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

Disability inclusion and inclusive education:
Lessons from Malawi and Nepal



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Carried out by

NIRAS Sweden

Written by

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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- Norway's strategy for disability- inclusive development (2022-2025)'.

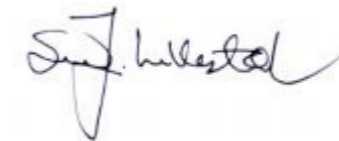
This evaluation report is the third report in the series of three reports exploring Norway's efforts to include persons with disability in development cooperation covering different perspectives. The report provides an in-depth study of the achievements made and remaining challenges regarding inclusion of persons

with disabilities in selected projects in Nepal and Malawi. The main conclusion in the report is that programmes often result in local improvements, but the overall lack of capacities at schools and the local administration suggest that these are not likely to be scaled up.

The first report (mapping 2021) provides an overview of the normative commitments and the budgetary allocations over the last ten years. The second report (april 2022) assesses the organization structure and capability of the Norwegian aid administration to meet the normative commitments related to inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation and country level results in the education sector in Nepal, Malawi, South Sudan, and Uganda. The report concludes that there has been a positive development on the normative level, but these achievements have not translated into practice.

We believe all three reports will provide useful inputs for the Norwegian aid administration in their endeavours to leave no one behind.

The evaluation was conducted on behalf of the Department for Evaluation in Norad by the consultancy agency NIRAS Sweden.



Oslo, 27 September 2022

Siv Lillestøl

Acting Director, Department for Evaluation



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Abbreviations

ADC	Area development committees	EMIS	Education management information system
AUSAID	Australian Aid	EQ	Evaluation question
CAS	Continuous assessment system	FEDOMA	Federation of Disabled Persons' Organisations of Malawi
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics	FGD	Focus group discussion
CDBC	Chisombezi Deafblind Centre	GDP	Gross domestic product
CEHRD	Centre for Education and Human Resource Development	GPE	Global Partnership for Education
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development	IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
CPC	Child protection committees	IDA	International Disability Alliance
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	IE	Inclusive education
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	IEP	Individual education plan
CSO	Civil society organisation	INGO	International non-governmental organisation
DEC	District executive committee	JFA	Joint financial agreement
DEN	District education network	JFP	Joint financial partners
DOCR	Department of Civil Registration	MACOHA	Malawi Council for the Handicapped
DPOD	Disabled People's Organisations Denmark	MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
EENET	Enabling education network	MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
EGRP	Early grade reading programme	MoFAGA	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
EJG	Education journalist group	MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population



MoWS	Ministry of Water Supply	SDG	Sustainable development goals
MTR	Mid-term review	SMC	School management committees
MUB	Malawi Union of the Blind	SNE	Special needs education
NCE	National campaign for education	SSDP	School sector development plan
NFDN	National Federation of Disabled Nepal	SSRP	School sector reform programme
NGO	Non-governmental organisation	ToC	Theory of change
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation	ToR	Terms of reference
NPC	National planning commission	TTC	Teachers training center
NRC	Norwegian Red Cross	TWG	Technical working group
OOSC	Out-of-school children	UN	United Nations
OPD	Organisation of persons with disabilities	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
PTA	Parents and teachers associations	VCDF	Vulnerable community development framework
QA	Quality assurance	WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
QLE	Quality learning Environments	WEI	World Education International
RNE	Royal Norwegian Embassy	WP	Work package
SC	Save the Children	WGQ	Washington Group set of questions



Executive Summary

Overview

Norad's Department for Evaluation commissioned this current study in 2022 as a final stage of an evaluation that began in 2021 and covers the period of 2010-2019. The evaluation builds on and complements the previous stage of the evaluation that analysed the structure and lines of accountability of the Norwegian aid administration to meet its disability inclusion commitments. The current stage takes this analysis further, building on the data collected in the first stage of the evaluation, by looking more deeply and specifically at results from inclusive education (IE) projects/programmes in two selected countries, Malawi and Nepal. Building on the approach from the first stage of the evaluation, a theory-based approach has been applied, emphasising analyses of the theories of change for achieving outcomes in actual programming in Malawi and Nepal. This has included exploring and triangulating reported programmatic results, and then analysing if and how adaptation to the national and

local contexts may have (a) ensured relevance, (b) contributed to ownership and sustainability, and/or (c) led to divergence from core goals and principles of inclusive education.

Stakeholders have stressed that over the past decade the governments of both Malawi and Nepal, and their supporters in the UN system and among donors, are addressing IE more concertedly. Policies have been better defined and have begun a shift from the past focus on special needs education to IE. Programming has been ramped up, even if the results at school and community level remain somewhat limited. Strong and consistent Norwegian support has been a major contributor to these national policy level processes. By virtue of being a major actor with a large portfolio of IE programming in Malawi and Nepal, Norway has a 'seat at the table' in policy and strategic discussions.

LINKING POLICIES TO PRACTICE

IE programmes mostly combine efforts to implement interventions within selected schools and communities with other engagements that are intended to develop more relevant and effective systems and policies. There is usually an assumption that influence over policies is dependent on being able to show results in practice that can and should be scaled up or reinforced in government strategies. Advocacy, advice, and better data are seen as the main channels for this influence. One of the most important aspects of influencing government policies and strategies has been an ability to show that IE is a viable approach. This is essential as authorities at both national and local levels are reported to have seen IE as being too expensive, requiring human resources that they lack, and potentially being a 'competing priority' within the overall education systems. Descriptions of the efficacy of the 'demonstration effect' of Norwegian supported programmes on national commitments diverge between Malawi and Nepal. In Malawi, there have been major

DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS EVALUATION

Inclusive education (IE):

In an inclusive education system, all learners with and without disabilities learn together with their peers in schools and classes in their local community schools. 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 (*IDA 2020 – interpretation of CRPD article 24*).

Special needs education (SNE):

An educational setting outside the regular classroom or community school (e.g., resource class, unit or school) – still under the Ministry of Education - organised for children with disabilities to benefit from quality support and services not yet offered in their regular class or community school e.g. bilingual education/ sign language instruction, braille instruction, or individual pedagogical adaptations required (*Based on CRPD article 24 paragraph 3c*).

increases in commitments to IE, despite severe resource constraints. Progress has also been made in fostering awareness of manageable ways to introduce IE into widespread practice. This has led to development of a national strategy and strengthened national institutions. In Nepal, despite statements endorsing what would appear to be progressive approaches, national ownership is still limited and at devolved levels it is generally very weak. Various pilot projects are underway, but these approaches are fragmented and are not being fed into national strategic plans. Special needs education is still the dominant paradigm for support to children with disabilities. A challenge is that the federal structure devolves policy formation for education to local government, where awareness and understanding of IE is limited.

It is recognised that organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) should have a major role in informing and advocating for IE. There are some reports of the OPDs having strong influence within their area of specialisation, but for the most part it is difficult to trace broader systemic influence. In Nepal, OPDs confirm that they are informed about the national policy processes and invited to meetings – but they feel that their voices are not heard. Most importantly, they are not involved in planning, implementation or monitoring of interventions.

SCHOOL LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

At school levels, there are mixed and often weak commitments to ensure that all children with disabilities have access to education. Some interviewees accepted that they have responsibilities to even reach children with severe or multiple disabilities. However, there are also many who view goals of inclusive education for ALL children as being unrealistic. It is apparent that schools supported by the Norwegian programmes analysed have a more inclusive reach, but they are highly dependent on external assistance to do so, which suggests obstacles to sustainability. Decisions regarding levels of ambition for inclusion are also related to judgements about whether inclusive education could be universally applied, taking the present resource and quality gaps in the education systems into consideration, or if some categories of students are likely to benefit more from a greater level of special needs education until these gaps are eventually filled. In both Nepal and Malawi, a pragmatic stance on this question prevails, with the result that hybrid models with both IE and special needs education (SNE) approaches are common.

MONITORING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Monitoring and data collection are recognised as being important to advocate and advise governments on what can and should be done to learn from and replicate lessons from the pilot/model schools receiving support. One Norwegian interviewee observed that “... *experience feeds into advocacy, as we can explain what is possible and why. Monitoring is thus an important tool for this to take up what is needed to implement policies.*” The need to increase the quantity and quality of field level data was a very common theme in interviews. This was often related to the need for better screening capacities that would both increase the quality of meta-data on the scope of needs for IE, and also to improve school level targeting. Within the cases analysed Norwegian support for this has mostly focused on the education management information systems (EMIS), with mixed results.

ORGANISATIONAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

With regard to ministerial level support, programming emphasis has been on the development of organisational capacities to implement policies and put into place data systems, such as Education

management information system (EMIS), for analysing progress of students from marginalised groups and inform adjustments and planning of IE to address inequities. At school and community levels, programmes focus on training and otherwise engaging with individuals within the school leadership, among teachers, and in the community, to enable them to use tools and recognise the value of education for children with disabilities. Although sometimes effective for those being reached, our evidence indicates that the greatest obstacle to effectiveness and scaling up of pilot initiatives has been the overall shortage of teachers trained in special needs education (SNE) and IE. Partners are addressing this through direct training and in some cases support to teacher training institutions, but the needs still greatly exceed the capacities.

Teachers trained demonstrate good knowledge about making practical adaptations in classrooms, but often fail to understand how to make pedagogical adaptations – especially considering inflexible curricula and prevailing school culture. The theory of change in the thinking of partners for how to overcome the shortage of capacity at school level is, in the view of the evaluation team, insufficient. Addressing the shortages nationally would require a major increase in resources to train, and ultimately to retain, these teachers. This is

an area where the evaluation team judges that there is a tendency to focus efforts with projectized ‘IE bubbles’ of a limited number of pilot schools, without making sufficient efforts to address this broader structural deficit in the education systems. Small-scale teacher training may provide a basis for project-level effectiveness, but does little to achieve wider and more sustainable outcomes. This raises questions about the validity of theories of change oriented towards national level change.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Installation of ramps is universally cited as the most basic infrastructural input and is virtually symbolic of commitments to inclusion. Latrines were also mentioned as a priority, but feedback and field visits suggest that there are still significant gaps in improving school facilities. Some respondents noted though that a focus on school buildings may tend to overshadow other essential material needs, such as improved blackboards, seats and desks. The projects reviewed were making some of these investments, but interviewees noted that these deficits reflect structural issues in the education systems that cannot be solved by small and relatively piecemeal project support. A good classroom environment for children



with disabilities is in many respects the same as a good classroom environment for all children. As such, the evaluation observes that IE related infrastructural investments must be seen against the background of severe infrastructural problems within the school systems in general.

School infrastructure is a common entry point for humanitarian agencies in addressing disability inclusion. The evaluation team has found that Norwegian humanitarian agencies remain unsure of how to develop their roles further. They recognise that this is a problem in relation to adhering to their commitments, and are currently exploring together with OPDs how to further develop their thinking and their programming.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND ENROLMENT

Early identification, assessment, and referrals of children with disabilities are crucial for inclusive education, but these procedures are not well-developed in many countries – including Nepal and Malawi. This affects the ability of educational authorities to make individual education plans and budget for support services. Interviews highlighted the importance of identifying those children who had otherwise been hidden from view so

that they can be properly assessed and diagnosed to determine their need of support for e.g., rehabilitation measures, assistive devices, health interventions and school adaptations. Once identified and assessed, teachers and education authorities would then be able to follow-up and adapt support accordingly. In Nepal, field visits showed that many children are still not identified because they have no birth certificates, or they are hidden by parents due to shame or to protect them from bullying and ridicule. Due to these and related factors, most children with disabilities are not enrolled in schools and are therefore not assessed. In Malawi, efforts are placed on identification and referrals to health services and increasing enrolment as a result. Interviewees generally report increasing awareness of which students have disabilities, including follow-up regarding out-of-school children with disabilities and increasing enrolment.

Lessons learnt

The main lesson from this final phase of the evaluation is that adaptation to local conditions, resources and capacities in the education system must inform the design of programmes and the pace of IE policy implementation to ensure that the individual learning needs of children are always at the centre. The evaluation shows that programme objectives aiming at inclusion of ALL

children with disabilities in the local community school, learning in the same class as their peers, has been unrealistic in the local contexts studied (Malawi and Nepal). Limitations in human and material resources have led school authorities, organisations of persons with disabilities and communities to put into place hybrid approaches that combine efforts to make mainstream classes more accessible and welcoming for children with disabilities, while also retaining special needs education (separate classes, resource units, or special schools) for children with some types of disabilities where the regular school system cannot yet provide a meaningful learning environment.

The hybrid approaches have sometimes been seen as detrimental to IE policy implementation. However, such hybrid approaches are recognised by the CRPD (art 24, paragraph 3) and could in some contexts and situations be in line with the best interest of the child (CRC art 3). These hybrid approaches deserve more recognition and support, while ensuring that the pressure on the regular school system to become more inclusive of children with disabilities is not removed or diverted. Inclusion of children with disabilities should be an integral part of all school reforms and school development plans – and road maps with milestones should be agreed and provided with earmarked funding.



Finding the optimal balance between hybrid and IE approaches is a dilemma which needs careful analysis and consideration in each context.

1. Norwegian partners have achieved significant results within the framework of supported programmes and have also influenced national norms and commitments. It is less clear whether the programme level outcomes can be scale-up and made sustainable. **Greater effort is needed to define and follow-up on theories of change for moving from policy level dialogue and local pilots to widespread practice.** This includes addressing the 'missing middle' of institutional change, local ownership and political commitments.
2. Transformational change will require that programmes more systematically **consider the structural obstacles in the education sector**, such as overly large classes, insufficient capacity among teachers to adapt pedagogical approaches, discriminatory norms and inflexible curricula and examination procedures, as well as the need for stronger early identification and assessment systems.
3. Commitments to working with OPDs have tended to remain stuck in 'consultative mode' and have not reached the stage of supporting them to play a more influential role in design, implementation and monitoring of policy and programmes. Despite obstacles related to the size and skills of these often small organisations, **this transformational shift to OPD meaningful involvement needs to remain on the agenda.**
4. The main obstacles to achieving broad and sustainable results are related to tunnel vision. The evaluation team observed many islands of success, and some of them show promise for eventual scaling-up and integration into national plans, but these paths will be rocky. The support has increased confidence that children with disabilities can achieve good educational outcomes, but as yet many key stakeholders (especially in local government and among teachers) harbour uncertainty about how to apply new ideas with existing resources. **Overcoming tunnel vision means designing programmes that take into account structural obstacles within the overall education systems and local realities in which IE is nested.**

Conclusions

Despite project-level successes, the theories of change of much of the programming for achieving widespread outcomes have not been realistic. This is partly due to obstacles in replicating IE experience, and partly related to the dearth of resources in the education sector more generally. Programmes do often result in local improvements, but the overall lack of capacities and limited commitments amongst many teachers and local authorities suggest that these are not likely to be scaled up. The evaluation judges that, in order to be designed to maximise effectiveness, theories of change should be more realistic, i.e., reflecting structural constraints while identifying entry points to retain a long-term trajectory towards transformational goals.

This implies the need to explore fundamental questions about limits to effectiveness and sustainability, and whether, from a rights-based perspective, the current hybrid approaches remain justified until resources expand, and capacities are developed. The view of the evaluation team is that the hybrid approaches deserve continued – but carefully designed- support from Norway. The programmes challenge discriminatory norms in society and put pressure on governments to

work towards a more inclusive education system – while still supporting and accepting special solutions for some children.

Recommendations

1. Priorities should reflect a recognition of the relevance and effectiveness of hybrid approaches, accepting a more realistic pace of moving towards the vision of IE for all, putting the best interest of each child at the centre. **Flexibility is essential to make room for alignment with the aims and capacities of partners** in government agencies, CSOs and OPDs.
2. The growing role of local authorities and schools themselves must be reflected in theories of change. Ownership among these actors is essential for both efficacy and sustainability, and **this ownership should be fostered by building on what local actors have learnt in operationalising IE.**
3. **IE objectives should be selected to reflect overall trajectories in the education sector.** Plans should take into account how raising the quality of education for children with disabilities will only occur in conjunction with raising the quality of education in general.
4. Programmes to address these resource scarcities should, wherever possible, **focus on systemic institutionalised approaches.** For example, it is better to invest in integrating IE into teacher training college curricula rather than engaging trainers focused on pilot schools.
5. Data collection for both national/district planning and local screening is a major priority. **These efforts should be revisited with an increased focus on the ownership, capacities and perspectives of those collecting data and the users of data** – most importantly, from the perspective of those local stakeholders who have thus far been insufficiently supported to effectively collect and use this data. Data collection must start with proper systems for identification and assessment of children with disabilities.
6. **Disability perspectives in Norwegian humanitarian assistance should be enhanced.** The exploratory approach currently being pursued, is an appropriate way to ‘test the waters’ about appropriate future roles.
7. **Theories of change should be made much more explicit about how pilot or model school initiatives**

are to be scaled up or actively used to inform mainstream education systems. They need to better articulate, monitor and reflect on the underlying assumptions about how outcomes will be achieved at scale and in a sustainable manner.

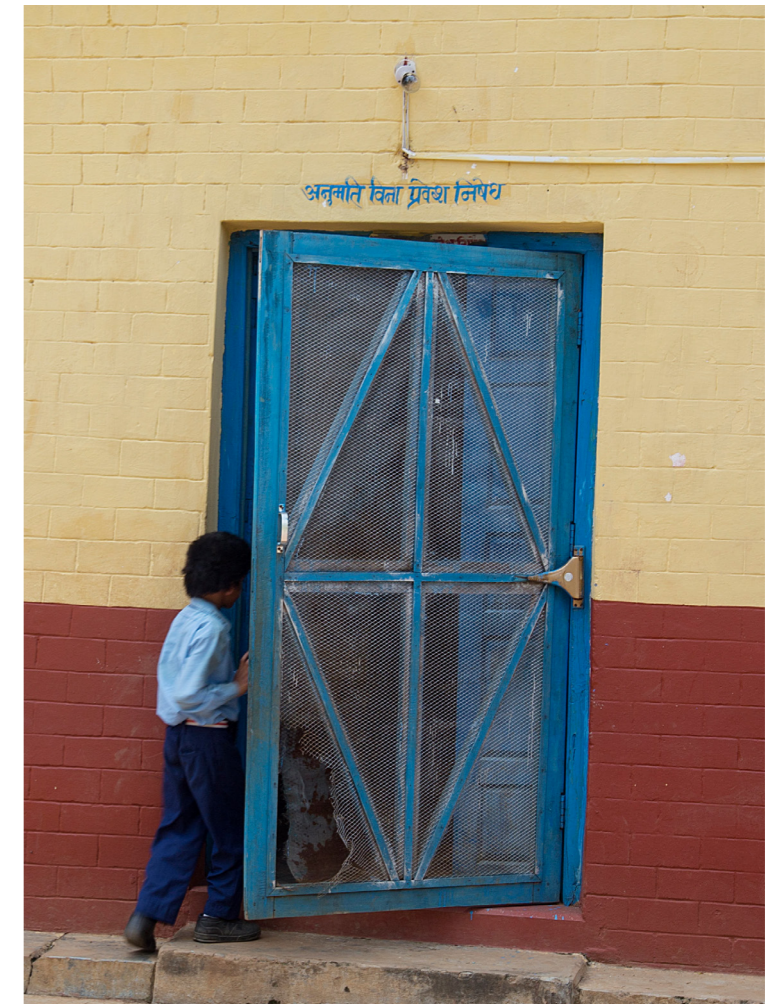


Photo: Bjørnulf Remme / Norad

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Introduction



1.1 Overview of the evaluation

Norad's Department for Evaluation commissioned this current study in 2022 as a final stage of an evaluation that began in 2021 and covers the period of 2010-2019. The evaluation builds on and complements the previous stage of the evaluation that was based on two work packages (WP) which analysed the structure and lines of accountability of the Norwegian aid administration to meet the disability inclusion commitments made by Norway. It included an analysis of results achieved in disability inclusive education efforts at country level in four selected countries. The current stage, WP3, takes this analysis a step further, building on the data collected in the first stage of the evaluation, by looking more deeply and specifically at results from selected inclusive education (IE) projects/programmes in two selected countries – Malawi and Nepal. The full evaluation builds on a mapping study of Norwegian support to disability inclusion in the period 2010-2019.¹

According to the ToR for this evaluation (see annex 1): *“The main purpose of this evaluation is 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.” As such, the evaluation is primarily intended to support learning.

The scope of the overall evaluation *“...builds on the UN's definition of disability inclusion: “the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights...”* and furthermore, *“The evaluation will focus on the education sector. The education sector is selected because the right to education is fundamental to Norway's aid policy in general and is directly relevant for Norway's commitments to the SDG 2030 Agenda: SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all, ...The education sector is also the most prominent sector receiving both targeted and mainstreamed funding for disability inclusion.”*

Furthermore, the ToR denotes that the evaluation will cover Norway's efforts to include persons with disabilities in development cooperation through different channels, modalities and partners in the period 2010 – 2020; both in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation.

The main evaluation questions are:

Relevance:

How is disability inclusion understood and practiced by implementing partners in selected study sites in Malawi and Nepal, especially global and national education partners?

Effectiveness:

What are the barriers and conducive factors to increased inclusion of persons with disabilities?

Sustainability:

Do local government and civil society partners have the competencies and capacities to maintain the benefits of the interventions and to scale up the pilots after completion of the interventions?

The evaluation was undertaken during the period of February to July 2022 by the following team members:

Ian Christoplos:

Team leader responsible for overall team coordination, development of tools, and analysis of findings, selective interviews with senior stakeholders in Malawi and Nepal, specialised attention to humanitarian assistance issues,

¹ 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>

analyses of programme documentation and lead author of the final report.

Annika Nilsson:

Senior evaluator responsible for supporting the team leader in the tasks above, interviews with international stakeholders and senior stakeholders in Malawi and Nepal, support to national team members with case study development including analyses of case study-specific documentation and analysis of factors related to the international discourse on disability inclusion.

Hege Larsen:

Expert on Norwegian cooperation, collecting and analysing Norwegian and other relevant documentation, advising the team on Norwegian programmatic support, analysis of how the international discourse on disability inclusion is understood and addressed in Norwegian development aid.

Era Shrestha:

National evaluator Nepal responsible for development of the case study on inclusive education projects/programmes in Nepal, field-level interviews, project/programme document review, and support to the team regarding cross-cutting analyses.

Basil Kandyomunda:

National evaluator Malawi responsible for development of case study on inclusive education projects/programmes in Malawi field-level interviews, project/programme document review, and support to the team regarding cross-cutting analyses.

1.2 Background and key literature

The evaluation reflects 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. It is further informed by Article 24 of the CRPD and the CRPD Committee’s General Comment 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.

Inclusive education (IE) and special needs education (SNE) are interpreted differently by different stakeholders and donors. We have made use of International Disability Alliance report from 2020 “What an inclusive, equitable, quality education means to us” and the CRPD Article 24 to define these concepts.



Definitions used in this evaluation

Inclusive education (IE): In an inclusive education system, all learners with and without disabilities learn together with their peers in schools and classes in their local community schools. 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 (*IDA 2020 – interpretation of CRPD article 24*).

Special needs education (SNE): An educational setting outside the regular classroom or community school (e.g. resource class, resource unit or school) – still under the Ministry of Education - organised for children with disabilities

to benefit from quality support and services not yet offered in their regular class or community school e.g. bilingual education/sign language instruction, braille instruction, or individual pedagogical adaptations required for children with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities (*Based on CRPD article 24 paragraph 3c*).

This report builds on analyses from the previous stages of the evaluation.² The main conclusions of the earlier stage of the evaluation were that, despite strong Norwegian policy commitments, approaches to inclusive education had changed little as disability inclusion was seen as optional and difficult. Disbursements to disability inclusive programming had not increased much since 2010, except when earmarked funding was provided for disability specific measures and specifically in the education sector.

This report has reviewed additional research and evaluations on inclusive education to gain a broader understanding of its concept and challenges. At the global level, we have drawn on reports from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)³ and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),^{4,5} and from those of the International Disability Alliance (IDA)⁶.

These reports indicate a consensus that inclusive education is a process that needs to evolve along with development of the mainstream school system, improved systems for identification and assessment (and registration in statistical systems) of children with disabilities as well as inclusive social and health services and cross-sectoral collaboration. This evaluation traces these processes in Malawi and Nepal.

Particular emphasis is given to understanding how inclusion is framed. The UNICEF global initiative on out-of-school children concludes that most countries need a policy framework consisting of three priorities:

² Norad (2022). Disability inclusion and inclusive education in Norwegian development cooperation. Evaluation report 1: Desk report

³ UNESCO (2020). Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and Education

⁴ UNICEF (2015). Fixing the Broken Promise: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children.

⁵ UNICEF Connect (2018). Inclusive education for children with disabilities.

⁶ International Disability Alliance (2020). What an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Education Means to Us

1) broad investment to strengthen and expand education systems, 2) a sharp focus on inclusion and the quality of the education on offer, 3) and targeted interventions for the children who are the very hardest to reach. The evaluation pays particular attention to the scope and effectiveness of such targeted interventions and to who may ultimately be 'left behind'.

A key tool promoted by UNICEF is the identification and registering of children with disabilities to enable better planning (a supplement component to the education management information system - EMIS, referred to as the EMIS-disability subsystem), to capture statistics on out-of-school children with disabilities – which remain the majority. This usually requires cooperation with the Ministries of Health.

The UNESCO report concludes that:

- Inclusion represents a move away from discrimination and prejudice, and towards a future that can be adapted to various contexts and realities. Neither the pace nor the specific direction of this transition can be dictated, but much can be learned from sharing experiences through teacher networks, national forums, and regional and global platforms.

- Ministries sharing administrative responsibility for inclusive education must collaborate on identifying needs, exchanging information and designing programmes.
- On disability, the use of the Washington Group short set of questions and the child functioning module should be prioritised. Administrative systems should aim to collect data for planning and budgeting in provision of inclusive education services, but also data on the experience of inclusion.
- Examinations should be formative and adapted to the abilities of the student.

The IDA report, which has developed criteria for an assessment of the level of inclusion in education systems have served as a point of reference. The IDA criteria emphasise the need for an overall good quality education system, sufficient resources and capacities of the education system and provision of a sign language learning environment for deaf students. We return to the IDA criteria in the conclusion of this report when assessing overall effectiveness.

The evaluation has been informed by earlier project/ programme level evaluations of the interventions analysed in the case studies. These largely project-level analyses confirm the syntheses and specific findings uncovered in our own fieldwork.

Finally, we obtained preliminary information from the evaluation of the World Bank IE Fund. It found that despite that some strategic decisions (e.g., selection of focus countries) that were influenced by donors preferences, some significant results were achieved as it tried to add value to other ongoing initiatives. In Nepal, it added to the funding base of the international non-governmental organisation (NGO) World Education, which is also implementing IE on behalf of UNICEF and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

1.3 Approach and methods

Building on the approach from the first stage of the evaluation, a theory-based approach has been applied, emphasising analyses of the theories of change (ToCs) for achieving outcomes in actual programming in Nepal and Malawi. This has included exploring and triangulating reported programmatic results, and then analysing if and how adaptation to the national and local contexts may have (a) ensured relevance, (b)



contributed to ownership and sustainability, and/or (c) led to divergence from core goals and principles of inclusive education.

The theory-based approach has involved a process of analysis leading to a reconstruction of the ToCs for the design and implementation of the individual case study programmes with emphasis on their results, the levers of change they have used to achieve those results, and how the results are expected to reflect Malawi's, Nepal's and Norway's commitments to disability inclusion. Country case studies (see annex 5 and 6) have been used to describe how selected individual project level ToCs come together in Norway's overall approach, including the logic and expected results chain, identifying the assumed links from activities and outputs to outcomes and results, thereby describing the drivers and causal relations. The theory-based approach has provided an opportunity to explore both explicit and underlying assumptions about how policies and evolving approaches were expected to be translated in effective and sustainable operational programming during the period of implementation, 2010 to 2020. Results in linking support to national policy formation, systems and capacities, on the one hand, and local operational capacities, understanding and commitments, on the other, have been emphasised. In each case study, the

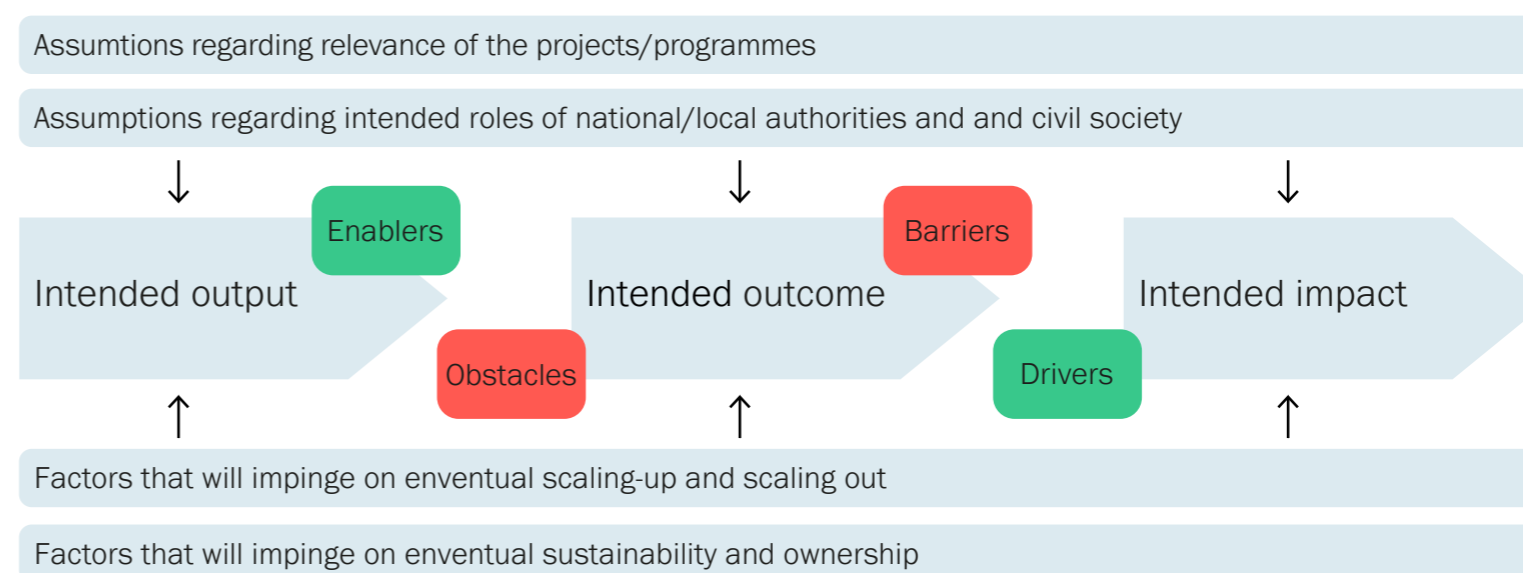
theory-based approach has thus involved analysing the assumptions that have been made about the following:

- How have national policies, guidelines and education system reform efforts been applied at operational levels?
- Within plans and in the views of key stakeholders, how are the projects/programmes assumed to be managed and sustainably integrated into the work of local service providers (primarily school administrations and teachers)?

- How has civil society (primarily organisations of persons with disabilities – OPDs) been enabled to ensure that the views and priorities of persons with disabilities are reflected in these projects/programmes?
- What are the assumed plausible paths to scaling-up of local 'pilot' initiatives and scaling-out of interventions related to national systems to achieve greater inclusion at local levels?

This approach was reflected in the following diagram in the inception phase:

Figure 1: Theory-based reconstruction of ToCs



As part of the analysis used in the first stage of this evaluation, the team has considered outcomes based on the IDA indicators of basic elements of an inclusive education system. At the outset it was recognised that the elements of the individual projects/programmes analysed were not likely (or expected) to fully address these comprehensive indicators of inclusive education. Nonetheless, in the conclusion of this report we return to these frameworks to judge the relevance of these initiatives in contributing to overall systemic outcomes (see chapter 4).

Case studies of programmes/projects have been used for in-depth analysis to identify examples of good practice, obstacles, national-local gaps/linkages of policies and practice, and for lesson learning. These were selected in the inception phase of the evaluation to reflect a mix of interventions that start at the national level and those being led by local civil society in Norwegian country-level inclusive education portfolio.

Table 1. Case study interventions

Case study intervention	Justification	Other observations
Nepal: UNICEF NPL-18/0007 2019-2020 (with particular focus on the EMIS component)	Clear example of an effort to strengthen national systems, key multilateral partner, substantial disbursement, EMIS is said to be a precondition for inclusive education, opportunity to analyse synergies between multilateral and bilateral contributions.	Important to understand if/how the system is contributing to both national planning and ultimately local programming and to monitoring of educational outcomes for children with different types of disabilities at the district and school levels.
Nepal: Save the Children QZA-14/0477 2015-2018	Key civil society organisation (CSO) partner of Norway, large disbursement, mainstreaming of inclusive education with a range of governmental and civil society partners at community level, linking policy and practice, combining many methods to achieve change.	Strong child rights focus seeking to strengthen civil society organisations, comprehensive approach, claims to involve OPDs.
Nepal: Plan Norge QZA-10/0926-29 2016-2020 (addendum to grant agreement with Plan (2011-2015) earmarked for earthquake response)	Example of inclusive education mainstreamed in humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, which can provide lessons regarding how inclusive education is addressed in Norwegian-funded humanitarian assistance.	Nepal earthquake recovery programming focused on creating safe learning spaces, uncertainty about its longer-term influence on systems for disability inclusive disaster risk reduction and recovery.
Malawi: Atlas Alliance -QZA-15/0470 2016-2019	Key CSO partner of Norway emphasising local OPD partners representing persons with a range of disabilities. Long term engagement that has potential to demonstrate impact.	Important example of working to enhance the voice of persons with disabilities.
Malawi: Save the Children QZA 14/0023 2015-2018 Inclusive Education in Malawi	Mainstreaming of inclusive education with a range of governmental and civil society partners at both community and national level linking policy and practice.	Major recipient of Norwegian support. Opportunity to explore Norway's largest contributions to inclusion in Malawi.



Data has been collected from the following sources:**Document review**

The team has undertaken extensive review of the documentation from implementing partners on the selected case study interventions, cross referencing this with the analyses that were already undertaken of national and Norwegian policies, guidelines and with other relevant documents, reports, research and statistics.

Interviews with programme stakeholders (including rights-holders)

The team visited four municipalities and three districts in Nepal and three districts in Malawi, representing a range of settings. The focus has been on rural communities in line with the nature of the programming. In these communities, interviews (and focus groups discussions) were held with community leaders, school managers and committees, teachers, parents and caregivers of children with disabilities in and out of school – as well as with their peers. All respondents were identified by the partners based on the parameters provided by the evaluation team. Special attention was given to hearing the experiences and suggestions from the learners with disabilities themselves, including how children with different disabilities experience barriers to accessing education that is relevant for their needs. In

case of children as well, all the interviewees were largely identified by partners, but the evaluators also used snowballing methods to identify additional respondents – especially since there were very few children with disabilities in the visited schools. In case of Nepal, the general approach was to cover all the children attending the sample schools while snowball sampling was used to identify a small number of children who were out-of-school and school drop-outs. Home visits were also conducted to interview children enrolled in home schooling modality.

The team engaged sign language interpreters in a few cases in order to ensure inclusion of views of deaf persons (Associations of the Deaf). Interviews were mainly held in the local languages (with exception of some respondents who were comfortable with English). Responses were recorded in English and uploaded to the team's data platform for further analysis.

The team has interviewed relevant staff members at partner organisations, responsible education officers at both national level and at local level in selected sites that have been targeted by the respective projects/programmes. Representatives of OPDs have been interviewed both at national and district/community level to understand if/how they have been participating in planning, design and monitoring.

The selection of national level interviewees has reflected the nature of the project/programme in a given case study. Some stakeholders possessed unique knowledge of a given facet of an intervention and their views have been contrasted with those involved from different institutional vantage points. A key focus at national and local levels has therefore been on interviewing a broad variety of stakeholders to hear their different perspectives on the theories of change. Given the diversity of the case studies, and the inductive nature of the theory-based approach we judge that we have obtained a sufficiently diverse range of interviews to arrive at an adequate level of 'code saturation', i.e., including the diversity of perspectives on outcomes, impacts and the contributions of Norwegian development assistance. Furthermore, in the interviews at field level we have undertaken a sufficient number of interviewees so that adequate 'data saturation' has been achieved, i.e., information began to be repeated in the interviews (see list of interviewees in annex 4). Nonetheless, it is also recognised that the diversity in the sample and the number of interviewees are such that confidence levels related to saturation are mixed and generalisations from these case studies have been approached cautiously.



Focus group discussions with programme stakeholders (including rights-holders)

Focus groups have enabled the team to solicit views from a broader group of people (i.e., community leaders, teachers, caregivers and parents of children with disabilities who are in school, parents of children with disabilities who are out of school, students with disabilities and their peers, children and adults with disabilities in the community who are not in education) and inspire discussions around most significant changes made by the project/programme and most important obstacles to inclusion. Particular emphasis was given to questions about how approaches to inclusion have been developed and implemented, how the effectiveness of such approaches has been assessed by rights holders and duty bearers, with the aim of identifying examples of good practice and identification of challenges. Interviews with national authorities and local governmental service providers also emphasised the structural opportunities and obstacles to implementing policies and practical approaches to inclusion. We have explored how different stakeholders define and understand 'inclusive education' and how they experience the implementation of these intentions.

Site observations

In addition to the interviews and focus group discussions, the team undertook site observations (in the school environment) to obtain a visual overview of programme investments and better understanding of how, for example, barriers have been assessed and addressed. This entailed observing accessibility of buildings and toilets, availability of assistive devices and supportive learning equipment as well as classroom practices. The team also took advantage of opportunities to observe and ask randomly selected community members about the situation of children with disabilities in the community.

Interviews with OPDs and other civil society actors

The evaluation team sought out OPDs and other civil society actors who are involved in advocating for disability inclusion and inclusive education to understand their perspectives and actions to enhance performance, inclusion and sustainability. This included direct interviews with OPDs as well as their disability specific members, networks and their branches in the selected localities. These interviews were used to collect data on how the OPDs experience the actual outputs and outcomes, the extent to which the projects/programmes have included persons with disabilities in design and monitoring, and if/how the cases have created national and local ownership.

Interviews and verification discussions with other relevant actors

Interviews were undertaken to verify key findings across the evaluation and to obtain a deeper understanding of issues where findings are unclear. This included verification discussions with personnel at the Royal Norwegian Embassies (RNEs) in Lilongwe and Kathmandu, authorities and ministries of education and ministries with intersectional responsibilities, as well as other large international supporters of inclusive education in the country, e.g., the World Bank Inclusive Education Initiative, World Education, UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International and the OPDs at national and local levels. Verification and feedback meetings on preliminary findings were organised in collaboration with the embassies at the end of the country fieldwork period.

Another area where additional interviews were necessary has been with humanitarian actors to understand how they perceive and prioritise disability inclusion in their work and whether there are additional disability inclusion initiatives that were not visible in the analyses in the earlier phase of the evaluation. The evaluation includes one case study of a humanitarian project in Nepal, but it was also important to obtain a better overall perspective on why disability is not



prominent in Norwegian humanitarian assistance by speaking with Norwegian stakeholders, including with the Norwegian Refugee Council and Norwegian Church Aid. In order to analyse learning trajectories in this thinking over time, these interviews have included recent developments outside the formal scope of the evaluation.

Ethical challenges and safeguards

There are sometimes challenges in soliciting information from vulnerable populations such as children and persons with intellectual disabilities. They may not be able to understand the questions properly or have ability to reflect on their situation (as alternatives to the status quo cannot be imagined). Loyalty to persons they are dependent on may also affect their answers. To avoid leading questions and get the best possible feedback, the evaluators adapted questions to simple statements that could be answered by 'yes' or 'no', and 'good' or 'bad'. Pictural approaches were also used wherein children could indicate what made them happy or sad. Interviews and focus group discussions were held in ways that ensured that respondents felt safe, e.g., without being overheard by people of power (people that they were dependent on) and organised in small groups of colleagues/friends or individually, as needed. In case of very young children, care was

taken that the parents/guardian were within their sight. Consent was sought from parents and teachers when approaching children. All respondents were briefed on the propose of the study and the safeguarding measures (anonymising their identify and maintaining confidentiality).



Photo: Huchot-Boissier Patricia/ABACA/Shutterstock



1.4 Limitations

Table 2. [Limitations and mitigations](#)

Limitations	Approach to mitigation
Timeframe of 2010-2020 has limited the institutional memory and availability of stakeholders.	The sample was weighted towards initiatives during the latter part of the evaluation timeframe.
Limited generalisability from a small number of cases in two countries.	Case studies have been used to generate lessons learnt that can be analysed and applied by evaluation users in the contexts of their work. The evaluation has ensured that limits to generalisability are presented in a consistently transparent manner.
Heavy reliance on stakeholder perspectives.	The evaluation has triangulated interview data (the primary source of data) with document review and field observations. Perceptions have been contrasted and compared.
Given the limited engagement of Norwegian humanitarian agencies in disability inclusion, analysis has focused largely on understanding this lack of engagement, rather than results achieved.	The one humanitarian case study project was used to highlight examples of issues arising with considerable caution regarding generalisations. These analyses drew heavily on interviews with major Norwegian humanitarian agencies to better understand why they have not engaged more and to obtain an overview of their plans going forward.
Diversity of stakeholders and types of disability have limited the extent to which an ideal saturation level of interviews was feasible within the case studies.	The methods applied have provided an overview of factors that can feed into future learning. The case studies have been used for comparative analysis and triangulation with other findings, i.e., they did not constitute evaluations of interventions being analysed. We judge that an adequate diversity of cases and perspectives (code saturation) and quantity of interviews within each case and category (data saturation) have been obtained given the resources available.

The findings presented in this report are based on a limited sample of countries and programmes, which inherently limits generalisability. Our confidence level regarding findings concerning the countries and programmes is high, but only moderate in a broader perspective as the trajectories towards inclusive education (IE) in different settings and with different organisations vary enormously. The ability of the partner organisations to adapt to these local realities has been highlighted throughout the evaluation, but this has meant, for example, that it is difficult to generalise regarding the role of organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). Atlas Alliance works with a range of small, informal and large, well-structured partners in both Norway and in developing countries. The sample in this evaluation has been used to exemplify the different capacities and roles of these partners.



2

Findings



In presenting the findings we begin with summaries of the case study findings that provide the basis for the subsequent analyses. The full case studies can be found in annex 5 and 6. The findings are structured around key aspects of relevance, effectiveness and sustainability that have been extrapolated from the results uncovered in the case studies. The two case studies are compared and contrasted so as to generate an understanding of the factors that underpin success and failures.

2.1 Background and overview of findings from Nepal

Norway has supported inclusive education initiatives in Nepal for over ten years. In the evaluation carried out in 2011, the key finding was that “Although measures are taken in the education sector program, progress of inclusion of children with disabilities is slow. The social inclusion, democracy and human rights initiatives supported by Norway have in most cases not yet encompassed persons with disabilities”.⁷

Since then, Norway has been part of funding the government's two education sector plans, both directly to the government (as part of pooled donor funding to the education sector) and through targeted funding to UNICEF to spearhead inclusive education for children with disabilities. In addition to this bilateral funding, Norway has provided multilateral support to UNICEF global efforts to promote inclusive education and the World Bank multi-donor trust fund for inclusive education (which have both selected Nepal as a focus country). Via Norad, Norway has supported the Save the Children country programme, which has an inclusive education component; Plan International, which has an inclusive education component; and Atlas Alliance members' country programmes, which have components on OPD capacity development and engagement in inclusive education. The Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE) in Nepal has actively taken part in the Technical working group (TWG) on IE.

Inclusive education in Nepal is spearheaded by the Inclusive Education unit under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and its

education unit, the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD). Approaches to IE encompass all vulnerable groups, such as girls, children belonging to Dalits,⁸ Madeshi,⁹ Janjati (ethnic) and Muslim communities, children with disabilities, children in poverty and geographic isolation. Compared to 2011, children with disabilities have become a more visible group in the sector plans and in policy papers. According to the sector plans, three modalities of educational provision for children with disabilities are practiced in Nepal: inclusive schools (children with disabilities are included in mainstream classes); special schools (specific to type of disabilities), and integrated schools (with separate resource classes within in the mainstream schools with resource teachers, to prepare the students to transit to the regular classes – when/if possible).

Presently, most children with disabilities who are identified and enrolled in education attend special schools, which is currently seen by government as the preferred option. The second option is resource classes (sometimes with boarding facilities) and only as a third

⁷ Norad (2012). Mainstreaming disability in the new development paradigm

⁸ Name given to the people belonging to the lowest stratum in the traditional (discriminatory) caste system, classified as 'untouchables' and subjected to social ostracism.

⁹ Term used to refer to people living in the Terai (southern plain sharing boarder with Neighbour country India). Madeshi have been facing racial discrimination owing to their identity (origin) viz-a-viz people of hilly origin.



option, inclusion in ordinary classrooms. According to an approach paper, produced by the IE TWG,¹⁰ the priorities should be reversed – but old norms and practices prevail. Even the new sector plan (2021-2030), which was adopted this year, includes plans for construction of additional 15 special schools.

In alignment with the new constitution of 2015, a federal system was introduced with significant responsibilities devolved to autonomous local governments (municipalities) that are responsible for services, including education. This has not yet been accompanied by systems and structures for ensuring implementation of national policies and plans on inclusive education. Although conditional budgets are given, the national level authorities only have an advisory role, and they have no monitoring powers. Capacity, competency, and resources for inclusive education are expected to be developed locally. The general school system struggles with large classes (sometimes over eighty students in the terai plain regions) and teachers that lack sufficient training, making it difficult to make additional demands on teachers.



Parents course with deafblind booklet in Chisombezi, photo: Signo

¹⁰ The Approach Paper was developed by the IE TWG. The status of the Approach paper is informal, but has served as guidance for development partners. It takes a pragmatic approach to IE and argues that the process needs to start with children with minor disabilities (that only require inexpensive adaptations) and then gradually expanded. It does not endorse construction of new special schools.

The Norwegian supported programmes have tried to navigate in this difficult context. Their theories of change (ToCs) have included efforts to address many of the obstacles, as shown by the following reconstructed theory of change, developed by the evaluation team to reflect partner assumptions: The Norwegian supported programmes have tried to navigate in this difficult context. Their ToCs have included efforts to address many of the obstacles, as shown by the following reconstructed theory of change, developed by the evaluation team to reflect partner assumptions:

Box 1: Reconstructed theory of change (ToC), Norwegian partners

IF:

There is a clear policy and a road map for inclusive education is adopted by the national government... and there is better screening and data on children with disabilities

There are successful pilots in selected municipalities (approximately one percent of the schools nationwide were targeted by Norwegian partners) showing how it can be done in practice (e.g., through various levels of engagement with local authorities, school improvement plans, awareness raising of communities and parents and with technical and financial support to teacher training, school management training, introduction of EMIS, accessibility measures in schools and scholarships to students with disabilities)...

And civil society partners are engaged in supporting the implementation

THEN:

Local education authorities will have better planning data and be interested to fund and scale up such models... More mainstream schools will be ready to welcome children with disabilities, be accessible and have ability to teach according to individual education plans

Parents and communities will be more interested to send their children to mainstream schools

And more children with disabilities will be enrolled and retained in local schools and their learning outcomes will improve.



Despite these efforts, practices on the ground have largely not changed, apart from a few pilot sites that are supported financially and technically by external development programmes. Also at policy level, progress is slow. The education sector plans, and the policy guidance provided by the government are still not clear regarding if/how inclusive education for children with disabilities should be realised, especially in light of the new federal system. This demonstrates that the underlying assumptions of the ToC were not correct. The main systemic obstacles that were not sufficiently considered were:

- The lack of functioning systems for birth certificates and early identification and assessment of children with disabilities, which is a precondition for design of their educational needs
- Lack of statistical data on out-of-school children.
- The poor standard of the mainstream education system, with overcrowded classrooms and insufficiently trained teachers, which makes the transformation to inclusive education (and the scaling up of pilot initiatives) difficult and costly – unless only minor physical adaptations are needed.
- The lack of pedagogical adaptation – the inflexibility in teaching and learning approaches, materials, curriculum and examination practices.
- The sensible reaction among parents to prefer special schools that have competency and welcome their children – or to keep them at home to protect them from bullying and humiliation at school.
- The general norms and attitudes in schools and local communities against persons with disabilities, and the inflexibility in mindsets about what education can contribute and who is entitled to education.
- The lack of powers to steer and monitor the education system at local level in the new federal system.
- The limited involvement of OPDs in planning and monitoring of interventions, despite their growing capacity to do so.

2.2 Background and overview of findings from Malawi

Education efforts in form of special needs education (SNE) for persons with disabilities in Malawi predate independence and can be traced to missionary activities, as with other forms of education in the country. Up to independence, the provision of SNE in the country remained a preserve of the missionary effort. In the post- independence period, particularly from the 1980s to around 2015, more focus was given by the government of Malawi to investing in special schools and resource classroom centres attached to public schools. Thus, SNE remained the main approach delivered through special schools and resource classroom centres within the mainstream schools. However, only a small proportion of learners with disabilities could be accommodated in the few SNE centres. For example, in 2007 there were estimated to be approximately 70,000 learners with special education needs, and for these were only 650 SNE teachers equipped with knowledge and skills to provide additional support to these learners.¹¹

¹¹ A. Chavuta A.N. Itimu-Phiri S. Chiwaya N. Sikero G. Alindiamao (2008). Montfort Special Needs Education College and Leonard Cheshire Disability International Inclusive Education project. Baseline Study.

A review of project documents and other relevant literature such as the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (NSIE) and interviews with various stakeholders showed that there were several challenges and barriers that teachers and learners with and without disabilities were facing in schools which had to be addressed to enable effective access to education. These challenges include, among others:

- Teachers' lack of experience, knowledge and skills in teaching learners with disabilities.
- Teachers' lack of specific skills, such as sign language.
- Inadequate teaching and learning resources.
- Frequent absenteeism from school by learners and high drop-out rates.
- Negative attitudes by the teachers and the community towards learners with disabilities.
- Lack of interest and commitment towards education by learners.

- Inaccessible school infrastructure.
- Lack of assistive devices.
- Lack of early identification, assessment and intervention services.
- Inadequate teaching-learning and specialised materials.
- Understaffing and inadequate numbers of classrooms leading to very large class sizes.¹²

This led to a recognition that SNE was no longer the most tenable way of reaching and providing education to the many children with disabilities in the country.¹³

In recent years a consensus has emerged around the need to take an IE approach that ensures the participation of all learners in schooling. The underlying theory behind the efforts to promote IE in Malawi presupposes that IE is achievable:

Box 2: Theories of change, Inclusive Education in Malawi

IF:

Learners with diverse needs, including learners with disabilities, are provided with appropriate support in an inclusive setting

When inclusive education practices accept learners with all levels of special education needs

And, learners receive classroom support, their teachers have the relevant skills, and funding is sufficient

THEN:

The learners can develop more positive self-esteem

Access will be in place for appropriate teaching and learning resources

And, the needs of all learners will be addressed so that each learner is allowed an opportunity to succeed

¹² Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi (2016). National Strategy on Inclusive Education.

¹³ A. Chavuta A.N. Itimu-Phiri S. Chiwaya N. Sikero G. Alindiamao (2008). Montfort Special Needs Education College and Leonard Cheshire Disability International Inclusive Education project. Baseline Study. August 2008

A review of the documents and reports of the two projects analysed in this evaluation, and interviews with various stakeholders show that they strove to achieve these objectives through similar interventions, including:

- Capacity strengthening.
- School environment adaptation.
- Awareness and sensitisation.
- Advocacy and influence.

The interventions were expected to contribute to an increase in the demand and supply of IE at community/school level; strengthened capacity of teachers and support staff for effective delivery of IE; strengthened school level systems and structures to support delivery of IE; and improved data management systems for IE. These would in turn contribute to improved systems and supportive policy for IE, as well as increased enrolment, retention, and completion for learners with children with disabilities. Ultimately, this would lead to improved learning outcomes for children with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Improving teacher awareness and skills has been a central part of this. A good start has been made on reforming the teacher training curriculum with the input from Save the Children. The rolling out and adoption of the training modules in all teacher training colleges has been sluggish, although, the continuous professional development for in-service teachers seems to be on course. This is an area where there would seem to be good prospects for achieving some of the core aims of these projects by building on this foundation. It would require political will, but relatively modest resources.

The key assumptions were that the government of Malawi would put into place the relevant and appropriate supportive policy, invest in recruitment of teaching staff in public schools, construct adequate infrastructure, as well as initiate the necessary curriculum reforms for teacher training colleges and increase resource allocation to support implementation of IE in the country. Another important assumption was that the schools where IE was being actively piloted would serve as models from which other schools would learn from and scale-up. This is an area where the assumptions behind theory of change for learning from model schools have proven to be, in many respects, inaccurate.

The government has had the political will and the policy/strategy to raise overall IE ambitions in the country. However, clear plans to enhance the recruitment, management and coordination of IE human resources to optimise returns on the current investment in IE are lacking, and resources invested have been severely insufficient. The two projects have supported a modest amount of infrastructure development, such as ramps, modified toilets, and walkways, but there remains an acute shortage of classrooms and all the other amenities needed for effective delivery of IE. The teachers continue to handle classes with up to over one hundred students – triple the size an ordinary classroom should have. The pupil-teacher ratio remains far too high to achieve the desired results of IE, even in the targeted schools. In a wider perspective, the evaluation finds that constraints to IE reforms – requiring massively increased investments in human resources and infrastructure – mirror constraints in the education sector in general. As such, sustainable and widespread replication of the successes of these two projects would be contingent on wider fiscal reprioritisation.



Due to this and other factors the evaluation team judges that, without a significant increase in public investment to expand human resource capacities and upgrade infrastructure in IE and SNE in particular, and in the education sector in general, the core assumption that the two projects will ultimately contribute to achieving broad outcomes is in doubt.

2.3 System level interventions, including policy/strategy development

EVOLVING GLOBAL POLICIES AS REFLECTED IN NEPAL AND MALAWI

On a meta level, stakeholders have stressed that over the past decade the governments of both Nepal and Malawi, and their supporters in the UN system and among donors, are addressing IE more concertedly. Policies have been better defined and have begun a shift from the past focus on SNE to IE. Programming to implement policies and strategies has been ramped up, even if (as will be described below) the results at school and community level remain somewhat limited. Some interviewees stated that IE in particular and attention

to disability in general were justified by increased attention to child rights, where children with disabilities remain the most marginalised. Save the Children reports that disability is increasingly an important area for discussion with country offices about priorities. UNICEF has also given far higher priority to children with disabilities in the past 10-year period, both at global level and in Nepal and Malawi. At global level, this includes initiatives such as the following:

- [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 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. 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. Interviews also indicate that the number of employees working on disability globally and in Malawi and Nepal has increased.

This increased focus is mostly due to the UN stepping up its efforts to 'leave no one behind', and the adoption of the UN disability inclusion strategy. Some donor agencies have also taken a keen interest in disability as part of their aligning to the Sustainable development goals (SDGs).



Advocacy by the IDA has influenced these processes at the global level.¹⁴ At national level, in Malawi and Nepal, OPDs have increasingly developed their interest and capacity to engage in dialogue on disability inclusion and inclusive education policy and practice, mainly due to support from their Nordic peer OPDs (including Atlas Alliance). These agencies have been supporting trainings on UNCRPD for OPDs; sponsoring attendance at UN conferences; and preparation and presentation of the country CSO report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The evaluation has generally found evidence that these changes in policies, donor commitments, OPD engagements and in the growing involvement of committed and competent government staff are all contributing to keeping up this momentum.

It should be noted that commitments to 'inclusion' are seen as encompassing both children with disabilities and other children who are, for various reasons, seen to be insufficiently included in prevailing education systems. In Malawi, this encompasses those faced with extreme poverty. In Nepal, it includes girls, marginalised caste groups (especially Dalits) and children in geographical isolation. In both countries it may involve

those affected by disasters and gender-related discrimination. The multiplicity and intersectionality of exclusionary factors has meant that the scope of IE remains fluid and also that prevailing inequities in the overall education systems are perceived as part of the justification for IE. This means not seeing disability as something inherently separate from exclusion more generally. International experience indicates that this may be problematic as, if support to children with disabilities is not earmarked and budgeted (as they are seen as one of many 'vulnerable groups'), there is a major risk that their particular needs will be ignored.¹⁵ In interviews with authorities in Nepal and Malawi mention was sometimes made of competing priorities, suggesting that this may be a risk at country levels.

However, there are differences in exclusionary dynamics. In both countries, children with disabilities have generally been the last to be considered, especially when this requires adaptations in pedagogic practices, individual education plans and support measures. Save the Children and Atlas Alliance report having worked closely with governments to find ways to define priorities and act accordingly.

There is a view among some interviewees, which is difficult to verify, that strong and consistent Norwegian support to inclusive education has been a major contributor to these national policy level processes. Adding to the momentum towards more concerted policies and related programming has been highlighted by some interviewees as one of Norway's most important contributions. The evaluation team wishes to stress this, even though the evidence to support this finding about Norway's support is somewhat weak and may be influenced by confirmation bias. It is important to note that, by virtue of being a major actor with a large portfolio of IE programming in Malawi and Nepal, the RNE is clearly seen as having a 'seat at the table' in policy and strategic discussions. Several interviewees referred to participation in technical working groups (TWGs) as an important channel. This is particularly important as some other donors have far less consistent commitments to IE and continue to support the government to build new special schools. Despite policy shifts in Malawi to embrace IE and efforts by the IE TWG in Nepal to create synergies through an Approach Paper, there is still fragmentation in international commitments. The Approach Paper was

¹⁴ Sida (2018). Evaluation of International Disability Alliance (IDA) 2015-2018

¹⁵ UNICEF (2019). Formative Evaluation of Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities



developed by the IE TWG when the process to adopt a national policy on inclusive education failed to be endorsed. It aimed at creating a common approach to inclusive education among development partners. The status of the Approach Paper is informal, but has served as guidance for some of the development partners. It takes a pragmatic approach to IE and argues that the process needs to start with children with minor disabilities (that only require inexpensive adaptations) and then gradually expand. It does not endorse construction of new special schools.

LINKING POLICY CHANGE TO PRACTICE

The programmes being analysed mostly combine efforts to implement interventions within selected schools and communities with other engagements that are intended to develop more relevant and effective systems and policies for IE. There is usually an assumption that influence over policies is dependent on being able to show results in practice that can and should be scaled up or reinforced in government policies and strategies. Advocacy, advice, and better data are seen as the main channels for this influence, along with support to human resource development to ensure that there are appropriately trained teachers to implement new policies on a wide scale at school level. This theory of

change is particularly important to emphasise given the limited geographical scope and proportion of national schools reached by Norwegian support. In Malawi, support is provided to only four of fifty-eight districts. In Nepal, UNICEF IE support is provided in four districts out of 76 and in 317 schools out of 30,000. Save the Children supports five districts and 433 schools.

Some interviewees in both countries emphasised that one of the most important aspects of influencing government policies and strategies has been the projects' ability to show that IE is a viable approach. This is essential as authorities at both national and local levels are reported to have seen IE (and education for children with disabilities in general) as being too expensive, requiring human resources that they lack, and potentially being a 'competing priority' within the overall education systems. Many respondents note that low-cost interventions such as installing ramps and changing seating arrangements in the classroom (moving children with low vision or hearing impairments to the front) constitute 'low hanging fruit' in this regard, though some interviewees noted that this may also be a distraction from attending to the overall challenges related to pedagogy and learning outcomes.

Descriptions of the efficacy of the 'demonstration effect' of Norwegian supported programmes on

national commitments diverge greatly between Malawi and Nepal. In Malawi there is reported to have been major increases in commitments to IE and education for children with disabilities in general, despite severe resource constraints. Progress has also been made in Malawi in fostering awareness of manageable ways to introduce IE into widespread practice and increase disability inclusion. This has led to development of a national strategy and strengthened national institutions. Roll out in practice is largely hindered by resource scarcity in the educational sector more broadly. Due to the issues surrounding extreme poverty in Malawi, there has been a range of national policies that have explicitly emphasised inclusion in general and have referred to disability. The National Disability Mainstreaming Strategy and Implementation Plan 2018-2023 provides overall guidance, and the National Strategy on Inclusive Education 2017-2021 (currently pending renewal) is seen as partly a result of advocacy and advice from Norwegian partners. Interviewees with Save the Children and the partners of Atlas Alliance see themselves as having contributed to the MoEST adopting IE as government policy. This result is seen as triggering an as yet incomplete process of moving away from SNE and refocusing the work of government education authorities at national and district levels.



In Nepal, despite statements endorsing what would appear to be progressive approaches, national ownership is still limited and at devolved levels it is generally very weak. Some informants stated frankly that they did not think that the Ministry of Education believes in IE, and that existing commitments reflect a desire to pander to donors. Without this ownership and leadership, international actors are given leeway to implement various pilot projects, but these approaches are fragmented and are not being fed into national strategic plans. General declarations of support for IE have accompanied the very strong national commitments to 'inclusion' more generally in the new constitution. In practice, however, SNE is still the dominant paradigm for support to children with disabilities. A challenge is that the federal structure devolves policy formation for public services, including education, to local government. At these levels, awareness and understanding of IE is more limited and there is reported to be greater fear among local authorities that they will be held accountable for disability inclusion policies that may be too difficult and expensive to implement.

In Nepal, no laws contributing to creating an institutional environment for IE have been enacted during the review period. On the contrary, the earlier

IE policy was replaced by the education policy, which can be seen as regressive. i.e., special education focused. There were no significant changes in specific budget allocations towards inclusive education within the review period, despite the Norwegian supported efforts made by UNICEF and Save the Children. Pilot programmes such as these still rely on donor funding to a great extent. Some progress has been made, nonetheless. The IE TWG has developed an "Approach Paper" (in the lieu of the inclusive education policy, which was not adopted). This paper has helped to provide conceptual clarity and build a stronger consensus around the way forward for IE in Nepal. The new education sector plan, yet to be rolled out, is said to have more specific targets, indicators, and budget lines for IE of children with disabilities. Still, it retains a heavy SNE focus, most notably with the creation of fifteen new special schools.

Furthermore, progress has been made in terms of systems that have been put in place that would allow equity-based budget allocation in the future. A basis for this is assumed to lie in the data generated by the EMIS- 'Disability sub-system' (funded by USAID), which is expected to be linked with the government's wider commitments to indexing allocations in relation to equity objectives. If and when in operation, the sub-system

can inform planning and budgeting of the authorities. With Norwegian support, UNICEF has taken a key role in trying to support the government to develop and adopt an IE policy and to introduce an EMIS sub-system that also captures the learning outcomes for children with disabilities (to serve as a planning instrument). However, the EMIS sub-system has yet to deliver the expected outcomes as the system does not yet function as intended. The sub-system is still in nascent phase of pilot testing. The main EMIS system itself also struggles to overcome some systemic challenges. Most importantly, the number of children with disabilities enrolled in schools remains negligible and those out-of-school are not yet captured by the system. The disability sub-system is intended to mitigate this, but it requires cooperation with health authorities and CSOs that are expected to undertake screening and assessments. This is not yet in place.

The prevailing theory of change in both Nepal and Malawi, for Save the Children, Atlas Alliance and other CSOs is based on (largely implicit) assumptions that the experience of their successful field level programming and pilots will inform systemic thinking about IE. This process is pursued through numerous examples of close dialogue and advocacy towards government partners wherein field level experience is seen as



lending credibility to policy and strategy advocacy and advice. Furthermore, experience with successful IE practices is frequently described as being important to enhance confidence among national and local authorities that IE is possible. Partners note a tendency for local authorities to doubt whether they can achieve aims, particularly with regard to reaching children with severe disabilities, which can be overcome by visiting and seeing successful programming at school level.

A flaw in this theory of change, wherein good examples are expected to lead to awareness, broad scaling up and system change, is that the level of aid-financed resources provided is unlikely to be replaced by local resources. Informants are clear about the challenges they face in sustaining and replicating these programmes. Some refer to national authorities being hesitant about commitments to disability inclusion in general due to concerns that they will become accountable for maintaining aid-funded programmes in the future. In both Malawi and Nepal, there is a continuing gap between intended aims of policy development and what government stakeholders feel they can deliver. There is an overall view that ambitious

IE approaches are relevant 'in principle', but that governmental resources and readiness to adopt these policies are not in place.

OPDS AND POLICY FORMATION

In Malawi, Save the Children and Atlas Alliance have different approaches to policy influence. Save the Children has worked directly with the government to influence and provide advice for change. Its sizeable field level programming has lent credibility to these engagements. Atlas Alliance partners have had less direct engagement at national level, and have relied more on the power of their examples of school level results to lead to influence. This is despite recognition by government that OPDs should, at least in principle, have a greater role in policy formation. It should be noted that Atlas Alliance's contributions in the project being analysed were hindered by issues of corruption at national level that were uncovered in the course of implementation. Programming continued through selected schools and partners, but the disruptions in the relations with the national partner, meant that this was a difficult time to exert influence at national level.

In interviews with Norwegian partners and government stakeholders it is recognised that OPDs should have a major role in informing and advocating for both systemic and more specific changes in IE. There are some reports of the OPDs having strong influence within their area of specialisation, but for the most part it is difficult to trace broader systemic influence in the examples analysed. Also, there is no consensus among various OPDs on the scope for IE in either Nepal or Malawi as they recognise that their members have mixed views on the relative advantages of IE versus special needs approaches. The deaf community is advocating that a sign language environment (as means of instruction and communication) is essential for deaf students – and this has also been accepted as a global policy for this group.¹⁶ This complexity makes it difficult for OPDs to advocate for IE in the short term, but rather see it as a long-term vision. The IDA policy paper¹⁷ on what inclusive education means to them (with a set of criteria) was a milestone in getting a common OPD voice. Still, at the national level such common understanding is yet to appear.

¹⁶ See the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education from 1994.

¹⁷ International Disability Alliance (2020). What an Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Education Means to Us



In Malawi and Nepal, it is apparent from interviews that OPDs perceive themselves as having a modest influence and ability to lend legitimacy to policy changes. A major success in Malawi, driven in part by the efforts of the Norad supported agencies, has been the change of the name of the government's policy from special needs to inclusive education. This has been accompanied by an increase in overall funding which, although significant in relation to previous funding levels, is recognised as still being far from sufficient in relation to needs. The decision by the government to label policies as 'IE', may not have entirely replaced the previous focus on specialised education, but it is notably claimed to be a success due to advocacy by OPDs and their CSO partners. Contribution is clear, as informants describe how they have raised policy-makers' awareness through school visits and advice.

In Nepal, OPDs confirm that they are informed about the national policy processes and invited to meetings – but they feel that their voices are not heard. Most importantly, they are not involved in planning, implementation or monitoring of the interventions made by development partners (or government). At best they are engaged by these partners to undertake advocacy

among their members to convince parents to send their children to school, or to provide braille printed books or sign language training. Some OPDs are engaging in their own piloting of education projects.

POLICIES FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

During the evaluation timeframe, interviewees among the Norwegian humanitarian organisations acknowledge that their agencies undertook relatively little policy and strategy development regarding humanitarian disability efforts. This is somewhat surprising given the global impetus to focus more on disability in the wake of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. On a global level, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) developed Guidelines for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action in Humanitarian Assistance in 2019¹⁸, and more recently there have been steps towards addressing policies more explicitly. Informants described the IASC guidelines as constituting an important roadmap for moving forward, with a strong and explicit role for OPDs, even if there was uncertainty about if or how these guidelines were being used. Although somewhat outside of the timeframe of this

evaluation, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Atlas Alliance and other Norwegian humanitarian agencies are beginning to plan for a strategy development initiative, with pilot activities, that would provide a basis for a more ambitious stance in the future. This initiative was described as a way to 'test the waters' both in terms of learning about how (and how much) to operationalise existing guidelines, and also to begin developing closer relations between Norwegian OPDs and humanitarian agencies.

2.4 Scope of school level interventions and implications for inclusion

At school levels, there are mixed and often weak commitments to ensure that all children with disabilities have access to education. Some interviewees accepted that they have responsibilities to reach even the more severely disabled and those with multiple disabilities. However, there are also many who view goals of full inclusion as being unrealistic. It is apparent that schools receiving support from the programmes have a more inclusive reach, but they are highly dependent on

¹⁸ IASC (2019). Guidelines for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action in Humanitarian Assistance.

external assistance to cover the costs of providing training and incentives to teachers for these tasks, which suggests considerable obstacles to sustainability in 'leaving no one behind'. The evaluation team also found that the actual implementation of inclusion at the ground level has serious flaws.

Particularly in Nepal, we found that the first obstacle is to identify children with disabilities. Many children lack birth certificates, which means that they cannot receive any services from the government and remain hidden from the system. Secondly, it is largely recognised that the current assessment system is poor. Children are undiagnosed or wrongly diagnosed. Thirdly, a number of teachers interviewed in the programme areas still do not consider children with certain disabilities to be able to learn. They assume that in order for a student to be able to learn he/she must be able to see, hear, understand and be able to master reading and writing – as this is what exams emphasise. These assumptions are understandable considering the poor pedagogical and technical support provided to teachers and the inflexibility of curricula and exams procedures.

To address some of these challenges, the Save the Children programme had undertaken their own screening of children in communities and introduced 'home

schooling' for children that were assessed by teachers to have multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities, or psychosocial disabilities (often associated with being aggressive). Children who were blind or deaf were usually advised to go to special schools, while others were supported in resource classes. Home schooling was also justified by the topographic challenges faced in transporting many children with disabilities to the schools.

HYBRID APPROACHES AND INCLUSION

Decisions regarding levels of ambition for inclusion are also related to decisions about whether inclusive education should be fully inclusive, or if some categories of students are likely to benefit more from a greater level of specialised schooling, contrary to prevailing paradigms that assume that participation in mainstream classrooms is the 'solution'. For example, it is globally accepted that deaf children need to learn in a sign language environment, which will mostly require separate classes or schools – still within the regular school system. Similarly, children with certain psychosocial or intellectual disabilities may learn better in smaller groups. In both Nepal and Malawi, a pragmatic stance on this question prevails, with the result that hybrid models are common. One partner represented described the choices between IE and SNE as:

“ Nobody is against this, but questions of how to get the local schools up to capacity for this. One reason is that there are never going to be enough specialists. All want inclusion but we would not automatically cut support to specialists. ”

Another informant described this even more strongly:

“ Some say that we reach ninety percent and are satisfied with that. Ten percent are pushed further behind. Specialised services are seen as draining from the mainstream. IE requires that mainstream classes have resources to include all. This is not possible in any African country now. ”

Even on a macro-level, choice of programming reflects enduring emphasis on both SNE and inclusive education tracks. Save the Children acknowledged that despite their strong corporate commitments and investments in enhancing awareness and skills related to IE among staff, the majority of their disability programming remains targeted towards special needs.

In Malawi, efforts are made to ensure students without disability are welcome to attend schooling that is designed for children with disabilities, those who are deafblind in particular. In both countries



most informants indicated that children with multiple and/or severe disabilities are least likely to attend IE mainstreamed schools. In Nepal, school visits indicated that even if they did, their benefits were limited as teachers did not know how to teach them, and lacked time to support them.

2.5 Monitoring, information systems and knowledge sharing

MONITORING AND THE WASHINGTON GROUP QUESTIONS

Monitoring is recognised as an important tool to advocate and advise governments on what can and should be done to learn from and replicate lessons from the pilot/model schools receiving support. One Norwegian interviewee observed that “...experience feeds into advocacy, as we can explain what is possible and why. Monitoring is thus an important tool for this to take up what is needed to implement policies.” This informant went on to explain that monitoring systems were of particular importance in ensuring broader inclusion:

“What we see is that to include and plan for including all children is an indication of the qualities we should strive for, also important for Norad and MFA to see this. Reaching fewer but spending more time. It is more expensive to work in the poorest areas and to include all children... We have to report on how many, but also to have the numbers to explain what is needed in reality to reach the most needy.”

Redd Barna/Save the Children Norway has lead responsibility in the Save the Children movement for disability inclusion and has been particularly active in increasing awareness and skills in use of the questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics¹⁹ to ensure that relevant data drives disability inclusive programming. This includes a four-day training module for national staff and partners in government and CSOs, including OPDs. An intention, not always achieved, has been to develop a baseline for more disability inclusive programming. This initiative has largely developed over the past two years and is thus outside the scope of the evaluation, but exemplifies the evolving thinking emerging from the learning underway within the organisation.

It can be noted that the Save the Children baseline initiative has apparently not been integrated with the EMIS efforts described elsewhere in this report, or with UNICEF approaches (although both are based on iterations of the Washington group questions) as it is focused on Save the Children programming rather than national systems. Data showing who benefits and who is ‘left behind’ in programmes is used for both internal learning and for advocacy. This has been recognised as being of particular importance as national data collected by Save the Children in the past tended to drastically under-report children with disabilities, partly as so many of these children are either not registered as such in prevailing school level data or because they are not attending schools at all.

However, it should be noted that other informants were more critical of reliance on the Washington Group questions, citing how this framing was problematic when defining multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and disabilities in the upper limbs.

In general, informants recognise that information and monitoring constitute a different set of challenges in humanitarian programming, and that little progress has

¹⁹ Washington Group on Disability Statistics, <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>

been made in collecting the data needed to increase awareness and inform programming in humanitarian interventions. There is acknowledgement that disability inclusion is a major humanitarian need, but there is insufficient data to proceed with programming. Norwegian partners are engaged in exploratory discussions about how to respond to this challenge. There is also reflection underway about this challenge at a global level.²⁰

SCREENING AND DECENTRALISATION

The need to increase the quantity and quality of field level data was a very common theme in interviews. This was often related to the need for better screening capacities that would both increase the quality of meta-data and to improve targeting and protection. In Nepal, very few children with disabilities are identified, properly assessed and registered in EMIS until now. This means that this tool is yet to be a useful planning and monitoring instrument. One interviewee in Nepal mentioned that there was a particular need to ensure that those with milder disabilities were captured in screening systems as, given the dark and noisy classrooms, those with relatively modest hearing and sight impairments may not be able to benefit from

education since they are often overlooked in screening due to a focus on more visible and severe disabilities.

In Nepal, monitoring of IE efforts has been hampered by the lack of clarity regarding how this should function in the new federal system, where the national level authorities have an advisory and supportive role in relation to the local authorities, and where the OPDs have limited capacity and resources to undertake monitoring at the local level. Also, the lack of a formally adopted policy on IE and the vagueness of the sector plans, makes it difficult to use data-driven advocacy to press demands on the local level. Existence of local IE policies are still very few, and capacities to develop policies based on data collection are said to be very weak.

2.6 Capacity development

AWARENESS AND COMMITMENTS TO DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES AMONG PARTNER CSOS

Norwegian and national CSO partners recognise that they need to ensure that their own staff have sufficient disability awareness and understanding to be able

to develop and implement programmes. This was particularly noted among Norwegian humanitarian agencies, where there is an acknowledgement that their own staff, due to insufficient knowledge and personal commitments, may be an obstacle to further and more consistently mainstreamed disability efforts. Overcoming this core obstacle is made more problematic due to the very high and rapid levels of staff turnover (within the organisations and within a given country) that characterise humanitarian action. Among both development and humanitarian actors there is thus also a recognised need for ongoing systems for awareness raising and learning, based on engagement with OPDs and persons with disabilities in general. The extent to which such systems are in place is difficult to assess.

Nonetheless, Norwegian partners interviewed emphasise that they have made considerable progress. In multiple interviews, Norwegian CSOs emphasised the following areas where their capacities, and that of their national partners, have improved over the past decade:

- General awareness of disability issues is said to be improving in the Save the Children movement (Redd

²⁰ Washington Group on Disability Statistics (n.d.). Should you use the WG questions in your humanitarian programming? A tool to help you decide

Barna describes this as related to their enhanced leadership on the issue), and among some other Norwegian CSO partners through the initiative “Together for Inclusion” led by Atlas Alliance and among Norwegian humanitarian agencies (though informants stress that this remains insufficient).

- Shifts (still incomplete) are reported to be underway from ‘medical-based’ to human rights-based perspectives on disability in both programming and in the awareness and attitudes of individual staff.
- Monitoring and evaluation capacities for assessing disability inclusion have been strengthened, with specific initiatives emphasised.
- There is greater access to disability disaggregated data to spur and design more relevant programmes, although far from sufficient.
- Skills have been reinforced to address gaps in IE programming, notably as part of the general strengthening of awareness and attitudinal shifts noted above.

Some Norwegian OPDs noted, though, that Norad procedures and systems were not optimal for collaboration

with weaker Norwegian and partner OPDs. This includes technical obstacles such as templates that are not designed to be accessible for sight impaired programme officers and disbursement schedules that create obstacles for small organisations with cash flow challenges.

Save the Children interviewees note that the capacity development for country staff has enabled them to delve deeper into gaps in prevailing IE systems, with the development of individual education plans being a clear example. However, these methods have made the limitations faced by partners in local schools even more apparent in actually implementing these individual education plans. This can be seen as an example of the need to reconcile ambitious goals with the on-the-ground opportunities and limitations for human resource development at local levels.

NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND OWNERSHIP

With regard to ministerial level support, programming emphasis has been on the development of organisational capacities to implement policies and put into place data systems, such as EMIS, for analysing progress of students from marginalised groups and inform adjustments and planning of IE to address inequities. In Nepal, Save the

Children and UNICEF emphasise their advisory roles at ministerial levels and within the IE TWG. By contrast, regular training and other capacity building interventions are relatively few. As noted above, in Malawi both Atlas Alliance and Save the Children supported MoEST to increase its capacities through the reorganisations required to carry out its increased focus on IE and the transition from a SNE to an IE policy focus that is currently underway. An IE sourcebook was mentioned as useful for guiding this transition among various authorities. The Malawi Association for the Handicapped (MACOHA) has also received advice for carrying out their responsibilities as the government agency directly responsible for support to people with disabilities.

Support to data collection has been a significant part of how the programmes have helped ministries and (in principle if not in practice) local government to undertake their mandate. EMIS support in Malawi has consisted of provision of a toolkit for data collection by Save the Children. Interviews indicate that in using tools such as this, EMIS is becoming more effective for collecting disaggregated data on children already enrolled in schools, but evidence is lacking regarding specifically how the data has been applied in programming design and targeting in practice. One informant expressed concern that EMIS was still not being used to its full potential saying, “*We thought they {the government} would own this by now*”.



In Nepal, UNICEF has also supported the introduction of the EMIS system,²¹ which aims at enabling national and local authorities to better plan and target IE efforts. This has been linked to the development of an equity index, which is used to produce annual reports on overall government commitments to equity goals. The intention with EMIS was to collect data twice a year directly from the schools. Feedback indicates that among schools and local authorities these ambitions have not been reached due to various capacity deficits. Some relate to lack of skills and connectivity to apply the systems that have been developed. Schools report having to pay for use of cyber cafés to transfer this data. Other factors relate to trust and ownership. Information flows are reported to be one-way to central authorities or donors, and do not reflect the information needs and prevailing capacities of the devolved systems that are ostensibly being put into place, wherein local authorities are expected to lead planning processes. Further, the present EMIS does not capture adequate data on children with disability to inform IE programming. Hence an EMIS disability system is being designed and piloted which is likely to face some systemic challenges discussed in this report.

TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AS THE CORNERSTONE OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In interviews, rich descriptions of the drivers of change at school and community levels have highlighted the central role the projects under analysis play in engaging with individuals within the school leadership, among teachers, and in the community to use tools and awareness of the value of education for children with disabilities. Stories of success often centre around the work of these individuals in accessing and utilising project support. Similarly, evidence of obstacles tends to reflect negative attitudes at micro level, especially where frontline service providers harbour scepticism about the value of educating children with disabilities.

Our evidence indicates that the greatest obstacle to effectiveness and scaling up of pilot initiatives has been the shortage of teachers trained in SNE and IE. Partners are addressing this through direct training and in some cases support to teacher training institutions, but the needs still greatly exceed the capacities. One partner in Malawi has undertaken a radical shift from past training focused on specialised SNE teachers to instead focusing on training

mainstream education teachers in IE. This appears to be an overall trend in Malawi, but several informants highlighted the continued need for, and shortage of, SNE specialists. The projects include various quantities of and approaches to teacher training, including both integration of training into overall teacher training curricula, training for specialised teachers and in-service training. Some efforts are beginning to support teacher training institutions whereas others use rosters of trainers to develop the skills of the teachers in the targeted schools. For example, in Malawi, Save the Children trained 1217 teachers and Atlas Alliance partners helped develop IE curricula and materials for in-service training for the Montfort, Machinga and Lilongwe teacher training colleges. In one location in Malawi, school leadership report using Save the Children IE modules for training 52 teachers. Another partner reported training one hundred teachers in six target schools. In general, in Malawi, informants stressed the value of in-service training. In Nepal, UNICEF has pooled individual trainers (resource persons) from the government Teacher Training Centre and from their own pool of consultants (and that of World Education, which is their main implementing partner in Nepal). However, there is no formal

²¹ UNICEF also supports EMIS in Malawi, but this was not a major focus of the evaluation.

collaboration with teacher training institutions that would ensure systemic change.

The theory of change in the thinking of partners for how to overcome the shortage of capacity at school level is, in the view of the evaluation team, insufficient. Addressing the shortages nationally would require a major increase in resources to train, and ultimately to retain, these teachers. This is an area where the evaluation team judges that there is a tendency to focus efforts with projectized 'IE bubbles' of a limited number of pilot schools, rather than seeking to influence broader structures in the education systems. Small-scale teacher training may provide a basis for project-level effectiveness, but stands in the way of broader and more sustainable outcomes.

Even within these bubbles, retention of specialised teachers is a problem, with interviewees frequently describing problems with trained teachers being transferred elsewhere or moving in search of better jobs. It is uncertain whether they have been able to apply their skills in their new positions. Within their limited scale and scope, some programmes take a more systemic approach, such as the support Signo has provided for including a component on deafblind teaching methods in a teacher training college in

Malawi. However, this is not the norm and integrating this into national systems will be difficult. In Nepal, however, a good sign is that the new education sector plan includes plans for training of teachers within mainstream schools in IE through preparation of sixty master trainers and reviving of the capacity of the teachers training centres at the district level, which was dismantled in the transition to the federal system.

COMMUNITY AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

The partners recognise the importance of community (primarily parent) engagement and understanding of how to support the education of children with disabilities. Evidence of effectiveness of the interventions used by the studied programmes in this regard is mixed. Some interviewees describe increasing enrolment rates as evidence that parents are more committed to sending their children to school. Others state that parents still lack these commitments and claim that many of the children purportedly enrolled have very low attendance rates and may be 'ghost students', who are formally enrolled but rarely attend classes due to lack of parent commitment to their education. In Nepal, field observations found little evidence of community engagement being supported by the projects, apart from the involvement of parents

in the few individual education plans that had been developed as part of the programmes studied.

Though the policy frameworks and the partners' ToCs envision parents and community engagements, the interventions to ensure implementation is limited. The school system in Nepal has provision for school management committees (SMCs) and parent teacher associations (PTAs) which are engaged in school governance and planning together with the local communities. Capacity building interventions targeting SMCs/PTA have been undertaken. However, the understanding and action for inclusion of children with disability varies across SMCs/PTA. Very few activities for awareness or engagement of communities (including media mobilisation) were found to be implemented at the field level in Nepal. Often parents mistrust the schools' ability to protect and advance the learning of their children – even in the areas targeted by the projects.

In Malawi, where interviewees report more significant success in influencing parents' attitudes towards accepting the value of education for their children, there are also some parents who fail to see the need for education of their disabled children. Interviews in Malawi include reports of examples of good cooperation



with parents, communities and OPDs around IE. The presence of children with disabilities in classrooms is also said to be leading to greater acceptance by peers and teachers. Furthermore, interviews with children with disabilities indicated that their inclusion has increased their self-esteem.

In Malawi, interviewees report significant success within the vicinity of programme interventions in enhancing community engagements. In Malawi, particularly in the Save the Children targeted schools, the consultations with stakeholders revealed that the parents had been motivated to take initiative of constructing teachers houses or construct additional classroom blocks to make IE succeed. Another good example is of parents accompanying or dropping their children with disabilities on a bicycle in the morning and pick them in the evening to ensure the children access education, which was not the case before. In general, in Malawi, significant success has been noted in working with PTAs, SMCs and mother groups, using regular meetings at community level to ensure that there is a link between school level interventions and broader community engagement. The programmes have

different approaches for engaging with parents. Signo has found that development of appropriate information materials, including a booklet with relevant illustrations, has been a very effective tool for stimulating conversations between teachers and parents about disability inclusion.

2.7 Advocacy and OPDs

INTERFACES WITH OPDS

Partners recognise that OPDs should, in principle, play a leading role in advocacy and awareness raising for realisation of their rights, and that other partners should play supporting roles. Results in living up to these commitments towards ensuring 'nothing about us without us' have been mixed. In interviews it is apparent that, overall, OPDs are seen as playing an important role as 'implementing partners', and as organisations that should be informed about programming. Their role is as a dialogue partner with national government and for legitimising the efforts of international and governmental partners. However, it is difficult to trace evidence indicating that they are actually influencing the

field level programming of international partners such as UNICEF and Save the Children. There is no evidence to suggest that they have significant power over the prioritisations, programme design or monitoring of Norway's non-OPD partners.

The evaluation finds that institutional set-ups for OPD participation in policy making and programming are insufficient. For example, advocacy efforts in Nepal are hindered by dysfunctionalities in the Federal Disability Steering Committee which was established as a platform between government and OPDs to ensure the effective implementation of the CRPD. It has rarely met and has been subject to political infighting. This has in turn been an obstacle to effective advocacy by the fragmented OPD community. At the same time, the Nepal Federation of the Disabled (NFDN)²² and some of its members have gained strength through the long-term support from their Nordic peers and are increasingly able to engage in policy dialogue and participate in programming. Often however, they are perceived too weak and fragmented to add value as implementing partners. Different OPDs approach the development partners (donors) with their specific needs

²² National Federation of the Disabled Nepal, <https://nfdn.org.np/>



and usually without a common agenda. This is natural, as the specific needs and required interventions are likely to vary across different disability types²³, whereas the OPDs have to compete with each other for the same pool of resources. This often comes across as 'fragmented' approaches to development partners who views disability as a 'single' (homogenous) theme. Further, at the at policy and programmatic level the policy measures and interventions are often designed in a manner to collectively address the entire target group. Hence, the development partners have unrealistic expectations of receiving collective and common inputs from the OPDs.

Interviews indicate that when OPDs are invited to policy and programming discussions, it is often in a tokenistic manner to get legitimacy for interventions. Additionally, since the OPDs have mainly been active in advocacy, though some have acquired technical competencies (like the case of National Association of the Blind (NAB), supported by NABP²⁴), development partners continue to see them in their traditional role of 'claim makers' and fail to consider the possibilities to collaborate as 'partners'. They engage them in implementation and

monitoring (technical collaboration). Large influential actors such as UNICEF and the World Bank are reported to engage primarily with international NGOs as implementing partners, which further weakens the voice of domestic OPDs.

In both Nepal and Malawi, Atlas Alliance (along with its Nordic equivalents) was mentioned as one of the few internationally funded programmes that has actively engaged with OPDs and even supported them to run their own rehabilitation and education programmes. This has major limitations though, as most OPDs have limited presence at the local municipal level, except in large towns. The work of Atlas Alliance and its partners in Malawi is slightly different from Nepal, as OPDs in Malawi have a somewhat stronger role in the education programmes, with some OPD partners running some schools directly. Furthermore, the OPDs in Malawi perceive themselves as having a more effective advocacy role. However, even in Malawi the lack of OPD presence in the vast majority of rural areas limits opportunities for local, operational roles. There are clear obstacles to OPDs becoming capable of undertaking influential and significant advocacy

and awareness efforts at local levels and in devolved governance systems.

2.8 Infrastructure and implications for inclusion

EFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURAL INVESTMENT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF PROJECTS

Installation of ramps is universally cited as the most basic infrastructural input and is virtually symbolic of commitments to inclusion. Latrines were also mentioned as a priority, but feedback and field visits suggest that there are still significant gaps in improving these facilities. Some respondents noted, though, that a focus on school buildings may tend to overshadow other essential material needs, such as improved blackboards, seats and desks. Construction and equipping of resource rooms has been a feature of programming in both countries. In the resource rooms, special needs teachers can provide additional assistance for children with disabilities in schools where IE has been mainstreamed. Significant progress is reported regarding WASH-related improvements.

²³ Disability classification in Nepal includes 10 types.

²⁴ An exception is the involvement of NAB in Nepal. As a result of support from Norway NAB was able to secure a government contract to produce braille books across schools in Nepal.



The latter includes provision of girls' latrines, which are seen as a gender-inclusion related intervention as well. Standards have been raised significantly. In Nepal, model activities of internationally financed programmes are showing evidence of stimulating greater governmental commitments and widespread improvements in infrastructure. However, field visits reveal that the contractors have not always followed the standards set (too narrow doors, too steep ramps etc). Even if the schools are more accessible now, the roads to get to school are not, especially given the terrain in Nepal. This is largely beyond the capacity or responsibility of the education authorities, who often see home schooling as the only viable option where students cannot reach their school.

In Malawi, actual refurbishment of schools has been undertaken through the two projects, but on a limited basis. Save the Children reported adapting ten schools, which were intended as models to be replicated. Interviewees highlighted how Save the Children and Atlas Alliance partners have used community mobilisation to contribute to needed infrastructure. However, interviewees stressed that needs for infrastructural investments in schools remain huge, particularly in Malawi where minimal standards for schools in general are often not being met.

INVESTMENTS IN BASIC EQUIPMENT

In both Malawi and Nepal, the most basic school equipment is often severely lacking. Simple improvements such as new blackboards were described as vitally important for the visually impaired. Chairs were mentioned as a priority for some children to be able to function in class. These examples highlight the importance of an awareness of how seemingly obvious improvements to classroom environments for all students are of particular importance for children with disabilities. The projects reviewed were making some of these investments, but interviewees noted that these deficits reflect structural issues in the education systems that cannot be solved by small and relatively piecemeal CSO support, or even IE support in general. A good classroom environment for children with disabilities is in many respects the same as a good classroom environment for all children. As such, the evaluation observes that IE related infrastructural investments must be seen against the background of severe problems for the school systems in general. Such 'low-tech' issues are important and highlight the context of extremely scarce resources for infrastructural investments in the education sector. When many classes take place under trees due to the lack of classrooms, this suggests that the

prospects for additional infrastructural investment for IE are only likely to emerge in conjunction with greater general investments in educational infrastructure. One interviewee noted that students with relatively mild disabilities (especially those who were not identified as such due to weak screening procedures) were likely to achieve minimal learning outcomes if the noise levels, poor lighting and other factors resulted in them not being able to see or hear the teachers. Here again, the infrastructural and material obstacles to inclusive education mirror the challenges facing education in general.

HUMANITARIAN INVESTMENTS USING INFRASTRUCTURE AS AN ENTRY POINT

With regard to post-earthquake and general humanitarian interventions, infrastructure is seen as an obvious entry point when rebuilding schools, as exemplified by Plan Norway's support in Nepal. However, during the field visit to the schools that received this support informants recalled little attention having been paid to disability apart from the initial construction. The schools were asked by Plan to submit data on children with disabilities, but no specific support followed. One teacher stated that:



“...the situation, the condition was such that there was no scope to think about anyone specific, the need was to protect all children equally, all of us were concerned about what to eat, where to live, how to survive- all children were at risk, all were suffering. So, whatever we did was for all.”

However, other informants highlighted changes in the overall discourse in Nepal after the earthquake as OPDs became active in discussions around future efforts to work towards disability inclusive disaster risk reduction. This change in discourse was not related to Norwegian support, apart from contributions from Atlas Alliance. Norwegian Church Aid notes that their overall commitments to WASH in their humanitarian work also fits well with ambitions to contribute to these areas, but it is recognised that this focus on ‘bricks and mortar’ is only one component of more complex obstacles to inclusivity in humanitarian response.

CLASS SIZE

Class size is another factor that affects the ability to make individual adjustments to make education more welcoming for children with disabilities. This is a particularly large problem in Malawi and the densely populated Nepali terai plains, where classes with over 100 pupils are not unusual. A solution to this problem of insufficient classrooms (and teachers), particularly in Malawi, has been the construction of resource rooms where children with disabilities obtain extra support in small classes with appropriately trained teachers. Where these resource rooms are fully operational, both students and teachers find them to be highly effective. Unfortunately, there are also reports that the operation of these rooms is often limited by the same shortages of teachers – and particularly teachers with specialised skills – with time to use these facilities and provide this extra education.

2.9. Assistive technology, teaching material and curricula

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

As noted above, ‘low-tech’ assistive technology, such as desks, chairs and blackboards remain important. In Malawi interviewees mentioned the particular problems facing students with disabilities if they had no chairs to sit on. There is a major shortage of access to hearing aids, spectacles and wheelchairs that supersedes what international assistance can provide. In Malawi, MACOHA is the government agency responsible for this support, but it is severely underfunded. In both Nepal and Malawi, the partners emphasised screening for sight and hearing impairments so that schools become aware of the students with these often-hidden disabilities, but subsequently addressing these needs through assistive devices was generally seen to be the responsibility of overburdened public agencies. Overall, the evaluation has encountered notable and relevant inputs of equipment, bursaries and assistive devices in both Malawi and Nepal, but it is difficult to discern a clear path to sustainability or scale. Mostly, the few specialised teachers and assistive devices that are funded by the government are geared towards the



special schools. There are reported to be insufficient mechanisms for assessment and disbursement of devices at local mainstream schools or health centres. One Norwegian implementing partner emphasised that they were not prepared to act as a duty bearer in this regard, but that the Norwegian government could exert greater influence.

“Always there are hopes that you will refurbish the schools, but we don't focus on things. It is the national authorities' responsibilities to make these investments and ours is just a project. Biggest effect is that we can show it is possible, can make authorities and parents more enthusiastic. Goes back to what Norad could do better. We support the Malawi government and one can ask what conditions come with the support, i.e., insisting that disability is mainstreamed like gender. We don't do this enough.”

TEACHING MATERIALS AND SPECIALISED SKILLS

Norwegian support has covered teaching materials, with anecdotal examples of provision of braille materials mentioned in several interviews in both countries. One informant noted that she has been informed that the Malawi government procurement of braille materials was increasing. In Nepal, the Nepal Association of

the Blind has two braille printers that have been used to produce braille materials, and in a few cases the National Association of the Deaf has been invited to provide sign language training. It is noted, however, that no evidence was found of progress in creating systems for ensuring widespread and sustainable availability of these materials and skills.

A gap noted by many interviewees, especially hearing-impaired children themselves, was on skills of both teachers and pupils in sign language. Comments indicated that this was a critical obstacle to benefiting from IE and a few comments were noted suggesting that it was a justification for SNE structures where the few teachers with sign language skills could be placed. It seems that not all partners are aware that the CRPD and other global policy documents specifically state that children who are deaf must learn in a sign language environment and that a separate class or school may be needed to achieve this.

Most importantly, it was observed that the teaching practices and pedagogical skills needed to teach children with communication or cognitive disabilities as well as those with difficulties in reading/writing were mostly poor or lacking among teachers, even among those that had participated in IE/SNE trainings offered

by the programmes studied. They had learned to make practical classroom adaptations, but did not know how to move beyond these. Teachers expressed frustration about this situation as they could clearly see that they were not able to include some children meaningfully. School culture, practices and curricula are yet to adapt to various learning pace and styles.

ADAPTING CURRICULA AND EXAMS

Both in Malawi and Nepal, considerable concerns have been expressed regarding problems arising from inflexibility in the national curricula and examination procedures that fails to take into account the needs and capacities of children with disabilities. One school reported that teachers were diluting (i.e., removing difficult elements) rather than adapting the curricula. This concern has been a major area of advocacy noted by one Norwegian partner in Malawi who reported that national OPD advocacy has been successful in raising awareness among the stakeholders responsible for these aspects of the mainstream education system. Examination procedures, such as the use of diagrams, were adapted so as not to discriminate against sight impaired students. Some interviewees noted that additional forms of support have been important for adapting education to the needs of



children with different types of disabilities. In Nepal, the new Education sector plan, adopted in 2022, includes measures for curriculum variation to address the diverse needs of learners, but it is yet to be implemented.

2.10 Identification and assessment of children with disabilities and impacts on enrolment

ASSESSMENT QUALITY

Early identification, assessment/determination and referrals are a crucial precondition for inclusive education, which is not well-developed in many countries – including Nepal and Malawi. This affects the ability of educational authorities to make proper district/national education plans and budgets for support services. The coordination between health and education authorities is often poor – and assessments made mostly focusing on visible medical conditions. Although assessments have a health component (WHO has developed good but rather complicated assessment standards²⁵), it is generally agreed that

assessments need to be done by a multidisciplinary team – including medical, social, educational and psychological expertise. However, assembling and deploying such teams may be unachievable in many countries.

Interviews highlighted the importance of identifying those children who had otherwise been hidden from view so that they can be properly assessed and diagnosed to determine their need of support for e.g., rehabilitation measures, assistive devices, health interventions and school adaptations. Once identified and assessed, teachers and education authorities would then be able to follow-up and adapt support accordingly. In Nepal, field visits showed that many children are still not identified because they have no birth certificates, or they are hidden by parents due to shame or to protect them from bullying and ridicule. Furthermore, there is no early identification and assessment system²⁶. Local health clinics can only diagnose obvious, visible disabilities. Many children are wrongly diagnosed as having intellectual disabilities. The motivation to take children to assessment is weak as in many cases this does not lead to support or other

response by the school or other authorities. A major problem is also the lack of cooperation between the health and education systems.

IMPACTS ON ENROLMENT

In Malawi, some efforts are placed on identification and referrals to health services and increasing enrolment as a result. Interviewees generally report increasing awareness of which students have disabilities, follow-up regarding out-of-school youth with disabilities and increasing attractiveness of education from the perspective of students and their parents. These results have led to increased enrolment and perhaps retention, though evidence is limited in this regard. The increases are generally modest, e.g., one Atlas Alliance partner in Malawi reported a 7.7 percent increase during the programme period. Examples of advancing to secondary education have been relatively few and anecdotal. However, these increases in enrolment are largely within schools receiving project support. In Nepal, the increase has been insignificant as the Norwegian supported programmes focus on only one percent of the 30,000 schools in the

²⁵ World Health Organisation (2012), Measuring health and disability – WHO Disability Assessment Schedule 2.

²⁶ UNPRPD (2021) UNPRPD Situation Analysis,



country. Furthermore, in Nepal, enrolment of children with disabilities in basic level education (0.94%) is still very low compared to 97% enrolment of children without disabilities for the same level. The dropout rate for children with disabilities from lower to higher levels is very high.

2.11 Country level coordination, intersectionality and synergies

INCLUSION BEYOND DISABILITY

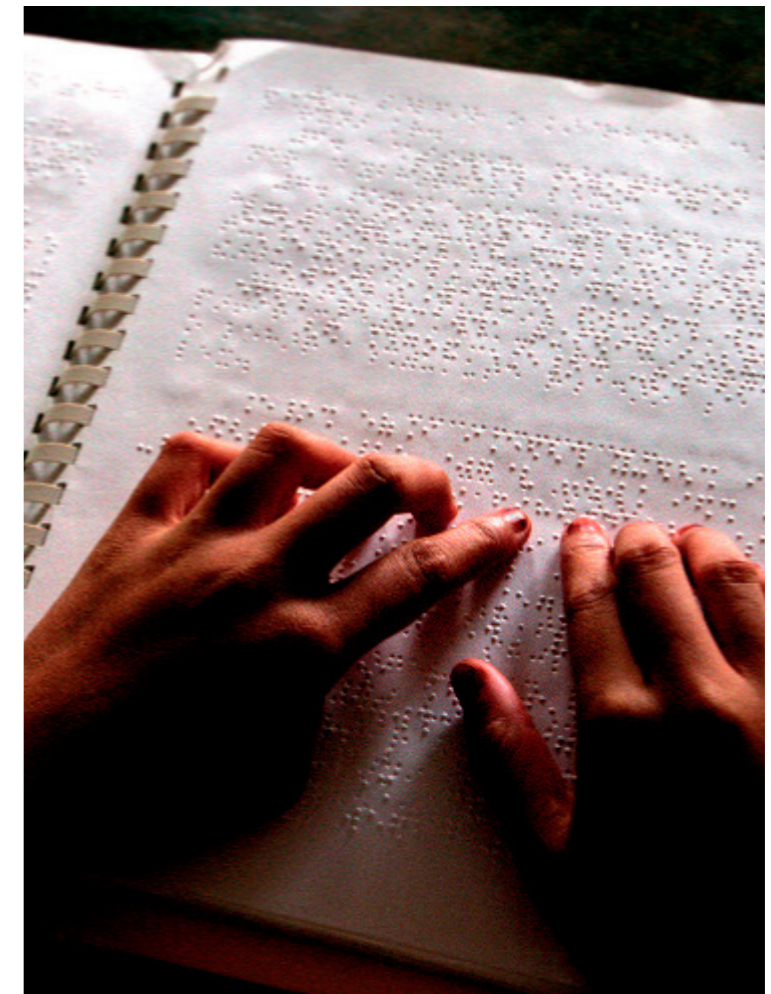
Inclusion is clearly seen as a set of intersectional goals that stretch beyond disability to include factors that relate to gender, ethnicity, caste and extreme poverty. In Nepal this is framed in the national discourse and commitments to 'gender equality and social inclusion' (GESI) which are embedded in the 2015 constitution. In Malawi, these commitments are related more to broad focus on addressing severe poverty. Among partners these broad perspectives on inclusion are seen as a signal to focus on synergies, particularly as related to gender and disability. For example, investments in accessible school latrines were often described in conjunction with construction of separate latrines and hygiene facilities for girls.

In humanitarian efforts disability inclusion is also addressed as an intersectional issue within broader inclusion approaches. For example, the Norwegian Refugee Council has minimum standards for inclusive programming that stress safety, dignity and avoiding harm (i.e., 'protection') with references to disability.²⁷ They acknowledge though that disability may receive insufficient attention by staff who lack appropriate knowledge (and who may harbour inappropriate attitudes) towards persons with disabilities.

DEVOLUTION AS A COORDINATION AND COHERENCE CHALLENGE

In Nepal, commitments to inclusivity are reflected in coordination related to the federalisation process, wherein responsibilities for coordination (in a gender equal and socially inclusive manner) are being successively devolved to local levels. Local authorities are aware that they are being given responsibilities that threaten to overwhelm their capacities (not just in relation to IE). The challenge lies in the capacity constraints at local/municipal levels and the challenges they face in prioritising among intersectional needs. As the role of the national level policy and coordination

mechanisms is now merely advisory and supportive, it has become increasingly difficult to ensure and monitor implementation of national level policy commitments and ambitions on IE, most notably how different aspects of inclusion are prioritised.



Braille, photo: Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted

²⁷ NRC (2021). Toolkit for Safe and Inclusive Programming: Minimum Standards, field-testing version.

3

Lessons learnt: What leads to results



What makes an intervention impactful at different levels, and what are the main obstacles at different levels to achieving results?

The main lesson from the evaluation is that resources and capacities in the education system must inform the design of programmes and the pace of IE policy implementation to ensure that the individual learning needs of children are always at the centre. The evaluation shows that programme objectives aiming at inclusion of ALL children with disabilities in the local community school, learning in the same class as their peers, has been unrealistic in the local contexts studied (Malawi and Nepal). Limitations in human and material resources have led school authorities, organisations of persons with disabilities and communities to put into place hybrid approaches that combine efforts to make mainstream classes more accessible and welcoming for children with disabilities, while also retaining special needs education (resource classes, units, or special schools) for children with disabilities where the regular school system cannot yet provide a meaningful learning environment. The hybrid approaches have sometimes been seen as detrimental to IE policy implementation. However, such hybrid approaches are recognised by the CRPD (art 24, paragraph 3) and could in some contexts

and situations be in line with the best interest of the child (CRC art 3). These hybrid approaches deserve more recognition and support, while ensuring that the pressure on the regular school system to become more inclusive of children with disabilities is not removed or diverted. Inclusion of children with disabilities should be an integral part of all school reforms and school development plans – and road maps with milestones should be agreed and provided with earmarked funding. Finding the optimal balance between hybrid and IE approaches is a dilemma which needs careful analysis and consideration in each context.

1. Overall, Norwegian partners have shown that they are able to achieve results within the framework of supported programmes and also have some influence on national norms and commitments to IE. It is less clear whether the (largely pilot) project level outcomes are likely to be scaled up and/or made sustainable. The lesson from this is that **greater effort is needed to define and follow-up on theories of change for moving from policy level dialogue and local pilots to widespread practice.** It is essential to devote greater attention to the 'missing middle' of institutional change, local ownership and political commitments, and

enhanced capacity and resources to overcome these obstacles to systemic and transformational change.

2. Transformational change will require that **programmes consider the structural obstacles in the education sector**, such as large classes, insufficient capacity among teachers to adapt pedagogical approaches, discriminatory norms and inflexible curricula and examination procedures, as well as early identification and assessment systems. This should include attitudinal change among parents and communities to address stigmas surrounding disability.
3. Commitments to working with OPDs have tended to remain stuck in 'consultative mode' and have not reached the stage of supporting them to play a more influential role in design, implementation and monitoring of policy and programmes, both nationally and in relation to Norwegian funded programmes. Despite admittedly major obstacles related to the size and skills of these often small organisations, **OPD meaningful engagement in policy making, implementations and monitoring needs to remain on the agenda. Guidelines for this**



are available from both IDA²⁸ and UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)²⁹. They need to be implemented.

4. The main obstacles to achieving broad and sustainable results are related to tunnel vision. The evaluation team observed many islands of success, and some of them show promise for eventual scaling-up and integration into national plans, but these paths will be rocky. The support has increased confidence that children with disabilities can be educated, but yet many key stakeholders (especially in local government and among teachers) harbour uncertainty about how to apply new ideas with existing resources. **Overcoming tunnel vision means designing programmes that take into account structural obstacles within the overall education systems and local realities in which IE is nested.**



²⁸ International Disability Alliance (n.d.). Toolkit for DPOs Voluntary National Reviews

²⁹ UNPRPD (n.d.) UNPRPD Guidance for Conducting a Situational Country Analysis of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

4

Conclusions



4.1 Relevance

HOW IS DISABILITY INCLUSION UNDERSTOOD AND PRACTICED BY IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS IN SELECTED STUDY SITES IN MALAWI AND NEPAL?

How well do project/programme objectives and design align with the realities on the ground, including the needs, priorities, roles and capacities of local authorities, teachers, persons with various disabilities? Do projects /programmes reflect barriers to inclusion experienced by persons with disabilities?

Norwegian support to the education of children with disabilities in Malawi and Nepal is intended to mirror global commitments and paradigms for shifting from special needs education to mainstreamed inclusive education. While not questioning the need to work towards these overall goals, partners recognise that treating this as an 'either-or' equation would fail to reflect the constraints and opportunities within education systems and at school level. There is a recognition that a hybrid approach, retaining some aspects of a special education system is more relevant considering the prevailing resources on the ground in the mainstream schools, and the best interest of

some children with disabilities that require substantial pedagogical adaptations and skills.

Teacher/pupil ratios and the quality of school facilities constrain teachers' ability to provide students with disabilities with the extra attention needed within classrooms. Several interviewees were critical of the narrow focus on ramps and latrines that, although important, carried with it a tendency to focus unduly on these 'solutions', and distract attention from the complex obstacles to inclusivity. Class sizes of well over a hundred students may be an insurmountable obstacle to providing the extra attention needed for supporting children with disabilities. Also, the pedagogical tools and methods needed to meaningfully include children with certain types of disabilities require advanced skills that not all teachers will realistically be able to master. Similarly, some children can only learn in small groups or with individual coaching. Individual education plans for children with disabilities are only relevant if they are implementable.

Higher level decision-makers, local authorities and parents all have concerns that mainstreaming children with disabilities in under-resourced school systems creates a risk of these children not being able to learn and develop along with their peers. On the contrary,

there is great risk of further stigmatisation. As long as education budgets do not earmark funds for the support services and teaching methodologies required to meet the various needs of children with disabilities, these resources will not be allocated. This means that although children with disabilities may be present in the classroom, they will fail to learn and to be included. This is particularly the case regarding children with severe intellectual or multiple disabilities and children with deafness who need a sign language learning environment. Many duty bearers and parents see a risk that these children will be 'left behind' if a dogmatic approach to IE is applied. Some have even suggested that the IE paradigm represents a colonial mentality that seeks to impose a strict set of norms endorsed by elites while ignoring local needs and norms that suggest more flexible approaches. Our findings suggest that Norway's partners are prepared to listen to these local perspectives and adapt accordingly.

Nonetheless, while applying a pragmatic approach there is still a need to retain the vision of inclusion as expressed in the CRPD, and the first option should always be to make adaptations in the regular school system. This will work well for most children with disabilities, if they are provided with individual plans, flexibility in curriculum and sufficient support.



4.2 Effectiveness

What are the results of the programmes and projects on disability inclusion?

What are the educational outcomes of children with different types of disabilities in programmes supported by Norway? Who are included/excluded and why? How do different approaches and modalities/channels contribute to greater inclusion?

What are the synergies created between projects/programmes supported by Norway? Are intended scaling-up/scaling-out processes being achieved?

What are the main achievements made regarding disability inclusive education in humanitarian assistance?

Programmes demonstrate impressive outputs and even outcomes within their direct spheres of geographic and thematic influence. The most important categories of these are:

- Creation of models that are serving to convince local authorities, teachers and parents that inclusive education is possible.
- An emerging consensus around how to design hybrid systems, adapted to local needs, that include relevant elements of IE and SNE.
- Growing ownership of IE principles at national levels and increasing competencies within ministries for putting these principles into practice.
- Enhanced quality and quantity of teaching in targeted schools, thus contributing to greater social inclusion and improved completion levels.
- Putting into place key 'pieces of the puzzle' for generating data that can contribute to better decision-making, resource targeting and understanding of needs.

- Increased awareness of the roles that OPDs should be playing in these processes.
- Significant improvements in the infrastructure and access to assistive devices in targeted schools.
- Some progress in adapting school curricula to the needs of children with disabilities.
- Some progress in adapting teacher training to the needs of IE and SNE approaches.

These results can be summarised as indicating that IE is a 'work in progress', which begs the question of 'how much progress'. In the first stage of the evaluation, we analysed the 'macro' perspective of Norwegian support to IE based on indicators proposed by the International Disability Alliance assessing results towards inclusive education. Table 3 presents the evaluation team's meta-analysis of field results in relation to a selection of these indicators:



Table 3. **Meta-analysis of field results**

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

IDA indicators for assessing inclusive education	Conclusions from Malawi and Nepal
1 ● There is an explicit disability inclusion plan with concrete goals and targets.	There are visions of inclusion, but without concrete targets or budgets.
2 ● Monitoring, reports and evaluations include assessments of inclusion achievements in systems as well as data disaggregation on trends in literacy and completion rates.	Availability of disaggregated data is increasing, but the enrolment rates are too small to provide reliable data and (particularly in Nepal) the EMIS system is yet to be used as intended in this regard.
3 ● Teacher education and curriculum reforms incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning, including equal access and participation.	Teacher training and education colleges are increasingly introducing components on pedagogical methods for inclusion of children with disabilities, but curricula and examination procedures are still insufficiently flexible, and it is largely teachers in special schools and units that are trained in these aspects.
4 ● 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.	With a few anecdotal exceptions, sign language is only used in special schools for deaf children and the use of braille is limited in mainstream schools.
5 ● Special schools and other segregated settings are progressively phased out, while key human resources and knowledge assets are converted into support services for inclusive institutions, such as schools, colleges and community-based support centres.	In Malawi, special education policies are being phased out, but progress is slow. In Nepal there are investments in new special schools, indicating that policies largely remain regressive.



Table 3. **Meta-analysis of field results**

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

IDA indicators for assessing inclusive education	Conclusions from Malawi and Nepal
<p>6 ● 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.</p>	<p>These budgets remain insignificant.</p>
<p>7 ● There are significant budget lines for accessibility of needed infrastructure, materials for teachers, students and parents, curricular and extra-curricular activities, the provision of assistive products and technology.</p>	<p>These budgets remain insignificant.</p>
<p>8 ● 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.</p>	<p>These budgets remain insignificant.</p>
<p>9 ● Multi-stakeholder engagement between ministries of education, schools, educators, support services, parents and communities, is promoted to ensure equal access and effective inclusion.</p>	<p>Yes, platforms exist at national level. However, at local level such platforms are mainly linked to donor-funded programmes. There are gaps in cooperation with (and capacity of) health and social authorities for early identification and assessment of children with disabilities.</p>
<p>10 ● Engagement with stakeholders with disabilities (parents, educators, government officials and others) is properly supported to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making.</p>	<p>The existing engagement with OPDs and parents is often tokenistic. They are formally invited, but they have limited influence in design, implementation and monitoring due to poor capacity and lack of support to engage meaningfully. The exception is the support from Atlas Alliance.</p>



WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS AND CONDUCIVE FACTORS TO INCREASED INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES?

What are the key systemic barriers to inclusion for various disability groups? How have programmes managed to address these and what major gaps remain?

Those implementing Norwegian supported programmes recognise the severe structural obstacles that exist to scaling up their approaches that seek to anchor overall IE principles and practice. The most important of these are:

- Insufficient public investment in the education sector in general, with the result that IE is sometimes still seen as an unaffordable 'luxury'.
- Insufficient numbers of teachers in general, and numbers of teachers trained in relevant IE skills in particular – which is in turn a reflection of overall resource scarcity within education systems.
- Despite some progress, systems still lean towards inflexible curricula and examination systems and a school culture that focuses on compliance, academic achievements and ranking of children

accordingly, instead of focussing on assertiveness/innovation, learning and development of each child.

- Insufficient systems for early identification, assessment and determination of disability.
- Persistent negative norms and prejudices against persons with disabilities and the belief that education for these children is useless.
- Devolution of far-reaching responsibilities to local authorities before capacities can be developed and resources allocated.
- Weak coordination mechanisms and poor OPD engagement practices by authorities/donors along with weak capacities among OPDs that prevent them from playing their rightful role in planning implementing and monitoring of IE efforts.

The response of Norwegian partners to these barriers has been to take a more pragmatic approach to ensure that children who cannot (yet) benefit from the education provided in ordinary classroom settings can access education and support services – still within the auspices of the ministries of education. These hybrid approaches recognise the need to keep some separate

facilities and classes that combines IE with efforts to renew and adapt components of the pre-existing special needs education systems. OPDs are sometimes being consulted and efforts are underway (insufficient in the view of the evaluation) to support them to play a bigger role in programme design/implementation and monitoring. Some efforts are being made to mainstream training of teachers in IE within teacher training colleges and overcome the limited of project focused capacity building (mainly in Malawi).

Evidence of efforts to integrate a disability perspective in humanitarian assistance indicates that this is a 'work in progress'. Evidence of effectiveness of Norwegian support thus far is lacking, despite progress being made among other stakeholders. More positively, there is an awareness and concern about this gap, and a search is underway to determine what an appropriate niche and approach would be for Norwegian actors.



4.3 Sustainability

DO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS HAVE THE COMPETENCIES AND CAPACITIES TO MAINTAIN THE BENEFITS OF THE INTERVENTIONS AFTER COMPLETION OF THE INTERVENTIONS?

What are the contributions made by Norway, e.g., related to development of capacities, competencies, incentives, to support country level policy formation processes? How are these contributions designed to contribute to sustainability? What factors have been proven to generate or obstruct ownership and sustainability for an inclusive education sector?

How is ownership of inclusive education fostered and maintained among OPDs, local authorities, teachers and other stakeholders tasked with new approaches amid severe resource limitations? How are efforts towards more holistic approaches seen from a sustainability perspective?

The short answer to this question is 'no' (or at least 'not yet'). Investments can create 'islands of success' among a limited number of schools, and Norwegian

interventions have made considerable contributions to enhance awareness and commitments among local partners regarding IE. Scaling up and scaling out in Malawi and Nepal tend to be seen as inevitably relying on international support. However, the investments required to ensure the sustainability of IE within education systems are not in place and would require reprioritisation and strong commitments within ministries of finance and education. In the view of the evaluation team, these commitments can only be fostered if and when resources in the overall education system are significantly enhanced. Ownership for disability inclusion is contingent on these priorities being seen as part of (and not in competition with) overall goals to improve education results.

Interviews clearly indicate that ownership, particularly among local authorities and teachers, is reliant on them seeing that IE is viable, i.e., affordable and implementable with available human resources. Heavy investments in model or pilot schools may send the opposite message for local authorities who are looking for less ambitious methods and models, i.e., what they can eventually undertake without project support. This is an area that the Norwegian partners are concerned about, but where uncertainties prevail about how to proceed.

IE itself is part of this challenge, which is why there are so many examples of falling back on hybrid approaches. Most actors do not see IE as a viable solution to reach the most vulnerable. One informant described this frustration:

“One of the main barriers was from the IE discourse itself. Claims of including all led to exclusion of children with complex disabilities. Some organisations have ideology that all must be in the same classroom. Any separation was criticised.”

Central to this are systems for ongoing strengthening of local capacities and competencies. There is no 'aid fix' for this structural challenge and the consequences of these limitations have knock-on effects on the sustainability of Norwegian supported programming. Our findings show that in extremely strained education systems there is a widespread (and in the view of the evaluation team, relatively accurate) view that scaling up from successful pilot activities in a small number of schools will require substantial overall increases to education budgets to improve facilities and the quantity and quality of teachers. Inclusive education quality will only be improved in parallel with efforts to address these overall deficiencies in education systems. Despite the progress in fostering public commitments



over recent years – achieved with Norwegian support – a sustainable system for capacity development will require both significant levels of international support and continued domestic advocacy in the years to come.

4.4 Summary conclusions

The overarching conclusion of this evaluation is that, when viewed from the perspective of the actual education being provided for children with disabilities and the capacities developed by teachers and other frontline stakeholders, the theories of change of much of the programming have been unrealistic. The conditions and capacities for effective and sustainable implementation of IE paradigms are not in place. Programmes do often result in local improvements, but the overall lack of capacities and limited commitments amongst many teachers and local authorities suggest that these are not likely to be scaled up. Ringfencing of resources and more intensive support through specialised facilities are often more effective, but even in these cases the path towards sustainable scaling up is hard to discern.

The seemingly obvious path to overcome this would appear to be stronger advocacy, primarily by OPDs, and

support to policy formation that reflects the realities of devolution to resource-poor and isolated districts. Here again, there are islands of success, but in general OPDs have limited influence and policy-level interventions are insufficiently effective and have not engaged the full range of stakeholders (beyond the IE community) to drive significant change.

A fundamental question raised when discussing the concerns of this evaluation about limits to effectiveness and sustainability is whether, from a rights-based perspective, the current hybrid approaches remain justified. The view of the evaluation team is that, yes, this hybrid approach deserves continued support from Norway. The programmes challenge discriminatory norms in society and put pressure on governments to work towards a more inclusive education system – while still supporting and accepting special solutions for some children. The portfolio has demonstrated that these models do serve to keep IE on the agendas of relevant ministries and constitute essential evidence to show that it is possible to achieve results despite massive challenges. The recommendations below are focused on areas where refinement is possible to increase efficiency and effectiveness with existing resources and continue to reinforce awareness and confidence among politicians, local authorities,

teachers and parents regarding what can and should be done to enable greater inclusion of children with disabilities in society.



Class room in Chisombezi, Photo: Signo



5

Recommendations



1. The priorities of Norad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the RNEs should be based on a recognition of the relevance and effectiveness of hybrid approaches. **Flexibility is essential to make room for alignment with the aims and capacities of partners** in government agencies, CSOs and OPDs.
2. This is particularly important in order to direct significant attention to the growing role of local authorities, schools and the wishes of parents/ caregivers and children with disabilities themselves. Their perspectives on where IE can and should be pursued, and where SNE remains more relevant and effective, should be respected. Ownership among these actors is essential for both efficacy and sustainability, and **this ownership should be fostered by building on what local actors have learnt in operationalising IE** with Norwegian assistance.
3. **Placements of children with disabilities should, however, always be based on a careful assessment of the individual learning needs of each child** and the actual context (condition of the mainstream school system available to that child). This is often linked to the type of impairment, as it takes longer time and more resources for the mainstream school system to provide a meaningful learning environment for children with severe communication or cognitive disabilities. Nobody should ever be denied access to a mainstream school if that is their own or care givers' wish.
4. **IE objectives should be selected to reflect overall trajectories in the education sector.** Plans should take into account how raising the quality of education for children with disabilities will only occur in conjunction with raising the quality of education in general. Standards that may seem essential from a human rights-based perspective are important to retain in a long-term perspective, but shorter-term viability needs to be based on recognition of severe resource constraints in schools – particularly in terms of human resources.
5. Programmes to address these resource scarcities should, wherever possible, **focus on systemic institutionalised approaches.** For example, it is better to invest in integrating IE into teacher training college curricula rather than having a roster of trainers focused on pilot schools. Shortage of assistive devices should be addressed as a government responsibility, rather than through small-scale, relatively ad hoc projects. Data collection for both national/district planning and local screening is a major priority, but EMIS is not a simple fix. **These efforts should be revisited with an increased focus on the ownership, capacities and perspectives of those collecting data and the users of data** – most importantly, from the perspective of those local stakeholders who have thus far been insufficiently supported to effectively collect and use this data. Health, education and social services need to pool and share their data on children with disabilities.
6. **Disability perspectives should be better integrated into Norwegian humanitarian assistance.** The exploratory approach currently being pursued, based on collaboration between Atlas Alliance and Norwegian humanitarian agencies is an appropriate way to 'test the waters' about what an appropriate role would be going forward.
7. **Theories of change should be made much more explicit about how pilot or model school initiatives are to be scaled up or actively used to inform mainstream education systems.** They need to better articulate, monitor and reflect on the underlying assumptions about how outcomes will be achieved at scale and in a sustainable manner. If these assumptions turn out to be questionable, this should be addressed as a significant risk factor.



Annex 1: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

EVALUATION OF NORWAY'S INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

1. Background for the evaluation

In 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that one billion people live with some form of disability, constituting approximately 15% of the world's population.³⁰ Ten years later the number of persons with disabilities is more likely to have increased rather than decreased due to aging populations and an increase in chronic health conditions.³¹

Disability affects all groups in society regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status, but the majority

of persons with disabilities – more than 80 percent – live in developing countries and are disproportionately represented among the poor. Here, people with disabilities and their families are poorer than people without disabilities in nearly all socio-economic indicators. As such disabled persons constitutes one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the world.³² The covid 19 pandemic is likely to have exacerbated this trend.³³

1.1 DEFINING DISABILITY AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

Disability is a contested term. It has evolved from being viewed as a purely medical concept related to individuals to including structural and social perspectives in which people are viewed as being disabled by the society rather than by their bodies.

The definition of disability in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) included both perspectives and defines persons with disabilities to 'include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.³⁴ This evaluation will take this definition as the point of departure.

Disability inclusion is defined in multiple ways. Common for most definitions is an understanding of disability inclusion as a process whereby individuals with disabilities have the ability, opportunity and dignity to participate in every aspect of life (including social, economic, and political,) to the fullest extent possible. This process involves dealing with systemic

³⁰ <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>

³¹ [Disability and health \(who.int\)](#)

³² [#Envision2030 Goal 1: No Poverty | United Nations Enable](#)

³³ [COVID-19's Impact on People with Disabilities \(massgeneral.org\)](#)

³⁴ [Article 1 – Purpose | United Nations Enable](#)



discrimination, stigma, and other types of barriers preventing participation and improving equitable access to services and benefits.

The United Nations developed a policy, strategy, and accountability framework to strengthen system-wide accessibility for persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of their rights. In the UN framework disability inclusion is defined as “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 programs and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the CRDP”.³⁵ This definition is operationalized in an accountability framework consisting of four main organizational functions; strategic planning and management, inclusiveness, programming, and organizational culture. These four functions are further specified through a set of 15 indicators. Among these indicators are universal and equitable access to services and benefits provided

through a hybrid approach to programming. It includes systems for consultation with persons with disability in all stages of the programme cycle.

The framework also includes an internal focus on recruiting people with disabilities in the UN organization and, more generally, building internal expertise on human rights approaches to disability within the UN-system.

1.2 THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

A growing body of evidence suggests that the nature of the relationship between disability and poverty is cyclical.³⁶ Poverty increases the risk of becoming a person with disability due to malnutrition, poor healthcare, and dangerous living conditions.³⁷ Disability increases the risk of becoming poor because of a range of barriers preventing full participation of persons with disabilities in the economic and social life of their communities. These general barriers are often related to limited access to education, employment,

social exclusion, and lack of social programmes. Such exclusions constitute a violation of rights as set out in the CRPD and other key human rights treaties.

Women and girls with disability face higher levels deprivation and multidimensional poverty. A study from South Africa finds that ‘disability intersects with gender as well as age and race to result in negative outcomes in education, employment and income for all people with disabilities, but particularly black women with disabilities’³⁸. Similarly, the UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development from 2018 concludes that women with disabilities are three times more likely to be illiterate than men with disabilities.³⁹

These findings demonstrate the need for disaggregated analyses of the heterogenous group of ‘persons with disability’ to understand how multiple sources of discrimination intersects and creates different barriers for inclusion.

³⁵ [UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf](#)

³⁶ [Poverty and disability in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review \(plos.org\)](#)

³⁷ [#Envision2030 Goal 1: No Poverty | United Nations Enable](#)

³⁸ Jacqueline Moodley & Lauren Graham (2015) The importance of intersectionality in disability and gender studies, *Agenda*, 29:2, 24-33 DOI: 10.1080/10130950.2015.1041802

³⁹ [UN Flagship Report on Disability and Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Enable](#)

In 2012, the Evaluation department in Norad launched an evaluation of Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, covering the years 2000 to 2010.⁴⁰ The key finding from the evaluation, was that policies and guidelines on mainstreaming disability in Norwegian development initiatives had not translated into concrete action by development partners. This conclusion mirrors other studies and evaluations on inclusion in development assistance,⁴¹ underscoring that when disability is not the main target of a programme, but rather considered as a one of many other concerns to be included in the design and implementation of development and humanitarian relief activities, (often referred to as 'mainstreamed') disabled persons are often excluded. The consequences of this – beyond discrimination – is further marginalization and a prolongation of the equity gap between persons with and without disabilities.

1.3 DISABILITY INCLUSION AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

Disability has gradually gained traction as a crucial, cross-cutting issue in development cooperation. Important in this regard was the UN General Assembly's adaptation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006. The CRPD – alongside other key human rights treaties – contributed to a shift in global initiatives, most notably visible in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁴² The 2030 Agenda is a promise to leave no one behind (LNOB) and underscores the importance of non-discrimination and inclusion in all policies and practices. The 2030 Agenda, with its explicit focus on disability, is often contrasted with previous efforts to promote global development that lacked similar references.

Numerous international organisations and countries have recently adopted strategies or frameworks for disability inclusion, hereunder the United Nations (2019),⁴³ the World Bank (2018),⁴⁴ and the United Nations Development Programme (2018),⁴⁵ which underscores the elevated attention to disability inclusion in development assistance. There is widespread consensus that effective inclusion of persons with disabilities requires both mainstreamed/ integrated efforts and targeted efforts. The former refers to the systematic integration of the priorities and needs of persons with disabilities and the latter refers to a specific focus on issues particularly related to empowering persons with disabilities (Skarstein 2018).

⁴⁰ [Mainstreaming disability in the new development paradigm Evaluation of Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities \(norad.no\)](#)

⁴¹ See Stein M A (2013) Mainstreaming and Accountability: (Really) Including Persons with Disabilities in Development Aid and Humanitarian Relief Programming. *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 31(3): 292 – 305.

⁴² Groce, N (2018) Global disability: an emerging issue. *The Lancet Global Health* 6(7).

⁴³ See <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

⁴⁴ See <https://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/leaving-no-one-behind-development-roadmap-disability-inclusion>

⁴⁵ See https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Human%20Rights/UNDP_Disability_Inclusive_Development_accessible.pdf

1.4 NORWEGIAN COMMITMENTS TO DISABILITY INCLUSION IN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Norway has expressed increasingly strong normative commitment to disability inclusion in general.⁴⁶ Norway ratified the CRPD in 2013 and is – together with the rest of the UN member states – committed to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.⁴⁷ In addition, Norway's commitment to promote and protect human rights in all areas of international cooperation has been elevated through the adoption of the white paper 'Opportunities for all: human rights in Norway's foreign policy and development cooperation'.⁴⁸ In the white paper on education Norway has affirmed the importance of inclusive education for all children, including children with disabilities. Norway has also made commitments within the humanitarian sector by signing the Humanitarian Disability Charter (2016). As a restatement of its commitments Norway has signed the Global Disability Summit - Charter for Change (2018). As member of the UN, Norway has commitments to the statements in the Flagship Report on Disability and Development from 2018,

the UN Disability Inclusion strategy, and the Security Council Resolution on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities. Norway has in the period collaborated with multilateral partners on the development of global reporting systems / statistical databases that could help in monitoring the progress made towards the SDG's and the implementation of the CRPD. These tools include Washington Group – "Short set of questions" for national surveys on disability, WHO and partners – "the Model disability survey", The OECD – DAC-policy marker 'disability/inclusion' and the EU and OHCHR project – "Bridging the Gap".

From 2016 onwards, Norway has contributed to several international initiatives such as: GLAD (Global Action for People with Disabilities), IEI (Inclusive Education Initiative) and AT-Scale (The Global Partnership for Assistive Technology) – and collaborated with the WHO initiatives WG (Washington Group) and GATE (Global Cooperation on Assistive Technology).

A mapping study from 2020⁴⁹ concluded that the increase in normative commitments have not resulted

in a substantial increase in budgetary allocations. The disbursements to disability targeted efforts have remained at around 100 million NOK per year until 2019 when the disbursements increased to 240 million NOK. In terms of share of total aid, the increase represents a shift from around 0,34% to 0,63% of the aid budget. The disbursements to mainstreamed disability efforts demonstrate a major increase between 2013 and 2015 from around 0,7% to 2,8% of the aid budget - but has since remained at the same level.

Top focus countries of mainstreamed disability efforts in 2019 were Malawi, Ethiopia and Nepal. In targeted initiatives the global level funding reaches around 20% and top focus countries in 2019 were Uganda, Mozambique and regional Sub- Sahara.

The mapping study found that the education sector is the most prominent sector in both targeted and mainstreamed efforts. The targeted disbursements grew from 13 million NOK in 2010 to 87 million NOK in 2019. The disbursements to the mainstreamed efforts grew from around 74 million in 2010 to 850 million in 2016

⁴⁶ See a full overview over the commitments here: [Mapping of Norwegian Efforts to Include Persons with Disabilities in Development Assistance 2010-2019 \(norad.no\)](https://www.norad.no/en/aktuelt/new-initiative-to-strengthen-education-for-children-with-disabilities/id2607536/)

⁴⁷ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/new-initiative-to-strengthen-education-for-children-with-disabilities/id2607536/>

⁴⁸ Norwegian MFA, Meld. St. 10 (2014-2015) Human Rights for all

⁴⁹ [Mapping of Norwegian Efforts to Include Persons with Disabilities in Development Assistance 2010-2019 \(norad.no\)](https://www.norad.no/en/aktuelt/new-initiative-to-strengthen-education-for-children-with-disabilities/id2607536/)

and has remained at that level. In 2019, 32 % of all Norwegian disbursements to the education sector has been coded with OECDs policy marker for the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. The Humanitarian sector is among the sectors that do not reach 1%.

Another interesting finding is that only 1% of all gender focused programs had a disability marker.

2. Purpose of the evaluation

The main purpose of this evaluation is to provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) with information that can be used to improve future efforts to include persons with disabilities in Norwegian development and humanitarian assistance. The evaluation will strive to include the views/perspective of the target group, i.e., persons with disabilities in developing countries.

Because of the cross-cutting nature of the topic, the evaluation will speak to a broad and diverse number of stakeholders involved in development assistance. The main users of the evaluation will be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The MFA refers to its political leadership, its

officials, the Norwegian Embassies, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). Other users of the evaluation include implementing partners' e.g., non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and UN organisations. Other stakeholders who have direct or indirect interest in this evaluation include individuals, households, communities, and relevant local, national institutions and policy makers that benefit directly or indirectly from the interventions in the partner countries.

3. Objectives for the evaluations are the following:

- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational 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.
- Identify lessons learnt that can contribute to improving the planning, organisation and implementation of future interventions to include persons with

disabilities in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation.

The findings and lessons learnt of the evaluation should be translated into recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assist in operationalizing the new commitments and goals outlined in the forthcoming strategy on disability inclusion in development cooperation. The findings could also function as a baseline for monitoring future institutional amendments

4. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover Norway's efforts to include persons with disabilities in development cooperation through different channels, modalities and partners in the period 2010–2020.

This evaluation builds on UNs definition of disability inclusion: "the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights into the work of the Organisation, the development of disability-specific programs and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the CRDP".⁵⁰

50 [UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf](#)

The evaluation will focus on the education sector.

The education sector is selected because the right to education is fundamental to Norway's aid policy in general and is directly relevant for Norway's commitments to the SDG 2030 Agenda: SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all, and, albeit to a lesser extent, SDG 8 on sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The education sector is also the most prominent sector receiving both targeted and mainstreamed funding for disability inclusion.

The evaluation at portfolio level will cover Malawi, Nepal, Uganda and South Sudan. Nepal and Malawi were selected for in-dept analysis in the 2012 evaluation. By including the same countries in the 2021 evaluation, we will be able to track the changes made to the programs and their effects on program effectiveness. Nepal was also subject to a performance audit of the education programs in 2019. Nepal and Malawi are still among the prioritized countries for disability funding. Uganda is also among the top recipients of funding to the education sector and among the prioritized countries for disability funding. South Sudan has been one of main receivers of both development and humanitarian funding to the

education sector and represent an opportunity to look at disability inclusion in the context of the development-humanitarian-peace nexus. Among these four countries, Nepal and Malawi have an education coordinator.

The evaluation at programme/project level will cover in depth studies in Malawi and Nepal.

The evaluation will assess relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of Norway's assistance.

Relevance will be assessed by documenting whether the organisational set up of the Norwegian aid administration is suitable to meet the commitments to disability inclusion and to what extent the existing programs are aligned with local needs and priorities, how organisations of persons with disabilities are consulted in planning, implementation of the programs, systems and guidance for mainstreaming disability inclusion at all stages of the program/project cycle.

Effectiveness will be assessed by documenting effects at output/outcome and to the extent possible impact level, for instance by emphasising tangible improvements for the target population (e.g., access to education, capacity development for staff). Both intended and unintended, positive and negative, effects should be considered.

Sustainability may, amongst others, be assessed by looking into whether the Norwegian support is influencing national and local ownership/processes for disability inclusion.

In the absence of plan of action or an accountability framework in the Norwegian aid administration this evaluation will build on some of the 15 indicators included in the UN disability strategy to assess relevance and effectiveness of Norway's assistance. As part of the inception report the consultants are asked to propose suitable indicators (from the UN framework as well as others).

5. Approach and methodology

The evaluation will assess disability inclusion at three analytical levels: the organizational set up of the Norwegian aid administration (Norad, MFA and NGOs), the country level, and the project/program level (local).

- 1) The organizational set up of the Norwegian aid administration will be assessed by looking at the strategic planning and management of efforts to include persons with disability in the education programs in Norwegian development and humanitarian assistance. Such planning includes



policies, national plans and guidelines. Management analyses include staff capacity and competence, and procedures/practices for how disability inclusion is considered in the management of the education portfolio. The analysis should focus on the sector/ portfolio level as well as international engagements on education. This analysis should include documentation from relevant thematic departments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad.

Applicable indicators from the UN accountability framework may include the areas of 'leadership, strategic planning and management', 'organizational culture' as well as 'programming'.

Norwegian commitments include the normative level, the budgetary allocations as well as international engagements.

The Norwegian aid administration includes Norad, MFA, including embassies, and implementing agencies.

We expect that this assessment develops a systematic analysis of available documents as well as qualitative data from digital fieldwork. Other sources of information should also be considered.

The analysis of the overall education portfolio should build on and combine relevant sources of data from Norad and relevant partners such as GPE and UNICEF.

- 2) Results from Norway's inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation at **country level** will be assessed through an analysis of the programs/projects in the education sector. This portfolio should be assessed against the established needs (established through existing baselines), policies, and priorities in the country. The analysis should track changes to the portfolio, describe relevant program characteristics (including mainstreamed vs targeted, target population implementing partners and geographic focus) and include an assessment of how the program theories (implicitly or explicitly) understand the multiple and intersecting sources of discrimination and how their programs attempt to address these barriers for inclusion. The portfolio analysis should assess the quality and appropriateness (including necessary level of aggregated data) of the data included in the programs log frame. Based on an assessment of this data, recommendations on how to enhance the quality of the data, methods for data analysis and the use of data analysis in the programming cycle should be provided.

The portfolio analysis should include an assessment of how DPOs have been consulted in education programs and document the results of the support provided to build capacity of the DPOs.

The portfolio analysis may focus on the UN indicators related to 'inclusiveness' and 'programming'.

Building on accessible data from the log frames and available secondary data, the portfolio analysis should include an assessment of how well stated program objectives on disability inclusion are achieved and their effects on the targeted population.

The portfolio analysis will be completed for 4 countries: Nepal, Malawi, Uganda and South- Sudan.

We expect that the evaluation draws on and combine datasets available at norad.no with other relevant databases such as EMIS. We also expect that, program/project documents and qualitative data from digital fieldwork is included whenever necessary.



3) Results from Norway's inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation to include persons with disabilities in development cooperation at programme/project level. A few cases (programs/project level) in Nepal and Malawi will be selected for an in-depth study. This analysis should focus on how inclusion is understood, expressed and practiced locally. The results achieved should be verified, the multiple and intersecting barriers (including gender) to inclusion detected and best practices documented. The aim of this in- debt study of a few selected sites is to be able to elucidate features that are relevant for disability inclusion efforts in the education sector in general. The selection of the unit of analysis/study sites should be guided by this aim.

We expect that these case studies will draw on a variety of sources of data, including primary data collection through physical fieldwork. An elaboration of the case design, including the analytical approach, should be included in the inception report.

Validation and feedback workshops shall be held in the case countries before departure, involving relevant stakeholders.

Further methodological considerations:

The evaluation will refer to the DAC criteria on evaluation of international development cooperation, with an emphasis on relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The consultant should clarify the use of the criteria. Where relevant other evaluation criteria established for a specific field (ref. humanitarian) should also be taken into consideration. Reports will be assessed against the DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, and the consultant must thus adhere to these standards.

The evaluation shall be carried out according to the OECD DAC's evaluation quality standard as well as recognized academic and ethical principles. The evaluation process itself should be conflict sensitive. The evaluation process should show sensitivity and respect to all stakeholders. The evaluation shall be undertaken with integrity and honesty and ensure inclusiveness of views. The rights, dignity and welfare of participants in the evaluation should be protected. Anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants should be protected.

If the evaluation decides to include persons that either have an impaired or absent capacity to give a free and informed consent (due to the age, mental illness or

intellectual disabilities) ethical safeguards must be put in place to ensure that any risk or strain associated with the engagement are negligible for these individuals. A thorough elaboration of these safeguards, together with other ethical safeguards to ensure no harm/conflict sensitivity of the evaluation itself, should be included in the inception report.

The evaluation team will propose an outline of a methodological approach that optimises the possibility of producing robust, evidence-based assessments, explicitly addressing the issue of contribution/ attribution. The approach should rely on a cross-section of data sources and using mixed methods to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. A discussion of the methodological challenges related to this evaluation should be discussed and proposed solutions presented.

The overall evaluation design should be presented and systematised in an evaluation matrix.



Data availability

A mapping of Norwegian efforts to include persons with disabilities in development assistance is available online. Further data collection is the responsibility of the evaluation team. Access to archives will be facilitated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Norad.

5. Evaluation questions

The evaluation will be guided but not limited to the following questions

1. Disability inclusion efforts in the education programs in the Norwegian aid administration (work package 1)
 - a. How is the Norwegian aid administration set up to meet the normative commitments to disability inclusion?
 - b. How has the disbursement to education programs evolved from 2010-2020?
 - c. What, if any, are the barriers if any to meeting the normative commitments to disability inclusion in the aid programs?
2. Disability inclusion efforts in the education sector at the country level- a portfolio analysis (work package 2)
 - a. What kind of programs, coded with the disability marker, have been implemented (theory of change, target groups: age, type of disability, gender)?
 - b. How well are programs and projects aligned with local needs and priorities?
 - c. How well is the multidimensional and intersectional nature of disability reflected in the programs?
 - d. What are the results of the programs and projects on disability inclusion?
 - e. What are the main lessons learnt regarding disability inclusion in humanitarian assistance and development assistance projects?
 - f. To what degree are the effects sustainable? Do local partners have the competencies and capacities to maintain the benefits of the interventions after completion of the interventions?
3. Disability inclusion in the education sector at project/program (local) level (work package 3)
 - a. How is disability inclusion understood and practiced in selected study sites in Malawi and Nepal?
 - b. What are the results of the programs and projects on disability inclusion?
 - c. To what degree are the effects sustainable? Do local partners have the competencies and capacities to maintain the benefits of the interventions after completion of the interventions?
 - d. What are the results of the programs and projects on disability inclusion?



6. Structure of the evaluation: work packages

The evaluation will be carried out as one project consisting of three main work packages. These work packages correspond to the three analytical levels described above: 1) the Norwegian aid administration 2) the country level 3) Programme/project level. These work packages will simultaneously contribute to the overall evaluation and constitute independent projects in their own right. Work package 1 and 2 are independent of each other and can run in parallel. Work package 3 is dependent on work package 2.

7. Deliverables

It is estimated that the evaluation will require a maximum of 300 workdays.

The deliverables consist of the following:

1. Draft inception report not exceeding 15 pages, excluding annexes, following the guidelines from the Evaluation department. After circulation among the stakeholders the Evaluation department will provide feedback.
2. Final inception report not exceeding 15 pages, excluding annexes, to be approved by the Evaluation department.
3. Desk report presenting the portfolio mapping of the selected countries, to be discussed with stakeholders.
4. Draft evaluation report not exceeding 45 pages, excluding annexes, following the guidelines from the Evaluation department. All underlying data, such as the quality assessments and transcripts shall be made available to the Evaluation department upon request.
5. Final main report not exceeding 45 pages, excluding summary and annexes.
6. A summary of the main report presented in an accessible format (universal design).
7. Up to two policy briefs presenting relevant topics from the evaluation, not exceeding two pages. Topics to be decided upon in collaboration with the Evaluation department after the final report is accepted.
8. Availability to participate in dissemination activities such as the production of shorter audio/video summaries of the evaluation for the purposes of social media dissemination of results.
9. Presentation of the main report in Oslo.
10. Availability to present findings from work package 1 and 2 at the Oslo Disability Summit, February 2022

See the tender document for an elaboration on deliverables and deadlines in section 3.2

All reports shall be prepared in accordance with the Evaluation department's guidelines and shall be submitted in electronic form in accordance with the progress plan specified in the tender document or later revisions.



Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation questions	Indicators and factors to be analysed	Methods and data sources	Observations and limitations
1. Relevance: How is disability inclusion understood and practiced by implementing partners in selected study sites in Malawi and Nepal, especially global and national education partners?			
1.1 How well do project/programme objectives and design align with the realities on the ground, including the needs, priorities, roles and capacities of local authorities, teachers, persons with various disabilities? Do projects /programmes reflect barriers to inclusion experienced by persons with disabilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of multiple aspects of relevance by different categories of stakeholders, informed observers and rights holders • Comparison of relevance-related claims in project/programme documents and statements by different categories of stakeholders and rights holders • Extent to which stakeholders and rights holders report being able to access programme benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews/focus group discussions • Site observations • Cross-country analyses 	Given the diversity of stakeholders and types of disabilities, findings will ultimately be indicative of relevance but will not lead to comprehensive conclusions.
2. Effectiveness: What are the results of the programmes and projects on disability inclusion?			
2.1 What are the educational outcomes of children with different types of disabilities in programmes supported by Norway? Who are included/excluded and why? How do different approaches and modalities/channels contribute to greater inclusion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracing of different types and extent of contributions of programmes to educational outcomes as described in monitoring and by rights-holders • Mapping of which types of disabilities are being addressed/excluded in programming • Partner perceptions of how different modalities/channels have created opportunities to effectively reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of objectives • Document review (focused on quantitative results) • Interviews/focus group discussions (focused on perceived outcomes) • Site observations • Cross-country analyses 	<p>Tracing of contributions is likely to reflect longer term engagements of implementing partners which may be difficult to differentiate from the specific intervention being analysed.</p> <p>Some of the cases focus on policies and systems and the extent to which data is available to trace these</p>

Evaluation questions	Indicators and factors to be analysed	Methods and data sources	Observations and limitations
2. Effectiveness: What are the results of the programmes and projects on disability inclusion?			
2.2 What are the synergies created between projects/programmes supported by Norway? Are intended scaling-up/scaling-out processes being achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of how 'pilots' have informed policies (and/or been scaled-up) and how policies have led to changes in practice • Stakeholder and informed observer perceptions of factors that enable or impede scaling-up and scaling-out within their organisations and in their operational contexts • OPD perceptions of the extent to which they are able to influence these processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-case studies on specific examples • Interviews • Cross-country analyses 	Examples of links between policies and practice may be anecdotal.
2.3 What are the key systemic barriers to inclusion for various disability groups? How have programmes managed to address these and what major gaps remain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of how humanitarian interventions have contributed to access to disability inclusive education in the acute and early recovery phases of disasters • Examples of how humanitarian interventions have contributed to developmental processes towards disability inclusive education and broader social cohesion • Factors cited justifying decisions not to prioritise disability inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews/focus group discussions • Site observations 	<p>It is likely that documentation may focus on outputs, and it is uncertain whether some of the broader evaluation questions will be relevant for humanitarian assistance programming (which may constitute a notable finding in itself).</p> <p>It will be important to go beyond the humanitarian case study that is included in the sample to also interview Norwegian humanitarian agencies that have chosen not to prioritise disability inclusion.</p>
3. Effectiveness: What are the barriers and conducive factors to increased inclusion of persons with disabilities?			
3.1 What are the key systemic barriers to inclusion for various disability groups? How have programmes managed to address these and what major gaps remain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported scope of interventions and gap analyses • OPD perceptions of scope of interventions for various disability groups • Tracing of measures taken to increase access and overcome barriers to broader inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracing of contributions • Document review • Interviews/focus group discussions • Cross-country analyses 	External factors, most notably the Covid-19 pandemic, may have disrupted processes towards addressing systemic barriers (and may have created additional, unexpected barriers to inclusion).



Evaluation questions	Indicators and factors to be analysed	Methods and data sources	Observations and limitations
4. Sustainability: Do local government and civil society partners have the competencies and capacities to maintain the benefits of the interventions after completion of the interventions?			
4.1 What are the contributions made by Norway, e.g., related to development of capacities, competencies, incentives, to support country level policy formation processes? How are these contributions designed to contribute to sustainability? What factors have been proven to generate or obstruct ownership and sustainability for an inclusive education sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which stakeholders perceive that their capacities and competencies to contribute to policies and practice have been enhanced • Organisational and institutional factors that may enable or obstruct application of capacities developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution tracing • Document review • Interviews/focus group discussions • Cross-country analyses 	<p>Depending on the range of stakeholder organisations involved in a given intervention, it may be necessary to focus the organisational analysis on specific key actors.</p> <p>External factors, most notably the Covid-19 pandemic, may have disrupted processes towards sustainable organisational development.</p>
4.2 How is ownership of inclusive education fostered and maintained among OPDs, local authorities, teachers and other stakeholders tasked with new approaches amid severe resource limitations? How are efforts towards more holistic approaches seen from a sustainability perspective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes by which ownership at local levels has been fostered • Perceptions an examples of how severe resource limitations have been overcome • Perceptions of the opportunities and limits that exist at local level to undertake more holistic approaches to disability inclusive education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of factors related to ownership • Assessment of observed ownership factors • Document review • Interviews/focus group discussions • Site observations • Cross-country analyses 	<p>Depending on the timeframe of the interventions the finding may be indicative of trends, rather than confirmed longer-term ownership.</p> <p>External factors, most notably the Covid-19 pandemic, may have disrupted processes toward ownership and created unexpected competing demands on limited resources.</p>



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Annex 4: Interviewees

Global	
Respondent	Organisation
Respondent 1	Atlas Alliance
Respondent 2	Atlas Alliance
Respondent 3	NCA
Respondent 4	Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted
Respondent 5 & 6	NRC
Respondent 7	PDNet
Respondent 8 & 9	Plan Norge
Respondent 10	Redd Barna
Respondent 11	Redd Barna
Respondent 12	Save the Childrne
Respondent 13	Save the Children
Respondent 14	Save the Children
Respondent 15	Save the Children
Respondent 16	Signo

Malawi	
Respondent	Organisation
Respondent 17	Senior Group Village Head, Mtanda Village, Salima District
Respondent 18	Chair Mother Group
Respondent 19	Member Local OPD (MUB)
Respondent 20	Migowi Primary School
Respondent 20	Migowi School Committee
Respondent 21	Mnema Primary School
Respondent 22	Mnema Primary School
Respondent 23	Mnema Primary School
Respondent 24	Mnema Primary School
Respondent 25	Mnema Primary School
Respondent 26	Mnema Primary School
Respondent 27	Nakaledza Primary School
Respondent 28	Nakaledza Primary School
Respondent 29	Nakaledza Primary School
Respondent 30	Nakaledza Primary School

Malawi	
Respondent 31	Nakaledza Primary School
Respondent 32	Nakaledza Primary School
Respondent 33	School Management Committee
Respondent 34	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 35	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 36	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 37	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 38	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 39	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 40	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 41	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 42	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 43	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 44	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 45	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 46	St. Francis of Assisi Primary School
Respondent 47	Student Teacher
Respondent 48	Teacher
Respondent 49	Teacher
Respondent 50	Teacher Associate

Nepal	
Respondent 51, 52, 53	Disability Committees (Association of the Deaf, Parents of children with Autism, Nepal Association of the Blind)
Respondent 54	CEHRD
Respondents 55, 56, 57	NFDN
Respondent 58	Plan International Nepal
Respondent 59	RNE Kathmandu
Respondent 60	Save the Children Kathmandu
Respondent 61	UNICEF
Respondent 62	UNICEF
Respondent 63	World Bank Nepal
Respondent 64	World Education
Respondents	Field visit Plan International (School head-teacher, teachers, children with disability, representative of local government, Representatives of NFDN)
Respondents	Field visit Save the Children (Children/parents/ School management committee/Parents-teachers association/Teachers and Principal and child club children in 2 schools NFDN- local chapters, CSO network (partner of SC, Local Government)
Respondents	Field visit UNICEF (School management committee/ Teachers/ Principal of target school, Parents of children with disability, General community members, NFDN- local chapters, Local Government- Municipality and provincial government)

DEPARTMENT FOR EVALUATION



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