal facing communications are disability inclusive, but disability inclusion is neither routinely considered in Norway's communications nor consistently delivered in terms of Norway's messaging.



To follow up on the recommendations made in the in the 2011 Evaluation (see Section 3.2), particularly with regards to addressing gaps in leadership and management systems, it evident that these have not yet been institutionalised. There is still dependence on individual champions in the aid administration (MFA/Norad and key partners). Analysis using the 10 elements in the analytical framework point to an organisational culture that is broadly supportive of disability inclusion. Leadership on the issue has generated a greater focus on disability and high-level commitments have been made towards disability inclusion, but practical implementation is still lagging, and disability is competing with other 'priority issues' in the internal prioritisation. The adoption of the new Strategy "Equity for all" is a positive development, but it is still mainly a list of commitments, without a concrete implementation and monitoring framework – and without a budget.

3.7 International partnerships and policy implementation

Given that the MFA and Norad are not implementing organisations and given that they are intertwined in complex relations with operational agencies, the 'proof' of effective policy implementation must be found in how goals and ambitions are reflected in the actions of partners. In this section the evaluation looks at international partnerships, and subsequent sections look at initial findings from the country portfolio analyses.

During the period under review Norway has developed partnerships around disability inclusion in general, and inclusive education in particular. Key partners in the inclusive education efforts have been UNICEF (58% of disbursements²⁴), other multilaterals/World Bank (10% of disbursements) and Redd Barna/Save the Children Norway (16% of disbursements). In the past two years, the Norwegian CSOs that formed a consortium called "Together for Inclusion"- coordinated by the Atlas Alliance – have increased their share, while multilaterals have reduced their share of disbursements.

Norway has also been an active member and supporter of Global Action on Disability (GLAD), supported the multi- donor trust fund for the implementation of the CRPD convention – UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Donor Trust Fund (UNPRPD-MDTF), the World Bank coordinated Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI) and multi-donor trust fund on inclusive education (MDTF), established as a result of the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education and Development. Norway has also supported the Global Partnership for Education with substantial contributions. Norad has opted not to code this initiative with a disability marker, despite it having some inclusive education components (not considered as significant).

The evaluation has found that key partners UNICEF and Redd Barna/Save the Children Norway – have substantially increased their focus on disability since 2018, as evidenced by their annual reports, studies and policy publications. While these efforts have been heavily funded and appreciated by Norway, the policy shift has not been the result of Norwegian aid administration policy dialogue or requirements, but rather depend on other processes in the UN and on a strong commitment of the Redd Barna leadership,

²⁴ The support to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is not included as it has not been coded as disability inclusive.

which has advocated for disability inclusion in Norway and internationally.

3.7.1 MULTILATERAL REPORTING AND RESULTS

Reports from UNICEF describe how the organisation has, since the Global Disability Summit 2018, been in the process of translating their commitments towards CRDP into practice.²⁵ Examples of achievement mentioned are:

- [Accessible Digital Learning Portal \(2021\)](#) – a hub for accessible digital learning information and resources based on Universal Design for Learning to support inclusive education in remote and classroom settings for learners with and without disabilities.
- [Ensuring an inclusive return to school for children with disabilities, COVID-19 Technical Guidance \(2020\)](#).
- [COVID-19 response and recovery: Building back better for young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families \(2021\)](#).

- New data report: [Seen, counted, included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities \(2021\)](#).
- [Foundations of disability-inclusive education sector planning](#) course in partnership with UNESCO-IIEP (ongoing).

UNICEF has undertaken an evaluation of its efforts on disability inclusive education 2019²⁶ which concludes that *“There is a strong level of initiation from UNICEF headquarters concerning disability-inclusive education, but this initiation is challenged by a lack of clear conceptualization. The findings also indicate that implementation varies across both regions and countries and that some country offices are in danger of never sustaining disability inclusive education”*. The evaluation points out a range of obstacles in understanding and capacity among staff and national level partners, along with lack of data on children with disabilities and a focus on enrolment rates, rather than learning outcomes. As a response to challenges, UNICEF is currently in the process of developing a Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy to be launched in late 2022. They are updating the

monitoring methodology for the new UNICEF Strategic Plan – 2022. They are finalising the Inclusive Education data collection module and the development and rollout of the inclusive education framework and toolkit There will be a Global report on education for children with disabilities in 2023 and updated Guidance on inclusive data collection through EMIS in 2023.

In terms of the results reported by multilateral partners, the reporting is often output based, while the reported outcomes for persons with disabilities are either anecdotal or very minimal. Tracking inclusion to the grassroot level has been very difficult in the multilateral contributions. For example, UNICEF (Goal Area 2 – Programme Every child learns) has received significant support from Norway. In 2020 it reports having used 2% of its budget for inclusive education (14 million USD) and an additional 8% (69 million USD) for education system development and analysis, including the EMIS (Education Management Information System), which can help monitor disability disaggregated data and equity in education.

²⁵ UNICEF (2022) UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell's remarks at the 2nd Global Disability Summit, 16 February 2022

²⁶ UNICEF (2019) Formative Evaluation of Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities



Overall, UNICEF stated the following progress from 2017-2020 in terms of inclusive education:

Table 4. [Progress from 2017-2020 in terms of inclusive education](#)

Sub-dimension	Share of partner countries 2017	Share of partner countries 2020
Law and policy	85%	90% (+5)
Country has an “effective” inclusive education system	53%	54% (+1)
Accessible physical environment	28%	29% (+1)
Human resources	31%	44% (+13)
Materials and communication	41%	48% (+7)
Attitudes	62%	75% (+13)
EMIS in place	49%	57% (+8)

It is not clear how these sub-dimensions have been selected, defined or measured. It is also notable that an inclusive education system relies on a holistic approach as it requires accessible premises, human resources, materials and communication. Initiatives covering individual elements are likely to be ineffective. In contrast to the other findings of this evaluation, UNICEF reports a high level of attitudinal acceptance of inclusive education.

The World Bank Inclusive Education Initiative is 50% supported by Norway, with 50% of support from the UK. All of its budget is allocated for disability inclusion. The Initiative reports against an elaborated results framework covering national level enrolment/retention rates, legislation, attitudes, knowledge and confidence, global level innovation and tools development. However, the 2020 annual report mentions that most indicators are still “in progress” (or are yet to develop a system of measurement), especially at country level.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) was a major recipient of Norwegian funds until 2019. The 2016-2020 strategy reports that 2% of its funding has been used for inclusive education. Reported contributions

include the provision of tools and guidelines for education sector analysis and planning to support improved disability data, teacher training in inclusive education, and equipment and learning materials such as braille machines, eyeglasses and hearing aids. The report specifically mentions that inclusive education for children with disabilities was a key priority in GPE's COVID-19 response. There are, however, no reported results of these efforts and the guidelines for education sector planning prepared by GPE make no reference at all to children with disabilities. The GPE is not coded as disability inclusive in the system as it was not judged to reach the level of “significant” disability focus.

3.7.2 REDD BARNAS/SAVE THE CHILDREN NORWAY REPORTING AND RESULTS

Partly as a result of the initiative and persistent advocacy of Redd Barna/Save the Children Norway, disability inclusion is one of the priority areas in the Save the Children International (SCI). There is a “Standing for inclusive education paper” (2014)²⁷, stating the commitments and approach of SCI. Disability inclusion is also a priority in the SCI global strategy for 2022-2024. An Inclusive education

²⁷ Save the Children (2014) Save the Children Stands for Inclusive Education

resources and toolkit (2022) has recently been made public and taken into use by Save the Children and partners. It builds on the Inclusive Learning Approach developed by the Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD) and the Enabling Education Network (EENET).

Box 5. The NAD EENET approach to inclusive education

NAD and EENET have called for a holistic approach to inclusive education that transcends individual, piecemeal projects. “It has two main components: the Inclusive Teaching component and the Inclusive Advocacy component. Through the Inclusive Teaching component, we work with schools and the education systems to give them the tools necessary to become inclusive. Through the Inclusive Advocacy component, we work with persons with disabilities and DPOs to strengthen their knowledge on Inclusive Education and the use of national and international legal frameworks, so that they can effectively advocate for their rights, raise awareness and hold their government accountable.”

<https://nad.nhf.no/nads-development-work/what-we-do/inclusive-education/>

Redd Barna/Save the Children Norway has invested heavily in developing its institutional and leadership capacity on disability inclusion and has recruited special advisors on disability and inclusive education. There is annual action plan for the inclusion of children with disabilities, which is monitored by the Redd Barna disability inclusion team. Special advisors on disability inclusion have also been recruited in the SCI office and in 14 other country offices. Redd Barna strongly advocates for accountability to persons with disabilities and their organisations in their international projects /programmes. Unlike UNICEF, they have a system in place to report on outcomes for children with disabilities in its annual reporting.

3.7.3 NORWAY'S 'VOICE' AND RESULTS AT GLOBAL LEVEL

There is evidence at the global level that Norway has sought to regularly champion the rights of persons with disabilities and disability inclusion in education in engagements with international agencies. Interviewees from multiple organisations outside of the Norwegian aid administration reported that Norad and/ or MFA staff regularly raise disability inclusion at Board-level, encouraging organisations to consider disability inclusion. Norad was also reported, by interviewees

from external partners, to be a key member of the GLAD Inclusive Education Working Group – using their ‘voice’ to raise the profile and importance of disability inclusion. Norway has also been active as a driver in other global fora and has been instrumental in initiating the Inclusive Education Initiative/Multi-Donor Trust Fund, partly as in response to the perceived weakness of GPE in this area.

Thus, the support provided globally in inclusive education broadly aligns with the general priorities for education, set out in the White Paper. These commitments include: “Give priority to improved access to education for people with disabilities and be at the forefront of efforts to include the special needs of children with disabilities in bilateral and multilateral cooperation on education and in humanitarian education efforts”; and, “Take a leading role in global efforts to ensure relevant education of good quality for all, with a particular focus on girls, children with disabilities, the poorest children, and children affected by crisis and conflict”. However, given that there has been no strategy or targets associated with these priorities and no systematic monitoring of results, it has been difficult for Norad/MFA to determine if the programmes that have been supported are contributing towards these commitments.



Reporting shows that budgets specifically set aside for children with disabilities are marginal and reporting on results at country level is scarce. The approaches outlined in the programme documents are based on diverse donor priorities and diverse ideas on the best strategies to use. The global disbursements have mostly gone to “education for all” programmes which have focussed on inclusion of girls and other vulnerable children - including children with disabilities. Generally, there seems to be no agreement of what inclusive education entails and what preconditions are needed for it to work.

Despite being signatories to the Charter for Change, there is no evidence that inclusive education is included in Norwegian humanitarian support that focuses on the education sector. Only two such initiatives could be identified: Education Cannot Wait (not coded with a disability marker) and the rebuilding of school buildings in Nepal after the earthquake. This is despite the fact that Norway has signed the Charter for Change, a commitment to mainstream disability in humanitarian assistance efforts. Some partners (Red Cross and Norwegian Refugee Council) have programme components focusing on persons with disabilities, but these are not coded as within the education sector.

There is a degree of disconnect between Norway's external coherence or messaging around disability inclusion and the ways that this is reflected in Norway's internal aid administration. For example, the nine “key ingredients for inclusive education” in a recent GLAD infographic agreed by Norway is not reflected in strategy or guidance documents produced by Norad or the MFA – or in any instructions to partners in the education sector. Those interviewed noted the contrast between GLAD's clear nine ingredients for inclusive education and the lack of a more detailed framework or operation guidance for Norway's aid administration (see Section 3.4). Most Norad and MFA interviewees were also unable to identify how Norway's work in external fora routinely influenced the funding or support provided by Norway to implementing partners.

3.8 Country level portfolio analysis

Turning to look at Norwegian support to the education sector in the four countries selected, Malawi, Nepal, Uganda and South Sudan, a portfolio analysis for the four countries looked at support to the education sector in each country, setting it in context, and then exploring

a sample of interventions to explore whether and how disability inclusion has been achieved and the factors enabling and obstructing progress.²⁸ The four countries analysed below were selected as they are Norwegian key partner countries. Three of them demonstrate a significant level of disbursements to disability inclusive/targeted education programmes. Compared with the average of around 20-30% of disbursements they stand out and reach more than 50%, despite a drop for Nepal in 2020. Detailed lists of the portfolios for each of the countries are included in Annex 7-10.

In both Nepal and Malawi Norwegian support to the education sector has a key priority and has been consistently supported through a range of programmes. In Uganda, while the education sector has not been a strategic priority, the support has been similarly consistent. In South Sudan education has been a priority since 2015, which is reflected in the growing support. In both Nepal and Uganda, the proportion of the support to the education sector with a disability marker has been consistently high, while the proportions in Malawi and South Sudan have increased since 2013 and 2018 respectively.

²⁸ The information provided is based on available reports on the education sector in the selected countries, the annual embassy work plans, documents related to the management cycle of agreements, and interviews with stakeholders.



3.8.1 NEPAL

There has been a disability focus in more than half of the support to education provided in Nepal during the period of the review – see Figure 7. There has been steady growth in support to education up to 2018, with a general emphasis on the importance of inclusion and the human rights of persons with disabilities in Norwegian development assistance. The dip in total funding in 2019 and 2020 was caused by the closure of schools due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The share of funding coded with a disability marker shrank significantly in 2020 from around 80% to 27%. This was due to the finalising

of bilateral support to the Ministry of Education and the finalisation of a large school post-earthquake reconstruction programme, both with disability markers. Inclusive education in Nepal is now supported through multilateral arrangements and Norwegian CSOs.

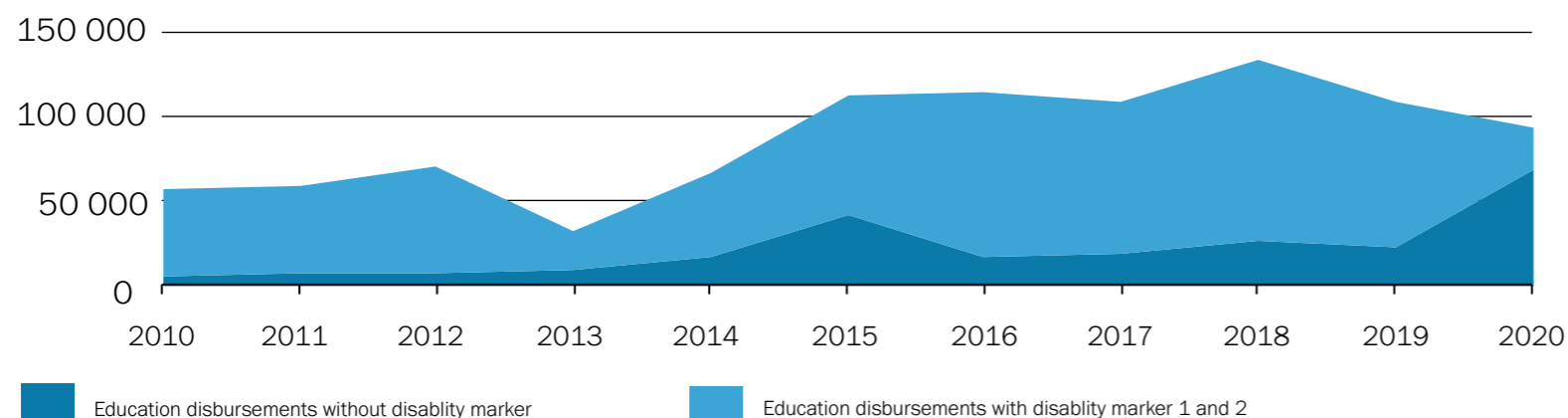
In the period of review there has been a strategic focus on good governance and democracy and supporting the peace and reconciliation process that began with the signing of the peace agreement in 2006. In 2010-2014 Norway supported the School Sector Reform Plan, with focus on education for all, and social inclusion, specifically looking at gender and marginalised ethnic and caste groups.

Norway's key implementing partners have been UNICEF, Save the Children and Plan, who are closely engaged in the process at the central and local levels. In 2013, Norway supported government efforts to develop a strategy for inclusion of vulnerable groups in education.

In the aftermath of the earthquake in 2015, Norway provided support to the rebuilding of school programmes, with a focus on ensuring accessibility. In the period 2016-2019, Norway has supported the Ministry of Education, and the School Sector Development Programme. From 2019, the priorities made for the strategic ambition of providing “quality education for all” in the Embassy's workplans has been linked to the SDG 4: to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In 2019, there were four education projects managed by the Embassy, all with a disability inclusion focus.

The Inclusive Education Initiative (IEI) started up in 2018 and is managed by the World Bank, with funding from Norway from 2019-2021. The IEI selected Nepal as a pilot country and in 2020 it was reported that the IEI worked on mainstreaming disability inclusion in the education sector by influencing the Government

Figure 7. Nepal, Share of Education disbursements with disability marker 2010-2020 (1 000 NOK)



in development of their next school sector plan. IEI also participated in the revision of the EMIS and carried out several mapping studies to identify children with disabilities and plans for continuation of the teacher training activities.

3.8.2 MALAWI

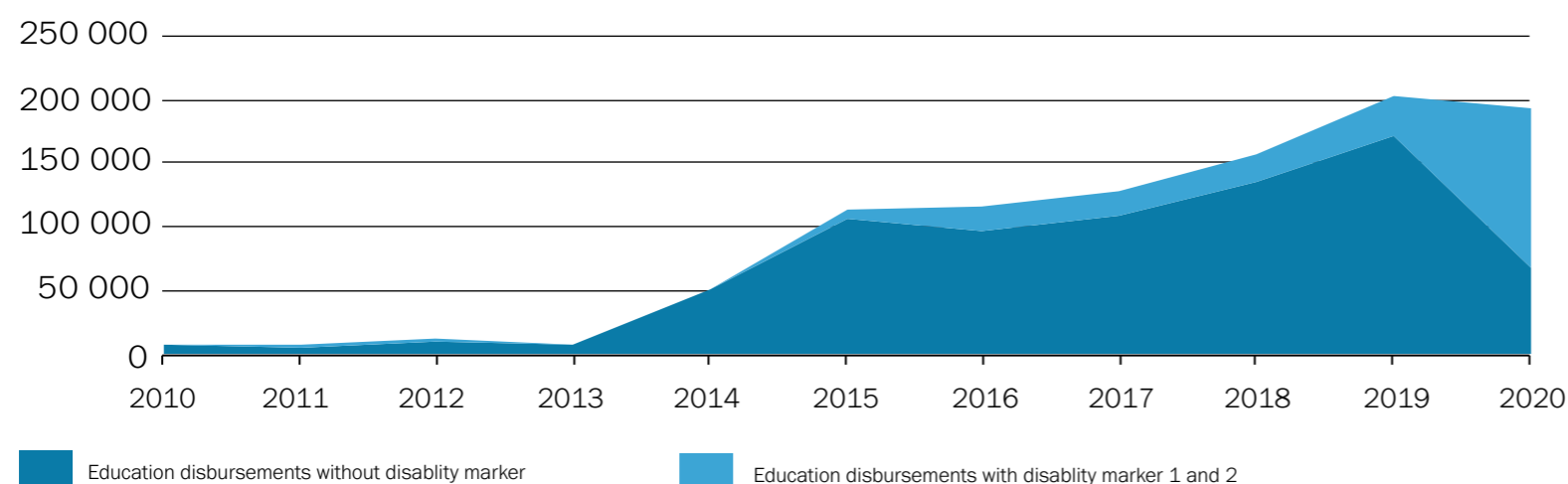
There has been a disability focus in about 10-15% of the education support provided in Malawi since

2015. There was steady growth in support to the education sector in Malawi up to 2019. The decline in funding dispersed in 2020 is related with the COVID-pandemic. Notably the disability inclusive share of the educational support increased to 65% in 2020 following the disability coding of a large contribution to the joint UN programme on girls' education (88 million NOK).

In the period of review support has been provided to a wide range of sectors. In 2015 Norway made education a priority sector for collaboration with Malawi and supported the Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESIP II) through GPE. Inclusion of children with disabilities was a focus area for the support with the objective of improved education sector coordination to achieve better quality in education, participation by girls and vulnerable and marginalised groups, including those affected by food insecurity.

Specific support was provided to Save the Children Malawi and the Campaign for Female Education programme for Girls Education, as well as the special needs teacher training programme of Save the Children Malawi, all of which were considered disability inclusive. Support was provided by the Embassy to the joint UN programme on Girls Education, implemented by UNICEF, World Food Programme and UNFPA, with the aim to ensure quality and retention of girls in school, which had a limited focus on disability inclusion. Voluntary Services Overseas International received funding for the "Unlocking Talent through Technology" programme. There was also support provided to an Inclusive Education project implemented by Save the Children, which has contributed to a broad-based Inclusive Education Strategy of the government supporting the 'leaving no one behind' agenda.

Figure 8. Malawi, Share of Education disbursements with disability marker 2010-2020 (1 000 NOK)



The Joint Program for Girls' Education II ended in June 2020, at which point the Embassy requested technical advice, including a field visit, to ensure that the next programme focused on increased quality and new priorities, including learning outcomes and the inclusion of children with disabilities. In addition, assistance and technical support was requested by the Embassy to help in following up the development of a new GPE programme in Malawi.

3.8.3 UGANDA

Figure 9 shows that there has been a disability focus

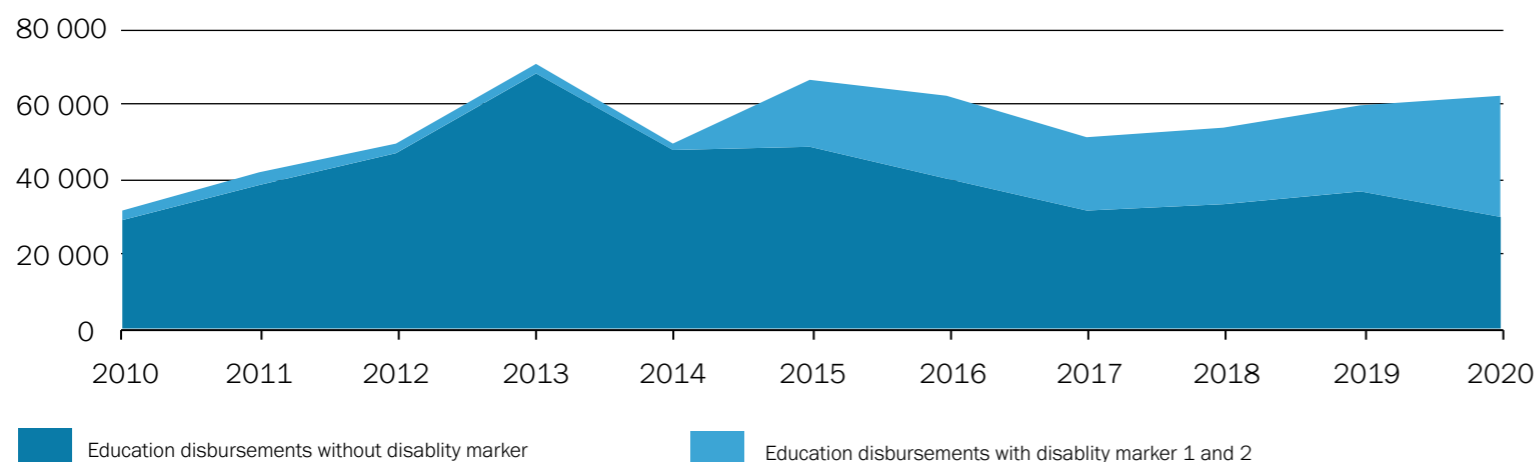
in about 35% of the education disbursements made in Uganda since 2015. In 2020 it reached more than 50%, following a substantial contribution of around 14 million to the "Together for Inclusion (TOFI)" initiative".

The focus areas of development collaboration of Norway with Uganda, in the years of 2010-2020 have been: Oil for Development, renewable energy, forestry, climate and environment as well as human rights - inclusion of vulnerable groups, including girls, people with disabilities, and marginalised children, such as internally displaced people and refugees. Health and education have been prioritised focus areas for

multilateral support, including support to UNICEF. In principle, disability inclusion is a cross cutting issue to be considered in all funding to UNICEF. Norwegian CSOs and OPDs have received support to disability inclusion education interventions, including the Strømme Foundation, Redd Barna and the Atlas Alliance. In 2019-2020 the three have coordinated and strengthened their country effort towards disability inclusion under TOFI.

Between March 2020 and January 2022, schools in Uganda were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, as a COVID-19 response, UNICEF reallocated Norwegian funds to produce and distribute home learning schooling materials. The effort included the production and distribution of books with braille codes. In 2021, the embassy in Kampala funded the Save the Children International and the Norwegian Refugee Council project: Strengthening Education Systems, Bridging Learning Loss 2021-2023. The project aims to address the problem of learning loss experienced during the prolonged closure of schools, due to the COVID-19. The overall goal of the project is improved access to quality learning opportunities and learning outcomes for children. Children with disabilities are included in the target group.

Figure 9. Uganda, Share of Education disbursements with disability marker 2010-2020 (1 000 NOK)



3.8.4 SOUTH SUDAN

Support to the education sector in South Sudan grew until 2020, with a focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities from 2018 onwards. In 2020, disbursements coded as disability inclusive or targeted reached 30% following a substantial contribution of 15 million NOK to the TOFI initiative.

The focus for the Norwegian development efforts in South Sudan in the period has been peace, stability and reconciliation, food security, civil society and education. In the years 2010-2015 education was not a priority sector for Norwegian support to South

Sudan. In 2015, the Embassy was selected as a pilot country for support to education in conflict and crisis, as well as being made a priority for Norwegian collaboration with vulnerable states. A strategic plan was developed in 2015, which included an active dialogue with the Common Humanitarian Fund and the education donor group and strengthened support to UNICEF and Norwegian CSOs. In 2016, against this plan, support was provided to UNICEF in 2016 for the 'Back to learning programme': for basic education and teacher training with an objective to strengthen lasting development. In 2017, education efforts were focused on vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities. Support to the UNICEF "back to learning

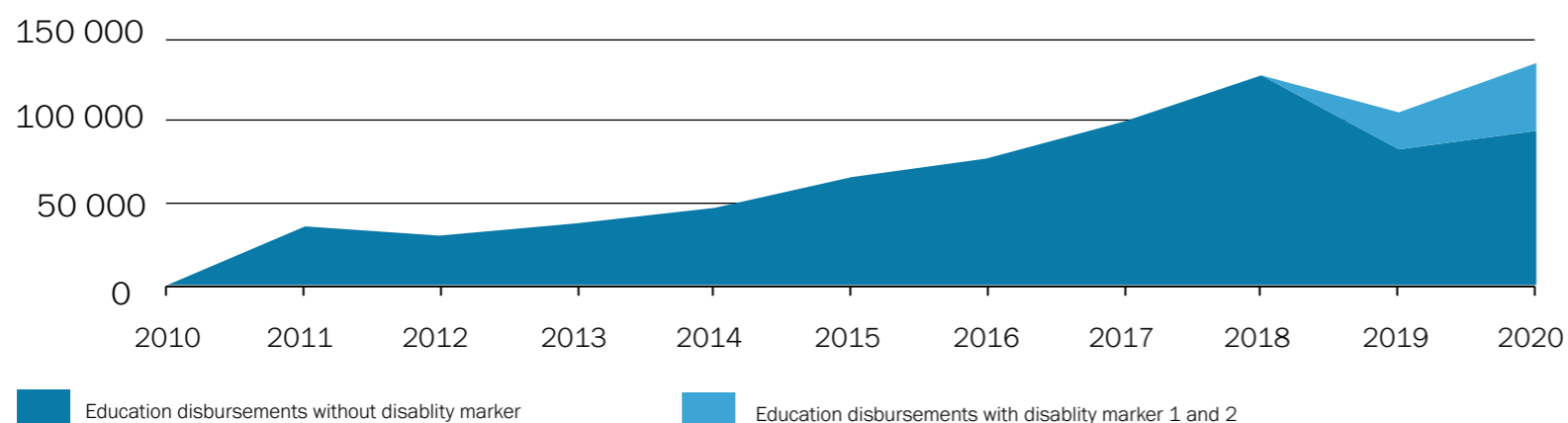
programme" was extended to 2019.

In 2019, Norad support began for the TOFI consortium led by ADRA in South Sudan and managed globally by the Atlas Alliance. The objective of the programme is to fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities in the country through increased participation of girls and boys with disabilities in pre-primary, primary and secondary education; increased capacity of OPDs to improve inclusivity of the education system for children with disabilities; and improved inclusivity of the education system for children with disabilities.

3.9 Relevance in relation to national policies and processes

There is evidence at the country level, mostly from interviews, supported by Embassy workplans, that the education programmes supported by Norway have been consistently implemented through national coordination efforts, which has avoided duplication. There is also evidence that the support that Norway has provided to implementing partners has added value in the education sector, with contributions to inclusive education in Nepal and underway in Malawi. The examples from Nepal, Malawi and Uganda below

Figure 10. South Sudan, Share of Education disbursements with disability marker 2010-2020 (1 000 NOK)



set out the mechanisms for coordination that have been used and describe the specific coordination around inclusive education in Nepal and Malawi.

3.9.1 NEPAL

In Nepal, government and development actors' work in the education sector is well coordinated and well-aligned in general, with similar coordination efforts in the support for disability inclusion in education. The support through an education sector-wide approach modality, led by government, provides a common platform of engagement for all development partners (donors as well as CSOs and OPDs) and is reported to be an effective mechanism for engaging with the government through dialogue to influence their priorities.

The Norwegian Embassy plays an active role in the education sector in Nepal, with the Education Counsellor (active from 2005 onwards) and the Local Embassy Senior Advisor playing an important role, including being co-focal point in the Local Education Development Partner's Group, that has been formed

to facilitate the government's aspiration of achieving the goal of equity in education. The working group on inclusive education focuses on strengthening a systematic approach to inclusive education in Nepal, in line with both the constitution and the overall direction of the government, with a specific focus on the inclusion of children with disabilities.²⁹ The group has supported the government to develop an 'approach paper', which is a road map to guide efforts for inclusion of children with disabilities, within the framework of the education sector development plan.

Norad's support to CSOs has been important in supplementing the government's priorities, particularly through technical assistance and demonstrating measures and best practices for addressing identified challenges in the education sector. CSO partners supported by Norad have been actively engaged in the coordination efforts and have influenced the Government's priorities.

3.9.2 MALAWI

The major donors to education have established a

Donor Coordinating Committee on education which aims to share experiences to avoid the duplication of activities. The Committee meets quarterly and is chaired by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education. Again, in the Norwegian Embassy the Education Counsellor (active in the years 2014-2020) had an important role. At the level of coordination, Norway has taken its turn as chair and co-chair of coordination of the Development Partners Group on Education and a co-chair of the technical working group on inclusive education. The aims of the latter have been to work with the Government and partners to ensure learning and participation for children living with disabilities. This has also contributed to the development of a Policy on Inclusive Education, through the third phase of the Joint Programme for Girls Education and across the education portfolio. It is emphasised that coordination between global and bilateral development in education has been a priority for the embassy in Lilongwe. Bilateral agreements have enabled the Embassy to follow both global and bilateral funding streams closely and report back to headquarters about achievements and challenges.

²⁹ The inclusive education policy from 2017, building on the CRDP, is regarded as an important commitment made by the government towards children with disabilities in Nepal, and perceived as a result from dedicated advocacy work in which Norway (the embassy and Norad), Save the Children-Norway, Atlas Alliance, Plan International-Norway and other partners have played a part (together with partners of MyRights- Sweden).

3.9.3 UGANDA

Norway is a member of the Education Sector Donor Group, which is co-chaired by the Irish Embassy and UNICEF. Norway does not have a specific formal role in the group. Education is not a prioritised thematic development area in the bilateral collaboration of Norway with Uganda, so wider coordination at this level is not expected. However, there are a number of Norwegian or Norwegian funded International CSOs implementing inclusive education projects in the country such as Plan International, Save the Children and Strømme Foundation; none of which participate in the donor group.

3.9.4 SOUTH SUDAN

As there is no funding currently channelled through the Government, coordination takes place through an Education Donor Group, which Norway is part of. For humanitarian interventions there is a Cluster Coordination system, which mainly consists of UN agencies and CSOs and which the Embassy does not have the capacity to attend. In inclusive education, ADRA is the lead agency for a consortium of CSOs

including YGlobal (part of the Norwegian YMCA-YWCA), Strømme Foundation and the Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People and a number of local partners, with the aim of increasing the participation of girls and boys with disabilities in pre-primary, primary and secondary education. There is considerable evidence that Norway plays an active role in supporting, coordinating with and adding value to support in the education sector alongside other actors and by doing this avoiding duplication of efforts.

3.10 Country level portfolio analysis results 2010-2020

The evidence available shows that that progress varies considerably, with evidence of significant local results in both Nepal and Malawi, while in Uganda there is evidence of some progress and in South Sudan, due to the short period of implementation, much more limited progress.

At the outset the results reported on programmes were to be assessed towards defined needs (established through existing baselines), policies, and priorities in the country, as well as assessment of how well stated

programme objectives on disability inclusion are achieved and their effects on the target population. The country portfolio analysis presented in Annexes 7-10. provide detailed information on the development in the period 2010-2020 – policies, legislation, strategies and actual inclusion of children with disabilities in Malawi, Nepal, Uganda and South Sudan. Project and programme documentation made available for this study does not provide sufficiently clear evidence to trace results in relation to the ToC, in particular how (and why) outputs may have contributed to inclusive education outcomes, or to progress made in the education sector in general. The documents following the management cycle of agreements of the four country level portfolios have mainly reported project / programme outputs. External evaluations and mid-term reviews provide more systematic evidence of what the projects and programmes supported by Norway have contributed to outcomes. To assess if the supported programmes of international partners have a potential to contribute to such changes, the team has analysed the programme outcomes against criteria of an inclusive school system according to the IDA³⁰, looking at: strategic planning; staff capability and motivation; budgeting/ finance; and community engagement. An

³⁰ International Disability Alliance (2020), What an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Education Means to Us

initial attempt has been made by the evaluation team to identify areas where there is evidence that progress has been made toward an inclusive education system in Nepal, Malawi and Uganda³¹, as set out in Table 5. A preliminary analysis suggests that:

- **Nepal** – The laws and policy frameworks are largely in place and there have been efforts made (supported by development partners) to promote some aspects of inclusive education through the School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023, in most cases implemented on a pilot basis in a limited number of schools. Norway has played an active role in supporting the policy development directly with the Ministry of Education and via UNICEF and Save the Children/Redd Barna. Still, the resources allocated for inclusive education are

insufficient and the implementation is hampered by negative attitudes and a weak school system. The main focus of the government continues to be on supporting separate special needs education.

- **Malawi** – There has been progress in promoting inclusive education since 2017, which has received further momentum since the development of the National Inclusive Education Strategy implementation plans and budget since 2020. Funding from Norway has helped to develop policies, implement pilot projects, train teachers, carry out research and consolidate learning. Major challenges are the insufficient funding of the planned reforms, the lack of qualified teachers and the overcrowded school system.

- **Uganda** – Despite the progressive policy development, the focus remains on separate special needs education efforts, with some slow progress towards inclusive education, such as work by UNICEF on a pilot basis. Norway is perceived to be an active advocate for inclusive education and has contributed via Save the Children/Redd Barna and Atlas Alliance to awareness raising and capacity building in communities, life skills training, teacher training, advocacy towards duty bearers and involvement of OPDs, capacity development of OPDs and support to teacher training at Kyambogo University.

Table 5 aims to give an analysis of trends in the education sector in Uganda, Malawi and Nepal towards the established criteria of IDA.

³¹ Given the difficulties of obtaining reliable secondary data for South Sudan the assessment was not carried out for the portfolio analysis.



Table 5. Indicators for inclusive education (based on IDA framework)

Indicators for inclusive education for assessment (based on IDA framework)	Uganda	Malawi	Nepal
1. All education facilities (private and public) are regulated under the same Ministries, for persons with and without disabilities	●	●	●
2. There is an explicit disability inclusion plan with concrete goals and targets.	●	●	●
3. Monitoring, reports and evaluations include assessments of inclusion achievements in systems as well as data disaggregation on trends in literacy and completion rates	●	●	●
4. Enforcement of non-discrimination and Zero Rejection policies in schools are implemented	●	●	●
5. Teacher education and curriculum reforms incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning, including equal access and participation	●	●	●
6. A diversity of languages (including sign languages, tactile sign languages) and modes of communication (easy-to-read, Braille, etc.) are used throughout the education system.	●	●	●
7. Schools for learners who are deaf are supported to become inclusive bilingual sign language schools	●	●	●
8. Special schools and other segregated settings are progressively phased out, while key human resources and knowledge assets are converted into support services	●	●	●
9. There are significant budget lines for recruiting and training qualified teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who can provide inclusive and quality learning for all learners	●	●	●
10. There are significant budget lines for accessibility of needed infrastructure, materials for teachers, students and parents, the provision of assistive products and technology	●	●	●
11. There are significant budget lines for support services, to assist all schools and all teachers in providing effective learning for all students, including those with disabilities	●	●	●
12. Multi-stakeholder engagement between ministries of education, schools, educators, support services, parents and communities, is promoted and functional	●	●	●
13. Engagement with stakeholders with disabilities (parents, educators, government officials and others) is properly supported to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making	●	●	●

● Policies in place, but not yet enforced ● Insufficient ● In place

More elaborated analyses tables with findings that support our assessment are found in the country portfolio analyses in Annex 7-10.

3.11 County level outputs/outcomes

This section of the report presents illustrative examples of the outputs and outcomes that have been achieved at country level. The evaluation team has selected these initiatives to demonstrate the elements of the theory of change that partners have focused on for achieving inclusive education results.

3.11.1 NEPAL

The partners of Norway reportedly approach disability inclusion as a cross-cutting theme and describe practices where disability inclusion education interventions have been linked with other sectors which are seen as foundational to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities, including social protection, accessible Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, safe environments, infrastructure, health, livelihoods and food security.

Advocacy efforts and support to the government of Nepal have been described as effective. Partners of the Atlas Alliance take (shared) credit for contributing to the passing of the Inclusive Education Policy (2017) which is aligned with UNCRPD and focuses on mainstreaming with provision for both inclusive and special education. Norwegian funding to Plan contributed to the development of the national "Safe Schools policy". The support to UNICEF contributed to the development of the WASH Act passed by the Ministry of Water Supply and Sanitation which is now developing guidelines for Inclusive WASH facilities. The priority of disability inclusion in the next phase of the Education sector plan made by the government (starting 2022), is perceived as the outcome of the long-termed commitment made by Norway and its partners.

Redd Barna has been a major supporter of the Save the Children International (SCI) programme in Nepal. The programme has engaged with the Nepal Ministry of Education and established partnerships with OPDs and local CSOs specialised in social mobilisation and education for children with disabilities to raise knowledge and awareness and reduce stigma and

discrimination at community level, to thereby increase enrolment rates and enhance outcomes for children with disabilities.³² SCI in Nepal works in consortiums with other International CSOs to promote inclusive education policies and raise equity issues regarding access to education for the most vulnerable groups of children in Nepal to decision makers at national level.

Norway has also supported the UNICEF programme; 'Making Development Disability Inclusive for Children in Nepal' (2019-2020) with a focus on two of the programme's components: Data collection, analysis and evidence generation and Basic Education. Selected outputs reported are; 1,036 teachers have been trained on inclusive education and early grade learning for children with disabilities and functional limitation, and 528 children with a disability/functional limitation have been identified - with Individual Education Plans being developed. Support to the Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey³³ has been useful to demonstrate the under-reporting of statistics regarding children with disabilities. The study indicated higher prevalence rate of children with disabilities than the national statistics.

³² Norad (2015) - Final Report 2010-2014, SC Contract QZA 09/143 -Nepal Norad

³³ UNICEF Nepal (2019) Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Final Report 2019



Accessible school buildings /infrastructure is a basic requirement for successful inclusive education. The 2015 earthquake destroyed more than 30000 school buildings. Since then, Norway has supported 58 building projects, giving priority to schools facilitating education for vulnerable children.

3.11.2 MALAWI

In the period in question, the inclusive education projects of the Atlas Alliance and its partners have focused on capacity development of OPD partners, teacher training, curriculum development, identification and facilitation of children with disabilities participation in education, advocacy and safe schools. Efforts are underway to ensure that disability inclusive education approaches are implemented nationally through the next phase of the UNICEF “Joint Program for Girls’ Education” which receives substantial support from Norway.

The Framework Agreement with Red Barna (2015-2018) treats disability inclusion as a cross-cutting issue. The Annual Progress Report to Norad 2020

describes efforts to include children with disabilities in the COVID-19 pandemic response, for example production of math and reading materials, which are designed to include strategies to support children with disabilities. A total of 1,775 regular teachers (816 male; 959 female) were trained in inclusive pedagogy, individualised education plans and the Inclusion Index. To strengthen case management a total of 1231 (772 male; 460 female) teachers were also trained on early identification and referral of vulnerable children. Following this, 1,341 children with various disabilities (631 male; 710 female) were screened and referred for appropriate case management.

The Plan International Safe Schools and Inclusive Education project targeted school going boys and girls including children with disabilities and aimed to ensure that children with disabilities are included in development work supported by Norway³⁴. However, the project significantly underperformed against the planned target for number of children with disabilities graduating from primary school and continuing to secondary schools.

3.11.3 UGANDA

From 2010-2014 the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education³⁵ in partnership with Kyambogo University carried out capacity building in teacher education for children with disabilities and special needs. The overall objectives were to expand and advance the capacity and quality of national education and training in Uganda, South Sudan and Norway. By 2014 a total 56 out of the 63 students had graduated with master’s degrees in vocational Pedagogy.

In the years 2016-2019 the Atlas Alliance partnered with OPDs on a programme aiming at development of skills for participation in society and life- long learning. According to the final Report 2016–2019 - sign language training, teacher training on inclusive education pedagogics, and awareness campaigns towards parents have been carried out. Partners also contributed to development of the National Disability-Inclusive Planning Guidelines for Uganda, 2017. Norway also supported the Uganda Functional Difficulties Survey 2017 carried out by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (published in 2017), and the study

³⁴ Plan International (2020) Malawi Safe Schools and Inclusive Education, Final Narrative Report 2020

³⁵ UWC Red Cross Nordic About Us – UWC Red Cross Nordic (uwrcrn.no)



on living conditions among persons with disabilities published in 2019.³⁶ With these two studies, the disability movement and government in Uganda have comprehensive and updated data on disability that can be used for advocacy, policy development and monitoring of CRPD.

Atlas Alliance launched the TOFI programme in Uganda in February 2020, which aims to provide support to OPDs to become strong and knowledgeable advocates and advisors on inclusive education and early childhood development. The COVID-19 pandemic led to delays in the programme implementation by the partner organisations. Nonetheless, several inclusive education training sessions were conducted at national level, targeting different stakeholders. To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and school closures, home-based learning materials were produced for marginalised learners and learners with disabilities who were unable to access the government home-based learning programmes.

Redd Barna has been a major supporter of the Save the Children International (SCI) programme in Uganda.

The programme (2014-2018) set out to improve access and quality including learning outcomes for the most marginalised groups of children (girls, children with disabilities, etc.) related to policy development, advocacy, and teacher training. The Final Narrative Report finds an increase in the number of children with disabilities accessing basic education in the 103 intervention schools to be 472 (all gender balanced), representing a change of 7.5% from the baseline. The programme supported capacity building of teachers in inclusive education to handle life and learning needs of children with disabilities. A total of 203 teachers (99 male; 104 female) were trained in inclusive education pedagogical approaches to support participation and improvement of learning outcomes for all children including those with learning disabilities³⁷.

3.11.4 SOUTH SUDAN

The first projects/programmes coded as disability inclusive education in South Sudan started in 2018. Strømme Foundation, ADRA and Redd Barna were the main implementing partners in these efforts. Available

reports lack evidence regarding the target groups and number of children that have been reached. In the annual report of SCI South Sudan, it is mentioned that they had actively participated in the review of the Inclusive Education Policy draft and in the development of a strategy for persons with disabilities.

The TOFI programme started in 2019. The overall objective is to fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities. The programme focuses on teacher training, direct provision in schools and home-based education and awareness raising. Support is provided to OPDs to become strong and knowledgeable advocates and advisors on inclusive education and early childhood development. Support is given to government in developing projects that enable learning on how to move towards inclusive education and early childhood development. There is moreover a component to increase access to micro finance, savings and loans groups for persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas. No results are reported so far.

³⁶ SINTEF (2020) Living conditions among persons with disabilities in Uganda, A National, representative household survey. SINTEF Report No. 2020 – 01387

³⁷ NORAD (2020) Annual Progress Report 2020 Agreement QZA 18/0373



3.12 Sustainability through ownership

In Nepal and Malawi, the support in the education sector demonstrates national and local ownership/ processes for disability inclusion. Nepal provides the strongest example of where consistent support to a number of influential implementing partners, working in coordination with the government has contributed to national ownership of inclusive education in the country. There is more limited, but notable evidence from Malawi. As noted earlier, the nature of this evaluation has yielded limited evidence regarding sustainability, so these findings should be seen as inconclusive.

3.12.1 NEPAL

The inclusive education policy from 2017, is regarded as an important commitment made by the government towards children with disabilities in Nepal and as such is a cornerstone of ownership and sustainability. The policy represents a shift from a welfare to a rights-based approach, with the focus on inclusive education that makes provision for both inclusive and special education needs.

The new policy aligns with the commitments made by Nepal towards SDG4.

Interviewees with stakeholders in Nepal, recognised Norway as one of the key donors raising the issue of equity and inclusion of children with disabilities in education. Norway's contribution in establishing dedicated technical assistance on inclusive education in order to have a more systemic impact on fiduciary aspects and to play a lead role in development of the gender equity index. Interviews confirm UNICEF's co-leadership role of the inclusive education technical working group has continued to facilitate and support momentum on the issue of mainstreaming inclusive education for Nepal, particularly in relation to the transition to the federal system and in preparation of the next education sector plan. Such structural support would appear to be essential to underpin longer-term sustainability.

3.12.2 MALAWI

According to the National Inclusive Education Strategy (NIES), the inclusive education agenda largely relies on support from different players and stakeholders. These include the Government of Malawi, CSOs, development partners, academia, the corporate sector and learners, parents and local communities. More specifically, the strategy highlights the role of CSOs and OPDs in the planning and implementation of inclusive education to include supporting government in the provision of inclusive vocational skills training and capacity building, resource mobilisation, public awareness and education, and supporting collaborative research. Similarly, the NIES describes the role of development partners to include provision of technical, material and financial support to implement inclusive education activities at all levels of education; promotion of better coordination strategies among partners to avoid duplication, wastage of resources and inefficiency and creation of a forum where different partners in inclusive education can share experiences in the implementation of inclusive education.³⁸

³⁸ MoEST. (2017) National Strategy on Inclusive Education 2017-2021

In interviews, Norway is credited for giving valuable contributions to the development of the new NIES, and for pushing the disability inclusion agenda towards the government and donors. Norway's high-level ownership of the inclusive education agenda in Norway has been seen a valuable signal for encouraging commitments towards sustainable change in Malawi. CSOs also contribute. The Save the Children Inclusive Education Project End Line Evaluation (2019) describes how, when the project started in 2015, the Ministry did not have an Inclusive Education strategy. Save the Children learned that "Identifying national priorities and working closely with Government entities in project delivery builds the basis for sustainability and continuity".³⁹

3.12.3 UGANDA

The financial support to the education sector in Uganda is low and comprehensive capacity development efforts would be required to meet the vision of a high-quality inclusive education sector. The long-term work of Norwegian partners in education is recognised and valued by the Ministry of Education as contributing towards sustainability.

³⁹ SC (2019) - Endline Evaluation of the Inclusive Education (IE) in Malawi Project 2019: 18



4

Conclusions



The ToRs for this evaluation have led the team to analyse the theories of change for implementing four streams of work to enhance disability inclusion:

- Strengthen the Norwegian Policy framework;
- Strengthen mainstreaming in supported programmes;
- Strengthen global reporting on disability inclusion;
- Providing direct financial support to multilateral agencies and CSOs for inclusive education initiatives.

An overall conclusion of the evaluation is that the work carried out along these lines of action has not led to increased disability inclusion in Norwegian development and humanitarian aid. The theory of change assumed a relatively linear path from broad commitments to clear policy frameworks, messaging, guidance, capacities, commitments and implementation. The reality has been patchier, with processes disrupted by insufficient ownership, lack of clarity of priorities and commitments across Norwegian aid administration and limited investments in institutional capacity development. Most resources have been allocated to UNICEF and other

multilaterals, as well as through CSOs and complex sub-granting processes. As a result, the roll-out of Norwegian commitments have inevitably been diluted. Successful outcomes documented are too often related to individual champions and drive of staff members and partners.

At the country level, however, the 'flexibility' that has at time led to insufficiently steady commitments to inclusive education has also allowed programming to be well aligned with national needs, priorities and policies. Considerable resources have been allocated, particularly to UNICEF, to achieve aims and appropriate support has been provided from the embassies to encourage a significant degree of coordinated implementation. In general, programming is generating positive outputs and outcomes. There are gaps, however. Most notably, the evaluation has found no evidence that commitments to mainstream disability inclusion in humanitarian assistance have materialised.

Conclusions in relation to the main evaluation questions can be summarised as follows:

Is the organisational set up and capability of the Norwegian aid administration suitable to meet the commitments for disability inclusion?

Where progress has been made, the increase in attention and support has been due to strong political leadership and to individual champions working in the MFA, Norad, embassies and in partner organisations. However, understanding and commitment across the administration is far from universal. Lack of clear accountability mechanisms, limited expertise and weak guidance on disability inclusion as a key human right related to equality, poverty reduction and the humanitarian imperative stand in the way of achieving greater consistency in addressing commitments.

To what extent are the existing education programmes aligned with Norwegian policies (specifically human rights), national policies and local needs and priorities of persons with disabilities?

Only 20% of disbursements in 2020 were coded as having disability as a principal or significant focus. Norwegian policies for disability inclusion are approached 'flexibly', and when trade-offs need to be made with other competing priorities, disability concerns are often given insufficient attention. Furthermore, lack of awareness, understanding and perhaps even inappropriate norms have resulted in failures to recognise what a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion means.



Looking specifically at inclusive education, the White Papers on Education and Human Rights provide only broad commitments but lack both a clear overall definition of what inclusive education should look like and more specific and timebound objectives for disability inclusive education programmes supported by Norway. Both are needed to guide the development of coherent portfolios of support and specific programmes to take forward these commitments, as well as clear incentives for actually acting on these policies and responding to these commitments in the face of competing objectives.

At the country level, a different picture emerges. Operational programming appears to be generally well aligned with local needs and priorities, and policies (where these exist). Partners and embassies are able to adapt programming to reflect existing national trends and opportunities. However, the understanding of what inclusive education should look like in different contexts and for different disability groups is still an area of contention – even within the disability movement. The dialogue with OPDs needs to be strengthened to find the right path towards inclusion in each country.

To what extent are existing programmes designed and utilised to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate outputs?

Little evidence was found of synergies across Norwegian programming in general. Disability inclusion has not yet been sufficiently mainstreamed to ensure synergetic effects, with four key components missing:

1. Consistent messaging on disability inclusion as a key priority (as was done with gender);
2. A strong strategic policy framework with objectives and targets for both the administration, dialogue with partners, programme assessments and the design of projects and programmes and indicators for monitoring progress⁴⁰.
3. An operational framework and guidance setting out a common approach to disability inclusion and internal systems to ensure that persons with disabilities are routinely considered, supported by capacity and human resource management to foster stronger and sustainable capacities across the administration.

4. Involvement of and accountability to persons with disabilities and their organisations. Supporting OPDs to develop capacity to engage meaningfully.

Again however, at country level the partners have been able to design programmes that are relevant and appear to be achieving a greater level of effectiveness by linking to and supporting national policies. For example, the roles of the Education Counsellors of the evaluation period at the embassies were seen by interviewees as both key resources and advocates for inclusive education at the country level. Despite the administrative gaps, there is evidence of consistent and coordinated efforts to support inclusive education through multilaterals and through Norwegian CSOs at the national level, particularly in Nepal and Malawi. With regard to consistency, it seems that this has been down to the efforts of implementing partners, particularly Save the Children (Redd Barna) and UNICEF.

Nevertheless, the implementation is slow and the share of children with disabilities attending primary education remains low (between 1-4%) in these countries, while school completion rates are even lower, indicating that progress is limited in terms of actual implementation.

⁴⁰ Such a strategy could play a similar role as the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy does in the UN system.



Most of the children with disabilities who attend school in these countries still go to special schools or units. The global reporting of UNICEF confirms that substantial policy level gains have been made in many countries, while actual implementation of inclusive education is still pending. Obstacles mentioned include curriculum inflexibility, negative school culture, lack of pedagogy skills of teachers, poor assessment systems, inaccessibility of premises, lack of materials and tools, parent attitudes and overcrowded classes. The gaps remain so vast that synergies are few.

To what extent does Norwegian support coordinate with and add value to support in the education sector by other actors, while avoiding duplication of effort?

Whilst lack of a strategy and of guidance has provided space for staff across Norway's aid administration to make contextually relevant decisions, it has also meant that Norway's aid does not 'speak with one voice'. More worryingly, the lack of formal coordination mechanisms has resulted in a lack of coherence across the portfolios and a lack of opportunities to share lessons or knowledge. Considering the global portfolio, Norway has provided support to some significant multilaterals in inclusive education initiatives, but with no guiding strategy there is little evidence that

this support was strategic beyond country levels, and there are concerns that the various efforts were not carried out in a coordinated and coherent way. This is, perhaps, best illustrated by the fact that while Norway plays a leading role in the GLAD Inclusive Education Working Group, which has published clear guidance on the key ingredients of inclusive education, this guidance does not seem to have been explicitly used in the development of Norway's own support to inclusive education.

Has Norwegian support influenced national and local ownership/ processes for disability inclusion?

With regard to coordination, this has been down to a strong sense of national ownership in Nepal and effective national coordination between donors in Malawi. In both countries there has clearly been progress made from inclusive education pilots at a sub-national level to the development of inclusive education policy, through to initial steps towards country implementation of this policy.

In Malawi there is some progress towards policies that may contribute to ownership and sustainability over time, but reliance on international actors still dominates. Progress towards ownership and

sustainability in Uganda and South Sudan appears to be limited.

However, it should be stressed that sustainability is difficult to assess using the methods thus far applied and further analyses may yield different conclusions in the next phase of data collection.



5

Recommendations



Recommendations for the MFA/Norad/Embassies⁴¹

1. Norway should develop an operational framework outlining how to achieve the commitments made in the new “Equity for All” Strategy, including annual targets, tools and guidelines, human and financial resources and monitoring/tracking tools. The operational framework needs to be based on clear definitions of disability, inclusive education and the twin track approach.
2. The Norwegian leadership should consistently communicate that disability inclusion and the commitments made in the strategy are fundamental priorities and are not mere options. Experience with consistent application of gender equality strategies and policies should be recognised as an example of what must be done.
3. The capacity of the aid administration should be strengthened by employing disability experts in key functions, appointing disability focal points in key departments and formalising the role of the Disability Inclusion Network. The Network should be given a formal role and Terms of Reference to

support the administration and key partners to implement the new Strategy, through guidance, tools and trainings, assessments of agreements, proposals and reports and facilitation of coordination and learning.

4. The commitments made in the Strategy must be translated into clear demands on partners to be disability inclusive, to track and report on outcomes for persons with various disabilities and to be accountable to OPDs. This must be accompanied by capacity development efforts that empower OPDs and rights holders to engage meaningfully in co-creation of programmes and monitoring of results.
5. There needs to be greater efforts to ensure that disability inclusion becomes part of core humanitarian commitments by Norway, especially in education. This includes acting on neglected existing commitments to, e.g., the Charter for Change. The new Strategy is rather silent on this matter, suggesting that particular guidance is needed to fill this gap.

6. A formal consultation platform between OPDs and the aid administration should be established in Norway. All programmes supported by Norway should ensure that its implementing partners invite national/local OPDs to take part in planning and monitoring in a meaningful manner.
7. The focus on policy level reforms supported by partners to promote inclusive education should be coupled with contextually relevant support measures, addressing the implementation obstacles identified, using a holistic and long-term approach (as exemplified in the NAD/EENET model).

Recommendations for the next phase of the evaluation

This evaluation is based on the collection and analysis of a wide range of contextual information, available project and programme documentation and a limited number of interviews. It is clear that there are potentially important lessons to be learned from the countries covered and from the education portfolios supported by Norway, which can be further explored in the next phase of the evaluation (WP 3).

⁴¹ The evaluation team notes that most of these recommendations may require joint efforts of the MFA and Norad at a global level, combined with ‘ground truthing’ of these initiatives by the embassies. Therefore the roles of the three institutions are not specified.



Key questions that are still to be answered include:

1. What are the educational outcomes of children with different types of disabilities in programmes supported directly (bilateral) or indirectly (global multilateral) by Norway? Who are included and why? Who are still excluded and why?
2. What are the key systemic obstacles to inclusion for various disability groups? Which of the supported programmes have managed best to address these? What are still major gaps? What lessons can be drawn? What strategies have proven most effective where the gaps are seemingly insurmountable?
3. How well do programme objectives and design align with the realities on the ground? How can ideals of inclusion be gradually developed in various contexts in practice?
4. What is the present level of synergies between programmes supported directly (bilateral) or indirectly (global multilateral) by Norway? How could synergies be improved?
5. What are the main lessons learnt regarding disability inclusion in education in humanitarian assistance?
6. What factors generate or obstruct ownership and sustainability for inclusive education within country level policy formation processes? What has Norway done and what could be done to impact on these processes



Acronyms and abbreviations

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	QA	Quality Assurance
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	RNE	Royal Norwegian Embassy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	SCI	Save the Children International
ECW	Education Cannot Wait	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
EENET	Enabling Education Network	SESBiLL	Strengthening Education Systems, Bridging Learning Loss
GLAD	Global Action on Disability	ToC	Theory of Change
GPE	Global Partnership for Education	TOFI	Together for Inclusion
IDA	International Disability Alliance	ToR	Terms of Reference
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation	UN	United Nations
IEI	Inclusive Education Initiative	UNCHR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
KII	Key Informant Interview	UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund on Inclusive Education	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
NAD	Norwegian Association of Disabled	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	UNPRPD-MDTF	UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Donor Trust Fund
NIES	National Inclusive Education Strategy	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
NOK	Norwegian Kroner	WP	Work Package
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation	YMCA	Young Men's Christians Association
Norec	Norwegian Agency for Exchange Co-operation	YWCA	Young Women's Christians Association
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee		
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities		



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