

Enabling Education Review

Issue 11 - Education in the new normal

December 2022




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About EENET

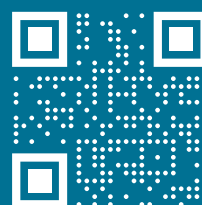
The Enabling Education Network (EENET) is a global information-sharing network. Established in 1997, we encourage and support critical thinking and innovation on issues of inclusion, equity and rights in all levels and types of education.

We help education stakeholders to document and share their experiences of making education more inclusive. Our website contains over 800 articles, reports, posters, guidance documents and videos. Each year we publish at least one edition of Enabling Education Review – often on a specific topic, like this edition which focuses on the new normal. We also still prioritise the free dissemination of printed materials to stakeholders who are not able to access information electronically via the internet.

EENET's work is funded through small grants and donations. We also carry out consultancy work for other organisations, to help fund our information-sharing activities.

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Editorial: What does a new normal look like?

Su Corcoran

When we wrote the call for articles for Enabling Education Review 11, in January 2022, we were watching the world emerge from COVID-19 restrictions. On 10 January 2022, for example, Uganda's schools reopened for the first time in almost two years. They were, potentially, the country that closed their schools for the longest time to stop the spread of infection. But the effects of closing schools on learning have been felt almost everywhere, so we envisioned an edition that focuses on the effects of collective trauma and the importance of supported transitions for children returning to, or starting, school.

A post-COVID world?

Many of us continue to deal with the impact of collective trauma on our learners. In the UK, for instance, conversations with educators indicate that young children lack many experiences – and the vocabulary needed to describe them – that we would expect of 3-to-5-year-olds. Teachers say that both primary and secondary age students are more socially anxious, and university students require more support than in previous years.

Children and young people of all ages are described as needing more reassurance that they are doing things right and seem less independent than previous cohorts. One reason for this is that learning from home meant they were less in touch with how their peers coped with remote learning tasks, so they felt they, alone, were struggling. Another reason is related to how months of remote learning experiences and social distancing affected how children and young people interact and engage socially.

School closures have adversely affected learners already severely marginalised within education systems in many countries. For example, as we saw in last edition of Enabling Education Review, there was limited focus

on learners with special educational needs and disabilities when governments developed centralised education provision such as television and radio programmes. Restrictions on movement meant that street-connected children could not access the education and support they were used to from relevant organisations.

In many low-income countries, the long-term school closures led to increased levels of teenage pregnancy and early marriage, and an increase in the number of children who became street-connected. This was especially so when families struggled to survive in the informal labour market that collapsed because of curfews and travel restrictions. Organisations supporting transitions (back) into education for these groups have therefore experienced greater demand for their programmes.

Despite many people perceiving that we are now in a post-COVID world, we are still being affected by the spread of the virus. Although death rates are lower now, ongoing effects of infection continue in many countries, with lockdowns and/or teachers and students falling ill and being absent from school.

While COVID-19 affected many countries, it has not always been the most significant barrier to education over the last three years. Poverty, adverse weather events related to climate change (e.g., in Bangladesh), and conflict (e.g., in Ukraine and Ethiopia) have negatively impacted teaching and learning and had traumatic effects on learners, families and teachers.

Taking a trauma-informed approach

Developing a trauma-informed approach to education policy and practice requires us to address the barriers to engagement and learning experienced by those affected by trauma. We know that teaching inclusively

benefits all learners, not just those identified as having specific additional learning needs. Taking a trauma-informed approach likewise benefits all learners and takes account of the unpredictable nature of (hidden) trauma. A trauma-informed school develops pedagogies of practice that enable teachers and other school staff to engage with, and respond to, learners living with trauma and associated mental health problems.

To develop a trauma-informed school or education centre, we need to support staff members to develop their understanding and confidence, enabling them to work effectively with these learners. The main focus should be on the quality of relationships between staff and learners.

Relationships matter. Each and every interaction experienced by an individual can either exacerbate the effects of trauma (however small) or provide an opportunity for healing and growth. Trauma-informed approaches should therefore involve taking the time to listen and understand learners' points of view. In contexts where adults are also affected by trauma, an inclusive approach should involve help with developing supportive relationships between members of staff as well.

It is important that, as educators, we try to understand why learners behave as they do. We don't need to ask learners about their experiences of trauma. Instead, we approach our work with an understanding of how trauma impacts the brain and body and how this impact can manifest in day-to-day behaviours. In understanding the potential fall-out from trauma, we can develop frameworks for how best to respond to different situations and ultimately frameworks that develop safer spaces where learners feel secure. In short, being sensitive to the wider context of learners' lives and the potential impact these experiences have should inform any guidance and support that we may need to provide.

Finally, trauma-informed approaches, as with all inclusive pedagogies of practice, require that we develop locally appropriate responses to trauma. How we work impacts the climate

and other conditions that can ultimately lead to events that traumatise, so we must strive to reduce our impact as educators or consultants who travel frequently. There is a need to develop local frameworks and more remote connections that still ensure support in a less climate-impacting manner. A new normal is therefore emerging in how we view the need for a different approach to developing, delivering and advocating for inclusive education.

This edition

The articles submitted for this edition of Enabling Education Review provide a varied overview of considerations within our current new normal in inclusive education. They remind us that there is no one new normal, and approaches to inclusion must be locally informed and developed. We have ordered the articles alphabetically by country, leaving the globally focused articles to the end, because there are multiple articles from some countries, and it was difficult to group them by theme. However, at the heart of all of the articles is the need to understand learners' individual experiences and the need for individualised approaches to their inclusion in education – whatever form that education takes.

We begin with an article about Afghanistan, from the Enabled Children Initiative, that focuses on a step wise approach to developing inclusive schools. From Bangladesh, Niketan focus on including girls in education during and after COVID-19. We have two articles from England. The first, by researchers from the Emotional Health Hub, looks at combining research and practice to find the best ways to listen to young children's voices to enable them to communicate how they feel. The second focuses on one mother's experiences of enabling education for her child in a system that does not recognise the needs of learners with developmental trauma.

An article on Gaza Children's Cinema explores the role of cinema as a community-based education initiative that creates a safe space of entertainment to encourage peaceful dialogue and promote alternative narratives to conflict. We then move to focus on teacher education with an article from the Duhok Inclusive

Education Partnership, in the Kurdish region of Iraq, which has adapted existing training modules on inclusive education to the local context. An interview with Newton Njoroge, from Life Skills Oasis in Kenya, focuses on working with children from an informal settlement who are at risk of, or have already dropped out of school.

An article from Sightsavers in Malawi looks at including children with disabilities in education during and after COVID-19. This leads into a focus on EENET's work with organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) in Somalia and Uganda.

We have included an extended section on Ukraine. The first article explores the findings from the EENET/NAD survey on home learning conducted in 2020. We share findings that are relevant to the current situation in Ukraine. EENET has worked previously in Ukraine, through our Young Voices and video projects. We therefore asked Oleh Lytvynov, a Ukrainian translator and interpreter with whom we have

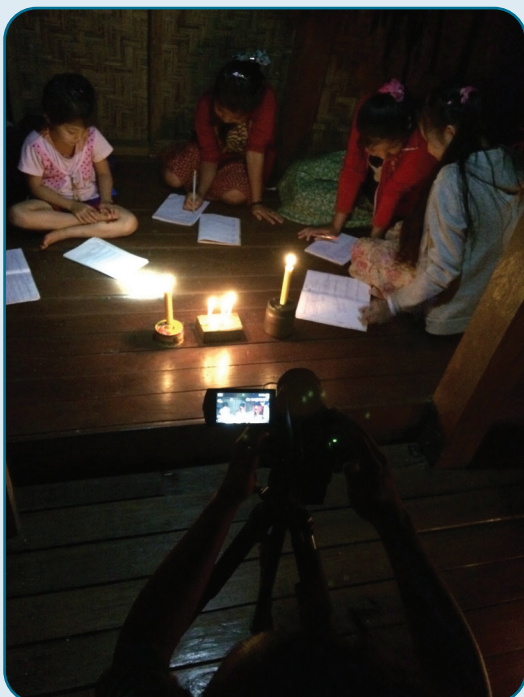
previously worked, to investigate how some of the schools involved in our previous projects were coping with the war and its impact on education. Their stories feature in the second article about Ukraine.

Our final three articles take a more global focus. The first, from Rachel Bowden, explores multilingualism as a resource for learning and teaching. The second, from Kindling Safety, introduces the need for inclusive approaches to fire education in informal settlements. Our final article shares information about EENET's writer mentoring project.

All of the articles go beyond COVID-19, to a new way of working in inclusive education – which has inspired the call for our 2023 edition of the review (look out for news of this soon!).

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'An Inclusive Day' – have you watched the videos yet?



- The 10 short videos were filmed in Burkina Faso, Burma, Ukraine and UK.
- They contain simple, practical ideas for making education more inclusive.
- The videos are accompanied by facilitation manuals for use by teacher trainers.
- The ideas in the videos work best when teachers collaborate with parents, families and the community.

Watch online: <https://bit.ly/InclDayYT>

Or ask EENET for the videos and training manuals on flash drive.

Supporting learners with disabilities in Afghanistan

Nasir Ahmadi

In this article Nasir describes how the Enabled Children Initiative (ECI) set up a school for children with disabilities in Afghanistan that aims eventually to include them in mainstream settings by working with other schools to develop inclusive learning environments.

A new school

Afghanistan has one of the largest disabled populations globally: 17.3% of children and 80% of adults have a disability.¹ However, people with disabilities face stigma, discrimination, and barriers to education, healthcare, skills-building and employment. As such, many children have never been to school, and are subject to bullying and discrimination. Mainstream schools routinely reject children with disabilities and have no experience of inclusive learning programmes or inclusively trained teachers. Therefore, putting children needing additional support straight into these classrooms could set them up for failure, or worse, abuse and discrimination.

In September 2020, I joined ECI (a non-profit organisation in Afghanistan) to start a special school as a first step towards developing a more inclusive education system. ECI's school aims to provide education and rehabilitation for children with disabilities not currently in school and who have not previously received an education. We also partner with mainstream schools to co-develop inclusive classrooms so that we can safely transfer our students into mainstream education.

A change in regime

Nine months after we opened in December 2020, the Afghan government collapsed and we made the difficult decision to close the school. We lost hope in the future. It was difficult to accept the possibility of losing the school. Parents cried when I called to share the news as this was the only school that would

enrol their children. But it did not take long to re-open. The children were eager to return and parents repeatedly asked when this would be possible. Staff who were still in the country wanted to return to work, even though we have to work even harder now.

We operate under new restrictions and logistical considerations. For example, we must segregate students and staff by gender, organise transportation for female staff and students, and prioritise the safety and personal security of students and staff. The costs of basic goods increased dramatically after the economic collapse, and the related humanitarian crisis means many of the families we serve now face poverty.

We are trying to grow our school with fewer resources, more uncertainty and greater demand. As a community of teachers, parents and students, we stand strong together. Today, we have 65 full-time students (28 girls and 37 boys) and a growing waiting list. They have visual, hearing and speech impairments, Down's syndrome, autism, and intellectual and physical disabilities.

Our approach

The huge demand for education for students with disabilities in Afghanistan continues. Our school offers a lifeline for families who felt excluded and struggled to cope with their children's disabilities. We aim to enable every child to reach their unique capacity and potential. We use adapted classroom approaches to teach academic subjects and provide occupational and physical therapy, psychological counselling, sports, art, sign-language, Braille, and life-skills training through our curriculum. Our students have diverse ages and disabilities. Since we are a small school, we have mixed-age classes so that we work with the children at the level they are at and support their further development.



Learners in Afghanistan

We encourage parents and caretakers to play active roles in children's learning. They participate in regular one-to-one meetings and training to learn techniques to use at home. They attend parent-teacher conferences and school events to celebrate their children's achievements. They participate in family sessions with our psychology and physiotherapy teams, learning to support their children's progress. A family-focused approach helps each student to become independent, thriving, and social individuals supported by their families, communities, and school.

Supporting transition

We want our school to be a model of education for students with disabilities in Afghanistan. Importantly, we want to support more inclusive learning environments in mainstream schools in Kabul for our students to transition into. We are building ongoing partnerships with other schools to prepare them to welcome children with disabilities. Change is possible, even in these uncertain times, especially at the individual student level.

We first work with the school principal to encourage the school administration to see the benefits of an inclusive approach. We provide awareness training for the wider school community and survey the school to assess the need for basic adaptations for inclusion. Can learners with physical disabilities access classrooms? Do school policies and

procedures (especially for safeguarding) ensure the additional protections and services for children with disabilities?

We provide ongoing technical support and training for schools to develop their inclusive practices. Currently, we are working at the level of the individual children who are transferring from our school into mainstream settings. We work with parents to help them support their child and access any additional counselling or therapy that is needed to ensure regular attendance in mainstream school. We monitor the progress of the school and the children we place in their care to provide feedback to develop the inclusivity of the school's systems.

Looking to the future

I believe change is possible at country level. My PhD focuses on challenges faced by visually impaired students accessing education. Many share stories of positive change: shifts in people's attitudes or beliefs about disability and what people with disabilities can achieve. This gives me hope that change can happen.

No one in Afghanistan is certain about the future, but I think that it will be determined by our actions today. Our long-term vision is inclusive education in every school, where all students have equal educational opportunities, pathways to employment, and are respected as members of their communities. We have a long way to go, but our work at the ECI School moves us closer, one student, one family, one school at a time. In the long term, we aim to develop an inclusive sustainable education curriculum for Afghanistan – building relationships and encouraging cooperation with relevant local and national government departments. We hope to develop policies and procedures for inclusive quality education for all students with disabilities.

^[1] Asia Foundation Model Disability Survey 2019: <https://bit.ly/eeer11-8>

Nasir Ahmadi is principal of the ECI School in Kabul and a Ph.D. candidate at Northeast Hill University in India.

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How our programmes in Bangladesh changed because of COVID-19

Niketan

Niketan, a Dutch development organisation, works with Disabled Rehabilitation and Research Association (DRRA) in rural areas and informal settlements in Bangladesh. The work aims to improve the quality of life of children and youth with cerebral palsy and other complex disabilities, who are often left out of other organisations' programmes.

The project provides a holistic support package to learners across age groups for as long as they require it. This includes physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and educational support. In practice, this means providing a range of early interventions, community care programmes, physiotherapy, assistive devices, daily living skills training, special and inclusive education, pre-vocational training, and job placements. Home-based support, provision of healthy meals, and reimbursement of travel expenses to access rehabilitation or education may also be offered. Families and local government authorities actively engage throughout this process.

Care and education during the pandemic

During the pandemic, we provided families and staff members with COVID-19 safety kits, including gloves, masks and soap. The physiotherapists and teachers we employ contacted children and their parents regularly using WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, or phone calls, to find out how they were doing. These conversations and text messages were also an opportunity to inform families about the local COVID-19 situation and advice.

Phones became the main way to enable parents to support their children's home learning experiences. We made short video clips of activities that parents should practise with their children. These activities linked with the school's curricula and continued the children's cognitive and social-emotional

learning. Many parents sent short video clips in return, proudly showing what they had been doing with their children.

Veranda schools

Where possible, small groups of 5-10 children, in shifts and wearing facemasks, received face-to-face education and physiotherapy. Community members volunteered to provide space on their verandas, mats to sit on and other low-cost local materials. Two community development organisers and an assistant physiotherapist supported several veranda schools. Activities were based on the individual needs of each child. Parents were trained to continue the rehabilitation and education activities at home, supported by WhatsApp or phone messages and video clips. The veranda schools were very effective and rapidly increased to 54 villages.

We continue to run veranda schools to embed disability care and education sustainably into the local community. The process is decreasing disability-related stigma, making communities more inclusive. By providing care and education close to their homes, children with complex disabilities have become visible to the community as children who need care, love and friends like other children. It also demonstrates that disability is not transferable and does not imply inability, and that children with disabilities can participate in the community with some support.

Financial support

Every family was affected differently by the COVID-19 crisis. Each family was considered on a case-by-case basis, focusing on their living space, access to finances, and food. There were serious concerns about the loss of jobs, especially for daily wage-earners in the informal economy, such as rickshaw pullers, street vendors, construction workers, and garment factory workers.

Continuing care and education for children with disabilities was critical, but it was important not to forget their close relatives. The whole family was affected by the pandemic and needed support to survive. Niketan did something it had never done before: providing cash transfers to individual families. In addition to the distribution of food packages, a pilot scheme was started to provide money to families for three months. We wanted to allow each family to make its own decision on what to use this money for. We found that 87% of the families were able to generate new income from this cash transfer. For example, some families decided to buy livestock or sewing machines. The families who bought seeds or rickshaws were the most successful.

Online training

Niketan started to develop open-source practical modules on YouTube¹ to help parents and others to support children with disabilities. They were aimed at families living in remote areas without access to a rehabilitation centre. The topics include “Feeding a child with cerebral palsy”, “Problems of reflux and drooling in children with complex disabilities” and “Gross motor skills”. They are useful and were used regularly during the COVID-19 crisis in Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. More modules are being developed, such as one on communication.

Stories for inclusion

Niketan and DRRA already worked with primary schools to promote inclusive education. During the height of the pandemic, we looked at developing new ways to promote inclusion. Storybooks were developed to address the fact that children without disabilities are often unaware of the difficulties their peers with disabilities face because they rarely meet or read about these children. The first book, “My name is Runa” is written in Bangla. It tells the true story of Runa from Bangladesh who has cerebral palsy. The book highlights her positive and negative experiences of growing up.

We also developed an Activity Guide and Talking Posters for teachers to use in the classroom to engage children with the story and increase awareness, understanding and acceptance of disability diversity. Talking Posters are enlarged illustrations from the book with questions to help teachers guide classroom discussions.

[1] <https://bit.ly/eer11-7>

With thanks to the Niketan and DRRA teams, especially Farida Yesmin and Md Nizam Uddin. For more information, contact Antoinette Termoshuizen: info@niketan.nl



Children in Bangladesh enjoying a storybook

Through the child's eyes: Meaningful emotional health support in English schools

Mary Harris and Jenni McGahan

Mary and Jenni co-founded The Emotional Health Hub to help children feel heard and understood, even when they do not have the words. The hub combines research and practice to find the best ways to listen to young children's voices to enable them to communicate how they feel. In this article, they share observations from working with primary school teachers in England.

The UK's new normal involves a decline in children's emotional health and wellbeing. Child and adolescent mental health services are overwhelmed. We face increased parental mental health problems, teacher burn-out, levels of poverty, and pressure for learners to 'catch up' on learning following COVID-19. In this context, schools are now viewed as an integral part of children's wellbeing support.

Although challenging, the collective emotional shake-up experienced through the COVID-19 pandemic sparked a shared compassion and understanding. In doing things differently in our schools there has been a shift in thinking. Teachers are reaching out to their pupils, before expecting them to engage in learning. They make them feel comfortable and safe in their classrooms and acknowledge the importance of taking time during the transition to settle back in again.

Many schools are more compassion-focused, trauma-informed and reflective – adopting preventive approaches to emotional health and wellbeing. Through our work with schools, we have observed that many teachers want practical advice on how to support emotional health in their classrooms. We focus on three interrelated elements for this: 1) creating a safe, inclusive classroom, 2) building relationships, and 3) pupil voice.

Creating a safe, inclusive classroom

Schools can offer a consistent and safe environment in which children develop skills to protect their emotional health. Teachers can create feelings of stability and security (vital for mental health) by:

- ensuring predictable routines;
- being sensitive about change and transitions;
- teaching and modelling emotional regulation;
- changing the focus from behavioural compliance to emotional connection;
- modelling skills such as empathy, compassion, and curiosity;
- providing opportunities for pupils to experience mastery, agency and choice.

These are especially important for pupils displaying more challenging behaviours who have faced trauma, loss, adversity or have communication difficulties. Emotional regulation is a particular challenge in stressful situations due to differences in their brain's emotion networks. Being mindful that feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, fear, threat and loss of control may result in these behaviours can help us see the child underneath and ensure inclusivity in our classrooms.

With children who have experienced trauma, we should aim to reduce activation in the fear centre of their brains to allow for healthier emotional expression. Some traditional behaviour management strategies – like time-outs, warnings, traffic lights – can make these children feel misunderstood, scared, resentful, and ashamed. Ultimately that increases relational disconnection. Through consistent, compassionate interactions, teachers can provide an emotional compass for children who do not have this type of relationship at home, setting them up for a healthier future.

Building relationships

Much of the discussion around wellbeing and resilience in education has focused on strengthening individuals. However, there is growing recognition that quality, meaningful relationships and supportive environments are more impactful. We need to reduce the pressure on pupils to “cope better” and focus on developing supportive relationships and positive connections. One way to do this is by offering frequent and varied opportunities that encourage reflection and communication of emotions.

The benefit of pupils openly communicating their feelings to a trusted adult is two-fold: it helps teachers identify pupils who might be struggling and need support, and it encourages children to consider, quantify and label their emotions. Many children mask their emotions and will not spontaneously ask for help or talk about it. We must create a sensitive environment in which all pupils can feel safe to do this.

Imagine a scenario where your manager asks you to write about a time when you felt extremely anxious. Then imagine being told to use your best handwriting because your experience will be posted on the staff room wall. This activity was recently used with a child in school during mental health awareness week. One nine-year-old pupil reported being uncomfortable, disengaged and “made it up” because he did not want everyone to know about his worries. This example highlights the importance of treating children’s feelings sensitively, and that trusting teachers is crucial for the impact of this work.

For it to have value, emotional health work within the classroom requires teachers to set different parameters to other subjects. Children are much more likely to fully engage when we explain why they are being asked about their feelings. They need to know what will happen with the information they share (including who else, if anyone, will know), and discuss how sharing might benefit them. Connection with trusted adults can be further improved by assuring children that all their emotions are normal and will be dealt with sensitively.

Pre-empting questions such as “Who will see the worry that I write down in the worry box?” and “Why are you asking me to complete this questionnaire and who will see my answers?” reassures children that they can trust teachers with their feelings.

Pupil voice

In capturing children’s views and needs on matters that involve and impact them, we too often rely on the observations of parents, carers and teachers, without considering the child’s voice. This is especially true for younger children who are often perceived as incapable of expressing their views accurately and effectively. However, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child reminds us that a child’s right to express their view is not dependent on this view being mature, just on them being able to form a perspective. We have found that with practice and encouragement in a safe and inclusive environment, young children can become incredibly articulate when generating ideas on what can help them with emotional health in the classroom.

Conclusion

Currently the priority in schools is catching up lost learning. However, far from being incompatible, the research shows that children’s emotional health and attainment are positively associated; happiness and connection relates to better educational outcomes. If we learnt anything from the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the basic human need for connection and its central role in our emotional health and wellbeing. While we observe a paradigm shift in schools towards relationship-based, compassion-focused, trauma-responsive education, teachers should not underestimate the impact they can have in a child’s life.

Mary Harris is a HCPC-registered Art Therapist, specialising in one-to-one therapy with primary-aged children. Dr Jenni McGahan is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University. More information about the Emotional Health Hub can be found on the website: www.theemotionalhealthhub.com

Challenging rigid perceptions of child development: A parent's story from England

Zahra Alijah

I am a secondary-level physics teacher educator. I thought I understood inclusion and the additional support available for learners within and beyond schools. However, as a parent enabling access to education for my son, I was surprised by how naïve I felt when my role as a partner in my son's education was undervalued.

My son's behaviour

When we began our schooling journey, Dan¹ was already active and independently minded. He showed behaviours often characterised as attention deficit hyperactive disorder or autism that I now know are related to developmental trauma, such as sensory-seeking and attachment-seeking needs. We don't know the origins of Dan's developmental trauma. It could be related to his adoption history.

Our first encounter with school

At age 3, Dan attended a nursery that claimed to be child-led and prioritised outdoor education. In reality, children had to follow the nursery team's activities. The team considered Dan's behaviour as impulsive and aggressive. He only wanted to join in on his own terms and would bump, push, and throw. Each evening, I signed incident reports about something he had done. He couldn't cope with circle time. Now I wonder why they insisted he join in. I was asked to remove him from school because they couldn't provide the one-to-one support needed to keep everyone safe.

Trying to get support

I approached several other settings. None felt they could provide the support Dan needed. I was advised to apply for an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessment when he was offered a place at school for Reception year (age 4). Children needing additional support in English schools are assessed for a personalised EHCP. Funding to meet the support needs identified in the EHCP is

provided by the local authority. I applied well before Dan began school, but he was not assessed until two months into his first term. The school tried to prepare for him, but in September I was again told he was behaving dangerously and aggressively.

There were 60 children in the two reception classes. This must have been overwhelming for Dan given his sensory and attachment needs. The school reduced his hours. He started one hour later than the other children and went into their 'inclusion' room (in reality an exclusion room) before joining the mainstream class later on. He struggled with this daily transition, becoming disruptive or aggressive when he re-joined the mainstream environment. They tried to have him mix with smaller groups of children but he was disruptive.

I managed to get a place for him in alternative provision. Schools specialising in social emotional mental health needs do not enrol until Year 1 (age 5) or above. Until then I had to educate Dan at home. The local authority redirected his EHP budget so I could access support from the local home educator group and other educational initiatives in the city. Dan flourished in many of the activities we explored during this time.

Learning new techniques at home

To support Dan's learning at home, I accessed the local post-adoption support team who suggested using a neurosequential model of working. This is a developmentally informed and biologically respectful approach to working with children. It is not a specific therapeutic technique or intervention but a way to organise a child's history and current functioning. I emotionally support Dan in ways often considered appropriate for children younger than him, while supporting his wider learning at a level suitable for his actual age. Sensory integration therapy is important

and takes a play-oriented approach. We use therapies like deep pressure, brushing, weighted vests, and swinging, which can calm an anxious child. I adapted my home to suit his physical needs. We have equipment to exercise and burn off energy (e.g., a small trampoline), and a hammock and weighted blanket to satisfy his need to cocoon himself. These techniques helped improve his behaviour at home and he progressed well.

Much of what I read about developmental trauma is relatable to Dan, including his struggle with transitions like leaving/entering class and his fight-and-flight responses in new or stimulating environments. Dan and I received sensory integration therapy from an occupational therapist. She helped me further develop and apply my learning. Having someone willing to listen and focus on solutions was a wonderfully positive experience.

Dan thrives in child-led, multi-sensory environments that focus on nurturing independent and collaborative learning and relationships through guidance. This approach helped him develop positive relationships with other children and educators at one of the education centres he attended during the home education stage.

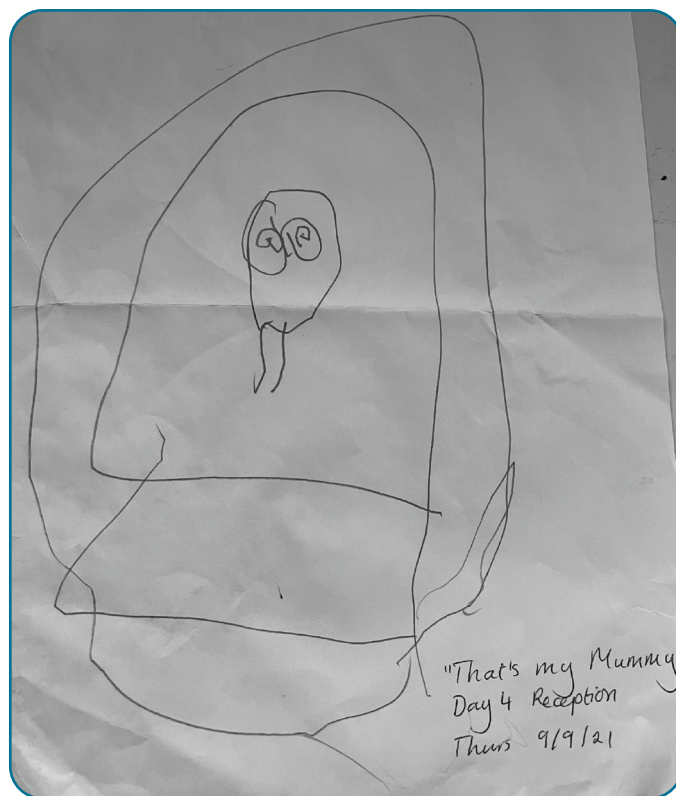
Returning to school

The transition to school for Year 1 didn't go easily. The teachers suggested that the approaches we had developed at home were detrimental to Dan's progress. They said I was babying my son and causing all the problems.

I had felt naïve when dealing with educators at Dan's previous settings. Now I felt empowered to speak out. Initially the teachers didn't believe me, but as they eliminated other potential reasons for his behaviour, they started to ask me questions about what we do at home. Now we explore together the support Dan needs and try to trust each other's knowledge.

Changing the system

As a teacher educator I want my students to start their careers with an inclusive mindset. As a parent I realise that much more must be done. My experiences completely changed



One of Dan's drawings

my approach to preparing student teachers. I discuss Dan regularly as an example. We explore problems of bias and profiling, and trying to fit the child to the classroom rather than adapting the classroom to the child's needs. I also bring developmental trauma into the lessons. We discuss how children are all very different and need unique support.

There are systemic issues I can't fix alone. Schools are underfunded and funding may not be used in ways specified by the ECHP. It is also hard to argue a 'good for all' approach within a teacher education system that provides very little time to focus on inclusion.

I believe the world needs to ensure there is a Dan shaped space in it. This is what he is entitled to, like every child. If Dan needs to climb more than other children, so be it. We just need to help him learn to do so safely. It is what makes him who he is: the energy, the physicality, the adventures. And I love him for who he is.

[1] Name has been changed

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Creating opportunities for dialogue using cinema in Gaza

Ayman Qwaider

Over 50% of the population of Gaza is aged 18 or younger.¹ They have had their formative experiences shaped by war or the threat of war, and a combination of associated hardships, deprivations and crises. Within this context, Gaza Children's Cinema aims to boost the resilience of children and their communities. In this article, Ayman explores the role of cinema as a community-based education initiative that creates a safe space of entertainment to encourage peaceful dialogue and promote alternative narratives to conflict.

A difficult context

In May 2021, The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) confirmed that 12 of the 63² children killed by Israeli air strikes in Gaza were participating in the agency's programme aimed at helping children deal with trauma. In addition to war and the threat of war, children and young people in Gaza have experienced economic hardship, environmental crisis, institutional failure, social division, political polarisation and ideological rigidity. They have lived through an eight-year blockade that has restricted commerce, freedom of movement and ongoing intellectual and cultural exchange. As such they, and their communities, have been cut off from the outside world and exposed to both external violence and internal conflict.

In addition, the education system is constrained by overcrowded classrooms in which teachers employ rote learning and authoritarian teaching methods, exacerbating the children's vulnerability to helplessness, hopelessness, and fear of "the other" that results from such isolation. It is therefore important to nurture children's creative capacity and critical thinking through transformative learning experiences that help them to aspire, explore and achieve their full potential.

Cinema as peacebuilding education initiative

The Gaza Children Cinema (GCC) is a community-based education initiative. Since 2013 it has aimed to provide a peaceful and creative space. In this space, children can be children and the overwhelming realities of siege, loss and war can be temporarily forgotten as they are supported to resist fatalism or hopelessness. The overall strategy is to boost the resilience of children in local communities. GCC partners with a local team of educators from Tamer Institute for Community Education, to organise cinematic sessions that include 40-minute discussion activities on a variety of themes. For example, the sessions include programmes broadcast on Al-Jazeera's children's channel, excerpts from Charlie Chaplin movies, and prize-winning Japanese and European animation.

The cinema programme integrates entertainment, education, and social development. It is designed to engage children's imagination, spark their curiosity, and enrich their sense of what is possible in the lives of individuals, families, and societies. The activities provide perspectives on global cultures and communities and promote dialogue among the children about their ambitions, worries, and dreams. They also explore the nature of their environment, the changes they would like to see, and the barriers that stand in the way of progress towards a better future. Ultimately, the GCC provides a rare forum for children to use their own voices – and to listen to and learn from each other. As they share their ideas and work together, they are supported to identify and address their individual and collective challenges. An educational experience grounded in open-minded inquiry offers an opportunity for children to open their minds, broaden their horizons and imagine a different world.

Mainstreaming cinema in youth culture

After almost a decade of implementing GCC in local community education centres, Tamer has adapted the programme to become one of the organisation's integral education initiatives. The cinema sessions are part of all the spaces that Tamer Institute provide for children, and the organisation works closely with local partners to reach out to the most marginalised. There has been a two-fold impact: the programme has contributed to strengthening a love of the cinema experience with children and supported efforts to revive cinema culture in Gaza; and it has created a non-formal educational space, where dialogue becomes possible.

Working with partners such as the Emaar Association in the south of Gaza, Tamer Institute has been designing, building, and equipping permanent cinema spaces for children. With this partner, an experimental film screening was piloted with children and their parents, which aimed to use entertainment to create a safe educational space for dialogue on the issues impacting the lives of communities in Gaza. The session was positively received by the facilitators, parents, children, and local committees.

The success of the cinema project overall has generated interest, passion, and the involvement of local communities, whether from individuals, families and other organisations. Some of these organisations have started developing their own cinematic programmes in their local communities. As such, they are offering additional safe spaces for children to reflect and tell their stories.

For the children and young people who are growing up in contexts of violence, conflict, and ongoing oppression, the cinema project – as a non-formal quality education experience – provides opportunities for escape, for joy, and more importantly frameworks for reflection and dialogue. Together we can challenge narratives of hopelessness and provide a sense of hope towards future peace.

[1] <https://bit.ly/eer11-5>

[2] <https://bit.ly/eer11-6>

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Children watching a film in Gaza.

Adapting and co-developing inclusive education training in Duhok, Iraq

Karen Khayat and Emma Shepherdson

Since 2015 EENET has worked with Norwegian Association of Disabled and partners and ministries of education in Zambia and Zanzibar to develop comprehensive teacher training on inclusive education. The training modules were shared under a Creative Commons license, so anyone can use and adapt them for their own context. A programme in Duhok, in the Kurdish region of Iraq, has done that.

Inclusive education in Duhok

An inclusive education approach has been co-developed in Duhok since 2018, as part of a partnership between Duhok Governorate, General Directorate of Education in Duhok (DOE) and General Directorate of Care and Social Development in Duhok (DOLSA), SALAR International, and Iraqi Research Foundation for Analysis and Development (IRFAD). In 2018-2021, the programme was supported through the Local Governance Development in Iraq (LOGDEVI) project and funding from SALAR International. In 2022, the Duhok Inclusive Education Partnership (DIEP) project continued the work through peer-to-peer financing from the European Union implemented by the United Nations Development Programme.

As part of this ongoing inclusive education approach, the teacher training modules developed by EENET, NAD and partners were adapted to the context, with technical support from an EENET consultant. This involved training teachers in three pilot schools (Zivreen and Khabat under the DIEP project and Handreen under the LOGDEVI project) and developing student-focused accessible infrastructure and improvements to the schools.

Adapting training materials

As a first step, the consultant made some initial adaptations to the training materials. They were

then translated into Kurdish in preparation for further co-development by 19 principal trainer-facilitators (PTFs). They worked together to ensure the training materials were context-appropriate for teachers in the pilot schools.

Under the 'new normal' created by COVID-19, the consultant could not travel to Duhok to work with and train the PTFs. Instead, she facilitated the adaptation discussions and training activities remotely, alongside country-based co-facilitators. Relying on remote engagement can be challenging, but the programme partners took the bold and essential step of investing in the equipment needed for high-quality online meetings and training. Few organisations do this. Some colleagues who advise other projects often struggle to deliver remote support due to the projects' limited connectivity and equipment. The investments in Duhok were a game changer.

The PTFs were trained in inclusive methodologies. Four modules have been co-developed:

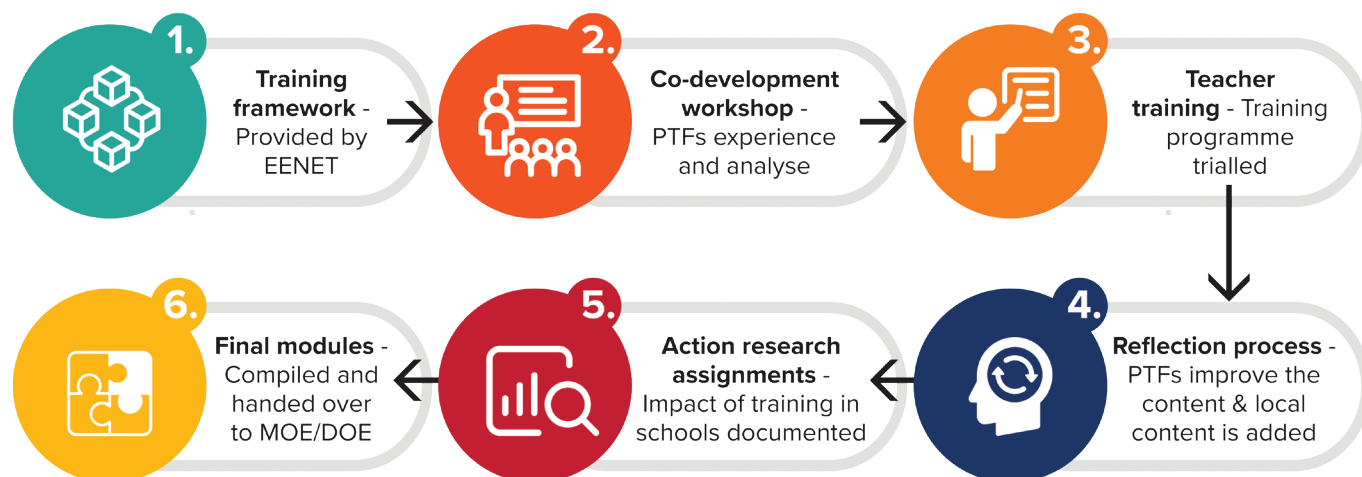
- Module 1 – Theoretical basis of inclusive education;
- Module 2 – Plan and develop school inclusion teams;
- Module 3 – Screening and identification of learning needs;
- Module 4 – Promoting active learning in the classroom.

The training materials are available for download in Kurdish Badini.

Training teachers

Modules 1 and 2 were delivered in 2021 (as part of LOGDEVI project). Modules 3 and 4 were rolled out in 2022 under the DIEP project.

The modules use participatory methods and active-learning techniques to build teacher confidence and problem-solving skills. After



The training process

completing the training, teachers practise what they learned. Every teacher developed a personalised plan for their own professional development, and an action plan for the following three months in their schools. Their plans included improvements in their teaching strategies, changes to the environment and increased use of low-cost teaching aids. Teachers have also been grouped with peers from other schools to share progress, support and learn from each other.

Problem-solving

The problem-solving approach at the heart of this teacher training meant that teachers at the pilot schools could take a holistic approach to making the schools more inclusive. For example, walk-through assessments of the schools and the peer-to-peer process helped identify improvements and renovations to improve accessibility and inclusivity at the schools. The schools have also created School Inclusion Teams to collaborate on problem solving.

The teachers were not restricted to the resources and stakeholders within their schools and communities. They were encouraged to reach out to other actors to meet their students' needs. This included a non-governmental organisation that could provide better quality wheelchairs for a student at one of the schools to improve their mobility.

Sweden-Duhok collaboration

In 2022 the DIEP project focused on developing peer-to-peer networks; strengthening knowledge exchange between

pilot schools, and between Sweden and Iraq. These networks can strengthen existing partnerships and connect teachers. The peer-to-peer exchange process happens at teacher and management levels. An international peer-to-peer teacher network brings together small groups of pilot school teachers in Iraq and Kurdish-speaking teachers in Sweden. They met online with each other and experts, and chatted in WhatsApp groups, to share and discuss their experiences of different approaches to inclusive education in both countries. We are now in the phase of establishing these networks.

A working group between senior managers and experts in Sweden and Duhok has also been established to provide input into a long-term strategy for inclusive education in the Duhok region.

Collaborating with observers

To assess objectively the effectiveness of the training, the project selected and trained a team of 13 observers. These education supervisors do not just monitor the project, they act as critical friends for improving the training and its implementation.

More information: <https://bit.ly/eer11-24>
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An interview with Life Skills Oasis, Kenya

Newton Njoroge

Life Skills Oasis (LSO) is a not-for-profit organisation working with children from Kiandutu informal settlement in Kenya, who are at risk of, or have already dropped out of school. In this interview, Newton Njoroge tells us about the challenges and opportunities affecting their work since the arrival of COVID-19.

How did COVID-19 affect your work with children in Kiandutu?

LSO runs education programmes in Kiandutu. We run a drop-in centre that opens seven days a week. From Monday to Friday, we deliver a programme of support for children who are not in school. This includes children who are street-connected and those who are at risk of being street-connected. At weekends and during the holidays, we organise additional activities for children who go to school.

When COVID-19 arrived, schools in Kenya closed in March 2020 and reopened in January 2021. This meant nine months in which the poorest children were not able to access education, as centralised home learning provision was mainly provided through television and radio. Initially we attempted to fill the gap in their education, but government restrictions soon meant that our work was limited until September 2020, when we were able to resume our education programmes.



Fence around the LSO building

What have been the main challenges affecting you since you resumed your programmes?

There has been an increase in the numbers of children on the streets. This is because many parents lost their sources of income as they were unable to go to work in the informal labour market. Since life opened back up, many have not been able to find work again as there are fewer options with businesses collapsing during the pandemic. Food and fuel prices have increased in the last few months so it is difficult for the poorest families to meet basic needs.

There has also been an increase in the number of children who have been using drugs in Thika town. There are many reasons for this. The first is an increase in the range of drugs and solvents available to the children. The second is about supply and demand. The number of children on the street has increased, so there is a perceived increase in demand. With the increase in daily living costs, there is more pressure from those selling drugs to make more money. Traditionally the children we worked with used solvents mostly (such as glue) and marijuana, as it is cheaper than food and helped them to forget the difficulties they face in their situation on the street. Now cocaine, spice, and other injectable substances are more readily available. The prolonged time on the street during the nine months of school closures meant that children were more at risk of peer pressure and being targeted by people pushing drug use.

What opportunities has LSO experienced?

There has been more local government recognition of LSO and the impact of our projects. We are now a key partner for officials wanting to keep children in a safe environment and prepare them to go back to school. There has therefore been an increase in the number of referral cases from government agencies.

The local network of community-based organisations, around Thika town and the wider district, and local government has been running for many years. However, the impact of the network has always depended on the interest of individual District Children's Officers as they chair the network during their time in post. Since COVID-19, collaboration has improved. Representation from local government entities has extended to include community chiefs, assistant county commissioners, assistant chiefs and other agencies. The improved coordination of the network has developed a better system of tracing street-connected children's extended family members as community-based organisations are able to work together more efficiently. There has therefore been an increase in the number of calls to LSO, as network members refer the children that they encounter on the streets to LSO's outreach centre in Kiandutu.

This sounds great, collaboration and working together are key to inclusion. Are there any issues with being part of this network?

Local government representatives recognise the role we play in supporting street-connected children to leave the street and are committed to addressing the increased number of street-connected children. This increase in the numbers of children on the street inspired the new more coordinated approach. However, these referrals are not accompanied by financial investment. Working together reduces the money that needs to be spent at a local government level as they rely on community-based organisations to fit the bill. They are therefore relying on the organisations focused on reintegration to support the children on the streets, but we have very limited resources. There is a need for greater levels of investment to support the work of the organisations who are part of the network.

What do you think needs to happen to make the system better?

Apart from financial investment, which is very much needed, there needs to be a more coordinated approach to community development. There are reasons why children are on the streets, which are as much to do

with the conditions of life at home as the temptations and freedom that street-life is perceived to provide. We need to start planning holistic approaches to building awareness of the risks of street life. This would involve working with schools to develop programmes that stress the risks to the students, supporting parents to better support their children to prevent their migration to the street, and sharing the responsibility across the different organisations within the network. For example, LSO works with children on the street and in Kiandutu, while other organisations focus on inclusive education programmes and providing feeding programmes in schools. Together we could plan to develop a broader approach to our work: e.g., providing parents with income generating opportunities; supporting children's transitions (back) into schools; and educating the public to refer street-connected children to the LSO drop-in centre and donating to the network, rather than feeding the children on the street.

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LSO project participants

Supporting children with disabilities to access education in Malawi

Sightsavers

When children are given the right support in pre-school, they are more likely to progress to primary school. This is especially true for children with disabilities. Sightsavers works with more than 40 Community Based Childcare Centres (CBCCs) in Malawi to provide inclusive early childhood education. This article looks at the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and the steps taken to move forward.

Project context

Sightsavers and partners work with the CBCCs with financial support from People's Postcode Lottery. As part of the three-year project, which began in 2020, young children with disabilities are being supported to attend pre-school where they can learn, play and develop alongside their peers.

Volunteer CBCC caregivers have been trained to adapt their teaching and play styles to support children with different needs. They have been encouraged to include all children in school activities, and now have greater confidence in teaching children with disabilities.

Inclusive training materials such as flipcharts have been developed which include instructions for the facilitator and illustrations and guidance for participants. The materials are linked to the early years curriculum and make suggestions about producing appropriate play materials and using local resources, adapting activities so that all learners can be involved and working together to organise and manage classroom and outdoor spaces.

Cluster groups have been formed so that different centres can learn from each other and CBCC caregivers are able to meet to discuss the challenges they face.

“The trainings that we went through were ‘inclusive education’ so that ... all students will

have equal learning opportunity regardless of their status... After getting trained, it helped me so much with these students ...” (Marytina, teacher, Mkonde CBCC)

Learning interrupted

The three-year project was due to begin in April 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was taking hold. With restrictions on meetings and school closures, normal teaching could not happen. The project staff switched to remote meetings as they were not able to make visits to CBCCs until October 2020.

The interruptions caused a lot of disturbance, especially for children with disabilities because of their greater support needs. We realised that children were not able to access learning materials so we started developing a set of resources that parents of children with disabilities could use at home. As not all children can attend a CBCC, these materials give an outline of different activities that will support children's learning.

“During COVID-19 our school temporarily closed but we still had a plan to get into class in fewer numbers... As caregivers, we were encouraging the parents to still give children toys knowing that a child learns a lot by playing. We went around visiting them in their homes, encouraging the parents that as the children play remind them that one of these days, they will get back to school and they should not forget the school materials.” (Marytina, teacher, Mkonde CBCC)

Changes made

Small changes were made when returning to the classroom. For safety, children now sit 1m apart, and all CBCCs have water available and encourage hand washing. As a precautionary measure, the duration of lessons and the length of the school day were shortened. This has been adopted in the longer term by the

CBCCs.

Social impact

During COVID-19 there were many restrictions and few activities took place between families. Some homes experienced food shortages because local businesses shut down. There has been some weakening of relationships between CBCC caregivers, parents, and children as people lived in isolation during the height of the pandemic. But gradually things are returning to normal, parents can fetch food for their families, and people can visit each other and socialise.

In order to encourage learners back into schools, community awareness meetings were held and CBCC caregivers visited the homes of children who had not returned. But most parents, CBCC caregivers and children were excited to get back to schools.

“We’ve seen a high number of children with disabilities registering at the CBCCs, which was not the case before the project. We’ve also seen communities working together to support the families and the centres that are enrolling children with disabilities.

Parents of children with disabilities are taking a leading role in making sure they support their children’s education. Some parents travel long distances to bring their children to the community centres – before the project, this

was not the case.” (Betty Moses, technical advisor for Sightsavers Malawi)

Supporting livelihoods

To increase the project’s sustainability, community gardens have been set up alongside the CBCCs. Children and their communities have learned about farming, and the gardens provide children with a nutritious porridge breakfast. With the support of agricultural workers, the families of children with disabilities have built enclosures for livestock and been supplied with goats. As these give birth the scheme is extended to the next family. This provides additional income for the families. In one centre enough food was produced to feed all the children for a year and to raise funds to buy some teaching materials.

Sightsavers is involved with a number of partners on this project, including the Catholic Health Commission (Malawi), the Ministry of Gender Children Disability and Social Welfare (Ntcheu), and the Parents of Disabled Children Association in Malawi. For more information: <https://bit.ly/eer11-4>

This article was written by members of the Sightsavers project team, including Betty Moses, Ben Chikaipa and Effie Kaminyoghe. For more details contact Ronnie Stapleton, Sightsavers’ Global Technical Lead for Education for the East Central & Southern Africa region: rstapleton@sightsavers.org



Teacher Marytina and her pupils in the classroom.

Organisations of people with disabilities as inclusive education advocates in Somalia and Uganda

Colleen Howell, Polly Kirby and Hayley Scrase

For the last three years EENET has assisted members of the Norad-funded Together for Inclusion (TOFI) consortium in Uganda and Somalia to pilot an initiative that develops the capacity of organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) to promote and advocate for inclusive education. In this article we outline how OPDs can be effective advocates for inclusion in schools.

The starting point

Since 2015 EENET has worked with Norwegian Association for Disabled (NAD), its partners and ministries of education in Zambia and Zanzibar to develop inclusive education teacher training. From this evolved a desire to support OPDs to play a greater role in inclusive education, as advocates and advisers. Overall, this work is now known as the Inclusive Learning Approach (ILA).

The TOFI programme started in late 2019 as a collaboration between 15 Norwegian OPDs and NGOs working in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda. The programme covers human rights, economic empowerment, and inclusive education. ILA has been used in four TOFI countries. It has two components: inclusive education teacher training and inclusive education advocacy.

While ILA's Inclusive Teaching Component emerged in Zambia and Zanzibar, the Inclusive Advocacy Component was first developed in Uganda, by National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) and NAD with technical support from EENET. It was then adapted in Somalia, involving Puntland Disability Organisation Network (PDON), Save the Children Somalia, Disability Aid Foundation (DAF), and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Puntland and Central South Somalia, again with EENET support. It is further being adapted in NAD-supported projects in Zambia and Zanzibar.

About the Inclusive Advocacy Component

OPD members have experience of the barriers facing learners with disabilities. Through collaborating with schools and linking them to support in the community, OPDs can help to address these barriers. They can actively lobby governments for changes to policy, plans and budgets. OPDs include adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. Through awareness-raising among members, they can mobilise more support within communities for inclusive education. TOFI provided an ideal opportunity to pilot inclusive education-focused mentoring and professional development for OPDs.

The Inclusive Advocacy Component strengthens OPDs' understanding of inclusive education situations and opportunities in low-resource contexts. This helps OPDs develop a clear vision of the changes they want to see in their education system. It also facilitates stronger engagement with schools and various levels of education authorities.

The approach has the following ambitions:

1. OPD members gain deeper knowledge and understanding of inclusive education and use this to support the development of inclusive schools and monitor progress.
2. With improved knowledge, OPDs develop more refined and evidence-based policy advice and guidance, and use this to advocate for inclusive education at different levels.
3. In turn, OPDs develop tools to integrate inclusive education awareness raising and monitoring into their strategic planning for inclusive education.

Type of training

OPDs often lack access to practical change-focused training on inclusive education, and not much existing training is free or open-source. The capacity building process in Uganda and

Somalia therefore involved developing four training modules that will be freely available:

- **Foundational module:** Introduction to inclusive education: what is inclusive education and understanding inclusive education advocacy?
- **Module 2:** Collaboration for inclusion: Working with School Inclusion Teams and networking across communities for inclusive education;
- **Module 3:** Identifying and supporting out-of-school children and using advocacy skills to do this;
- **Module 4:** Sustaining inclusive education advocacy and integrating inclusive education into strategic plans.



Training participants discuss an illustration in Uganda

Each module builds on learning from the previous module and encourages participants to put their learning into practice. Participants do small advocacy tasks within their communities using skills they have learnt, such as action research, in between each training module. This helps them understand more about inclusive education challenges and take positive action in their local context.

All the modules and advocacy tasks are designed to be adapted to different contexts. In each new context, the four modules need to be read, reviewed and adapted before being used in collaboration with the lead facilitators who are being trained.

Key elements of the approach

- Lead facilitators from the implementing organisations, which should include OPDs, help to contextualise the training materials meaning they are co-developed and therefore co-owned by key stakeholders.
- The approach builds a cadre of knowledgeable, skilled and confident OPD facilitators. They roll out the training to OPD members, community leaders and parents/caregivers. They also make ongoing improvements to the training and align it to the local context.
- The training prioritises practice over theory, promotes learning-by-doing, and builds OPD members' capacity to be innovative and critically reflective when advocating for inclusive education.
- It recognises the vital roles OPDs can play in advocating for inclusive education and the skills and knowledge needed for these roles.
- It provides a toolkit and suggestions for how to use, adapt and build on the approach to make it context specific.

Some lessons

Experience from Uganda and Somalia suggests the training should be rolled out fairly quickly after the local-level facilitators have been trained. This ensures the facilitators are confident and remember the content and methodologies. Facilitators should train in facilitation teams, so they can support and learn from each other, and learn across districts. The facilitators should train OPD leadership and other members; parents of children with and without disabilities from schools in their communities; head teachers; and local councillors, district and/or community leaders.

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<https://bit.ly/eer11-26>

Home-school collaboration in inclusive education, Ukraine

Su Lyn Corcoran, Helen Pinnock and Rachel Twigg

Inclusive education acknowledges that learners have a ‘right to belong’ within both school and home communities. In this article, we explore the importance of home-school connections, using findings from a home learning survey conducted in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Focusing on responses from Ukraine, we highlight how existing support networks and effective home-school relationships led to better outcomes for children learning at home during a crisis.

Teacher-parent partnerships

Parental involvement in and attitudes towards learning, academic achievement and socio-emotional development influence children’s attitudes to learning. Relationships between parents and teachers, and between communities and schools, are critical to facilitating positive parental roles. High-quality links, welcoming environments, and partnering activities help parents and teachers work together to support children’s wellbeing and intellectual development. Learners with disabilities and/or additional needs often need more attention and greater advocacy from parents to ensure they are included in learning. School-home partnerships are central to meeting their child development goals.

The importance of teacher-parent partnerships is well understood, but in many contexts teachers see parents as an inconvenience. Many school systems were therefore unprepared for changing parents’ roles when COVID-19 closed schools and children had to learn at home. We also noticed that most home learning materials and activities provided at this time had little or no focus on the needs of learners with disabilities, or on learners’, parents’, and teachers’ mental health and wellbeing.

Our survey

In response to the crisis, EENET and Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD) developed some basic home learning guidance materials for families of children with disabilities. To inform the materials we conducted an online survey in 14 languages. We received 944 responses from Ukraine, providing a snapshot of the home learning support provided during the first six months of the pandemic. Much of the infrastructure described by Ukrainian respondents has now been damaged, destroyed, or otherwise negatively impacted by the current war, but the respondents gave their time to share their experiences and we wish to acknowledge that. And, as the authors of the latest Ukraine case studies in this edition suggest, their experiences during COVID-19 have helped them adapt to the current situation.

Findings – the challenges

Centralised support for home learning in Ukraine was provided through the Ministry of Education YouTube channel and 11 television channels. Schools and other education centres provided additional support through printed study materials or remote teaching sessions using the phone, online platforms and social media groups. As one respondent to the survey said:

“[Teachers] urgently recorded the lessons, developed additional presentations, recorded videos with a song, a fairy tale, which can also be conducted by a mother using the simplest materials.”

There were challenges accessing remote learning platforms because of poor internet connectivity in rural areas, the level of teachers’ abilities and access to resources for online lesson delivery, and parents’ need for digital support. Another respondent said:

“No one cares about whether educators have experience of online interaction. There are only orders and requirements.”

Televised programmes were described as useful for children in rural areas, who were more likely to have a television than a laptop. However, these programmes and connected learning were not interactive. They also required parents' time to find other educational resources, explain the tasks, and complete them. This meant children often worked at weekends to make up lessons they had not had time to complete.

Gaps in available support for home learning greatly affected learners in the early years or with disabilities. The centralised remote learning provision was not accessible to all learners, as one respondent said:

“Children with hearing impairments had difficulties engaging with the educational material remotely.”

Children with additional needs, who struggled to access materials and did not get special home learning advice, were disproportionately affected. And they lacked access to other support like physiotherapy or speech therapy.

Findings – what worked?

When respondents described home learning as being inclusive, two key areas stood out:

- the benefits of greater flexibility;
- the value of existing home-school connections.

Flexibility

The flexibility offered by home learning allowed learners to take control of their 'school' day. They could spend more time sleeping because there was no journey to school, or they could split their studies into smaller periods and take more breaks. Children had more autonomy over the learning process. Teachers could be more creative when providing structures within which home learning was delivered. In areas where teachers had the resources to control or flexibly adapt the delivery of home learning support, children and parents described more positive learning experiences.

The benefits of enhanced flexibility have implications for rethinking how the length and structure of the standard school day and journeys to and from school could impact children's behaviour and capacity to learn. It also raises interesting questions about further developing hybrid approaches to learning, where platforms tested by children (especially those with additional needs) are maintained long-term and used by both schools and parents. Such platforms are then ready for home learning whenever children cannot access school.

Existing connections

Positive home learning experiences were tied to existing relationships and interactions. When learners at home received assistance and real-time communication with teachers, this was most effective in areas where schools and education centres already collaborated more openly with parents and the wider community. Established communication networks put schools in a better position to support learning and development of children with additional needs. Where teachers were supported and given time to develop their own resources, or where materials could be used alongside televised programmes, learners were reportedly better able to access materials and meet learning objectives.

The Ukrainian questionnaire responses outline the importance of flexibility and home-school partnerships for inclusion – especially in periods of crisis. Such inclusive communities are at the heart of effective inclusive education systems which support autonomy, both for teachers and learners.

Su is a researcher at Manchester Metropolitan University and editor of Enabling Education Review. Helen is a an EENET consultant and Rachel is a secondary school teacher who is also an EENET volunteer. They can be contacted through the EENET office.

Delivering inclusive education in Ukraine

EENET has published two video sets in recent years – ‘An Inclusive Day’ and ‘Inclusive Beginnings’ – both of which feature inclusive education practice in Ukraine. Through our young voices project, we also worked with children as peer researchers in Ukraine. This work would not have been possible without Oleh Lytvynov, a Ukrainian translator and interpreter. In July-September 2022, Oleh reconnected with several teachers in Ukraine to find out about how they were coping with the war and its impact on education.

Iryna and Inna shared their experiences of working in preschools in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. Lesia, Iryna and Oksana all come from Lviv, a city in the west of the country. Lesia and Oksana work in preschools while Iryna is the head teacher of a combined primary and secondary school. The stories they shared with Oleh provide unique insight into how they adapted their working practice to meet the needs of the learners. We share some of their insights by theme in the following sections.

Preparing for a war

Lesia: I could not sleep on the night of 24 February 2022, thinking about whether the war would begin. At 4:03am I took my phone and opened Facebook. The first thing I saw was a post by a member of the Ukrainian parliament published just three minutes earlier, which read: “Here it is”. At first, I did not think it was about the war. Then I saw dozens of comments reporting explosions in different parts of the country. I realised that the war had started and I began to wake up my relatives and colleagues.

Iryna (Kyiv): On the morning of 24 February 2022, I was getting ready to go to work when I heard two booming sounds in the distance. I thought it was from a construction site nearby. But then I heard multiple message notifications on my phone, which was unusual for that time in the morning. When I checked, I learned from the teachers’ chat that Russia had invaded Ukraine. Listening to sporadic explosions in the distance, I texted the parents from my class, asking who was going to bring their children.

Everyone said they were leaving the city, so I did not go to work that day. I stayed in Kyiv

as I could not leave my pets. The capital was understood to be Russia’s main goal, with fighting in the outskirts throughout March until the Russian army retreated. Sounds of artillery, anti-aircraft guns, and warplanes did not stop. I was scared and slept in the hallway to ensure I had at least two walls between myself and the street – the so-called “rule of two walls” which can save your life during shelling. I slept fully dressed so I could run out quickly.

Inna: I woke to the sounds of explosions and felt denial. I could not grasp how anything like that was even possible. We could not hold classes that day and contacted parents using our school chat groups. We invited families to stay in the bomb shelter that we had prepared in the school basement when rumours of a potential invasion started. We felt responsible for the safety of our learners and had asked parents to help us stockpile bottled water, food, and other necessities.

On the first day, 39 learners, staff, and family members took cover with us. Over the next 10 days the number of people in the shelter increased. It became difficult to buy food in the city – I keep pictures of empty grocery shelves on my phone for history. The families began to leave by train or car. When my family evacuated to Lviv, the journey took three days because of military checkpoints and the flow of traffic out of the capital. From Lviv I contacted school staff who were scattered across Ukraine and beyond. One teacher travelled to Poland with four families from the preschool. They settled together as a community and she continued to work with her learners there, eventually working in a Polish kindergarten with a class for refugee children.



A playground in Ukraine (image from 2019)

Iryna (Lviv): The full-scale Russian invasion came as a shock to me even though my team and I had prepared. We turned our basements into bomb shelters, organised medical training events and worked with professional servicemen to prepare older students to understand the situation and learn first aid. The day before the invasion, we held an online meeting with parent representatives to discuss personal safety measures and how education would continue in case of war. This practice of weekly meetings with parents began during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the bombing started, I instructed families to stay at home. Staff who lived nearby came to school to discuss next steps. At the time, the post of city head of education department was vacant, so we had to make our own decisions. We had a system where I communicated with the school administration and parents, and then administrative staff contacted teachers. To begin with, it was important for everyone to stay in touch so we could track which children remained in the city and who left.

Oksana: I told my staff to stay home and contacted the parents. I invited my son and his family to stay with me so we could be together. On 9 March I took them to the Polish border and returned home alone.

Supporting the internally displaced

Iryna (Lviv): We turned the school into a temporary home for internally displaced people (IDPs) from the regions affected by the war.

Parents helped with mattresses, pillows, and blankets. Volunteers and partner organisations helped the school stockpile food and medicines for the temporary residents. We organised the process and logistics and appointed coordinators from among the staff members and parents to ensure shelter for approximately 700 displaced persons.

When Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, many Ukrainians learned only Russian. Consequently, many of the IDPs coming from the east of Ukraine spoke limited Ukrainian. We arranged free language courses for them. Most of the IDPs did not stay at the school for long. There was a constant flow of people coming and going. After the first two weeks, we had a flawless logistics system of parents from our community and other volunteers helping IDPs find places to live, taking them to the train station or the Polish border, providing games for learners, and so on.

Apart from providing education, most of the school staff volunteered in their free time. They worked at humanitarian logistics hubs, supporting IDPs in different ways, such as providing psychological consultations. As the school is located close to the Lviv International Airport there were fears that the area could be a target for Russian strikes. The IDPs were therefore transferred to the central refugee hub, where they were assisted with finding jobs and long-term accommodation. Our parents helped to build a modular village as part of this. By June, the school was no longer a shelter for IDPs and could begin preparations for the new, wartime, school year.

Other contributions to the war effort

Lesia: Most of my staff stayed in Lviv and were eager to help the country somehow. During the first two weeks, the school's cooks prepared food which we delivered to arriving refugees and territorial defence forces at the train station. Many staff members joined volunteer groups. We tried to move ourselves from a state of fear and be useful.

We tried to stay in touch with the learners' families. Many parents were in the military and provided some reassuring information to keep



A collage image displayed at a school in Ukraine (image from 2019)

community spirits up. Other parents donated money for food for the preschool kitchen because, in addition to cooking for the territorial defence, the kindergarten also cooked for more than 200 orphans and children with disabilities who were evacuated from the combat zone to a centre nearby. On some days they used 100 kilogrammes of flour. Although the kindergarten was closed for the first few months of the full-scale war, we did not sit idle. We delivered classes at centres hosting refugee children.

Oksana: I realised that people needed to communicate so I decided to open the preschool – not as an educational institution, but as a sort of humanitarian hub. Many staff members who stayed in the city were happy to join. At first, we collected goods for the army, like food, for example. Later we decided to make camouflage nets. This idea attracted many as it busied people's hands, provided relief, and raised morale because we were together doing something useful. Some teachers felt that they could not come because their children were afraid to stay home alone, so we came together with the children. This

helped them to feel a little better as they saw that life was continuing.

As word of the humanitarian hub spread, more people offered help. Some delivered food, some offered electrical appliances for internally displaced people, and others just came and asked how they could be useful. I began to feel that we, as an educational institution, were becoming a community centre. We felt the responsibility, although did not actually know ourselves what else we could do. We organised ourselves to find other ways of helping the country and involving the volunteers. Even though the kindergarten has been reopened, our humanitarian work continues. We do different things: collect food, equipment for soldiers, donations for the army and so on. We registered a charity fund to help orphanages.

Remote Learning

Lesia: At the end of April, we tried to deliver remote learning activities, especially for children with special educational needs, but the experiment was not very successful. In general, everyone felt uncertain during the

first few weeks, and it was much easier to go somewhere and do some small concrete things, like making camouflage nets, instead of thinking about how to continue the educational process in the new dramatic circumstances.

Oksana: In the first weeks of the war while the preschool was still closed, we changed the content of communication with the parents. We began posting psychologists' advice on the school's social media to help parents support themselves and their children. We used social media and messages to stay in touch with learners' families, to know who remained in the city and who had left, and whether everyone was safe. It is significant that every one of 360 families whose children attend our preschool responded to our messages and informed us of their status. Unfortunately, there have been losses in our community. One father was killed in battle. We collected money to support the family.

Iryna (Lviv): Even though the school turned into a humanitarian hub, it continued to provide distance education for its learners, as well as for the children of IDPs who stayed at the school and in the neighbourhood. In some cases, the school provided laptops or tablets to make sure learners could join the lessons. The experience of providing distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was very helpful in these circumstances.

The situation for learners with special educational needs was somewhat different. For some of these learners it was uncomfortable to study at home with their parents. We organised face-to-face classes to provide structure and routine for autistic learners for example, and others whose parents were not used to supporting their learning at home. The greatest challenge concerned learners with visual impairments. We sought advice from a specialised school and managed to provide the necessary support.

On the 1 September, the school renewed face-to-face education. We have 1001 learners in total, but some families are still abroad, feeling cautious about returning to Ukraine until the war is over. As of October 2022, 104 learners

were learning at home – 60 of whom are still abroad. One of the teachers, who has also not returned yet, continues to teach her learners via teleconferencing.

Iryna (Kyiv): I stayed in touch with the parents, but only sporadically at first. After a month, the Department of Education instructed educators to contact learners about where they were and whether they would return to Kyiv soon. Some teachers had online sessions with their classes, but it did not work for me because my class was for 3-4-year-olds. Instead, my colleagues and I began to film short video clips with different activities, crafts, storytelling, etc., for the youngest classes. Some children respond well to crafts and arts and send pictures of their pieces, while others prefer gymnastics lessons.

When the kindergarten closed, the Department of Education needed to know what was happening to justify paying teachers' salaries. They asked us to prepare monthly activity plans and weekly reports about our video lessons and the other resources we use. There is no bomb shelter in my preschool so we took longer to open. We kept it ready for children, watering the plants in the garden, cleaning and doing small repairs and preparing the basement to serve as a shelter.

Reopening schools

Inna: Throughout March and April 2022, we kept in touch with the learners and their families. We provided simple human contact and support rather than education, but we began to think about restarting our work. I returned to Kyiv on 10 May to prepare to reopen. We discussed safety policies in an online meeting with parents. There was no official guidance, so we had to devise our own. A construction expert examined the building to confirm that our basement was safe enough to use as a daytime sleep room to avoid waking the children during air raids. We worked closely with parents to ensure continuity for the children. For example, many families began to feel more relaxed and often ignored the sirens, but we took them very seriously. To not confuse and disorient the children it was important to implement similar rules at school and home.

Before the war, 130 children attended Shchastya Kids preschool (shchastya means “happiness” in Ukrainian). In July 2022 we have 58 learners, including newly arrived internally displaced children from other parts of the country. We stay in touch with families who have not come back yet. There is currently no need for remote delivery of learning activities for these children because they have preschool places where they stay.

Iryna (Lviv): The school has two bomb shelters with a maximum capacity for 720, which is not enough to fit everyone at the same time. We had to rearrange the schedules and modes of teaching. Grades 1-5 come to school every day, and the older learners enjoy a blended approach, studying at home on certain days. This system was discussed and agreed upon with the parents, who also suggested many good ideas.

Dramatic times require new and flexible approaches. For example, some displaced learners were asked to return (at least digitally) to their home schools to avoid losing their places. The schools arranged a system for such learners to continue physically attending lessons at our school, but they are assessed by their home schools. This allows the families to stay in Lviv while still formally complying with the national regulations.

Lesia: Our preschool opened on 1 June. It does not have its own bomb shelter, so we had to sign an agreement with the owners to use one nearby. It is a proper bomb shelter, not just a cellar, equipped with oxygen, ventilation, toilets, running water, etc. It takes 3 minutes for an adult to get there, and 11 minutes to bring all children from the kindergarten. Precise timing is a must. When we reopened, approximately 30% of the original school roll were attending. By August, the preschool was at 80% capacity.

Iryna (Lviv): We place great emphasis on safety. All teachers are being trained and certified in providing first aid and we offer this training to parents. We also work with parents to ensure they take their children's safety seriously. For example, during the air raid signal, all learners go to the shelters and

remain there until the sirens are clear. At the same time, some parents come and want to take their children home while the sirens are still on. Even though actual missile strikes are rare in Lviv, it is essential to take these things seriously and have consistent rules for learners.

The war has meant that we have had to develop self-organisation and responsibility. We have had to learn quickly, especially in being constantly alert to air raids. In September, a fire started in the old, worn-out electrical room of the school. The school team acted quickly, evacuating all the learners and extinguishing the fire before the firefighters arrived. It shows why 80% of our parents voted for live, in-person education, instead of distance learning as they are confident that their children are safe at the school.

Iryna (Kyiv): Not all families who have returned to Kyiv will be able to bring their children to school. There is a new requirement that only children whose parents have jobs can attend. This condition was introduced to relieve preschools from being responsible for all children's safety. There are other changes too. The war and partial occupation of Ukraine's territory disrupted supply chains in the country, including the supply of food products to Kyiv's kindergartens. Since kindergartens cannot provide meals anymore, children only come for a few hours in the morning or afternoon, and do not have the usual daytime sleep at the preschool.

Another adaptation is the learner/teacher ratio. It is 5:1 now, so the teacher keeps a close eye on the children assigned to them. In the event of an air-raid siren, they must immediately grab ‘their’ children, help them get dressed and take them to the shelter. This avoids the usual free-for-all when children get ready to go out, and the children can get to safety faster.

Oksana: We did not need to increase our staff numbers with the restrictions on the ratio of teachers to students as children are still abroad. Any staff vacancies are filled quickly by the IDPs who have fled from more dangerous regions of Ukraine and have been able to

join the preschool as educators and technical staff. Internally displaced children have also moved to the school. When we admit a new child, we always meet the family to learn about any special educational needs and the child's experiences of the war. Some saw explosions and destruction, some spent a long time in bomb shelters. Educational psychologists work closely with the children, but luckily, we have not observed any serious effects of war on the newcomers.

Some of our staff members are still abroad but they work remotely, conducting online lessons. The COVID-19 pandemic experience was useful in this respect. Each teacher is in touch with their learners' families, and they contact parents of children who stay at home regularly to suggest home learning activities. Some children must stay at home because they have an unemployed parent, but they can join their class during outdoor playtime and attend extracurricular paid activities like dance club, English lessons, or school preparation classes. I also offer their parents visits to our specialists like psychologists and speech therapists if needed.



Playing with building blocks in a preschool in Ukraine (photo from 2019)

Mental health / emotional support needs

Iryna (Kyiv): According to official reports, over 100,000 people have moved to Kyiv from the more dangerous parts of the country. There are many newcomers in the Kyiv preschools. I already had experience of working with internally displaced children when the war in the east of Ukraine in 2014 displaced children from the Donbas region. I remember how one

boy was affected psychologically – he was nervous and cried often. The others introduced a peculiar game called 'separatists'. The current phase of the war is much worse, and many Ukrainian children play war these days.

Inna: I am engaged with the Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation as a psychologist and trainer. I have developed and conducted multiple online seminars on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for educators from all over the country, based on international experiences. To better support the children returning to Shchastya Kids with PTSD, we work with parents to understand what they have experienced, where they have been, and what they witnessed during the war. We also developed training for staff and parents on how to identify PTSD symptoms in children and what to do.

They began to draw and play war because war became an everyday reality for them. But it is good that they do draw and play at all because they are able to express their experiences. It is more important to keep a close eye on those children who are very calm and freeze their emotions inside.

Shchastya Kids is an inclusive preschool. We treat all children as individuals, and the war has not changed this. Children need to feel understood. Teachers must remain even more aware to identify when someone is startled because of aircraft sounds, for example. We cannot get rid of all triggers, but we can be there to hug children, to tell them that those are our warriors of light who protect us. Many seemingly innocent things can retraumatise children who have seen destruction. For example, when a house of toy building blocks falls apart it can remind a child that they lost their home, or when one colour creeps over the other one when a child is painting. It is impossible to foresee all triggers, but it is important for us to observe children's reactions and provide support.

We also choose educational content (audio, video and literature) with extra care to avoid re-traumatisation. This extends to music – melodies that you have always liked can have

a completely different, even re-traumatising effect on children who have survived missile strikes and air raids, heard explosions, and seen ruined houses, etc. In my mind this could be an interesting topic for future research. We have observed children's cognitive and functional regression during the war. For example, beginning to stutter or not speaking at all. Such regression is normal in times of prolonged stress and uncertainty, and we must demonstrate extra patience and understanding.

The war forced us to modify our daily practices. We offer fewer activities during the day at a slower pace. Morning circle-time now includes breathing exercises to help stabilise our mental and emotional state. The teachers are trained to help children cope with anger and aggression, while supporting their own mental wellbeing as we know it is often hard to hold back tears when listening to children's stories. The children are taught to recognise complex emotions in themselves. Every Friday, preschool psychologists conduct resource meetings to prevent emotional burnout in teachers. They are not mandatory, but any staff member can attend if they feel the need. Similar weekly meetings are offered to parents.

The most surprising thing for me is the feeling of unity we experience in our school community. Everyone has their own story: someone's husband is fighting on the front, someone has parents in the occupied territory, but despite all that we have all become closer to each other. And this extends to the parents who show up at preschool meetings and festivals more than ever before.

Lesia: There are new wartime requirements for learners. The teacher:student ratios are tighter but we do not have additional staff. We have to make do with the resources we have. To comply with the new requirements, we must reduce class and pupil numbers. Only children of working parents are admitted but we still cannot accommodate everyone who wants to join. The situation is stressful because children want to see their friends and socialise. It is hard for them to release all their energy at home and parents get tired caring full time. It is a vicious circle: some mothers cannot work because

they are looking after their children, and children cannot go to preschool because their mothers are not employed. We consider each case separately and make some exceptions. For example, if a mother is about to give birth, we will, of course, admit her older child.

Our usual ways of working have changed. Safety is the main focus now. Most learning activities take place outside so that we can get to the bomb shelter faster, saving time on dressing the children up. We try to plan for all possible scenarios collaboratively with parents. We discuss the detail, down to what clothes the children should sleep in so that they are prepared for an air raid; there is no time to change clothes. Municipal and central authorities organise safety and civil defence training for us – how to act in case of a chemical attack or radiation contamination, for example. Most of these activities are useful, and we are motivated to learn, knowing this could save lives.

Oksana: The war affects the learning we provide. My first task is ensuring that children are happy and safe. Learning can be provided only when these first goals are met. We proceed from an understanding that a child is an intelligent individual, just like an adult, only a smaller one. We speak with children about the war because they live in a country at war and experience it every day. Children can understand everything that is happening when you talk to them. If an adult does not explain things, the child will gain their experience anyway, but through their own bumps and bruises so to speak, and so they need to be supported.

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They can be contacted via the EENET office.



Painting pine cones in a preschool in Ukraine
(image from 2019)

Home Learning Materials

www.eenet.org.uk/inclusive-home-learning

EENET and NAD have developed easy-read and visual home learning guidance for families with children with disabilities that includes:

- An A2 home learning poster, available in twelve languages.
- An activity booklet, featuring a collection of easy-to-use, low or no-cost home learning activities for learners of varied ages and abilities.
- A booklet of home learning activities adapted to the needs of very young learners.



Browse the project pages on the website to choose from a selection of fun learning activities that children with and without disabilities and their families can do at home, at any time.

Multilingualism is a resource for learning and teaching

Rachel Bowden

In this article, Rachel builds on her experience as both an English teacher and a researcher of English medium instruction, to discuss the need for a shift in how we think about language in the classroom.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed educational inequalities while increasing the learning and achievement gap. Multilingual learners, who use languages other than the official language of instruction outside school, may have been additionally disadvantaged through periods of enforced self-study during lockdowns. Teachers often form a vital bridge between multilingual students and monolingual school textbooks. Without teachers' support to understand monolingual textbooks, multilingual learners faced additional hurdles to continuing their education during lockdowns.

What does this mean for supporting multilingual learners in the classroom?

The old normal: multilingualism is ignored or seen as a problem

About 370 million learners in low- and middle-income countries attend schools where the official language of instruction is not their main language.¹ This multilingual reality is mostly not reflected in initial teacher education, textbooks and examinations, which assume the education system is monolingual. As a result, teachers are left to develop their own strategies to help multilingual students participate and learn and achieve. These include:

- explaining new language and new concepts in familiar language;
- using simplified versions of the additional language;
- mixing familiar and additional language;
- using pictures and diagrams;
- giving examples; and
- giving demonstrations.

These strategies help students bridge between their out-of-school knowledge and experience and academic language, meanings and practices. Indeed, multilingual communication in the classroom is a sign that teachers are enabling students' participation and learning. However, in the vast majority of schools, multilingual classroom communication is not encouraged, despite its proven benefits for learning. As a result, teachers and learners limit or hide the use of multilingual communication.

Many people believe that using learners' familiar language limits their learning of the instructional language. They think that spending more **time** using the instructional language or using a greater **amount** of the instructional language matters the most. This is not the case. Research shows that using learners' familiar languages alongside the instructional language, improves the **quality** of learners' language use and comprehension more quickly.

The new normal: multilingualism is a right and a resource

There has been a change from seeing multilingual communication as a problem to recognising that it is both a right and a resource for learning and teaching.

The term 'pedagogical translanguageing' describes the ways in which teachers use learners' familiar languages (and other strategies) to enable students to learn subject content and the official language of instruction. There are many possible approaches, such as combining familiar language with subject-specific language in the language of instruction. Often, this happens within a single sentence. For example, in a geometry lesson, a Rwandan mathematics teacher uses English for mathematical terms, and Kinyarwanda to help students understand:

“Urabona izi rectangle..” (Do you see these rectangles?)

And

“Hano ni midpoint of this rectangle. Sibyo? Muri kubireba?” (Here it is in the midpoint. Isn't it? Do you see that?)

Translanguaging also includes moving between verbal and non-verbal forms of language. In the lesson, the teacher uses other strategies to help students understand. For example, he draws diagrams of rectangles and writes formula. He also demonstrates exercises and guides volunteer students to show their classmates on the board.

Translanguaging can also involve changing languages between activities. For example, the teacher might ask students to discuss a topic, or prepare an answer in their familiar language and then present to the class in English. Or they may read a text in English, and then answer comprehension questions in a familiar language. Find free ideas and examples online here: <https://bit.ly/eer11-1>.

Pedagogical translanguaging leads to better learning outcomes across subjects and in the official language of instruction. It also increases the active participation of learners in classroom activities, and their engagement with meanings.² The term celebrates the multilingual reality of teachers and learners, and the value of multilingual classroom communication for teaching and learning. It helps us to see that the ‘language problem’ is not that students or teachers lack English. The problem is education systems which do not recognise, use and develop teachers’ and students’ multilingualism for teaching and learning.

To promote the use of pedagogical translanguaging, we can:

- Talk to students, families, teachers and head teachers about the benefits of multilingual teaching and learning for subject and language learning.
- Make space for learners’ out-of-school languages in school, for example through:
 - school displays and signage;
 - assemblies and official events;
 - classroom activities (e.g., group

discussions, presentations);

▸ dictionaries and glossaries;

▸ parents’ meetings.

- Publish multilingual and language supportive textbooks.
- Educate teachers as multilingual educators, in initial teacher education and continuous professional development.

All academic learning includes language learning

It is helpful to see that all academic learning includes language learning. Even in supposedly monolingual classes, the technical language associated with particular subjects, such as geography or science, is very different from the language students use outside school. For example, the specific meaning of energy, force and power in physics is different to how we use these words every day. We can consider the teaching of every subject as an opportunity for language learning.

Actively teaching learners target words, phrases, and types of text (e.g., laboratory reports, academic essays, stories) helps all students and in particular multilingual and marginalised learners to participate and achieve in education.

We know that marginalised multilingual learners suffer further educational disadvantage when their multilingualism is not recognised or developed at school. To bridge the inequality gap, which has widened through the pandemic, we must support teachers to develop their pedagogical translanguaging strategies. In equipping learners for life in the new normal, multilingualism should be celebrated as a resource for learning and teaching and for individuals and communities.

[1] <https://bit.ly/eer11-2>

[2] <https://bit.ly/eer11-3>

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Fire education in informal settlements

Helen Underhill and Laura Hirst

For an estimated billion people around the world living in informal settings,¹ the risk of loss of life, property or livelihood due to fire is significant. Despite fire being the fifth most common cause of injury or death globally, access to knowledge around fire safety and the practical steps residents can take to improve safety in their living situations remains sparse and is unevenly distributed. In this article, Helen and Laura talk about the work of Kindling Safety. They provide background to the problem of fire safety in informal settlements and argue that inclusion is important to improving fire safety education.

Informal settlements

When people within the humanitarian and development sectors talk about informal settlements, they might be referring to a temporary settlement of emergency tented shelters provided by intergovernmental organisations (such as UNHCR) for refugees displaced by conflict. They might also refer to urban residential areas where people adapt existing buildings to create new homes. These are often irregular and informal, and might involve practices such as living on rooftops or adding a floor to the top of an existing building. Individual shelters are maintained by the residents and settlements often function with little or no formal infrastructure (such as water, sanitation or electricity) provided by the state. Fire is an issue facing people living in both of these types of informal settlement.

Fire is also a daily concern for the people living in settlements often referred to as slums. These semi-urban informal settlements are unplanned, informally constructed, and comprise makeshift shelters and shacks. They are most commonly associated with 'forgotten' areas of large cities such as Cairo, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, Delhi or Johannesburg. These over-crowded settlements are generally home

to people who have comparatively low-incomes and are more likely to work in the informal economy or in employment with little job security, or experience under or unemployment. The risk of fire to a household living in any of these types of settlement is not limited to loss of life or injury: the loss of property places an additional financial burden on already stretched resources.



Fire education game (H. Underhill)

The impact of a fire in one shelter or shack within an informal settlement can be devastating. The over-crowded nature of settlements means fire breaks are not always possible and are difficult to maintain. This means fires can (and do) spread from one shelter to the next rapidly, causing a domino effect across the settlement that can destroy hundreds of shelters in a matter of minutes. In hot, dry conditions, fires rip through tented settlements at speed, and evacuation routes are often hazardous and fraught with danger. Shelters are often constructed using combustible materials such as bamboo, wood, plastic and fabric, and many residents use tyres to hold down tin roofing or plastic sheeting. Having lived in shelters for many months and years, residents also often decorate inside with fabric pinned onto wooden frames, inadvertently covering fragile and

overloaded electrical cabling in flammable material. Most households rely on gas bottles or open flames for cooking and heating, and many still use candles for light. The potential for fires to start is enormous and incidents occur with frightening regularity.

Recognition and inclusion

Developing knowledge around fire prevention and response is a necessity to improve safety for all people living in informal settlements. As the rate of rural-urban migration continues to increase and more people are displaced by conflict, the pressure on existing settlements is also set to increase and with it, the risk of further fire incidents.

Thinking about improving fire safety in informal settlements requires an understanding of how people live and what this means for how they experience fire risk. For example, cooking inside shelters is a common cause of fire, disproportionately impacting women and girls who remain most likely to be involved in caring responsibilities. One solution might be to create a communal cooking area located a short walk across the settlement to limit the use of fuel inside a shelter. At first glance, this appears to solve the problem as it moves the risk of fire to an outside space away from the shelter. However, in some contexts, a daily priority is to cook and eat together in a private space, or the caregiver may also need to remain close to young, elderly or immobile members of the household or be concerned about security. Inclusive fire education must pay attention to such concerns and practicalities by recognising the different ways in which people live.

Recognising that different people have different responsibilities that create additional burdens and fire risks is key. While women and girls most often interact with fuel for cooking and can easily be present when a fire starts, many young men feel an expectation that they have the physical capabilities to stop the fire from spreading by tearing the shelter down, or are perceived as being able to fight the fire. Aside from the obvious burden and additional risk that this places on some men, this expectation can also determine access to fire safety knowledge. When educational activities about

responding to fire are only directed at able-bodied (younger) men, all other people in a settlement are more at risk - this includes women, girls, people with disabilities, different age groups. Where some men are seen as the custodians of knowledge about fire response and prevention, all capacity to respond leaves the settlement the moment they do.

For individuals and households with any additional need (be it physical, mental or age related) or experiencing any form of social exclusion or discrimination, the possibilities for recovery from fire – emotionally and financially – diminish. Social networks are key. Therefore, where fire safety messaging is delivered as part of community-wide ‘sensitisation’ (for example in leaflets or posters), recognition is also needed of how different people experience life within a settlement: Who is included in educational programmes and why and therefore who is excluded? How do cultural and social norms and histories determine what issues are included or excluded? How are different groups’ experiences represented in materials, in languages and images?

Only by recognising every person’s capacity to contribute to the reduction of fire risk is it possible to actually achieve fire safety for all.

[1] <https://bit.ly/eer11-9>

Helen and Laura are researchers and practitioners working on a range of issues related to understanding and responding to fire risk, predominantly in humanitarian and development contexts.

Webpage: www.kindlingsafety.org



Urban settlement, Lebanon (H. Underhill)

EENET's writer mentoring project

Ayman Qwaider and Ingrid Lewis

EENET's Arabic Language Community (ALC) has been growing for several years, enabling stakeholders in the Arab region to share inclusive education experiences. In 2022, Ayman Qwaider, EENET's ALC Facilitator, started a project to remotely mentor a group of ALC members to develop action research and writing skills. They will ultimately help add more Arabic language content to EENET's website. In this article, we provide an overview of the project and our future ambitions.

EENET's approach to sharing

Since 1997 EENET has supported education stakeholders to document and share their inclusive education ideas and experiences. We enable multi-directional knowledge exchange and amplify the voices of educators, decision-makers and other stakeholders doing innovative inclusion work in contexts that are often not showcased on other global platforms. Their stories are shared through our website and in this annual publication, Enabling Education Review. However, it's not enough simply to provide a platform for sharing documents.

Over the years many stakeholders who had exciting and informative stories to share have said: "we would love to publish our story, but we don't know where to start with writing about our experiences". That's why, 20 years ago, we created a project to address this challenge. It was originally referred to as 'writing workshops' but quickly evolved into an action research project.

We recognised that to write a good article about inclusive education experiences, the writer needed to have the skills and confidence to dig under the surface of the story, and reflect critically on what works and needs improving from the perspectives of different stakeholders. A good inclusive education article is informative

and honest, about the positives and negatives, not just a superficially positive promotional piece. And the process of writing about our experiences can lead to reflections and improvements in our own work, not just giving advice to other readers. EENET's first action research project in 2002 supported teachers in Zambia¹ and Tanzania to use creative ways to research and reflect on their own practices and what was happening in their school communities. Their hard work provided lots of lessons that we wrote up in an action research guide, and that we have continued to use and improve.²

Sharing in other languages

EENET's Arabic Language Community has been steadily growing over the last few years but it faces ongoing challenges with sourcing inclusive education materials in Arabic. We really want to share much more content written in Arabic for the Arab region – not just Arabic translations of materials originally written in English from other parts of the world. This is why we have started the ALC writer mentoring project. Ayman started by supporting a small group of education professionals from different countries in the Arab region.

Writer mentoring

This project helps education stakeholders to build their skills and confidence to document their work and to collaborate with others to reflect on, document and share inclusive education experiences. We selected participants with a genuine interest in developing their action research and writing skills who could commit to participating in the full six-month process. The application form for the programme asked them to provide a brief description of their work and what they would like to share. The final selection of participants ensures a diverse representation of stakeholders from different contexts across the region.

The participants have attended two short Zoom workshops to discuss and learn more about inclusive education, action research, critical thinking, communication skills, and practical tips for writing short, accessible articles. They are currently carrying out small action research activities, investigating inclusive education experiences in their context. Ayman supports and mentors the participants, who in turn support each other, via WhatsApp and Zoom.

The participants will then write up their action research process and the inclusive education experiences they have investigated. Building on EENET's editing process, the authors will receive ongoing peer and facilitator support to prepare and revise several drafts. EENET will publish the finished articles in Arabic in a special publication in 2023.

Expanding the project

We would like to run an ALC writer mentoring project every year to help support a growing cadre of investigators and writers and generate a library of Arabic language documents on inclusive education. We are seeking funding to develop similar mentoring opportunities for prospective authors in other regions.

^[1] <https://bit.ly/eer11-10>

^[2] <https://bit.ly/eer11-11>

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Ingrid is EENET's Managing Director.



Buy me a coffee

To make a donation to help expand our inclusive education writer mentoring work globally, visit EENET's page on the 'Buy me a coffee' crowdfunding platform: www.buymeacoffee.com/eenet

Inclusive Beginnings

Early childhood education videos from EENET



Inclusive Practice

Inclusive Transition

Filmed in Eswatini and Ukraine these two videos contain simple, practical ideas for use by early childhood educators. Each video has a trainer's manual. There is also a guide on using the videos for advocacy.

- **Watch the videos online:** <https://bit.ly/2KOImlv>
- **Download the manuals and guide:** <https://bit.ly/eer11-12>
- **To order the videos and manuals on flashdrive contact EENET.**

Useful publications

Resources

Girls' education technical package: theory of change (Save the Children)

This technical package outlines Save the Children's global Theory of Change for Girls' Education. It is designed as guidance for all Save the Children and partner staff who are involved in girls' education programming and advocacy. <https://bit.ly/eer11-13>

Super better children for health

(Children for Health and Kelvin Nsekwila)
This health curriculum for young adolescents can be integrated into a school's curriculum or taught as an extracurricular activity. <https://bit.ly/eer11-14>

Inclusive participation toolbox (CBM)

This toolbox is a digital centre with resources for supporting the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with disabilities. <https://bit.ly/eer11-15>

Talking to your deaf friends postcard and poster (Deaf Child Worldwide)

Some deaf people speak, some use sign language and some use both. This postcard and poster in eight languages can help you to learn more about how to communicate with your deaf friend. <https://bit.ly/eer11-16>

Research

Special issue of the journal on education in emergencies focused on education during pandemics Volume 8, number 3. The full list of articles can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/eer11-23>. The special issue also includes EENET's article on "Home learning for children in low-income contexts during a pandemic: an analysis of 2020 survey results from Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo" <https://bit.ly/eer11-25>

Primary schooling for children with disabilities: a review of african scholarship

Nidhi Singal, Carrie Spenser and Rafael Mitchell

This study reviews articles published in peer reviewed journals between 2010 and 2018 listed in the African Education Research Database (AERD), to explore how the education of children with disabilities is understood and investigated within African education research. <https://bit.ly/eer11-18>

Policy brief

Opportunities and challenges for disability-inclusive early childhood development in emergencies (Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies)

This brief advocates for and highlights the benefits of disability-inclusive Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE). It includes examples of disability-inclusive ECDiE programming from around the world and provides recommendations for governments, donors, and programmers for more inclusive ECDiE. <https://bit.ly/eer11-19>

Videos

MSF: Better representation of our diverse global workforce (MSF Norway)

In this video, Medecins Sans Frontiers aims to provide a better representation of their diverse global workforce as part of a communications strategy to address the harmful legacy of using "white saviour" images. <https://bit.ly/eer11-20>

Chance for Childhood #OverExposed campaign

This campaign aims to reframe the thinking around using images of children for fundraising purposes. The campaigners anticipate it will galvanise a sector-wide change in the way that organisations reflect on their own editorial standards. <https://bit.ly/eer11-21>

Podcast

Listen to Kanwal Singh's insights into inclusive education in India in this podcast. Kanwal is former director of the Vishwas school and author of Hanging On: A Special Educator's journey into inclusive education. <https://bit.ly/eer11-22>