

# ILFE Toolkit

Adapted Afghan Version:  
Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating  
Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments



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Cultural Organization

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## Preface

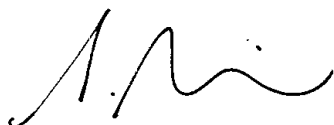
The education of all children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances remains a major challenge in Afghanistan. Approximately 50% of children remain out of school and many children who are enrolled in school, drop out, or do not attend school every day.

The World Education Forum (2000) held in Dakar, set as its second goal: "ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality." Due to the persistent conflicts in Afghanistan, the government committed itself to reach this goal by 2020 instead of 2015.

Without making all the schools more inclusive and child-friendly this goal will be elusive. Increasing school enrolment, attendance and completion rates for all the children and provision of books and learning materials in different languages both in ink (regular print) and Braille are significant parts of this effort. Further, eliminating bias within schools, the national education system, and curricula, and eradicating the social and cultural discrimination that limits the schooling of girls and boys, are the challenging but must tasks for all those who are involved in education. We should equally address the learning needs of children with different abilities, disabilities and health conditions, as well as children under different socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. Indeed, education must be equally provided for children living in communities far away from the nearest school, children who have to work to support their families, as well as children who migrate from one place to the other in search of pasture for their domestic animals or for their own security due to the conflicts that still continue in parts of Afghanistan.

Inequality and inequity in education remain matters of great concern in Afghanistan. To change this, it is critical that teachers, headmasters, principals, supervisors and education planners are sensitised about the importance of inclusive and child-friendly education, and to provide them with practical tools.

This Toolkit addresses these issues and offers comprehensive, practical, and cost effective cases and suggestions on how schools and classrooms can become more inclusive and learning-friendly. It has been developed by building on experiences gained by the organisations and individuals working for inclusive education as well as for Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) over decades in Asia and beyond. I wish this Toolkit, adapted carefully to suit the needs and context of Afghanistan by key government and non-government stakeholders over the past 12 months, to be an inspiration for all those who are working in schools and classrooms with diverse student populations.



**Shigeru Aoyagi**

Director, UNESCO Kabul

UNESCO Representative to Afghanistan

September 2010



## Foreword

The education of all children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances remains a major challenge, but also a major priority for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. In spite of the tremendous efforts that have been made over the past years, both by the Ministry of Education as well as its national and international partners, almost 50% of Afghan children remain out of school. In addition to the millions of children who never enrol in school hundreds of thousands of children may be enrolled in school, but they rarely attend.

The reasons for the high drop-out rates, poor attendance and completion rates as well as transition rates to lower secondary schools are many. However, without making all schools more inclusive and child-friendly the goal of ensuring access to quality Education for All (EFA) will remain elusive. Realising this goal means increasing school enrolment, attendance and completion rates; provision of books and learning materials in different Afghan languages in both ink (regular print) and in Braille; eliminating bias within schools, the national education system, and curricula; and eliminating the social and cultural discrimination that limits the demand for schooling for girls and boys with different abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, and health conditions. Education must also be provided for children living in communities far away from the nearest school; children who have to work to support their families, as well as children who migrate from one place to another in search of pasture for their animals or for their own security due to the armed conflict that still plagues parts of Afghanistan.

This Toolkit has been developed by a group of education specialists to address these, and many of the other barriers, that keep children away from school, and prevents them from succeeding within the formal education system. It has been comprehensively revised and adapted by teachers, student teachers, teacher trainers, Ministry of Education officials, as well as education activists working within national and international organisations to address these issues specifically from an Afghan perspective, and within an Afghan context.

The publication of this Toolkit by the Ministry of Education and UNESCO in collaboration with all the member organisations of the Coordination Working Group on Inclusive Education (IECWG) is a timely initiative as the Ministry of Education sees inclusive and child-friendly education as one of the main means of fulfilling its national and international commitments to provide equal access to quality primary education for all by 2020.



**Farooq Wardak**  
Minister of Education

## Acknowledgements

The work of preparing this Toolkit was genuinely participatory and involved many education specialists, teachers, agency experts, and others from inside and outside of the Asian Region. Their names are listed below, and we would like to thank all of them for their contributions. Every single input and comment were thoroughly considered and contributed to the enrichment of the Toolkit.

Listed below are the many contributors who provided their valuable time and experienced insights into completing this Toolkit. If we have inadvertently forgotten someone, please accept our heartfelt apologies and sincerest appreciation for your valuable assistance.

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# Overview of the Adapted Afghan Version of the ILFE Toolkit

**Inclusive education is based on the right all children have to quality education according to the:**

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- UN Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- World Declaration on Education for All (1990)
- Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)
- The Dakar Framework – Education For All (2000)
- Millennium Development Goals – MDG (2000)
- Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2004)
- Afghan Millennium Development Goals – AMDG (2005)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
- Afghan National Development Strategy – ANDS (2008)
- Education Law (2008)
- Road Map – Needs and Rights Assessment for Inclusive Education (2009)
- National Education Strategic Plan – NESP II (2010).

**Inclusive and child-friendly education should be seen as:**

- An approach to whole school improvement that will ensure that national strategies towards Education for All are really for all;
- A means of ensuring that all children receive quality care and education in their home communities as part of early childhood development, pre-school, primary and secondary education programmes, particularly those who are currently excluded from mainstream education or vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion; and

A contribution to the development of a society that respects and values the individual differences of all citizens.<sup>1</sup>

An inclusive, learning-friendly environment (ILFE) welcomes and educates all children regardless of their gender, background and abilities.

**These are the key characteristics of inclusive and learning-friendly schools and communities:<sup>2</sup>**

- Inclusive schools welcome all children in the community regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, HIV and health status, as well as their social, economic, ethnic, religious or language background.
- Inclusive communities and schools embrace diversity not merely tolerate it.
- Children learn at their own pace and according to their own abilities to achieve optimal academic, social, emotional and physical development.
- Children with disabilities and other special or individual learning needs as well as their parents and teachers have free access to school and community based as well as external support systems, all to ensure that their individual needs are responded to effectively.
- Children and parents are actively involved in the teaching-learning process, the knowledge and skills children carry with them from home is therefore valued, and recognised.
- Curricula, assessments and examinations are flexible and child-centred, encouraging children to learn and to develop self-esteem and confidence.

<sup>1</sup> International Symposium on Inclusion and the Removal of Barriers to Learning, Development and Participation (2005). "Recommendations" Bukittinggi, Indonesia on URL: [http://www.idp-europe.org/symposium/Symposium\\_Recommendations.pdf](http://www.idp-europe.org/symposium/Symposium_Recommendations.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Watterdal, T. (2008). "Embracing Change." p 2.

Although Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) will look different from country to country, district to district, and from school to school they are all based on the same six principles (or dimensions):

1. Rights-Based, Inclusive and Child Seeking
2. Effective - Focusing on the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of all children
3. Healthy, Safe and Protective
4. Gender Responsive
5. Community Based and Family Focused
6. Child-Friendly Systems and Policies - Child-Friendly Assessment and Evaluation Systems, Curricula and Support Systems

It is important to reiterate that; NO school can be child-friendly unless it is Inclusive, and NO school can be inclusive unless it is child-friendly!

## WHO CAN USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This Toolkit was written especially for teachers in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools, school administrators, student teachers, teacher educators and trainers, education activists, education planners in government and non-government organisations, as well as all those who want to improve access to schools and learning for children who usually do not go to school. This Toolkit will be especially valuable for teachers who are working in schools that are beginning to change towards becoming more inclusive and child-friendly.

We must embrace the fact that "All Children Are Different," and the principle that all children have an equal right to education, regardless of their gender, background or ability. Many of our schools and educational systems are moving towards "inclusive education." Girls and boys with diverse backgrounds and abilities are encouraged to attend neighbourhood schools. On the one hand, attending school with their peers increases their opportunities to learn because they are able to interact with other children. Improving their learning also promotes their participation in family and community life. On the other hand, the children with whom they interact also benefit. They learn to respect and value each other's abilities and backgrounds, as well as patience, tolerance, and understanding. They learn to work together, to take responsibility, and to appreciate each other's strengths and accept each other's weaknesses. They come to realise that every person is unique and "special" and thereby learn to embrace diversity and to cherish it.

## How Can You Use This Toolkit?

For us, as teachers, embracing diversity among our students is not always easy. Some of us may have large classes, and we may already feel overstretched and overworked. Including children with diverse backgrounds and abilities into our classes often means more work, but it does not have to! All we need to do is to manage the diversity among our children by recognising their strengths as well as their weaknesses. We need to plan lessons accordingly, by using different teaching strategies and adapting our curriculum to fit the abilities, needs and background of each individual child. And, most importantly, we need to know how to mobilise our teacher colleagues, parents, and community members to help us provide a good quality education for all the children in our school and neighbourhoods.

This Toolkit is designed to help you do all of these things! It provides you with useful tools to make your schools and classrooms more welcoming, lively and effective places of learning for ALL. Our



schools and classrooms should therefore not only become child-friendly, but also teacher-friendly, parent-friendly, and community-friendly. This Toolkit contains a set of ideas that will inspire you to reflect (think about) on your own situation. You can try out many of the ideas provided to you throughout the seven Booklets of this Toolkit without major investments in equipment or materials. Instead they are designed to help you make a difference with few resources by inspiring your creative minds. They also invite you to discuss these ideas with others, and, together with all the learners in your community, create a unique, dynamic, and inclusive learning-friendly environment.

However, this Toolkit is not an absolute recipe or manual to be followed step-by-step. It will not have an answer for all the challenges you may face. Please remember that creating an inclusive, learning-friendly environment is a process that will take time. It cannot be achieved over night. Since you and your students will always be learning new things, the process towards inclusion will never be finished. It will provide continuous challenges as well as satisfaction to students, teachers, administrators, special educators, parents, and other members of the community.

Each Booklet contains tools and activities that you can do by yourself (self-study) to start creating an inclusive, learning-friendly environment (ILFE). Some of these activities ask you to reflect on what you and your school are doing now in terms of creating an ILFE. Others actively guide you in improving your skills as a teacher in a diverse classroom. You might want to try these individual activities first, so you can become familiar with what an ILFE is, how it can be created in your classroom and school, and how it will benefit you and your students.

Because creating an ILFE requires teamwork, there also are tools and activities that you can do with your colleagues and supervisors, with your students, as well as with their families and other members of the community. These activities will help you sustain important changes in your classroom and school, so they continue to be inclusive and learning-friendly.

These Booklets can be used in two ways. For those schools that are already involved in becoming inclusive and learning-friendly, you might want to choose a Booklet or Booklets that will help you in some special way, such as working with families or communities or managing inclusive schools. For those schools that are just starting on the path to becoming inclusive and learning-friendly, you might want to work through each Booklet, starting with Booklet 1 and moving through Booklet 6. The Toolkit is designed to help you each step of the way because each Booklet builds on the one before it.

Although the term "school" is used throughout this Toolkit, this term means any formal or non-formal learning environment where pre-school, primary, or secondary education takes place. In this Toolkit, therefore, the term "school" is used broadly to cover all types of educational settings. These environments can be formal schools, community classes in private houses or Mosques, or even informal classes held under shady trees. Consequently, you can use this Toolkit if you are a professional teacher or a volunteer who helps children with diverse backgrounds and abilities to learn in informal settings (such as classes for street and working children).

## **WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?**

Through this Toolkit, you will learn what an "inclusive, learning-friendly environment" is, and how your school and classroom can create such an environment (Booklet 1).

You will also learn how important families and communities are to the process of creating and maintaining an inclusive, learning-friendly environment, as well as how to involve parents and community members in the school, and how to involve children in the community (Booklet 2).

You will learn what barriers to education, development and participation are, how to identify those children who are not in school, and how to reduce and remove barriers to their inclusion in schools (Booklet 3).

You will learn how to create an inclusive classroom and why inclusive and learning-friendly environments are so important to children's achievement and how to deal with the wide range of different children attending your class. You will learn how to make learning meaningful for all, and how to plan and manage an inclusive classroom, how to maximise available resources, introduce and manage group work and cooperative learning, as well as how to assess children's learning (Booklet 4).

You will learn how to manage inclusive schools and make sure that your school is welcome to all children, and how to develop schools that help children to optimise their social, emotional, physical and cognitive development (Booklet 5).

Finally, you will learn ways to make your school accessible, healthy and protective for all children, especially those who are vulnerable to exclusion from and within the education system (Booklet 6).

## LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Teachers and practitioners from around the world helped to develop this Toolkit. This includes those directly involved in four Regional workshops sharing their tools and ideas for getting all children in school and learning, those sharing their knowledge and tools through other venues such as printed publications and the Internet. It includes those who served as "critical readers" in reviewing early drafts of this Toolkit. And most importantly, it includes those schools and teachers from many different countries who reviewed this Toolkit and provided valuable advice and additional tools for its improvement. You will therefore be learning from a vast number of stakeholders, in schools in countries throughout Asia and beyond. One of the most important questions you can ask yourself when using the tools is: "How can I adapt this specific tool for use in my classroom or in my school?"

We have included a number of cases from different parts of Afghanistan that highlight different aspects of the ideas we are presenting in this Toolkit. These cases will also help you to better understand how these ideas can be implemented in practice.

## A NOTE ON TERMS

One challenge in developing this Toolkit was determining what terms should be used. Oftentimes, different terms are used to describe the same thing. Moreover, sometimes a term may imply an idea or feeling that is not intended. For example, we have avoided using any terms that imply discrimination. We have also tried to keep the terms simple and the presentation itself as friendly and informal as possible.

In keeping with the theme of this Toolkit, we have tried to use terms that are as inclusive as possible. Some of the most important terms that appear in this Toolkit include the following (listed alphabetically) while others are explained in text boxes throughout the Toolkit as the terms first appear:

- **Barriers to learning, development and participation**

The barriers children face will vary from one child to another. It is important to realise that all children face some forms of barriers. If these barriers are not addressed properly, children will not be able to reach their full academic, social, emotional, and physical potential. Barriers may therefore be experienced temporarily or permanently depending on how effectively these

are addressed, reduced and/or removed. It is therefore important that educational approaches are adjusted to the individual potentials and needs of all learners. These barriers can be environmental or attitudinal (created by us as teachers and by the school system) or individual (barriers related impairments, health conditions and circumstances affecting the child).<sup>3</sup>

- **Children with diverse backgrounds and abilities**

This is perhaps the most inclusive term in this Toolkit. It refers to those children who usually are excluded from (fall outside of and not being able to participate in) the mainstream educational system due to gender, disabilities, as well as having a different social, cultural, language, ethnic, or religious background than the majority population in their communities.

- **Classroom**

This refers to the actual place where children come together to learn with the help of a teacher. This can for example be in formal classrooms in schools, or in community based classes in private homes in villages far away from the nearest school. It can also be in informal classes for child workers held under trees in parks or in alleyways, classes at youth centres for children who are living on the street or even home-based learning sessions for those children who cannot attend any other learning environment, either temporarily or permanently.

- **Community**

This refers to the wider social group to which the child and family belong. It can be a group of families, a cluster of houses in the mountains, a village, or a neighbourhood in a big city.

- **Disability or Children with disabilities**

"Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments (hearing or vision) which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."<sup>4</sup> Children with disabilities are therefore often excluded from schools altogether or they are sent away to special schools. They are children who were born with an impairment, or they lost their hearing, vision or ability to walk or move around because of illness, accidents, or other causes. It is important that we understand that children with disabilities are capable of learning, and that they have the same right to attend their neighbourhood school as all other children.

- **Family**

This refers to the main social unit within which a child is raised.

- **Gender vs. Sex**

Gender refers to the social roles that many believe belong to boys and girls, or to men and women within a particular social or cultural group, for example; "men as breadwinners;" "women as child caregivers;" "boys as vocal, tough and sporty;" and "girls as quiet, obedient and studious." Gender roles are created by a society and are learned from one generation to the next as part of a society's culture. Because it is a socially learned perception (for instance, learned in the family or in school), anything associated with gender can be changed to achieve equality and equity for both boys and girls. In other words, we can change the gender roles of "men and women as both breadwinners and child caregivers." Gender roles often affect the expectations we place on girls and boys in school. As a result of cultural and social gender roles, we struggle to provide access for girls to education here in Afghanistan and boys (not just in Afghanistan but in countries all over the world) seem to struggle to succeed within education. While the term "sex" refers to the biological differences between boys and girls (or men and women).

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO (2009). "Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings - Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments Specialized Booklet 3" Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO. pp: 8-12

<sup>4</sup> Article 1 of the United Nation Convention (2006) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- **Impairment**

Impairment is a partial or complete loss of a body function, a body part, an organ, or a sensory (hearing or vision) system. The loss can be the temporary or permanent. Impairments may affect mental functions (memory, consciousness, and cognitive abilities), sensory functions, and/or physical and bodily functions (internal organs, as well as the head, the body and limbs) which means that children with an impairment may experience difficulties seeing, hearing or moving, and that they may learn at a different pace (faster or more slowly) and in different ways than most other children.

- **Inclusive education or Inclusive learning**

This refers to the schools and education programmes both in formal or non-formal learning environments that are welcoming of ALL children regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, as well as social, cultural, language, ethnic, and religious background.

*An inclusive and child-friendly education system ensures that all children have equal access to quality education regardless of their gender, age, abilities, disabilities/impairments, health conditions, circumstances, as well as socio-economic, religious, ethnic, and language backgrounds.*

*Afghan Ministry of Education Definition of Inclusive Education*

- **Learning environment**

This means any formal or non-formal setting where children gain knowledge and the skills to use that knowledge in their daily lives. Learning environments may take the form of schools, colleges, community based classes, and Mosques, or even private homes, or sport clubs.

- **Learning-friendly**

This means placing the child firmly at the centre of the learning process, but also recognising that his or her total learning environment includes others such as teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders, who will guide children in their learning process. In a learning-friendly environment children will benefit not only from learning by themselves, or from their teachers, but also from the learning of others who may have different need and learn in different ways. For instance, a learning-friendly environment gives children a chance to participate actively in their own learning. It also is an environment in which teachers are helped and empowered to learn and teach more effectively, where they are free use and adapt new teaching methods, and where parents and community members are actively encouraged to participate in helping their children to learn effectively and their schools to function.

- **Student or Learner or Pupil**

These terms refer to anyone who is participating in formal or non-formal learning at a primary or secondary level. They are used interchangeably in this Toolkit.

- **Students with "special learning needs" or "special educational needs"**

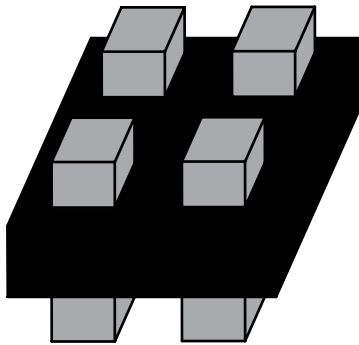
This means children who may require greater or a different kind of attention to help them with their learning. In many countries, these children are taught in special schools or classrooms. However, we believe that these children should grow up, play, and learn together with their peers in the regular neighbourhood schools and not placed in segregated special schools. These students are often labelled (or sometimes being referred to in derogatory terms) in such a way that they are set apart from "regular" students, they will therefore suffer from poor self esteem and are discriminated against by their peers and their communities. When these terms appear in the Toolkit, it merely acknowledges the existence of this labelling practice. However, this does NOT mean that we condone these practices. It is important that we realise that ALL children are unique and different and should have equal rights to quality education in their neighbourhood school.

- **Teacher**

This refers to any individual who systematically guides and facilitates a child's learning within a formal or non-formal learning environment.

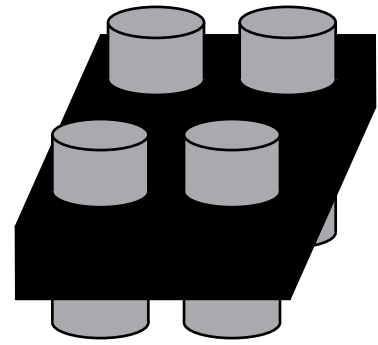
## Inclusion vs. integration and segregation

### Special Education



#### Special Education

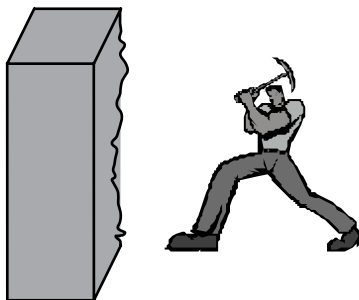
- Child with special needs
- Square peg for square holes
- Special teacher
- Special school



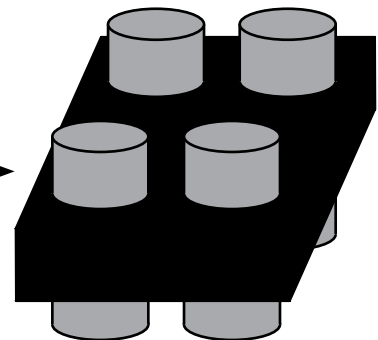
#### Regular Education

- Regular children
- Round pegs for round holes
- Regular teacher for regular school

### Integrated Education



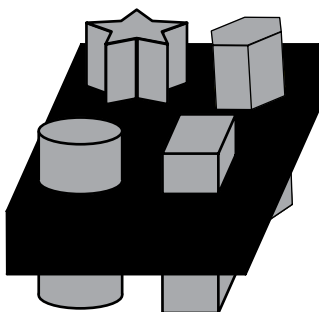
Therapy  
Rehabilitation



- Change the child to fit the system
- Make the square peg round

- Education system stays the same
- Child has to adopt or fail

### Inclusive Education



- All children are different
- All children can learn
- Different abilities, ethnic groups, size, age, background and gender
- Change the system to fit the needs of the child

*(Original drawings by Sue Stubbs adapted by Karen Chesterton and Alexander Thomas Hauschild)*

## Dari Braille Alphabet

ا	ب	پ	ت	ث	ج	چ
ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	ژ
س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع
غ	ف	ق	ک	گ	ل	م
ن	و	م	لا	ء	ی	ئ

## Pashtu Braille Alphabet

ا	ب	پ	ت	ټ	ث	ج
چ	ح	خ	څ	ځ	د	ډ
ذ	ر	ړ	ښ	ز	ژ	س
ښ	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع
غ	ف	ق	ک	گ	ل	م
ن	ڼ	و	ه	ء	ي	ې
ی	ئ					

## English Braille Alphabet

A ⠠	B ⠡	C ⠢	D ⠠⠃	E ⠠⠣	F ⠠⠋	G ⠠⠢⠠	H ⠠⠠⠢	I ⠠⠠⠢⠠	J ⠠⠠⠢⠠
K ⠠⠠⠢	L ⠠⠠⠢	M ⠠⠠⠢	N ⠠⠠⠢	O ⠠⠠⠢	P ⠠⠠⠢	Q ⠠⠠⠢	R ⠠⠠⠢	S ⠠⠠⠢	T ⠠⠠⠢
U ⠠⠠⠢	V ⠠⠠⠢	X ⠠⠠⠢	Y ⠠⠠⠢	Z ⠠⠠⠢					
. ⠠	, ⠠	; ⠠	: ⠠	? ⠠	! ⠠	( ⠠	) ⠠	- ⠠	' ⠠

## Braille Numbers

1 ⠠	2 ⠠	3 ⠠	4 ⠠	5 ⠠
6 ⠠	7 ⠠	8 ⠠	9 ⠠	10 ⠠



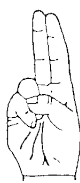
## One-Handed Dari Finger Spelling Alphabet



ج



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ت



پ



ب



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آ



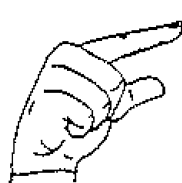
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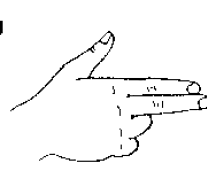
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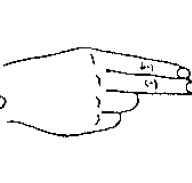
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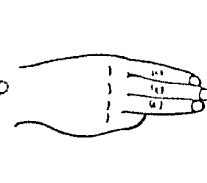
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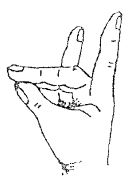
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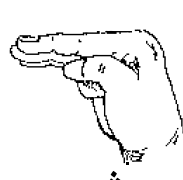
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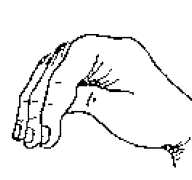
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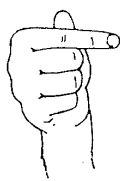
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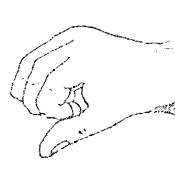
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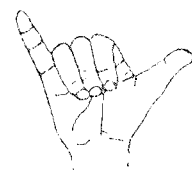
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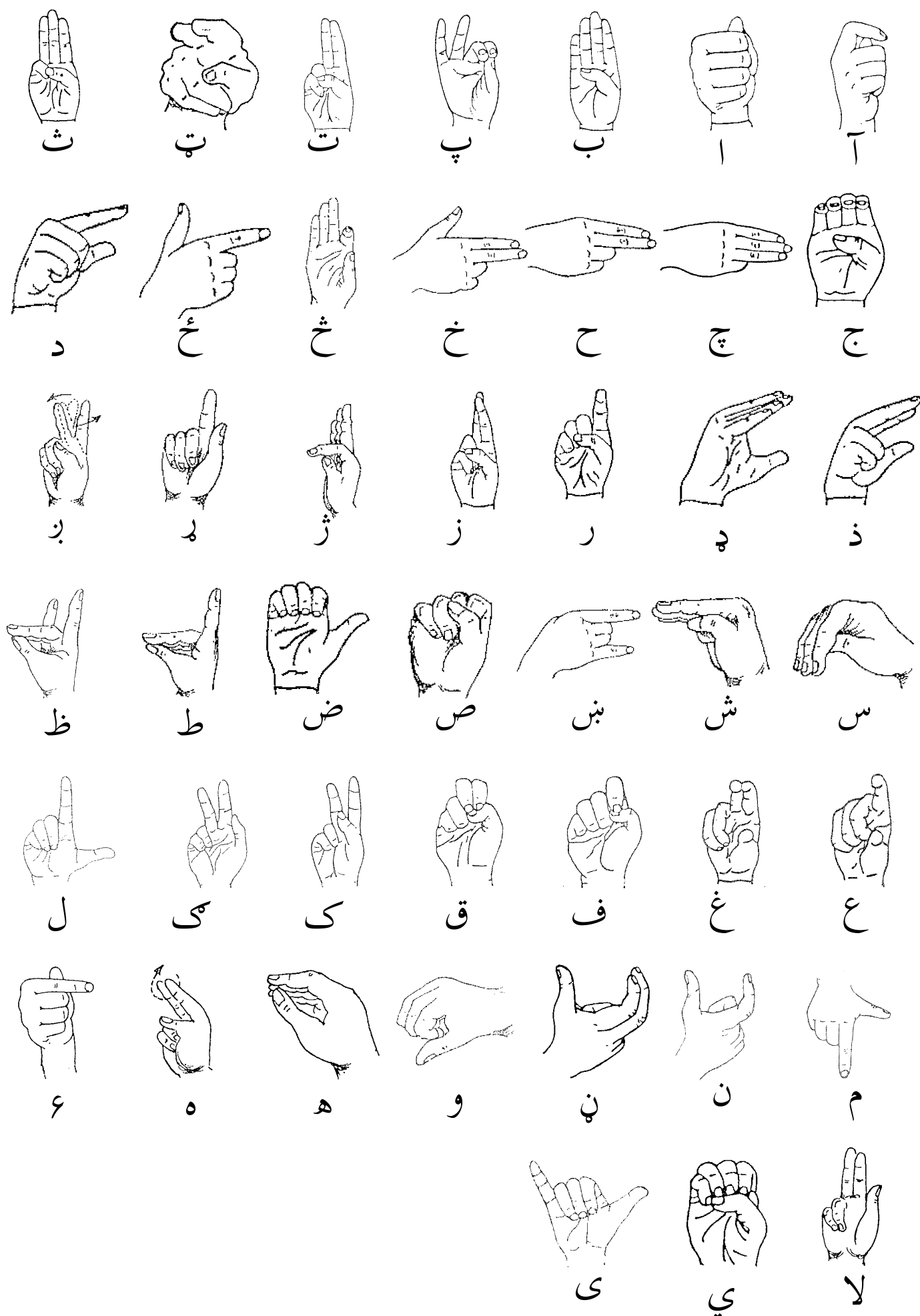


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## One-Handed Pashtu Finger Spelling Alphabet



## One-Handed American Finger Spelling Alphabet



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



M



N



O



P



Q



R



S



T



U



V



W



X



Y



Z

## Two-Handed British Finger Spelling Alphabet

**A****B****C****D****E****F****G****H****I****J****K****L****M****N****O****P****Q****R****S****T****U****V****W****X****Y****Z**

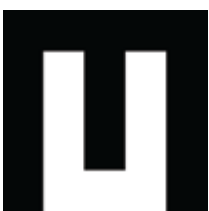
**E Chart****6/60**

If this symbol (letter E) at 6/60 cannot be seen from half a distance (3 meters) in the eye with the best correction (as vision is different from one eye to the other), the person is considered to be blind.

**6/18**

The first number (6) is the distance used for testing (6 meters). The second number (18) is the size of the symbol.

If these symbols (letter E) can be seen from a distance of 6 meters with proper correction (glasses), the person being tested has "normal vision". If s/he cannot see the symbol s/ he has low vision.



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