

The Enabling Education Network (EENET)

What is EENET?

EENET is an information network that was established in 1997. It provides a free service to a variety of teachers, parents, children and policy makers, primarily in countries of the South. It also encourages the flow of information and documentation originating in the South. Through sharing this information EENET promotes access to education for marginalised groups and supports the development of better education for all children.

EENET users include: teachers, teacher trainers, parents of disabled or other marginalised children and their organisations, disabled people's organisations, academics, national and international non-governmental organisations.

EENET's Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision is...

accessible information about inclusion in education is produced and shared worldwide by those committed to promoting the education of all marginalised groups and to combating educational exclusion.

Our mission is...

to promote the sharing of information about the inclusion of marginalised people in education worldwide.

Our values...

- we believe in the equal rights and dignity of all children, acknowledge diversity across cultures and believe that inclusive education should respond to this diversity
- we recognise that education is much broader than schooling
- we prioritise the needs of countries which have limited access to basic information and resources
- we seek to develop partnerships in all parts of the world.

In conducting our work:

- we adhere to the principles of the Salamanca Statement
- we believe that access to education is a fundamental right
- we recognise the intrinsic value of indigenous forms of education.

We are committed to:

- encouraging the effective participation of key stakeholders in inclusive education
- engaging with the difficulties caused by the global imbalance of power
- encouraging a critical and discerning response to all information and materials circulated.

How is EENET managed?

EENET has a small international steering group which monitors on-going work and guides new initiatives. The group includes representatives from South and North, including a disabled person, a parent of a disabled child and other practitioners. There is also a growing body of people (from representative groups) who support and use EENET and who provide additional advice and direction on specific issues.

EENET is run by one full-time Co-ordinator and one part-time Research and Development Worker. EENET is funded entirely by donations and grants and is located within the University of Manchester.

What does EENET offer?

Newsletter — *‘Enabling Education’* — published once a year

- This is circulated free in hard copy in English to a subscription list of 1600 people and distributed to an additional 3000 people in the course of the year. Selected editions are also available in French, Spanish and Portuguese on our web site and in Braille/audio-cassette.

“The video and the two issues of EENET’s newsletter have broadened my horizon and made me 10 inches taller in knowledge and in experience in inclusive education.”

Teacher educator, Ghana

Web site — www.eenet.org.uk

- Contains posters, reports, guidelines and training materials, from a variety of sources, on: inclusive education policy and practice and covering a range of marginalised groups; teacher education; early childhood issues and child-to-child work; the role of parents; action learning; and a section on deafness and the education of deaf children.
- In November 2002 our web site hits peaked at over 140,000 hits, and 12,000

“At last I can find everything I need on one site!”
Teacher educator, South Africa.

user sessions per month. Unlike most web sites, the majority of our users are not within the USA — we have an unusually good level of use in countries where people still experience difficulty accessing electronic media.

- During 2003 we will begin to provide Arabic documents on the web site, through a joint initiative with a regional partner in Egypt.

Requests for information

- We respond to a large number of individual e-mail, postal and telephone enquiries. We currently have on-going contact with individuals and organisations in over 100 countries.

“I sincerely wish to express my deep thanks and appreciation to you for all those useful gender materials that you sent to me. The materials have been very helpful and are contributing greatly to the success of my work.”

Government employee, Nigeria

Regionalisation

- EENET has begun a process of assisting the development of regional or local information networks which can reach more people and provide more locally appropriate information. Regional networks are being started in Latin America (Brazil-based), Asia (India and Hong Kong bases) and Portuguese speaking Africa (Portugal-based), with new partners also emerging in English-speaking Africa.

Production and dissemination of useful training materials

- EENET is committed to providing materials which are easy to read and use. This includes booklets, posters, videos, CD-ROMs and audio-cassettes, as well as our annual newsletter. Some have been produced by EENET, such as the “Family Action for Inclusion in Education” book. Some, like the “Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Education” video package from Lesotho, have been produced by other organisations which do not have the capacity to disseminate directly to practitioners like EENET can.
- We disseminate information and resources free of charge to South-based individuals and organisations and we try to recover a small fraction of these costs by charging North-based individuals and organisations for our publications and videos.

“We cannot express in words how much this valuable donation is important for our work here. We are very grateful and could not wait for watching the video and studying the manual!!! The CD-ROM of the web site is unbelievably helpful with all the information that one may need on inclusive education.”

Disability Action Network, Somaliland

“These materials are extremely useful to our work and they have expanded our knowledge base. Our advocacy will now be more holistic and comprehensive...Your work has tremendous significance in this context.”

Society for Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, India

EENET's impact

We know from the feedback we have received and from anecdotal evidence that our resources are being used extensively to influence government policies, to train teachers, and to raise public awareness. Here are some examples:

- In Ethiopia, the entire contents of EENET's web site has been used to inform the development of teacher training materials for a new course to prepare all teachers to include disabled children in their classes.
- In South Africa and Brazil, EENET's newsletter is used as core reading material for students who are studying inclusive education. The lecturers say that it is the only easy-to-read material available and it gives the students a global perspective which helps them to critically reflect upon their own situations.
- In the UK, school children are using the web site to supplement their learning about children's education in other countries. Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) makes extensive use of EENET's materials to prepare its volunteers before they go to work in education and disability projects overseas.
- In Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria and many other African countries, individual teachers are experimenting with their own style of teaching to make it more inclusive of marginalised groups.
- In Pakistan and the USA, the video package from Lesotho is being used as part of distance learning packages for teachers and community workers.
- In South Africa, EENET's definition of inclusive education was adopted, unaltered, in the national education inclusion policy White Paper in 2000.

Contact details

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