

Inclusion in Action

Report of an inclusive education workshop
Zanzibar, 7-10 February 2006



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global support to
disabled people

"Learning is an endless process."

"Group work gave me the chance to explain myself without fearing that I may be wrong."

"I have found the friendliness of the participants valuable. It is like we are all coming from one country and not all parts of the world."

"Participants became one family (acceptance and respect)."

"As the days progressed, the people in the workshop started to open up and are now able to discuss issues freely and frankly."

"I liked energiser activities which let participants remember what happened in the workshop and also helped them go back to the workshop with more power."

"We must everyday remember that education for all is a right, and it must be taken – we should not wait until it is given by others."

Participants' comments on the workshop

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Our warmest thanks also go to our co-facilitators; Edwina Mulenga Mumba and Patrick Kangwa, teachers from Mpika in Zambia. Your contributions made a difference.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CBR	community-based rehabilitation
DPO	disabled persons organisation
EENET	Enabling Education Network
MIEP	Malawi Inclusive Education Project
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training (Lesotho)
NAD	Norwegian Association of Disabled
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NFU	Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
TAMH	Tanzania Association for Mentally Handicapped
ZAPDD	Zanzibar Association for People with Developmental Disabilities

1. Introduction

1.1. Aims of the workshop?

The workshop aimed to:

- enable participants to learn from each other's experiences of, and ideas for, planning, implementing and reviewing inclusive education work within a developing country context
- offer a demonstration of participatory, active learning workshop methodologies that can also be applied to project management processes and to classroom practice to make both more inclusive
- help participants think about/develop their own plans for further action on inclusive education.

1.2. Who was involved?

Organisers and funders

The event was organised by staff from the Norwegian head offices of Atlas Alliance, NAD and NFU, with in-country support from the staff of ZAPDD, a partner of NFU. Funding for the workshop came from Operation Day's Work. The Zanzibar Ministry of Education and Vocational Training were official co-hosts of the event with ZAPDD.

Participants

In total, 42 people attended the workshop (including facilitators and organisers). Many were from NFU and NAD partner organisations. Additional participants were invited from inclusive education projects in East and Southern Africa. They are not directly working with NAD and NFU, but had important experiences to share. In total 30 were from Africa, nine from Norway, one from Nepal, one from Palestine and one from the UK. A full list of participants can be found on pages 50–55.

Facilitators

The lead facilitator was Ingrid Lewis, who is Co-ordinator of EENET. Patrick Kangwa and Edwina Mulenga Mumba were co-facilitators. Both are primary school teachers from inclusive schools in Mpika, northern Zambia. They have been working with EENET for many years on the development of action research methodologies for inclusive education.



Workshop participants and organisers

1.3. What approaches did we use?

The workshop was designed so that, in the process of conveying information about inclusive education, it would also demonstrate some of the teaching and learning approaches that often characterise an inclusive classroom.

Most of the activities promoted active learning and the idea of taking responsibility for one's own learning, rather than relying totally on a teacher/trainer dictating a lesson. Inclusive education is not a simple concept that can be applied in the same way in all places. It is therefore not possible, or desirable, to have one trainer dictating one set message to participants about what inclusive education is and how it must be implemented.

The workshop offered a range of group/pair work, plenary discussions and presentations, to ensure that there were activities to suit the varied learning styles of all participants. This reflects how an inclusive classroom operates.

In addition, the workshop emphasised that you do not have to be an existing inclusive education 'expert' to take actions to make education more inclusive. Everyone has ideas and experiences, gathered from their working and personal lives, that can be relevant and useful to the development of a more inclusive education system and society.

A separate report outlining the activities used during the workshop is available. This includes details on the methods used to prepare diverse participants for working together (a half-day 'communication skills' session at the start of the workshop), as well as information about the participatory approaches that elicited much of the information contained in this report.

2. What is inclusive education?

2.1. Defining inclusive education

Participants brainstormed the following list for how they would define inclusive education:

- effective education for all
- equality
- removing barriers to learning
- a continuous process
- freedom to interact and play
- recognising each person's worth
- supporting each other
- adapting the schools system for all children
- respecting our differences
- education for all
- accepting each other
- providing teachers with skills to meet different needs
- system addressing diverse needs in a regular learning setting
- recognising different abilities.

They were also shown EENET's interpretation of inclusive education, developed by participants from many different countries and backgrounds during a workshop in Agra, India in 1998:

- all children can learn
- inclusive education is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving
- differences in children – such as age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV and TB status – should be acknowledged and respected
- education structures, systems and methodologies should be developed to meet the needs of all children
- such developments should be seen as part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society
- progress need not be restricted by large class sizes or a shortage of material resources.

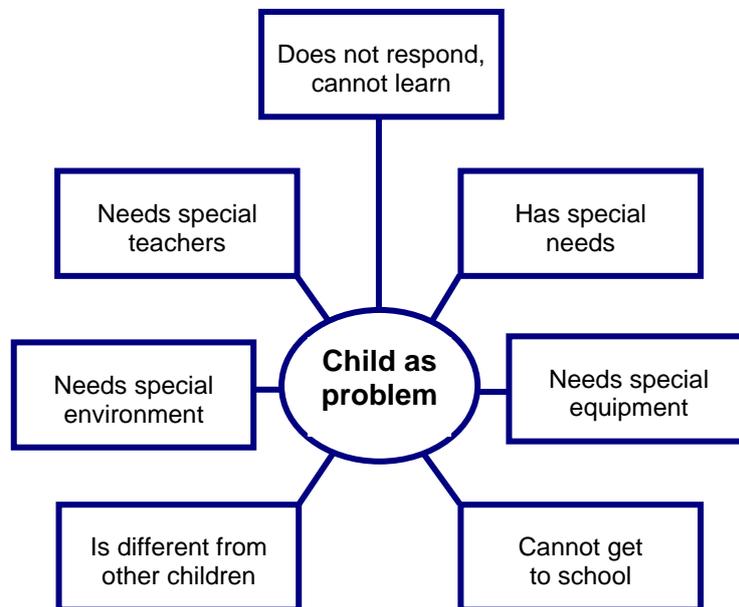
Participants felt the following elements were missing from this definition:

- acknowledgement of the interaction between children, the role of learners and learning from each other
- importance of community involvement.

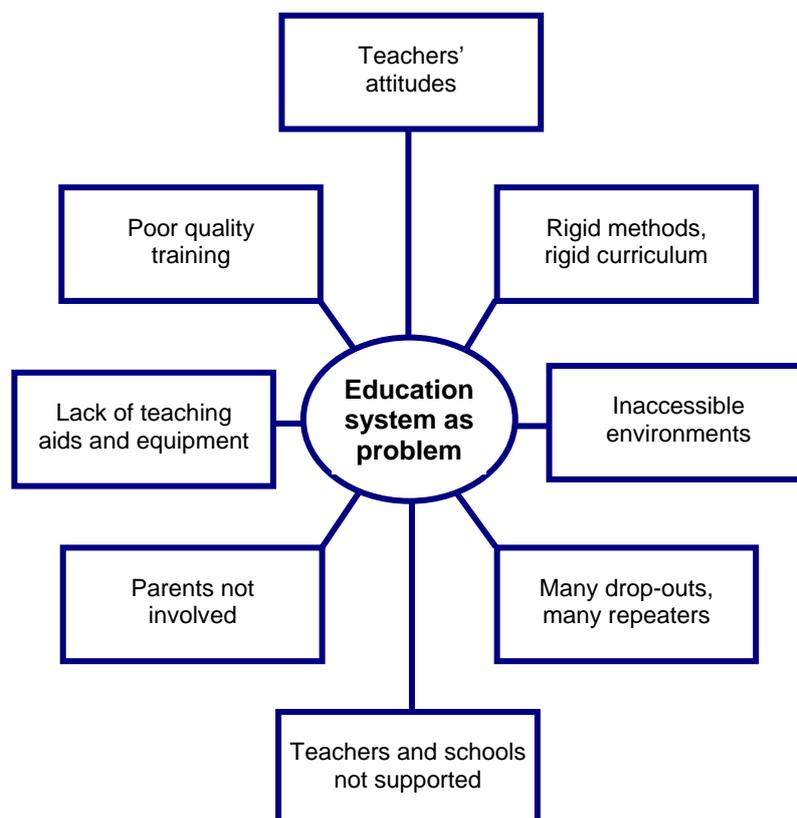
During these discussions it was stressed that there is not just a single definition of inclusive education that can be adopted and applied in every situation. Inclusive education is a constantly evolving concept. The workshop did not seek to dictate a set definition to the participants. Neither did it aim to get the participants to reach a unanimous conclusion about the perfect definition. Instead it encouraged them to think about the overall vision of inclusion and the elements that might make up inclusive education in their unique situations.

Where is the problem located?

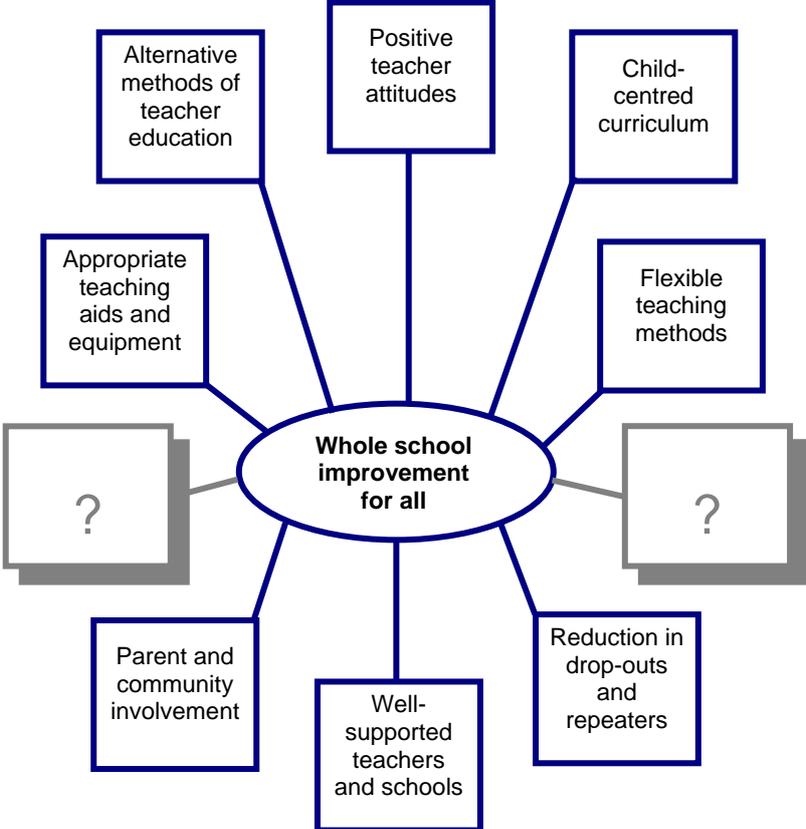
The following diagrams were shown. The first diagram illustrates how a traditional education system views children who are different in some way. The child is viewed as the problem, which leads us to try to create solutions to change the child, to try to cure him/her, or in some way make him/her fit into the existing system.



The second diagram illustrates an alternative view. Here the individual child is not the problem. The education system is the problem because it is not flexible and innovative enough to cope with all sorts of different children.



A third diagram was presented. If we see the education system as the problem, then we create different solutions. We do not try to change the individual children to fit into the system; instead we change the system and we work towards 'whole school improvement for all'.



Discussions inspired by the diagrams

The diagrams inspired some lively debates among participants about what inclusive education means and the conceptual and practical challenges they are facing. These are summarised below.

Motivation and incentives for teachers

The diagrams suggest that inclusive education is, or could be, quite complicated or requires a lot of changes. Teachers often say they do not want to take on the extra burden needed to be inclusive (or that they should receive extra pay for doing this). How do we motivate them or give them incentives to do the extra work they think will be required? This is a global problem; teachers do not want to take on pupils whom they think will reduce standards, particularly in countries where education systems focus heavily on passing exams and school league tables (UK and Kenya were highlighted).

An example of a teacher in The Bahamas was mentioned. The example highlighted that, by adapting teaching/learning practice to help learners with so called special needs, we can actually be improving education for everyone. This can motivate teachers. The Bahaman teacher uses self assessment in her class. Students devise and monitor their own standards and methods for assessing and marking their work. The approach was created to help include students at risk of exclusion (e.g. disabled students who cannot cope with rigid exam systems and need different ways of expressing what they have learned). But it helps all students. The teacher found that after making the initial effort to develop the idea, she is now a more effective teacher and *all* her students get better grades in the formal exams.

Examinations

One participant felt that the 'whole school improvement' diagram should include 'involvement of the examination board'. This would ensure they are aware of the kind of students they have and take this into consideration, e.g. by helping children who are slow to be given more time, or children who cannot write to be given oral exams, or developing more continuous assessment methods.

One participant told the story of a man with severe cerebral palsy who failed an exam three times when he had to handwrite. When he was allowed to take an oral exam, he got every answer right. Later he learned to use a typewriter.

The problem of whether employers recognise the value of oral exams, and therefore whether an inclusive school can prepare pupils for the competitive job market, was discussed. It was highlighted that inclusive schools and inclusive society (workplaces, etc) go hand-in-hand. Therefore, as the education system changes, so should the society around it (and vice-versa). In addition, education is about learning life skills and not just about the academic standards that we can reach, and this needs to be stressed more within education and society as a whole.

Very gifted children

The impact of inclusive education on very gifted children – within a society that is very demanding and where parents strive to give their children the best education – was raised when discussing these diagrams. Can a move towards inclusive education actually lead to the brightest pupils being forgotten? Participants discussed that teachers always have to prepare and think about the learning needs of *all* children, whether disabled or gifted. We need to persuade teachers that inclusive education does not mean a new burden, but instead gives them new methods to deal with the teaching of all pupils. For instance, the method of using older or more advanced students to help teach those who are struggling to learn, does not just help the 'slow learners'. It brings extra benefits to the 'gifted' children because they can revise their own learning as they teach others.

Personal reflection on changing my approach

I had 45–50 pupils in my class. I used to not pay much attention to the slow learners. I didn't care about them. I would prepare one common class for all, and thought this was OK. I thought there was no way I could teach the whole class. But the number of students was declining. After training in special needs education and learning about inclusive education I saw that I needed to prepare for different needs. If you show love, caring, concern, the students will come to class every day – but if you don't, they will not come back. When you bring the children closer to you, they will love learning. If you don't accommodate them, they will not participate in the class. Don't ignore the children – ask what they would love to learn from you – they are experienced in their own way, modify their ideas.

One child I had previously given little attention to as a slow learner, asked me “I want you to teach me this number [27], is that one number or two different”? It was my job to find a way to make it easier for the child to learn the number. There is no need to be selective in our teaching. It's not just children with disabilities, slow learners, or those challenged in some way that need attention – each and every child needs to achieve something at the end of the day.

Edwina Mulenga Mumba (Zambia)

Pregnant school girls

As part of a warm-up activity,¹ participants engaged in a heated debate about whether girls who become pregnant should leave school, or whether inclusive education means they should stay in school. About 25% thought they should leave school and 75% thought they should stay and be accommodated within an inclusive system.

There was debate about whether a pregnant girl can return to school if she drops out. Some schools/countries actually ban such pupils from staying in or returning to school. Participants also discussed possible ‘psychological damage’ to pregnant girls who stay at school, as a result of bullying, etc. Many felt it was the school's responsibility to protect the girl from such abuse and to tackle the bullying, rather than removing her from school. Health concerns were also raised as a reason why the girl should leave school. Opponents of this view highlighted that we now expect schools to cater for a disabled or sick child's personal care needs, so why not those of a pregnant girl. The issue that all children have education rights was raised. One participant summed up by stressing that if we are talking inclusion, then we are talking about including *all* children, and that including a pregnant girl is no different from including a disabled or refugee child.

2.2. What does inclusive education look like?

There is no set formula for making education inclusive. There are so many big and small changes we can make that will lead a school to become more inclusive. The specific changes we each need to make depend on the current state of our school or

¹ The activity was called “agree-disagree” – see the separate report on workshop methods for more details.

education system and the people involved with the school/system. Equally, there is no single blueprint for what an inclusive school or education system must look like. Every school/system may have a common goal of equal rights in education for all learners. But exactly how that goal is achieved will vary from school to school and country to country.

In small groups, participants studied photographs of schools in Zambia and Indonesia to help them reflect on their own ideas about what makes a school inclusive or not inclusive. Most of the photographs had been taken by school children as part of projects to document inclusion in their schools.² The activity also reminded workshop participants that what we see on the surface does not necessarily give us all the information we need. We should look at each situation in more detail before we can fully analyse it and make suggestions for change.

Summary of participants’ thoughts on what inclusive education might look like:

Photograph	It’s inclusive because:	It’s not inclusive because:	What the photographer thought
	Flat ground, physically accessible	Can’t see any disabled children Some children seem to be isolated	Girl pupil: “I like football – watching not playing – and I like the ground, it’s a place to play which makes me feel welcome in school.”
	The disabled person could be a teacher – the school is accessible and there is a role model for disabled pupils which is great	The disabled person could be a parent and the teacher is talking sternly to him, indicating poor parent/teacher relations	Boy pupil: “It shows my two favourite teachers and the fact that teachers communicate with each other is good.”
	It’s a democratic inclusive class – the teacher has been to the back of the class to help pupils, not just standing at the front all the time Pupils seem happy	The teacher has his back to the pupils at the rear of the class, this is exclusion Pupils at the back could be talking and misbehaving behind the teacher	Boy pupil: “This photo represents something that makes me feel welcome in school – my favourite teacher who is always kind and helpful.”

Continued overleaf

² See the separate report on workshop methods for details of how this activity was managed.

Photograph	It's inclusive because:	It's not inclusive because:	What the photographer thought
	<p>There is an albino child in the class</p> <p>The children look interested in what is happening at the front of the class, it seems a welcoming class</p>	<p>The albino child could be visually impaired yet is sitting at the back</p> <p>He's not wearing the same uniform, so he could be bullied for being different</p>	<p>Adult researcher: "The class uses group work. There aren't enough seats but they take it in turns to sit in comfortable and uncomfortable places."</p>
	<p>There are no steps into the latrines, so they are accessible</p>	<p>The latrines are inaccessible because there are narrow doorways and no doors (lack of privacy)</p> <p>No paths to the latrines</p>	<p>Pupil: "The school is more inclusive now. Before we didn't have any latrines and there was no place to hide either [no hedges]."</p>
	<p>These posters are showing the ways in which the teacher encourages participation by the pupils</p>		<p>Adult researcher: "Pupils explained that they liked the way the teacher let them tell him what should be done, what he should teach them tomorrow, etc."</p>
	<p>Everyone seems to be joining in and enjoying the lesson</p> <p>The teacher could be albino (i.e. a teacher from a marginalised group)</p>	<p>The boy in the bottom right possibly looks bored</p>	



*Participants working on the photo elicitation activity:
“what does inclusive education look like?”*

2.3. Inclusive education is an ongoing process

The photo elicitation activity above highlights that there is no single image of what an inclusive school looks like or should look like. Inclusion comes as a result of many different factors added together. The perfect school never exists. Inclusive education is a vision or a goal that we are always aiming towards. Through a process of constant change we can move closer to this vision and become more inclusive.

Also, there will always be new reasons why children get excluded – because our political, cultural and environmental situations keep changing. So we have to keep changing to tackle these new causes of exclusion. We might make big changes to a whole education system, or we might make small changes within one school.

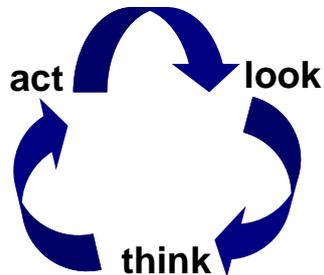
“Inclusive education is like developing a new vehicle. You start by developing the various different parts, then you work out how to put them all together, and then the vehicle starts moving. But you also have to *maintain* it, and respond to new problems, in order to keep it moving.”

(workshop participant)

To help us keep moving towards our vision or goal of inclusive education we must learn from each other. We must find out what big and small changes other people have made, that we could try in our own place. We also sometimes need to take a step back and look at what we have been doing, and ask other people what they think about the work we have done.

Sometimes we get stuck when we are trying to make education inclusive. In order to work out what to do next, we have to **look** closely at what has happened in the past. We also need to **look** at what is happening now, and what other people are doing. We have to analyse the information we collect, so that we can **think** of solutions to help us move forward with inclusion. Then we have to **act** to make those ideas happen in reality.

Once we have taken an action, we have to look closely at it, and analyse what happened, so that we can take even better actions next time. It is an ongoing process of reflection and improvement which will keep us moving towards our goal of inclusive education.



This 'look-think-act' process can help us to keep making improvements to the way we do inclusive education. It is an action research process – we research the situation in order to be able to take appropriate and effective action. In many ways it is common sense, and you may already work in a similar way. It is not a complicated process. It is a bit like the way we live our lives generally – we look at what is happening to us, we think about how we can make our lives a bit better, and we take some action.³

Participants raised the issue of how action research fits in with the more formal project planning techniques, such as SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, that they are often required to do by donors. The techniques used in action research are accessible to people at grassroots levels. This means they can help you to gather and analyse the sort of data you need to compile SWOT analyses. The good thing about action research is that it does not just help you gather information to put into a formal project plan or report. It also helps you gather information that you can then use directly to take action for improving your work.

2.4. Inclusive education means presence, participation and achievement

Inclusive education is not just about increasing the numbers of marginalised children in school. Patrick Kangwa and Edwina Mulenga Mumba from Mpika, Zambia, shared their experiences of ensuring that children are not just **present** in class, but are **participating** and **achieving** as well. All three elements are needed before we can really claim to have inclusive education. There is no point working hard to get excluded children into a class, if they then cannot join in, and if they do not benefit or achieve anything from being in class.

Children participate in decision-making

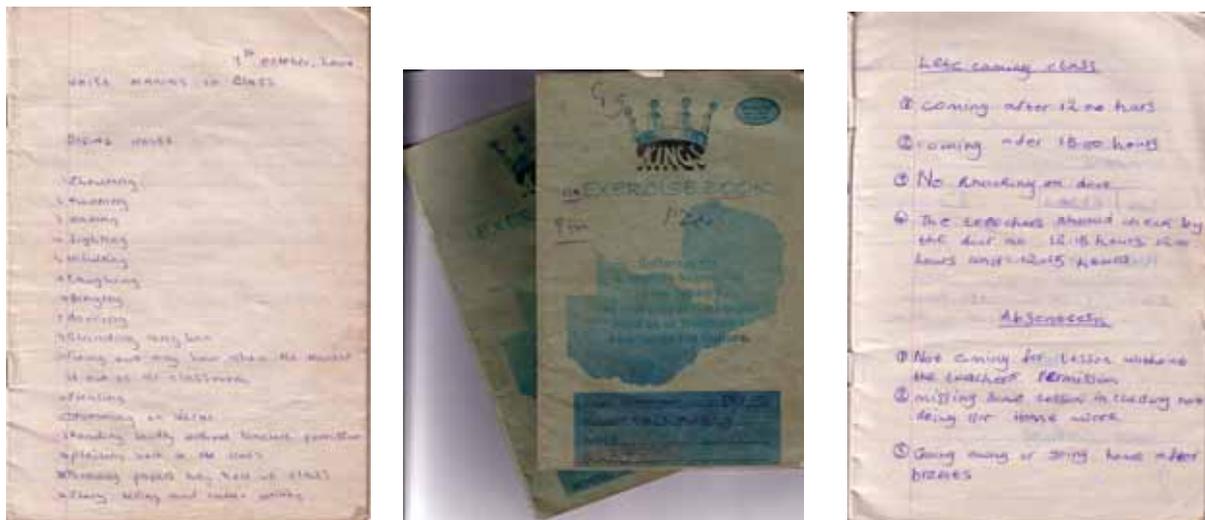
In class I must work with the children, so they can manage their own learning. We took the example of children making noise in class (not necessarily talking, but other disruptive noise). Children in my class were divided into groups. Each group was

³ You can learn more about the 'look-think-act' process in EENET's guidelines: "Learning from Difference". See the suggested reading list on page 56 for more details.

given their own exercise book. I asked them to define noise-making, and they came up with a list of 23 things that disturbed them. They wrote these in the exercise books.

We looked at another problem: children coming late into class. The children decided how to define late-coming and absenteeism. They made their own records of when there was noise-making, lateness or absenteeism within their group. This activity was part of how we ensure that children are present in class. But it is also a way to ensure that children are actively participating in the decisions of the class and in the process of learning.

When these children entered the next class (Form 6) we found that they were much more able to carry out projects, and had a better understanding of issues such as disability and HIV, as a result of having to investigate and monitor behaviour and absenteeism among their peers. Their next teacher found that the children performed well in exams and also that she could leave them in class alone and they would continue to work – because they were used to taking responsibility for their own class discipline.



Examples of the books the children use for recording class behaviour

Also to help ensure that children participate in class, we use 'twinning'. The albino child (shown in the photograph in Section 2.2), for example, initially was not accepted by the class because of superstitions. But we twinned him with a permanent friend/twin, and they work together in class, and help each other outside class. The albino boy is now much more accepted and included in the life of the class. To find suitable twins we look at different aspects, such as who lives close to each other, who is the same age, and we build on processes that are already happening, any friendships that seem to be starting, etc. [Patrick Kangwa]

How a teacher ensures presence, participation and achievement

For inclusive education you must have all three of these elements, it is not good enough just to have children in class. How can we make sure that pupils are present in school every day? We work with parents, to ensure that the children are allowed to come to school every day. We ensure that we accommodate and welcome every child, to avoid anyone feeling inferior. We need to understand every child. To ensure

participation, we always try to find different ways of working with the children. We do group work, using active, child-centred teaching and learning methods. The teacher goes around in the classroom, he/she does not just stay at the front. We make sure everyone is given a chance to talk, to participate. When they interact, the pupils also find out about each other.

Achievement is also very important. We ensure that teaching methods suit the class. We look at each individual, and aim to be flexible. If our prepared activities do not work, we reassess and change our approach. We give every child a chance. Often we start with the slow learners, rather than just asking the fast learners to call out the answers. We ask the slow learners to explain, to make sure that they have understood the lesson, so we can check that they are benefiting from what we are doing. [Edwina Mulenga Mumba]

Participation and achievement for blind pupils

There are very diverse opinions on the issue of inclusion for blind learners. Participants debated the issue of blind pupils who need Braille in order to participate and achieve in class. In the examples described above, teachers talk with parents to explain what they can and cannot offer at the moment. They can offer blind children non-Braille-based learning methods and the social aspects of learning, and they help the children to find friends who can help with reading and writing tasks.

It was suggested that since inclusive education is a process, we cannot achieve everything straight away. We may need to decide between two options: (i) is it better for a blind child to stay at home without any education until all the correct facilities are available (which may take a long time); (ii) is it better to start the child going to school even without all the equipment being in place. The child has a right to education, and you can find innovative solutions to his needs as you go along. By sending the child to school we are also challenging the whole community and not just the parents to take responsibility for this child.

In Kiribati (Pacific island) teachers have found ways to help children learn Braille, even without proper equipment. One school uses eggs in an egg box to help children learn about the six-dot positioning of Braille letters. This is a cheap and practical solution when formal Braille teaching equipment is unavailable.



A locally made Braille teaching aid

However, many people feel it is not enough to send a blind child to school without supporting them with specialised services. It is unfair to let a child sit in class and just listen, and it is difficult for a teacher without specialist skills to teach a blind child. This raises the crucial issue of how to get special schools to support inclusive schools, so that where specialist resources and skills are available, they can be transferred and made more widely available.

3. Barriers and solutions

3.1. Identifying barriers to inclusion and who they affect

There are many reasons why certain groups of children do not have their right to a quality education upheld. There are many different types of barriers to inclusion. Often we focus on the resource and physical barriers (such as insufficient funding and equipment; or the lack of ramps into a classroom) because these may seem to be the most obvious. But there are other types of barriers to inclusion, which can be equally important, and which we may be able to solve quite cheaply.

Barriers to inclusion can be split into broad categories such as:

- **Environmental barriers:** e.g. school buildings and toilets which are not accessible
- **Attitude barriers:** e.g. fear, embarrassment, shame, low expectations
- **Policy barriers:** e.g. inflexible school timetables; lack of mother tongue teaching
- **Practice barriers:** e.g. lack of interactive and co-operative teaching
- **Resource barriers:** e.g. shortage of teachers, large classes.

Participants worked in groups to study a collection of photographs of schools in Zambia and Indonesia. They were asked to find in the photographs as many barriers to inclusion as possible - both obvious and the less obvious barriers (and not just resource or physical barriers).⁴ In plenary, they listed the barriers they had identified. They then considered which type of barrier it was, and who was affected by it. A few examples are presented below (there was not time to discuss each barrier identified in full detail):

Barrier	Type of barrier	Who is affected
Topography, hills on school campus	Environmental	Disabled children, older teachers
No classes nearby	Resource	
Loneliness (the person looks lonely)	Attitude	
Inaccessible toilet	Environmental	Disabled children
Unconcerned teachers	Attitude	Learners, parents, Ministry, community
Small staff room	Environmental, policy	Teachers
Pupils fetching water in school time	Attitude	All children, often especially girls

Continued overleaf

⁴ A large selection of images was used, so we cannot present them here. The images are available on CD-ROM from EENET for people wishing to use them in their own inclusive education training or awareness work.

Barrier	Type of barrier	Who is affected
Narrow door, small window	Environmental	Teachers, learners
Distance to school	Environmental	Teachers, learners, parents – particularly disabled and young, sick children, hungry children
Girl being harassed by a man (note: this was an awareness raising poster, not a photograph of a real girl)	Attitude	Girls
School campus planning	Policy	Disabled and non-disabled teachers, pupils parents
Children at market/child labour	Attitude, resource	Pupils, especially poorer ones

Each barrier to inclusion usually affects more than one group of people. If we can solve a particular barrier we often find that we can help the entire population to be more included, not just, for instance, disabled people.

Multiple identities

Although most participants work specifically with disabled people and for disability organisations, they were advised not to limit themselves only to thinking about disability-related barriers. Participants therefore brainstormed all the different identities that a disabled person could have, in addition to being considered disabled, e.g.:

- child/age
- girl/boy
- nationality/tribe/language group
- religion
- sibling
- urban/rural
- clever/not clever
- physical appearance
- infected or affected by HIV
- orphan
- working
- economic status.

This list shows the complexity of people. We cannot see people just as disabled. They will have other identities that might influence their inclusion in education as much as, or more than, their disability does. A disabled girl for instance, may face equal or more discrimination because of her gender than because of her disability. So those working for disability organisations must not ignore other issues of discrimination.

Who are the stakeholders?

We all use the word ‘stakeholder’ a lot, but it is always good to check that we know what the word means. Participants defined stakeholder as “everyone who takes part for something to happen”. They brainstormed the following as examples of stakeholders:

- parents
- children
- teachers
- politicians/leaders
- governments
- NGOs/partners
- donors
- anyone who is interested
- business/private sector
- faith groups.

3.2. Solutions to barriers

Every situation (every school, district, country, etc) is unique and will have its own set of challenges when it comes to making education more inclusive. Solutions to barriers therefore need to be developed specifically for each situation, based on local knowledge and past experiences. A solution that helps you to include a group of marginalised children in one place may not automatically work in another place. It is important that we learn from each other's experiences of what works and what doesn't work. But we must also be willing to actively adapt and experiment with solutions, to make them work in our *own* unique context. If we simply export an idea from one place to another, without making local adaptations, it is not guaranteed to work – and this can lead people to incorrectly assume that inclusive education in general doesn't work!

3.3. What barriers and solutions did participants identify?

During the workshop, various activities were used to help participants identify and discuss potential or actual barriers to inclusion in education (and later to discuss solutions that they have tried or could consider trying). The main participatory activities were the creation of mountain diagrams, personal reflection and writing, and observational school visits. The methodology for these activities is discussed in more detail in a separate report.

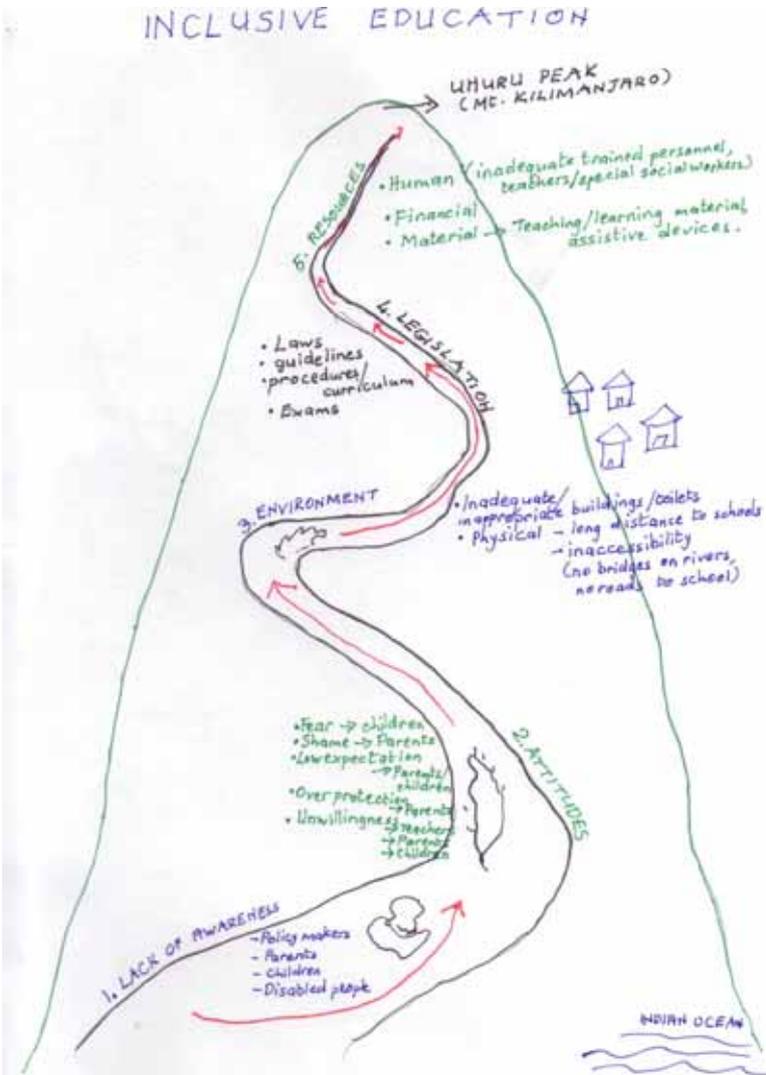
The mountain diagram activity can help participants to think about: what they want to achieve (the goal at the top of the mountain); the barriers they have to overcome in order to reach the top; and the signs of hope they have already encountered on the journey, or the ideas they have for solutions to the barriers. It can be a more engaging way to approach the issue than a traditional discussion. To help participants to share key points from their mountain diagrams in a lively and interesting way, we also used a role play of a press conference.

Personal reflection and writing can help participants to focus in-depth on one issue (one barrier or one example of a solution). Colleagues can then discuss and combine their detailed writings to form a more complete story of the situation in their context.

Observation of real-life situations (e.g. schools and classrooms) can help participants to learn from others' ideas and experiences, and to reflect again on how their own situation is similar or different.

The following summaries of barriers to inclusion and ideas for solutions in each country have been extracted from the mountain diagram discussions, role play and the individual writing task, and from more formal presentations made by some of the participants.

Barriers and solutions to inclusion in Tanzania



Barriers	Solutions (actual or suggested)
<p>Lack of awareness about, and negative attitudes towards, inclusive education</p>	<p>Hold awareness meetings, for people from government to grassroots level. Use case studies from other countries to illustrate inclusion working.</p> <p>To change attitudes at district level – work with NGOs that are positive to inclusion to inform district planners, etc. This is important because if they don't include inclusive education in their plans we will struggle to move forward.</p> <p>To change children's attitudes – school-based awareness-raising involving the whole school gathered together.</p>

	<p>The government is preparing a bill to introduce inclusive education nationwide. This will back up sensitisation work with a legal obligation for schools/parents.</p>
<p>Lack of teachers trained in inclusive education/special needs. Lack of expertise in the education system</p>	<p>A training programme is being run. Head teachers currently select those who are willing/interested or who seem to care a lot about teaching children with special needs.</p> <p>The curriculum is being reviewed – so that every teacher going to college will be trained.</p> <p>To ensure ongoing learning, we will use role models of adult disabled people, to show how they have experienced growing up, education, etc. School inspectors and head teachers will be trained, and head teachers will meet to discuss and exchange experiences.</p> <p>The following could also be tried:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more seminars for teachers, inspectors and local government officers – and they must pass on what they learn to colleagues • teachers, etc, visit other organisations working with disabled children, and special schools • government funding for teachers who want to study further.
<p>Different interpretations of policy. Tanzania has an education and training policy that is pro-inclusive in sentiment; it states that education is a right for all children including the disadvantaged. But it does not explicitly mention inclusive education, so decisions on whether to include children depend on how implementers interpret the policy.</p>	<p>Policy makers need to prepare policy guidelines which would describe and assign specific roles to key players regarding inclusive education obligations (e.g. family/parents or guardians, community, local government in relation to various departments working together).</p> <p>These guidelines should state the role of Central Government (Ministries) in supporting councils and schools. They should assign specific roles to schools, teachers, training colleges, and civil society organisations and disabled peoples’ organisations.</p> <p>There needs to be legislation making the provision of education to all (including disabled) compulsory (this will come in the form of a revised education act).</p> <p>Once in place the policy guidelines and act should be translated into local languages and shared with all stakeholders.</p>

TAMH (Tanzania Association for Mentally Handicapped) has been trying out a number of activities/solutions to meet the challenge of making education more inclusive. These include:

- Lobbying Ministry of Education and Culture to accept TAMH's project on inclusive education in primary schools, which they did. The project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, sponsored by Operation Day's Work/NFU, Norway. It is being piloted in four primary and two secondary schools in each of four districts (Kinondoni, Mkuranga, Morogoro Rural and Iringa Rural).
- A baseline study to determine the needs and roles of key stakeholders.
- Running inclusive education awareness-raising meetings/workshops in all relevant districts, schools and communities. These were done to improve project ownership and sustainability, and encourage parents to enrol disabled children in regular schools instead of hiding them at home.
- Creating advocacy materials (brochures, T-shirts, stickers, newsletter, etc).
- Writing a training manual for in-service training of teachers in pilot schools.
- In-service teacher training has reached 142 teachers and college tutors. The training has covered special needs issues, inclusive education, assessment of disabilities, teaching/learning methods, curriculum and learning environment modifications, and how to get government/community/NGO support.
- Sign language training has so far reached 20 teachers from two pilot districts. It aimed to help the teachers communicate better with, and help teach sign language to, hearing impaired pupils. It was facilitated by the Tanzania Association for the Deaf.
- School-based planning workshops for inclusive education were conducted in each district involving approximately 80 participants. These workshops aimed to improve understanding of the issues, discuss barriers to learning and strategies for overcoming them, and develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Participants included all people responsible for preparing short- and long-term school plans at district and school level.
- A youth development project complements the inclusive education project by mobilising and training young people with developmental disabilities in social/life skills, self-advocacy and vocational skills. It has reached 50 pupils in seven schools so far. Two youth camps have also been held to enhance social skills training and promote self-advocacy through independent living and participation in sports and recreational activities.

The Salvation Army in Tanzania started inclusive education programmes in pilot schools in Dar es Salaam (2000), Mbeya (2001) and Tabora (2002). The programmes have focused specifically on inclusion for disabled learners. They have used the following strategies for helping to include more disabled learners:

- Linking rehabilitation services to the schools, by having an orthopaedic workshop in one of the schools. These services undertake assessments of children, produce and distribute assistive devices, and refer some pupils to hospitals for further assistance.
- Improving school infrastructure, with the support of the Ministry of Education and overseas donors. However, new schools are still being built without considering accessibility and so the Salvation Army is encouraging the Ministry to develop a policy on accessible school infrastructure.
- Running inclusive education workshops for 145 teachers and preparing a training manual.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has increased the number of learners with learning difficulties, but not all teachers are well prepared to meet the needs of children affected/infected by HIV/AIDS.

This issue was raised in the Lesotho presentation, but solutions were not discussed at this time.

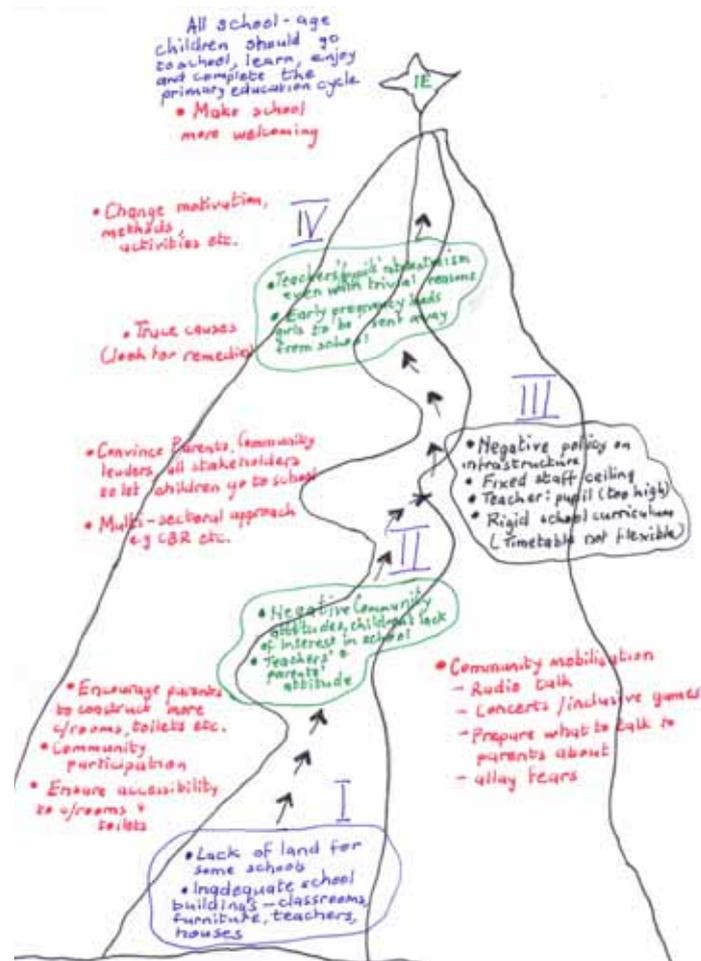
Lesotho's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has a policy to promote the inclusion of learners with special educational needs into regular schools at all levels of education. It acknowledged that one of the main barriers to inclusive education, however, was teachers' lack of preparedness to teach children other than those considered 'average or above'. MOET realised that improved teacher training is therefore key if inclusive education is to succeed.

A course that covered special needs and inclusive education was started at the Lesotho College of Education in 1995, but it did not succeed because of a lack of suitable personnel to run the course. In 2004, MOET seconded someone from the Special Education Unit to assist with the course, and more progress has since been made. (The Special Education Unit is a programme within MOET which started in 1991.) The College has also worked to improve training of disabled teachers, offering a resource room, appropriate equipment, a transcriber, etc. The National University of Lesotho is starting a special needs and inclusive education course in August 2006 as well.

MOET has tried out the following successful solutions for changing attitudes towards inclusion of learners with special needs:

- Training of teachers, education officers and district resource teachers on special educational issues. This has included training on: identification and assessment, referral systems, individual education plans and counselling skills.
- Making visits to schools to monitor and supervise the progress of learners with special educational needs. There is a system of itinerant teachers who support schools practising inclusive education. This system helps teachers to identify, assess and draw up individual education plans. It helps them problem solve for the implementation of inclusive education, and on-the-spot workshops are held if necessary.
- Sensitising the public on the educability of learners with special educational needs by holding public gatherings and celebrating international disability days.
- Collaborating with other departments of MOET, other ministries, stakeholders and NGOs in relation to disability issues.

Barriers and solutions to inclusion in Uganda



Barriers	Solutions (actual or suggested)
<p>Absenteeism – by both teachers and pupils</p>	<p>With teacher absenteeism, refresher courses are an option. If teachers find or rediscover that teaching can be enjoyable, they will be more likely to come to work.</p> <p>With children, if they feel involved and participating, they will not be absent so much.</p> <p>We can call parents, encourage them to come to school, involve parents in school life.</p> <p>We can make the school environment welcoming – like home – so the children will come.</p> <p>Absenteeism depends on the community as well. Small girls and boys go to the market or stay home while their parents go to the market. We can involve local leaders and ask market officials to keep children away from the market.</p> <p>Sometimes there is absenteeism because of poor supervision by the head teacher – so heads also need to be supervised better by inspectors.</p>

<p>Inadequate school infrastructure (too few classrooms, teacher accommodation, furniture, etc)</p>	<p>Government should encourage more parent and community participation to complete unfinished classrooms or continue contributing in a small way (donate labour, materials, etc) to building projects</p> <p>Districts should be allowed by Government to pass by-laws to enforce construction of more school buildings.</p>
<p>Negative community attitudes</p>	<p>The solution is not just about convincing parents to send their children to school. We need to show the whole community that children need an education, so everyone needs to support education.</p> <p>School management and civic/religious leaders need to actively support and speak out in favour of inclusive education.</p> <p>Printing pamphlets in local languages for pupils to read to their parents, and posters to be displayed in key community places.</p> <p>Radio talk shows for teachers involved in inclusive education and parents of children with disabilities, who are managing such children's needs.</p> <p>Finding positive disabled role models/teachers to talk to school children, etc.</p> <p>We are forming school committees – disability and community committees.</p> <p>We need to get parents to work together as a team and advocate to the school, e.g. by giving them examples of successful case stories, and using community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programmes to support them, and forming groups of parents who support each other.</p>

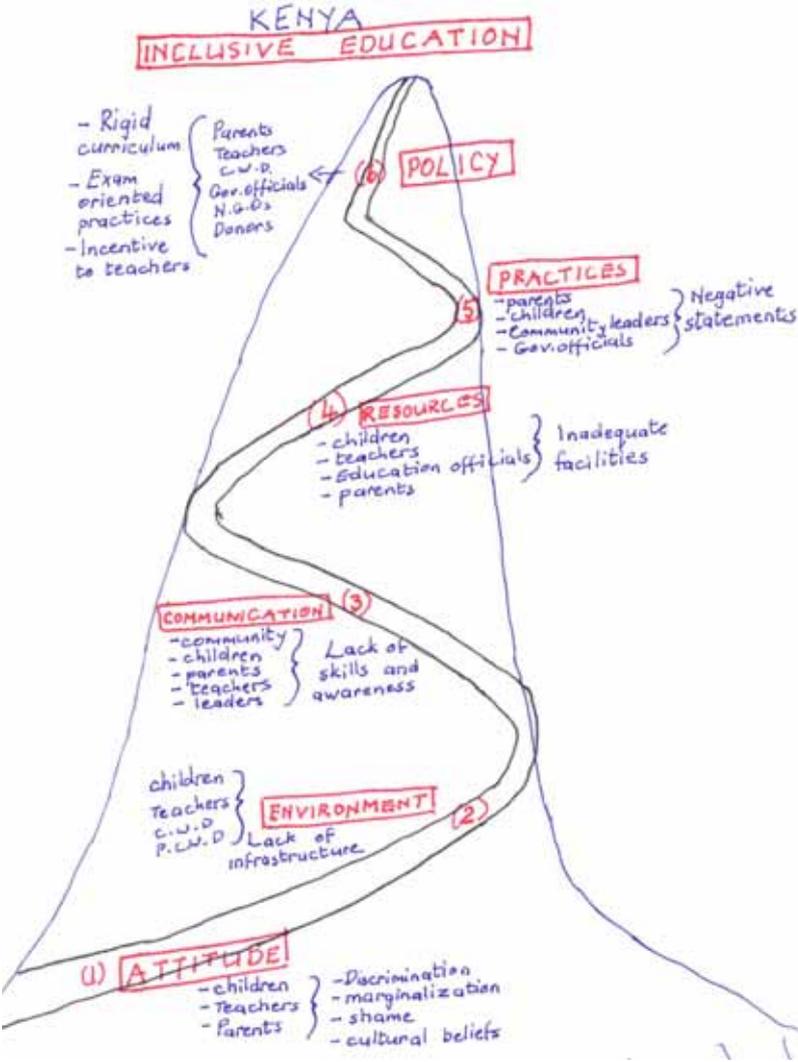
To help raise awareness about inclusive education and overcome some of the confusion that exists between the concepts of special needs education and inclusive education, a radio talk show was organised. The programme was broadcast across Busia district at prime time and in the local language. Members of the public were able to phone in during the programme.

A team of 'experts' was involved: the Dean of the Faculty of Special Needs Education Department at Kyambogo University; the District Inspector of Schools for Busia; a practising and practical inclusive education teacher; the community development officer; and the District Education Officer.

Discussions covered: the definition of inclusive education and its relevance in relation to Universal Primary Education; community participation in promoting inclusive education; and how to handle children who face exclusion within a mainstream

classroom setting. The phone-in process even involved people outside the district, and comments from contributors showed that the programme had helped to clarify what inclusive education is. The radio show helped to prepare the ground for subsequent workshops for teachers and head teachers.

Barriers and solutions to inclusion in Kenya

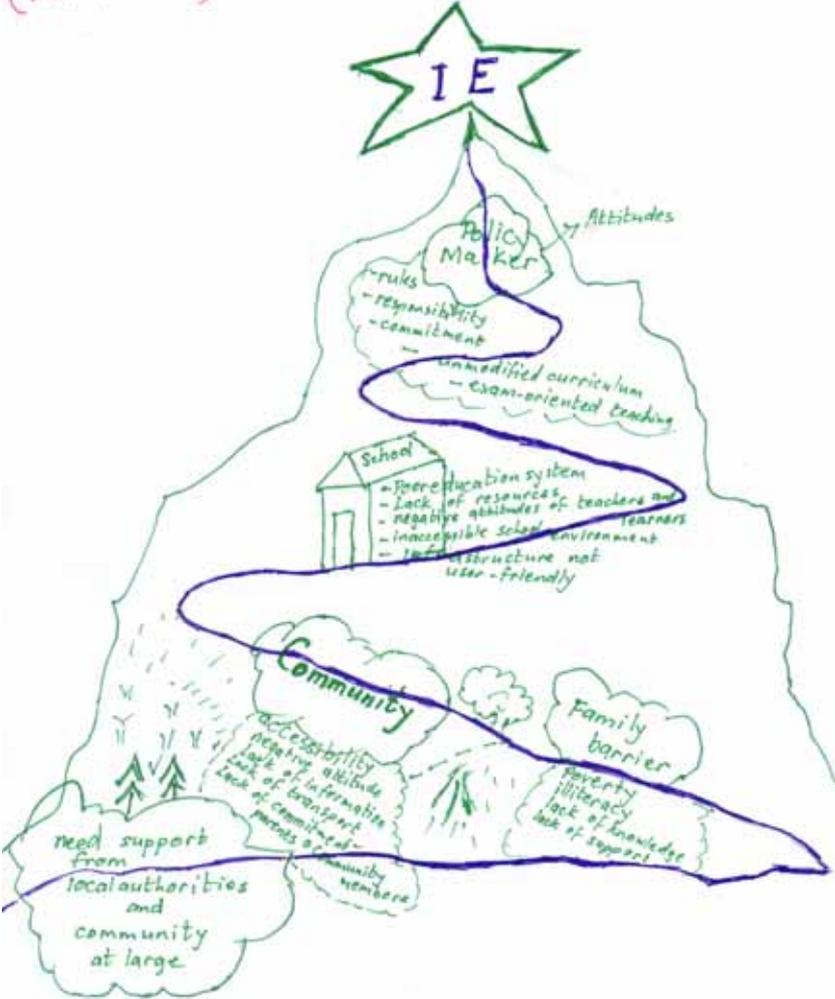


Barriers	Solutions (actual or suggested)
Poor communication skills	We need more sign language, Braille, literacy skills generally. We can involve parents of special needs children, e.g. give them sign language training, etc. Most teachers, parents, etc have no skills with Braille. We can help the community to learn at least the basics, so they can support children from a young age.

<p>Policy and practice do not match</p>	<p>There are policies in place already that relate to education and inclusion issues. But the reality is the reverse, because a rigid curriculum still contradicts the policies on inclusion. We need to change the exam-focused practice and give incentives to teachers to work differently.</p> <p>We use lobby groups to help us monitor policy application – they can go beyond what an NGO on its own can do.</p>
<p>Negative attitudes of parents, teachers, children etc</p>	<p>Some parents are still ashamed or believe taboos. It's hard for them to be open about their disabled children. We need parent groups, churches, etc, that are based within the community, to work with us on this to change attitudes.</p> <p>To achieve this there could be meetings to discuss issues on inclusion, followed by workshops, seminars, etc, with church-goers, at local leaders' meetings, and so on.</p> <p>We can also help create some leadership among parents to get them organised for easy transmission of information.</p>
<p>Inadequate facilities/ resources (human and material)</p>	<p>We are working with parents, groups and NGOs to see if we can get equipment.</p> <p>There are not enough teachers with the right skills. We have induction programmes for teachers at local level, and get other training institutions to take teachers for short-term programmes. So in a few years we will have enough trained teachers.</p> <p>We also link with disability groups on how to make local teaching aids from local materials.</p> <p>Policy takes time and so does training. We cannot just wait for the government to train everyone through pre-service training, so we help speed up the process by taking existing teachers out of school for training as well. These teachers become trainers-of-trainers and the process expands.</p>

Barriers and solutions to inclusion in Nepal and Palestine

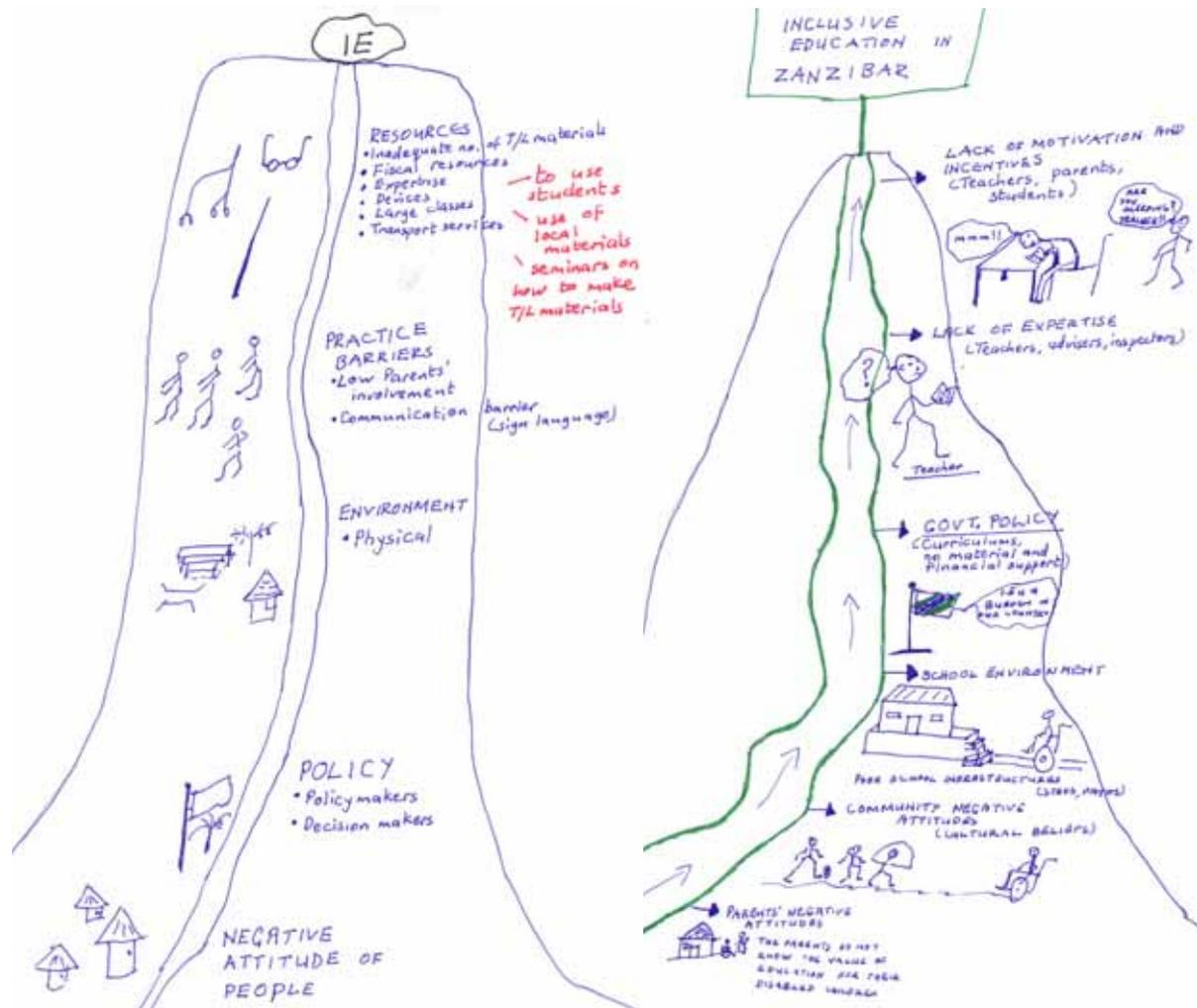
As there was only one participant from each of these countries, they worked together to discuss barriers and solutions. Despite the differences between their countries, they also found quite a few areas of common ground.



Barriers	Solutions (actual or suggested)
Transport – problems getting to school	[Palestine] Check-points stop children from going to their nearest school. Most schools are close to the Israeli places and so they face problems. We can transfer teachers to those schools that children can get to. We can also build schools around the check-points, but there are still problems when there is an uprising.
Poverty and illiteracy in the community	[Nepal] NFU Nepal Network is a parents’ group. Poor people with disabled children in the family won’t take them to the doctor, and their family (or husband) give no support. So the solution is to have interactive parent-to-parent programmes for support with such problems. We are just starting this.

	<p>[Palestine] Regarding poverty – the Ministry of Education makes plans to deal with this. Each student pays to go to school, but if they cannot, it's free. There are good links with societies – agreements with them – they help provide materials and equipment.</p>
<p>Inadequate/inappropriate policy</p>	<p>[Palestine] We studied the needs in the community regarding having inclusive education, and we found lots of disabled children were in school already. So we pointed this fact out to policy-makers, and they agreed to scale-up inclusive education to all government schools.</p> <p>[Nepal] Mostly we have special schools, like day care. Parents don't want their children to go to ordinary schools, they want 'special'. The government started 'inclusive education' in some schools, but actually it is based around special units. They call it inclusive education, but it's not. Mainstream teachers are not trained. We lobby the government to introduce proper inclusive education – we are still fighting for policy.</p> <p>We gather information from around the world to help us lobby. In March/April 2006 we will also hold a big conference as part of our work to lobby government.</p>
<p>Negative teacher attitudes, and lack of knowledge/confidence to teach disabled children</p>	<p>[Palestine] We are building special committees, in each school, with 5 members: the head teacher; one member of health committee in the school (will be the principal of the inclusive education committee in school); two active and effective teachers; school social worker.</p> <p>They will do training on inclusive education policy and principles in the school (about 36 hours). The committee principal is an ongoing link between the school and the directorate of education.</p>

Barriers and solutions to inclusion in Zanzibar



Barriers	Solutions (actual or suggested)
<p>Inadequate teaching/learning materials</p>	<p>We can mobilise the community to support schools. There are materials at home that are thrown away, but could be given to children to bring to school.</p> <p>We can also run training for how to prepare materials locally, and get teachers to swap ideas.</p> <p>We lobby the government to allocate more funds to inclusive education for materials which we can't make ourselves.</p> <p>Children could possibly make materials as well, like alphabet charts and other posters/pictures/models that are displayed in class – instead of teachers making/buying them. This would help improve child participation as well.</p>

<p>Parents' negative attitudes towards education for disabled children</p>	<p>We use role models and people from disabled peoples organisation who talk to parents, to help them change their ideas.</p> <p>We also use radio and TV, etc, to share messages about disabled children's abilities and rights.</p> <p>Parents gradually start to see that things are not impossible for disabled children.</p>
<p>Environmental inaccessibility</p>	<p>We don't just focus on making schools accessible, but on helping and advising on how to make other areas accessible – so children can be more included in the rest of the community.</p> <p>We assessed the accessibility of the surrounding environment in our feasibility study.</p> <p>We went to villages and talked to parents about making the environment generally more accessible for disabled people and old people, encouraging families to build ramps, etc.</p>
<p>Lack of 'expertise' among teachers</p>	<p>There is now a component on special needs education and inclusive education in the in-service training course at teacher training college to ensure teachers have the skills and knowledge to handle children with diverse needs.</p> <p>We have lots of manuals for teachers.</p> <p>They have had intense training on planning, staging lessons, making progress reports, re-planning, etc. This helps us to avoid keeping children in the same class forever until they pass the exam. They take a report with them through the grades and at the end they must have skills for life.</p> <p>The department of inspectors have all been trained because they monitor schools to see if the teaching and learning process is working. Before inclusive education was introduced, teachers claimed inspectors never looked at 'special needs' children because they didn't know how to. Now they are trained and know what to look for when inspecting.</p>

Barriers and solutions to inclusion in Malawi⁵



Barriers	Solutions (actual or suggested)
<p>Absence of legislation, acts of Parliament and clear policies on inclusive education make total implementation difficult to achieve</p>	<p>Inclusive education in Malawi is being advocated for and the Government is interested in it. The Special Needs Education department needs to finalise the draft policy and Parliament needs to adopt it to make inclusive education mandatory.</p> <p>We need to work with local communities so they are aware of the benefits of inclusion and can lobby their Members of Parliament to prioritise this issue in Parliament.</p> <p>We need to get civil society interested in inclusion and encourage the media to highlight it, to influence policy makers to come up with inclusion-friendly policies.</p>

⁵ There were unfortunately no detailed notes taken of the role play discussions on this diagram.

The Government of Malawi has taken the following positive steps to promote inclusive education:

- signing various declarations, conventions and protocols regarding children's rights to education
- establishing a Special Needs Education Department in the Ministry of Education
- encouraging headquarters to collaborate with other departments in the ministry
- reviewing the curriculum to include special needs issues as core areas
- including special needs units in all regular teacher training colleges and universities
- developing a policy on special needs and inclusive education
- increasing budgetary allocations to cater for special needs education
- increasing advocacy on inclusion of persons with disabilities through civil society organisations, print, and electronic media advertisements, banners and posters
- awareness-raising campaign aimed at key stakeholders in education (e.g. education administrators, regular teachers and community members)
- collaborating with development partners with inclusive education projects
- rehabilitating facilities to make them physically accessible.

Sight Savers International runs the Malawi Inclusive Education Project (MIEP). MIEP enables learners with special needs (especially visually impaired children) to attend the regular school nearest to their homes and therefore stay in their own homes with their families. This helps them to develop their social potentials. These pupils are generally taught by a regular class teacher. This teacher may get advice from a specialist itinerant teacher who visits the school occasionally to discuss progress and problems faced by learners with special needs. MIEP operates in 12 out of 34 educational districts of Malawi.

The Government of Malawi provides training for specialist teachers, salaries and other benefits, teaching and learning resources. Sight Savers International has used the following strategies to make education more inclusive:

- improving mobility of itinerant teachers by providing motorcycles or pushbikes and allowances for their maintenance
- providing instructional resources for special needs learners
- providing low vision devices for visually impaired/low vision learners
- funding cataract operations
- undertaking advocacy for inclusive education through civil society organisations
- providing mobility support to the Ministry of Education in order to supervise and monitor the project effectively.

These strategies have resulted in increased identification and enrolment of special needs learners. More schools are becoming inclusive of visually impaired learners and more regular teachers are actively involved in their education. The challenge remains how to bring this to the districts that are not yet involved.

Barriers and solutions observed during the school visits

As part of the workshop process, participants were divided into small groups and each group visited a local school that has been working towards inclusion. A total of seven schools were visited across Zanzibar. The groups were arranged by the facilitator, to ensure that they contained a mixture of people from different countries and jobs, as well as enough Kiswahili speakers in each group to assist with translation needs.



Participants were briefed in detail before the school visits, to ensure that they could gain maximum benefit from the visits and learn as much as possible. They were shown several techniques to help them observe, record and interact effectively. For instance, there were discussions about how to do effective classroom observation, how to be prepared, what to look for and how to take notes of what is observed. Participants were also encouraged to hold in-depth discussions with head teachers, teachers and pupils, and were given advice on the best ways to do this. Above all, participants were encouraged to treat this as an opportunity for two-way sharing of ideas and experiences with the schools. They were challenged to share at least one of their own experiences, ideas or a piece of advice with someone in the school.⁶



The school visits helped participants to observe a wide range of inclusive education issues. They noticed many more issues than they had previously been discussing in the earlier workshop sessions. This helped to give a broader perspective on inclusive education during the final workshop discussions. For example, the following 'new' issues that can positively or negatively impact on inclusion were highlighted as a result of the school visits:

⁶ Further details of the methodology for the school visits is available in the separate report on workshop methodology. An additional report containing the full feedback provided by the groups has been prepared for reference by the schools involved in the visits.

- amount of teaching aids on display in classrooms
- general atmosphere in school (whether or not it is friendly and welcoming, and whether the head teacher was involved and approachable)
- boys dropping out to go to work
- children being hungry/thirsty in school
- degree of interaction/mixing between boys and girls
- language of instruction (whether it was mother tongue or second language)
- lesson content/curriculum
- numbers of male/female teachers, in particular the mainly female staff in most schools (and the effects this could have on boys in school)
- other physical/environmental issues – beyond the ‘obvious’ accessibility issues like steps/ramps and toilets – in particular the issue of noise distractions between classes, due to inadequate walls
- record-keeping, education and assessment plans for students, and displaying information relating to inclusion
- religion (whether all religions are catered for in school)
- teaching methods (whether they were teacher- or child-centred).

Participants gave very detailed feedback on what they had seen and heard at the schools. A summary of the main types of barriers and solutions they discovered is presented below. There are some barriers for which no solutions had yet been found, or for which the school or the visitors had no suggestions yet, or which simply did not get discussed due to time constraints. Reader might like to see if they can think of their own ideas for solutions to these barriers.

Barriers (experienced by one or more schools)	Solutions tried or being planned in each school
<i>Environmental barriers</i>	
Lack of space in classrooms/school grounds	Would like to be able to construct more classes [Mwanakwerekwe F school]
Inaccessible toilets, and not enough toilets for boys and girls	Plans are underway to renovate the toilets to make them more accessible [Kusini school]
Physical environment in some areas is not accessible, e.g. rocky pathways, steps, ramps too steep, etc	School Committee has developed plans for building toilets, ramps, etc [Mwanakwerekwe F school] Have started working on improving school environment (e.g. ramps) [Mwembe Makumbi school] Ramps have been made into head teacher’s office and some classrooms [Paje school]
Lack of water available in school	
Noisy environment because of inadequate dividing walls between classes – not conducive for learning	
Absence of a playground	
Long distances to school	

Attitude barriers	
Negative attitudes towards inclusive education from some parents (especially those with children in special units/classes) and community members	<p>Have developed plans to do more awareness raising with parents [Mwanakwerekwe F school]</p> <p>Teachers and parents committee continue to educate community members about inclusive education [Kusini school]</p> <p>There are parents' meetings to discuss issues around disability and inclusive education [Mwembe Makumbi school]</p> <p>The community is being involved in the implementation work for inclusive education [Paje school]</p>
Teachers' negative attitudes (in the past)	<p>Now there are some well motivated teachers who are committed to inclusive education [Mwanakwerekwe F school]</p> <p>Teachers are now interested in learning about special needs and inclusive education [Mwanakwerekwe E school]</p>
Pregnancy among school girls [negative school/ community attitude towards this]	
Easy availability of employment for boys leads to drop-outs	
Practice barriers	
Teaching methodology (doesn't encourage inclusion)	Remedial teaching for children below average is carried out on Saturday and Sunday [Mwanakwerekwe E school]
Children with disabilities are restricted to their classroom	
Teachers only seem to think about physical disabilities	Most children are assessed for their needs and abilities [Mwembe Makumbi school]
Different teaching 'schemes' in operation – time consuming for children with and without disabilities	The government needs to change the syllabus to make it more child-friendly [Jang'ombe school]
Presence of separate special classes/units	
One religion practised in school, are children from other religious groups left out?	
Boys and girls are kept separated	

Resource barriers	
Limited school budget	<p>Requesting more funds from government [Mwanakwerekwe F school]</p> <p>Would like more funding to support the implementation of inclusive education [Mwembe Makumbi school]</p>
Lack of equipment and teaching/learning materials and assistive devices and furniture etc	<p>Plans exist for obtaining teaching materials [Mwanakwerekwe E school]</p> <p>Teaching/learning materials are present [Paje school]</p> <p>More meetings with parents and community in general to discuss solutions to the problem of inadequate furniture [Jang'ombe school]</p>
Inadequately trained teachers and teachers who lack skills to help children with special needs / to help all learners	<p>Brought in better training for teachers – all done at the school and in the local language [Kusini school]</p> <p>Ongoing training of teachers [Mwembe Makumbi school]</p>
Not enough facilities for using Braille, or sign language interpreters	
Not enough training on disability issues	
Large class sizes	
Small salaries for teachers	

4. Next steps

4.1. Identify *specific* barriers and solutions

Over the course of the workshop, participants began to think more specifically about barriers to inclusion and possible or proven solutions. A reminder was given about the differences between general and specific barriers/solutions:

Example of a general barrier: poor teaching practice.

Example of a specific barrier: teachers use methods involving standing at the front of the class and reading from a book, without active participation of the children.

Example of a general solution: sensitise teachers.

Example of a specific solution: work with the local teacher training college to develop an in-service teacher training programme that raises teachers' awareness of – and ability to use – active learning methods

The more specific we can be when we describe a barrier, the easier it is to think of a specific solution. And if we identify a specific solution, it is then easier to create a realistic and appropriate activity list. It is hard to think what activity list you would create for the very general and vague solution of 'sensitise teachers'. But if we look at the specific solution given above, we can more easily begin to think of a list of possible activities to help us achieve that solution, for example:

- meet head of teacher training college
- read documents about how other similar countries have developed such programmes
- consult teachers about what training they want – use interviews and focus group discussions
- consult pupils about what they want their teachers to be like – use drama and photographs to help them express views
- write new training and awareness programme, pilot it in five schools and review in six months.

So the next question is: how can we more effectively identify *specific* barriers to inclusion, and solutions, in our *own* situation? Some workshop participants found it quite hard to think in terms of specific barriers and solutions. This was possibly because they did not have all the facts about their context available to them while they were away from their working environment. The ideal, therefore, is for participants to work with colleagues and stakeholders when they are back home, to gather more information so that they *can* identify specific barriers and solutions.

4.2. Use action research

The 'look-think-act' process (action research) will help us to do more specific research into the problems/barriers; analyse the information and think about solutions; and then take suitable actions.

The following ideas were presented to participants as activities that could help them to 'look-think-act'. The ticks (✓) show the activities that were demonstrated and/or practised during the workshop.

Look

- Find out as much as you can about the problems or barriers, and what has already been done to solve them.
- Talk to all sorts of people, by using for example:
 - brainstorms (✓)
 - focus groups / group discussions (✓)
 - story telling (✓)
 - interviews (✓)
- Observe and record, by using for example:
 - classroom observation (✓)
 - photography (✓)
 - video (✓)

Think

- You – and your colleagues and stakeholders – analyse what you have heard, seen, recorded.
- Use different ways to help people analyse the information, and think about it from different perspectives.
- Use drawing activities, such as:
 - mountain diagrams (✓)
 - timelines
 - mind maps
 - cartoons / drawings (✓)
- Use performing activities, such as:
 - drama
 - role play (✓)
 - puppet shows
 - dancing / singing
- Use writing and reading activities, such as:
 - reflective diaries
 - case studies
 - stories and articles about ideas and experiences (✓)

Act

- Experiment.
- Try out ideas that:
 - you have for how to improve the situation
 - your colleagues have tried
 - you read about in the EENET newsletter

- a pupil or parent has suggested.
- The action research method of planning your work recognises that there are no definite solutions that will suit every situation.
- You try things – if they work you try to improve them more.
- If they don't work – you look and think some more, then try something else.

Personal plan

Participants were asked to think about how they could use the 'look-think-act' process in their own inclusive education work after the workshop. They were asked to think about the following questions. They could discuss with colleagues, but should write their own individual plans:

- What activities will you do to help you look more closely at (investigate/research) the specific barriers and existing solutions in your place?
- What activities will you do to help you analyse the information and think about specific solutions to the barriers?
- Who will do these activities with you?

The following example was presented:

“My plan – an example of some specific activities to help me ‘look-think-act’

Look

I will use photography activities with children in three schools in my district to help them tell me what they like/dislike about their school. And I will use story-telling approaches with their teachers.

Think

I will use mountain diagrams and mind maps during a meeting with local education officials to help us analyse the information we have collected, and suggest some solutions.

Act

We will experiment with an appropriate action, based on all the collected information and our joint thoughts and ideas

And then ...

We will look again in a few months to see if the experiment is working.

We will work with more people to think about more improvements.

We will take more actions.

We will keep on improving education!”

Participants' responses

Participants spent a session working on their plans, but the activity did not produce the expected outputs. Two common problems seemed to be: a desire to create a traditional plan following log-frame styles, rather than a personal action plan; and misunderstandings about how to work with stakeholders on an equal basis in these sorts of activities.

Different views on planning

Several participants began developing complex project plans (aims, objectives, indicators, etc). These detailed all aspects of the inclusive education project, instead of the required simpler output: a short personal statement of commitment to do some participatory activities with colleagues and stakeholders. This may be because we are all so used to (re)producing formal project plans for donors, that we are not so comfortable discussing or writing down personal activity plans or commitments. More time is needed than was available to allow participants to think about and practise the techniques used in a 'new' approach like action research.

What does stakeholder participation mean?

Some participants found it hard to detail how they would involve stakeholders in the 'look-think-act' process. Some drew up long lists of stakeholders when discussing the 'who will do these activities with you' question. These lists possibly did not fully reflect the groups of people that they would actually have access to or authority to work with in reality. Some participants wrote a list of barriers that they would then ask stakeholders to discuss through focus groups, etc. But it is far more important to approach stakeholder participation from the point of view of *encouraging them to say* what barriers they experience, what the priority problems are from their perspective, and what solutions they think might work (or have worked elsewhere in their experience). If we tell stakeholders what barriers to discuss, we are potentially stopping them from telling us about new things that we had not previously seen or thought about. We must guard against this.

5. Summary of lessons and recommendations

There was a large amount of information about inclusive education in the participants' presentations, and in the outputs of the various workshop activities, discussions and the workshop evaluation. A summary of key lessons and ideas has been extracted from this body of information, and is presented below.

Policy and planning

Stimulating the policy change process

- Policy that supports inclusion is important. But we cannot wait for government policy to change before we start trying to make changes to education. We can try to lead policy change through setting a good example.
- To help change policy we need to be well informed, so that we can put forward a strong case – backed up with evidence – when we do advocacy and lobbying. So we need to keep sharing information internationally, to learn how other countries have succeeded or failed with policy change processes.
- It can be helpful to create pilot schools, which can demonstrate 'inclusion in action'. These schools can help policy makers to visualise what we mean by inclusive education, and act as a place to 'experiment' with new approaches which can then be scaled up to other schools.

Effective policy and planning

- Inclusive education policies need to be holistic, covering not just disability issues, but also issues such as the rights of pregnant girls/young mothers to continue their education, and the importance of mother-tongue teaching (especially in the early years).
- Good baseline studies are needed (before developing new policies and programmes), to show what exists and what is still needed. Even if we did not do a proper baseline study at the very start of our project, we can do the activity now, to provide information for future comparisons.
- Every place will need its own unique plan, in order to deal with its own unique set of barriers, resources, stakeholders, etc. We all need to work on creating solutions relevant to our situations – we can get ideas from 'outsiders', but they cannot provide us with all the answers.
- Special needs departments in education ministries can help us take forward inclusive education. But we also need to be careful that the presence of such departments does not lead the remaining 'mainstream' education departments to ignore inclusion, because they believe it is someone else's job.

Classroom/teaching practice and curricula

Attitudes and actions

- Inclusive education requires us to have teaching methodologies and curricula that ensure inclusion for all children at the levels of presence, participation and achievement.
- There need to be improvements in the way we use individual education plans and student records, especially to ensure that we have appropriate assessment/exam methods for all students.
- The role of play in education must be taken more seriously – it can impact on whether children feel included and welcome in school, and can thus affect attendance and participation levels.
- The way that religion is incorporated into the curriculum and teaching activities must be considered, because the nature and extent of religious teaching/activities can exclude some children.
- Group work can be an effective way to manage teaching and learning, even with large amounts of students. Pupils can be involved in the selection and management of the groups.
- We can adapt the kind of activities we use in participatory workshops for use in the classroom, to make our approaches more active and child-centred, with an emphasis on problem-solving and skills building.

Materials

- We need to find innovative ways to source and/or make teaching and learning materials. We must not let funding shortages become such a big barrier, and we can involve learners more in the process of creating low-cost materials (e.g. improvising, using items thrown away at home, getting children to make the materials and displays, etc).
- Children can go to (and achieve at) school even if we cannot yet supply specialist equipment. Rather than waiting for funding for 'imported' equipment or training, we need to put more effort into finding locally sustainable ways of providing certain skills and facilities (e.g. drawing on local adults and disabled people's organisations to help teachers/pupils/parents to learn/use sign language, Braille, etc).

Teacher recruitment and training

Who should we recruit and train?

- The way we select existing teachers for further training on inclusive education needs to be improved, so that we are not just training those who are already 'believers' in inclusion.
- Inspectors and examiners also need re-educating, so that they support teachers in their changes towards inclusion, and help ensure that teachers are able/allowed to implement the new theories they learn.
- All other school staff also need to understand and support inclusion principles, even if they are not directly teaching classes or managing the school.

- It is vital to recognise the role that head teachers play in schools. Without their support inclusion cannot happen. We need head teachers who are aware of inclusion, have direct experience of inclusive practice, and who promote friendly staff relations throughout the school.
- A better balance of male and female teachers is needed at all levels, so that girls and boys have enough appropriate role models to support them throughout their school career, and help prevent drop-outs.
- Disabled people need to be encouraged and supported to train as teachers, in order to establish role models for disabled children, and uphold their equal rights to be employed as teachers.
- *All* teachers should be educated in child-centred teaching/learning approaches, from the start of their training, since such approaches improve children's participation and achievement. Learning about these approaches is not something that should be reserved just for teachers receiving 'special needs' training.

What is covered by 'training'?

- Training does not just have to mean formal courses on inclusive education. Teachers can learn a lot about how to become more inclusive through discussing and observing each other, and through practising new ideas 'on-the-job'.
- We need to find ways to motivate and enthuse teachers throughout their careers, even when they face challenges and changes, so that they stay in the job, are not frequently absent, etc.
- Inclusive education training for teachers should increasingly be done using their local language, if we are to improve their understanding and adoption of new approaches to teaching/learning. This means donors need to fund more translations of training and reading materials into local languages.
- Teachers do not just need specific training on inclusive education, they also need general background education about child/human rights and diversity and discrimination issues.

Stakeholder involvement

NGOs/DPOs

- All NGOs working on education need to co-operate more closely, to discuss inclusion and ensure we are working towards the same goals, not contradicting each other.
- There need to be stronger links with CBR programmes – inclusive education and CBR are inherently linked.
- Greater use of role models from DPOs and the community can help our work to raise awareness and change attitudes.

Community and parents

- We need to involve influential local community/religious leaders, so that they endorse the education messages we are giving to parents (these leaders often have more influence on parents than we do).
- Supporting the development of parents' support groups is vital; they can advocate for and monitor inclusion in education for their children.
- We need to ensure that we do not automatically blame the parents if children are not attending/achieving in school. We also should not automatically assume all parents are 'ignorant' of the issues surrounding education and inclusion. We need to be sympathetic to family situations, investigate the reasons for poor attendance/achievement, and work with parents to find solutions – as equals and allies.
- Committees of parents, students, teachers and community members can help a school to investigate exclusion problems, develop appropriate solutions, and provide links to help share awareness messages more widely.
- Innovative activities are needed to help us raise awareness and keep people listening to our messages about inclusion. For example, the use of radio programmes and drama can help to keep awareness messages fresh and interesting, and help us reach new audiences.
- The term 'sensitisation' should be avoided when describing the work we do to raise awareness! It has become over-used and there is no clear single definition of what it means. It can easily become a word that we hide behind when we don't really know what we are doing.
- Children and young people can play a big role in promoting inclusion and rights. We should draw on experiences from peer education work, and use fun participatory activities, to help us find ways of mobilising children to express and share opinions about inclusion with their families and communities.

Accessibility

- Some physical and environmental (and political) problems that affect children's participation in education are beyond our control – we may never change them. So rather than waiting helplessly for an impossible change, we have to be creative to find ways around these problems. For example, 'shift systems' are often used to help deal with problems of over-crowding in schools if new classrooms/schools cannot be built due to lack of funds.
- Even though we mostly focus on education in schools, we still need to think about the other places in the community that present accessibility barriers – as these can stop children from *getting to* school.
- We must not forget that accessibility includes a much wider range of issues than just adapting buildings for disabled people. For instance, a school could be considered inaccessible for many children if it does not provide sources of water and food, or help student who cannot bring these to school with them. Schools that have inadequate walls (and therefore no sound-proofing between classes) are also inaccessible – noise is a distraction and hinders participation and achievement. The overall atmosphere of a school also determines its

accessibility – if it is friendly and informal it will be more accessible for everyone.

- Toilets are an issue that can affect inclusion in all schools (especially if you ask the children for their opinions!). We need to consider many things: quantity of toilets, accessibility, location, safety and privacy, cleanliness, and how easily we give children permission to use them.

Special schools

- We need to be clear that special schools and special units are not the same as inclusive education.
- Special institutions, however, can play a role in the development of inclusive education. We need to find ways to bring the two systems together, so that specialist educators advise and support mainstream teachers – with the ultimate aim of having one united education system that caters for all.
- Special units/schools can sometimes provide a useful first step for some children, before moving into inclusive schools.
- We should not assume that special school/units always have the best skills and equipment. Sometimes they too lack trained teachers and facilities, and as such may offer a disabled child an education that is no better than a mainstream school.
- Special school/units can gradually be redeveloped so that they act as resource centres for schools within the district, or are the bases for specialist itinerant teachers.

6. Outcomes of the workshop

The real impact of a workshop or training course cannot be assessed immediately after the event. It often takes time for people to reflect on what they have heard, seen and learned before they begin to rethink their attitudes or ideas. It also then may take extra time for them to change their practices and policies – if indeed the workshop inspired them to do so.

However, some initial outcomes can be elicited from the results of the workshop evaluation. One of the participants from Norway, Siri Wormnæs, led the evaluation process. This primarily involved participants answering a few questions at the end of each day. Participants were asked to reflect on what they had learned that day and what had confused them. They were asked to reflect on what they had learned outside the formal workshop sessions (during chats over lunch, etc). Finally they were asked to reflect on how they felt their own competences has changed as a result of attending the workshop.⁷

Teaching, learning and research methodologies

Feedback suggests that participants enjoyed the participatory, collaborative, informal style of the workshop. They found the approach useful for exchanging information and gaining the confidence to share positive and negative experiences. Some also commented that it helped them to reflect more effectively on their own beliefs and values. Participants also acknowledged that many of the action research and active learning methods used (e.g. using photographs, story-telling activities, group work, role play, etc) could be applied in their own work on training teachers or teaching children. They explained how they would use certain activities in their day-to-day work, and some expressed a clear commitment to doing so.

A few participants found some of the activities confusing or strange, or commented that too many different and new activities had been used in too short a time. This indicates both a lack of participants' familiarity with such activities, and also a need for changes to the facilitation methods in future.

When asked to list three things they had learned through informal discussions during break times, etc, participants developed a very long list. They felt they had learned things about each others' education systems, policies, teaching/learning practices, cultures, governments and political situations, NGOs, school structures, etc. This highlights just how important it is to embrace the learning that we do outside of formal training sessions or meetings.

Understanding of inclusive education issues

Participants came from a diverse range of backgrounds, with different levels of experience and understanding of inclusive education prior to the workshop. For most participants the workshop helped to clarify the concept of inclusive education. It helped them to see inclusive education as an ongoing process that does not have a definition set in stone nor a single formula of solutions that can be applied in every

⁷ Full details of the evaluation results are available in a separate report.

context. Some felt their understanding of inclusive education had been broadened, beyond a purely disability perspective. Others felt that they were now more aware of the need to discover and tackle barriers to inclusion beyond just the most obvious physical and financial barriers.

However, some participants felt that the workshop still left them a little confused, as they did not feel there was a solid definition of inclusive education or an easy-to-follow set of solutions. For some the workshop had not done enough to help solve the specific challenges they are facing in their context.

Personal competence

Participants offered a range of answers as to how their personal competence had changed as a result of attending the workshop. This included a sense of improved competence and confidence with identifying and analysing problems, and working in a participatory way to find solutions. Some felt they would be more able to effectively present and discuss the issues with other people, using different communication techniques.

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Suggested reading

“Enabling Education” – the EENET newsletter. Numbers 1-10 (EENET, 1997-2006)

These newsletters contain short, easy-to-read articles on a wide range of inclusive education issues from around the world. They can be downloaded from www.eenet.org.uk or they are available in printed format or on CD-ROM from EENET. Some editions are also available in Braille and audio cassette.

“Inclusive Education: Where there are few resources” (Sue Stubbs / Atlas Alliance, 2002)

This book provides a comprehensive overview of current inclusive education debates and practice, with particular focus on resource-poor countries.

“Learning from Difference: An action research guide for capturing the experience of developing inclusive education” (EENET, 2005)

This set of guidelines takes practitioners and communities through a process of reflecting on and recording their experiences, and then developing new ideas and actions for making education more inclusive. It uses participatory activities very similar to those used during the “Inclusion in Action” workshop. The guide is available from EENET in printed format or on CD-ROM (the latter contains extensive additional material: background reading, video/audio clips, etc).

“Researching our Experience” (EENET, 2003)

This is a collection of short articles by ordinary primary school teachers in Mpika, Zambia. The teachers have been using an action research approach for several years. They tell stories about the challenges they have faced in making their schools more inclusive, and the solutions they have found through working together with colleagues, pupils and parents.

“Schools for All: Including disabled children in education” (Save the Children, 2002)

This practical book offers ideas and case stories drawn from Save the Children’s and EENET’s many years of experience in inclusive education. There is also a poster available which summarises key points. The book is available electronically from www.eenet.org.uk or on CD-ROM from EENET. Braille and audio cassette copies are also available. The poster is available from EENET or NAD.

About the workshop organisers and funders...

The Atlas Alliance

The Atlas Alliance is the umbrella organisation and the co-ordinating body for the international development work of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) in Norway. The alliance was formed in 1981. Today the alliance consists of 14 organisations and two affiliated organisations. Both NFU and NAD (see below) are DPO members of the Alliance.



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NFU

Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (abbreviated to NFU in Norwegian) is an independent advocacy organisation for persons with developmental disabilities. Members include persons with developmental disabilities as well as relatives and friends. The aim of NFU is an inclusive society for all. Since 1981, NFU has been involved in development co-operation with sister organisations in Africa, Asia, Central America and the Caribbean. The focus has been to strengthen the rights of persons with developmental disabilities in all aspects of life.



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NAD

Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD) is an independent advocacy organisation working for equal rights and full participation for disabled people in Norway. For 25 years it has also joined forces with development partners overseas in the fight against all forms of discrimination.



equal rights and
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Operation Day's Work

Operation Day's Work is an annual solidarity campaign run by Norwegian school students in secondary and high schools. More than 115,000 students participate in taking one day off from school to get a day job after a nation wide information campaign. The salary they earn is donated to education projects benefiting youth in development countries. Annually, US\$3-4 million is raised.



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EENET

The Enabling Education Network is an inclusive education information-sharing network, open to everyone. Network members include teachers, parents, students, non-governmental organisations and policy-makers. EENET focuses primarily on inclusive education in countries of the South, and promotes and shares information and documentation originating in these countries. An annual newsletter "Enabling Education" and an extensive website (www.eenet.org.uk) are EENET's main communication methods.



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