

Module 3

Education for children with special needs

Unit 1

Education for children with special needs

Aims:

- to inform the trainees about the international agreements and policies that relate to children and children with special needs
- to educate the trainees about the importance of education for children with special needs
- to explore the reasons why some children with special needs don't go to school in Cambodia.

Task 1

Brainstorm the rights of children



15 minutes

1. Put the trainees into groups of four or five people.
2. Says to the trainees: "Cambodia has signed the **International Convention on the Rights of the Child**. This Convention outlines the basic rights that *all* children, wherever they live, should have."
3. "In your groups write down as many rights that children have as you can. For example: every child has the right to a name; every child has the right to play. You have 5 minutes."
4. Collects the answers from the groups but do not write them on the board.
5. Ask the trainees: "What rights do children with disabilities have? What rights do children from ethnic minorities have? What rights do girls have?"

Answer

The same rights as other children.

Task 2

The right to education for children with disabilities



20 minutes

Presentation



1. Present to the whole group a short summary of the international and national agreements that relate to the right to education for children with disabilities.
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993)
 - Salamanca Statement and Framework for action (1994)
 - Cambodian Constitution(See handout '**The rights of children with disabilities**' for details.)
-

2. Answer any questions the trainees may have.

Handout



The rights of children with disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

- Article 2** states that all rights shall apply to all children without discrimination on any ground and specifically mentions disability
- Article 3** states that in all actions the child's best interests "shall be the primary consideration"
- Article 23** states the right of disabled children to enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions, which ensures dignity, promotes self-reliance, and facilitates the child's active participation in the community. It also states the right of the disabled child to special care, education, health care, training, rehabilitation, employment preparation and recreation opportunities
- Article 28** states the child's right to education on the basis of equal opportunity
- Article 29** states that a child's education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

Cambodia has signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993)

These rules set an international standard for policy making and action covering people with disabilities.

On **education** the rules state:

- countries should recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings. They should ensure that the education of people with disabilities is an integral part of the education system
- special attention should be given to very young disabled children, pre-school children with disabilities, and adults with disabilities, especially women.

The World Conference on Special Needs Education (The Salamanca Statement 1994)

In June 1994 representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations came together for the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca in Spain. They agreed on a statement and a framework for action on the education of children with disabilities. The Salamanca Statement says:

We believe and proclaim that:

- every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs

- education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs
- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting those needs
- regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all, moreover they provide effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the entire education system.

The Cambodian Constitution

Chapter 6, article 74 states:

- the government shall support disabled people and the families who have devoted themselves to the nation.

Draft Legislation on ‘The Rights of Persons with Disabilities’

Draft legislation to support, protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities has been formulated and will be presented to the Council of Ministers. Chapter five deals specifically with the education of children and adults with disabilities.



Task 3**The importance of education for children with special needs****25 minutes**

1. Ask the trainees: “Why is it important for children to go to school?”
2. The trainees brainstorm their ideas. Write the main reasons on the board.
3. Ask the trainees: “Why is it especially important for girls, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities to go to school?”
4. Tell the trainees to work in groups to answer this question.
5. Listen to the ideas from the groups and write the main ideas on the board.

Answers**Reasons why it is important for children with disabilities to go to school**

Schooling and education helps all children learn about the world around them and to become useful members of the community.

Some children with disabilities cannot learn to read, write and count like other children, but it is important that these children go to school for the following reasons:

- Education helps children to become independent adults.
- Education prepares children to be able to work and earn a living.
- Education teaches children how to get along with others, how to behave, and how to work with others.
- Education develops the abilities children have.
- Education helps children to accept rules and take responsibility.
- Education helps children to form friendships and gives them the feeling of belonging to a group.
- Education teaches children the activities that will help them to be useful members of a family and the community.

All this helps to make up for the disabilities children have. Also other children see how much children with disabilities can do in spite of their disabilities. When they see this, they gain from the experience of being with children with disabilities. They learn to accept children with disabilities.

Some children with disabilities may only be able to complete a few years schooling. Some children with disabilities are able to complete all their schooling and go on to higher education. Find out each child’s ability. Help each child to reach his or her potential.

Reasons why it is important for girls to go to school

Many parents think it is more important to educate their sons than their daughters because it is boys who mainly go out to work.

However it is important that girls go to school because:

- being educated will help them to be good mothers. A woman who is educated is much more likely to have a healthy baby and healthy children
- it will help them contribute to the family income. In Cambodia most women work. They run most small businesses, stall in the market, etc. Education can help them to be more effective
- girls who have received a basic education are less likely to be exploited. For example, a girl who can read and write probably won't be tricked into prostitution.

Reasons why it is important for ethnic minority children to go to school

Children from ethnic minorities often are prevented from participating fully in society because of prejudice, language and cultural barriers. Going to school will help these children to become more integrated in the main society. They may learn the national language. Also other children can learn about their ethnic culture. So prejudice is broken down.

Task 4

Reasons why children with disabilities don't go to school in Cambodia



30 minutes

1. Ask the trainees to discuss the following question in their groups: "Why do you think many children with disabilities do not go to school in Cambodia?"
2. The trainees discuss their ideas.
3. Collect their ideas.
4. Ask the trainees: "In your experience, which is the most important reason why children with disabilities don't go to school? What are the most important reasons why girls don't go to school or drop out early? Why don't ethnic minority children go to school?"

Answers**Some reasons why children with disabilities don't go to school**

- poverty – the family cannot afford to send the child to school
- parents think that their child with disabilities does not need an education
- parents think it is more important to send the other children in the family to school than their child with disabilities
- parents are ashamed or embarrassed by their child with disabilities
- the child with disabilities does not want to go to school
- the parents are afraid that their child with disabilities will be teased at school
- the school is too far away from the family home
- the child with disabilities can't walk to school
- parents feel their child with disabilities won't be able to go to school
- the school principal or the teacher doesn't want the child with disabilities in their school
- other parents at the school don't want the child with disabilities to join the school because they are afraid the education of the other children will suffer.

Reasons why girls don't go to school or drop out early

- poverty
- parents think it is more important to educate boys
- girls are needed to care of other children in the family or help with household chores.

Reasons why ethnic minority children don't go to school

- lessons are taught in Khmer which they don't speak
- education is not seen as relevant or important by parents
- parents are worried their children may be teased.



Inclusive education

Aims:

- to introduce the trainees to the idea that the education system is the problem not the disabilities children have
- to explain to the trainees what 'inclusive education' means
- to explain the advantages of 'inclusive education'.

Task 1

The child is not the problem



20 minutes

1. Tell the trainees to read the following opposing views on their own and decide (on their own) which view they agree with the most (see handout on next page).
2. Tell the trainees to get into pairs and compare their ideas with their partner.
3. Ask some trainees to give their opinions.
4. Note - the trainer should not give his or her opinion.

Handout



Read these two viewpoints. Which one do you agree with more?

Viewpoint A

In every society across the world there will always be some children who have special needs. These children have particular problems that prevent them from learning and developing like other children. These children need special teaching in response to their problems. It is best to teach children with similar problems together. Separate special schools are the best places to meet the special needs of these children. Teachers need extra training to be able to teach these children.

Viewpoint B

Every child has different learning needs. Any child may experience difficulties in school. Such difficulties can point to ways in which teaching can be improved. These improvements lead to better learning conditions for all children. The child is not the problem. The education system is the problem. Every child is an individual. Teachers need to be flexible so they can meet the needs of every child in their class, whatever difficulties they have.



Task 2

What is inclusive education?



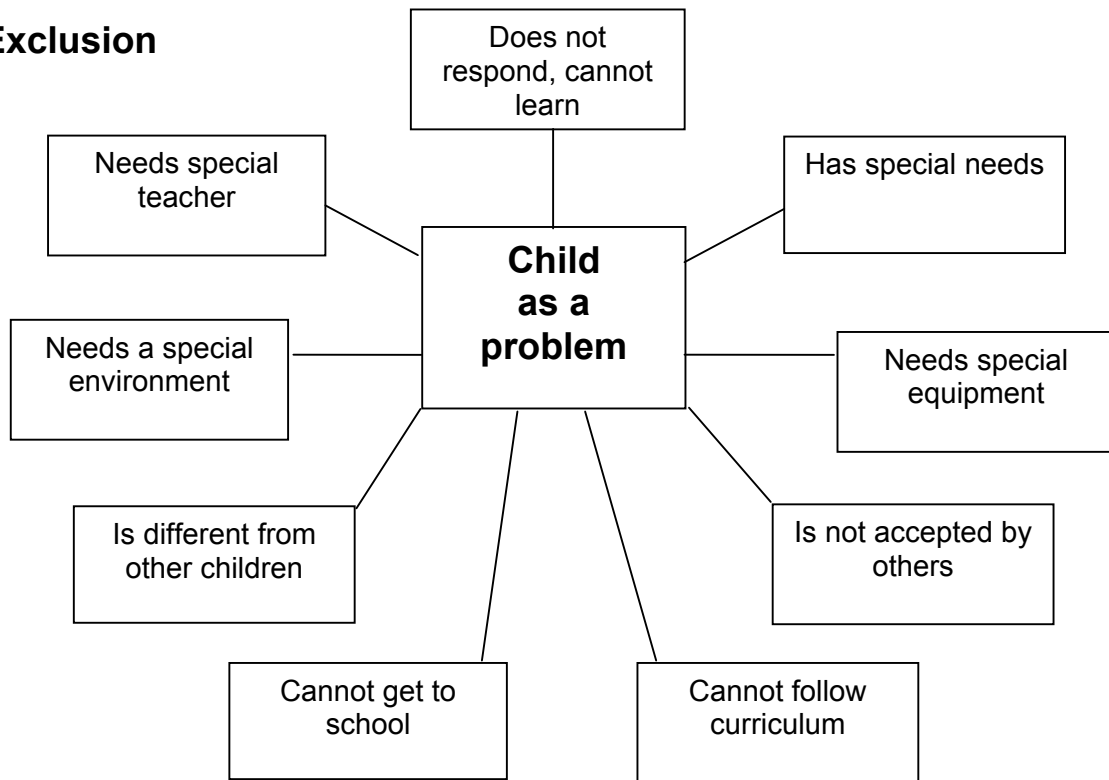
25 minutes

1. Tell the trainees to look at the '**Exclusion v Inclusion**' diagram
2. Explain the diagram and what is meant by 'inclusive education.'
3. Answer any questions.

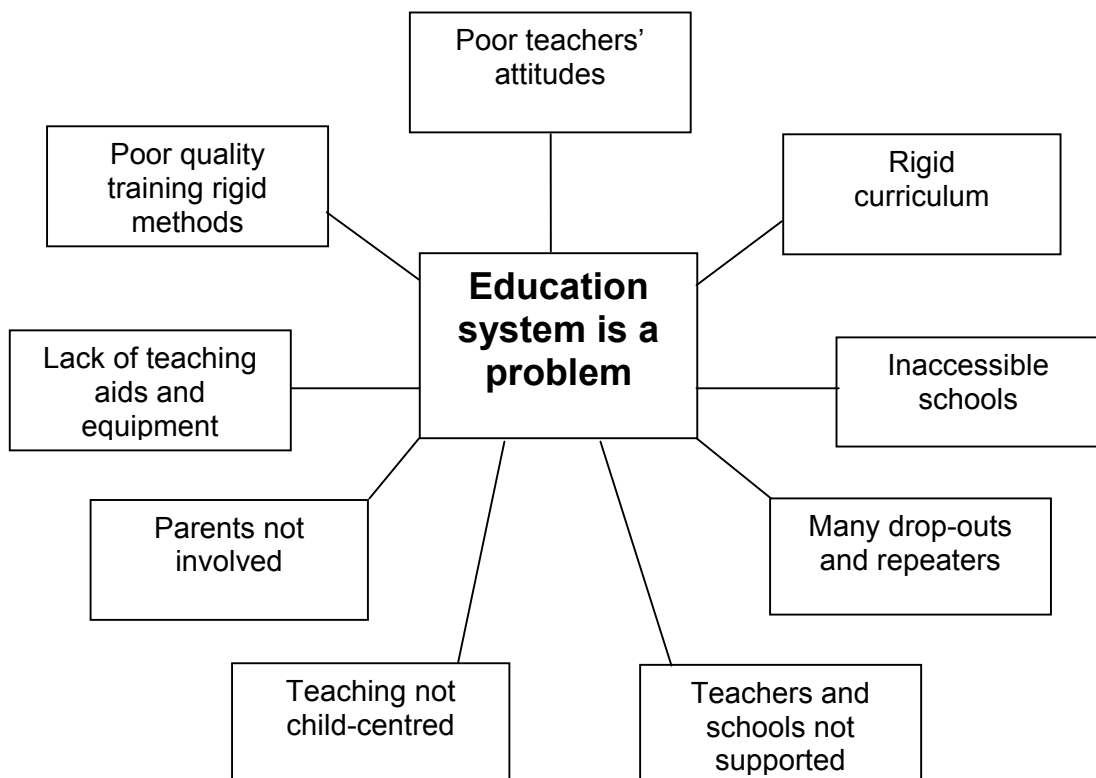
Handout



Exclusion



Inclusion



 Presentation



Inclusive education

In the last few years there have been three important international conferences on education:

- 1990 World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand)
- 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education (Salamanca, Spain)
- 2000 World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal).

In Dakar, the participants agreed that:

"Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries...The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency".

Dakar Framework for Action 2000

In order to achieve Education for All we

- need to ensure equal opportunities for children who are the most vulnerable, marginalised and excluded
- need to ensure not only access to education, but access to **quality** education.

At the World Conference on Special Needs Education the participants agreed that:

"Experience in many countries demonstrates that the integration of children and youth with special educational needs is best achieved **within inclusive schools that serve all children** within a community. It is within this context that those with special educational needs can achieve the fullest progress and social integration."

Salamanca Framework for Action, 1994

Children with special needs include:

- children with disabilities
- girls
- children from remote regions
- children from ethnic minorities
- street children
- working children.

An inclusive school

- recognises that every child is different. Every child has unique learning needs
- celebrates differences
- responds to the individual educational needs of all children
- provides equal opportunities to education for all
- provides education that promotes quality of living for oneself and others
- promotes quality in learning and teaching.

Inclusive education is not only about integrating children with special needs. It is about whole school transformation.

Inclusive schools benefit all children.

An inclusive school is flexible, it recognises that the school system not the child is the problem. In an inclusive school teachers try to adapt the school system to help the child.

The advantages of Inclusive schools are:

- they are much cheaper than building a lot of separate schools for children with special needs
- they encourage the integration of children with special needs which helps to build an inclusive society
- they allow other children in the school to learn about the abilities of children with disabilities
- they encourage the involvement of parents and the community
- they improve teaching.

All across the world organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and Save the Children have been helping countries to develop inclusive education. Developing countries like Lao PDR, India, Papua New Guinea and Malawi are leading the way.

Task 3**Discussion****30 minutes**

1. Tell the trainees to get into groups of four or five people.
2. Write the following questions on the board:
 - Should every child with a disability go to the regular, local school?
 - If not, which children with disabilities shouldn't go the local school?
 - Children with which kind of disabilities would be the easiest to include in the local school?
 - Have you ever taught any children with disabilities?
 - If yes, what were their difficulties, how did you overcome them?
3. The trainees discuss their answers.
4. Collect the ideas from the groups.

Answers***Should every child with a disability go to the regular, local school?***

- Most children with disabilities can go to the local school, but each child must be looked at on a case by case basis.

If not, which children with disabilities shouldn't go the local school?

- Children who have severe physical and learning difficulties will need to be educated at home or in a special school or class. Their education should concentrate on basic self-help skills such as feeding and dressing themselves.
- Children who are totally deaf or blind will need separate schooling in the beginning so that they can learn Braille and sign language.
- Deaf children are often very difficult to include in regular classrooms. Often a school has a special classroom for deaf children within the regular school. Outside of lessons the deaf children join the others for the rest of the school activities.

Children with which kind of disabilities would be the easiest to include in the local school?

- Children with mild or moderate physical or learning disabilities are the easiest to include.

