

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CROSS-COUNTRY PEER-REVIEW  
BANGLADESH (HOPE project) and INDONESIA (IDEAL project)**

***“DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES THROUGH ACTION LEARNING”***

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## ACRONYMS

C4D	Communication For Development
CBCP	Community-Based Child Protection (Indonesia)
CBID	Community-Based Inclusive Development
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CwD	Children with Disabilities
DEO	District Education Office
DPO	Disabled People Organisation
ECCD	Early Child Care & Development
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FBC	Family-Based Care (Indonesia)
FF	Family Forum (Indonesia)
GMR	Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO)
HOPE	Holistic approach towards Promotion of inclusive Education (Bangladesh)
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
IDEAL	Inclusive Community Development and Schools for All (Indonesia)
IE	Inclusive Education
IEC	Information, Education & Communication
IF	IKEA Foundation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning
MIS	Management Information System
MTR	Mid Term Review
OOSC	Out of School Children
PDQ	Program Development & Quality
QLE	Quality Learning Environment
SCI	Save the Children International
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SMC	School Management Committee
SOP	Standard Operational Procedure
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
UP	Union Parishad (lowest level local government structure / Bangladesh)
WASH	Water and Sanitation-Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization



**CROSS-COUNTRY**

**PEER REVIEW**



**IN PICTURES**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is one of the major challenges facing education systems around the world. The question of how schools can include all learners from the communities they serve and enable them both to meaningfully participate and achieve the best possible learning outcomes is a pressing concern for anyone concerned with issues of equity and social justice in contemporary and future society.

Exclusion has many faces. Poverty and marginalization are major causes of exclusion. Households in rural or remote communities and children in urban slums often have less access to education. Children with disabilities especially, suffer from educational exclusion and account for one third of all out-of-school-children. Depending on contexts, working children, those belonging to indigenous groups and linguistic minorities, orphans and migrant children are vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion. Once out-of-school-children have been identified and reasons for being out of school analyzed, specific strategies can be developed to welcome them to school and support their learning so that they stay in and benefit from education. However, the sources of exclusion need to be addressed too and it is necessary to look at what happens in and out of school from children's daily reality in their homes and communities. And when they do go to school we need to continue to ask ourselves: *What are they learning and in what conditions?* Efforts to expand enrolment based on the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion must be accompanied by policies and practices to enhance the quality and equality of teaching and learning. Together we must work on an 'access to success' continuum for all children. This is a process that involves responding to the diverse needs of learners and this has implications for teaching, the curriculum, ways of interacting and relations between schools and communities.

### 1.1 The challenge of including children with disabilities in education

The drive to achieve Education for All (EFA) by 2015 led to a focus on *barriers to participation* in basic education for marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2010) and there has been criticism that disability was not acknowledged in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG, 2015) have recognized that education for all cannot be achieved without the inclusion of children and young people with disabilities in education, given the close links between disability, lack of education and poverty (United Nations Secretary General 2007). Many children and young people with disabilities are denied sustained access to basic education, meaning they do not receive the support they need to stay in and benefit from schooling. Some never enter school, others may start but make poor progress and are eventually 'pushed out'<sup>1</sup> from the system, and a relatively small proportion, especially in low-income countries, are educated in a parallel system of special schools, running alongside regular schools.

Key barriers for disability inclusion, identified by HOPE project (Bangladesh) and IDEAL project (Indonesia), include traditional negative community attitudes towards disability, and therefore parents hiding these children; lack of disability knowledge and experience among parents,

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<sup>1</sup> Rather than "dropping out" children are often "pushed out" by a rigid education system that is not responsive to different individual learning needs

teachers, government decision makers and the general public, leading to refusing school access for these children; and poor collaboration and coordination between sectors and key actors leading to limited assessments and support services as well as unnecessary labeling.

In 2017 in Indonesia, the IDEAL project reached 1,479 children with disabilities, of which 1,268<sup>2</sup> were enrolled in school. These are children who may otherwise have remained hidden at home.

## 1.2 What is inclusion?

Inclusion is rooted in the right to education as enshrined in Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948). Various treaties and normative instruments have since then reaffirmed this right, such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006). Article 24 in the UNCRPD is critical as it requires member states to provide education for persons with disabilities that fosters their participation in society, their sense of dignity and self-worth, and the development of their personality, abilities and creativity. This is re-enforced by General Comment no.4 (2016) which notes that millions of children with disabilities continue to be denied their right to education, and for many more, education is available only in settings where they are isolated from their peers and often receive an inferior quality of provision. It goes on to state that inclusive education requires changes to the culture, policy and practice of regular schools to accommodate and effectively include all students.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)<sup>3</sup> spells out the right of children *not* to be discriminated against. It also expresses commitments about the *aims* of education, recognizing that the learner should be at the center of the learning process. This affects content and pedagogy, and – more broadly – how schools and classrooms are organized and managed. Underlying the notion of inclusive education is a recognition that all learners are unique individuals with diverse abilities and interests, and that they come from different social backgrounds. Inclusive education is an evolving concept. In the past it has focused on learners' characteristics or the location of learning, but it is now moving towards concepts of participation and power (Stubbs, 2008).

**CRPD Art. 4:** State Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. In realizing this right, State Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live.

(UNHCHR, 2013): The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has noted that only inclusive education can provide both quality education and social development for persons with disabilities, and a guarantee of universality and non-discrimination in the right to education

The overall goal of inclusive education is to ensure that school is a place where all children participate and are treated equally, i.e. with respect. It is an approach that transforms education

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<sup>2</sup> Not all are school-age children, many are younger and may first benefit from CBR services and other early interventions

<sup>3</sup> Persons up to the age of 18 years old are defined as a child in the CRC

systems to respond to the diversity of learners. This means enhancing the quality of education by improving the effectiveness of teachers, promoting learner-centered methodologies, developing appropriate textbooks and learning materials and ensuring that schools are safe and healthy for all. Strengthening links with the community is also vital because relationships between teachers, children, parents and society at large are crucial for developing inclusive societies.

### **1.3 The policy-practice gap**

Many countries have developed policies for inclusive education. However, the implementation of such policies remains weak. The 2015 Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2015) commissioned a comprehensive literature review (Grimes, Stevens, Kumar, 2015) of the evolution of policies and strategies to support the implementation of inclusive education. This review confirmed Croft's earlier observation (2013) that there are serious question marks over whether the development of policies and legislation at national level is affecting any real change in the 'provision of education for disabled children' at school level (Croft, 2013, p. 234). Reasons for the gap between policy and practice vary greatly from country to country. They include barriers like negative social and cultural beliefs, economic factors, conservative attitudes among teachers and teacher educators, parental resistance, a lack of skills among teachers, rigid curricula and exam systems, inadequate educational infrastructure, large class sizes, the dominance of a medical model of disability, and a top-down introduction of inclusive education without adequate preparation of schools and communities (Mitchell, 2005).

It is inefficient to have school systems where children because of poor quality are not learning. A school with high repetition rates is a case in point. The expenditure incurred by schools when students repeat a grade would be better used to provide additional support to those who encounter difficulties in learning. If we want to improve inclusive quality in schools, the way teachers teach and using a child-centered curriculum are of critical importance. Such a curriculum is characterized by a move away from rote learning towards greater emphasis on hands-on, experience-based, active and cooperative learning. Introducing inclusive practices also has implications for teachers' attitudes and practices – be it towards girls, those who learn more slowly, children with disabilities, children from ethnic minority groups or those with a different mother tongue. An inclusive curriculum addresses a child's cognitive, emotional and creative development. It is based on the four pillars of education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – learning to know, to do, to be and to live together – which starts in the classroom.

### **1. PURPOSE of CROSS-COUNTRY PEER REVIEW.**

To understand and describe what is changing due to our inclusive education (IE) project activities for the most discriminated and excluded children, a cross-country peer-review was initiated – piloted in Bangladesh and Indonesia – to improve cross project learning. Extensive research on the scope of application of peer reviews has shown that there is a vast amount of experiences with peer reviews in various contexts within education, but also within other professional areas

( Gutknecht-Gmainer, 2005). Peer review is a method used to inform decision making by engaging professional colleagues or peers in a critical review of the merits of a project and through learning from each other.

The purpose of this documented cross-country peer review in Bangladesh and Indonesia is to create a capacity building and professional learning opportunity based on inclusive education experience and expertise in another context. Through this peer evaluation, Save the Children wants to showcase (1) how existing results can be interpreted, (2) lessons learnt and worked out together, and (3) strategies (including for project exit) developed for the final implementation year, resulting from the lessons learnt. This peer review is an “assessment” of project activities by colleagues. It is not to judge but to improve and help each other enhance the quality of the collective contribution to inclusive education. Such a review process works best if conducted by interested, technically responsible colleagues, respected for their IE knowledge and skills, and who can thus provide meaningful feedback. Peer reviews can provide evidence of the effectiveness of project interventions from the perspective of one’s peers and add an important dimension in the development and evaluation of the effectiveness of project activities. Peer reviews can complement data gathered in other ways and provide a source for triangulation.

The overall objective of this peer review is *“to understand and describe what is changing especially for some of the most discriminated and excluded children through IKEA Foundation supported project interventions”*. Specific objectives include: (1) to create focused peer-to-peer sharing and learning opportunities across countries, (2) record key strategies, opportunities, remaining challenges and achievements, (3) document lessons learned for targeted quality improvements during the last year of each project, and (4) use information collected for developing a responsible, phased exit strategy for 2018.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Guidelines to select peer reviewers based on pre-agreed criteria were developed and used to select a team of two peer reviewers in each country, after which the following steps were followed:

1. Project background information was shared between both countries for (1) pre-visit reading, (2) identifying project areas of special interest, and (3) developing special questions).
2. Country visit dates were agreed, and preparations started for visa applications, booking of tickets and accommodation etc.
3. The country visit program<sup>4</sup> was developed together.
4. Information collection methods to be employed included Focus Groups Discussion (FGD), meeting and discussion, interview, observation, and document review for both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

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<sup>4</sup> Peer review questions were developed together by both peer-review teams, Dr. Peter Grimes and Els Heijnen-Maathuis (SCS regional education adviser), also involving monitoring (MEAL) and program quality (PDQ) colleagues

5. Respondents to be included: SC project team, local NGO partner staff, local government officials, CBR resource person, children / students, teachers and School Management Committee (SMC), parents.
6. During both cross-country peer review visits skype calls took place with Peter Grimes (independent expert) and the SCS regional education adviser for Asia to support and facilitate the reflection and learning process as 'critical friends'.
7. The cross-country project peer review report with lessons learned and recommendations was developed by Peter Grimes with support from the SCS regional education adviser for Asia, with contributions from both peer review teams.

## **4. DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES THROUGH ACTION LEARNING**

### **4.1 Reflective practice**

Reflective practice is, in its simplest form, thinking about or reflecting on what you do. It is closely linked to the concept of learning from experience, in that you think about what you did, and what happened, and decide from that what you would do differently next time. This process of learning and reflection is linked to actions. Where teachers are reflecting on their work before or after an action, it can be described as 'reflection-on-action', whilst reflection which takes place during a lesson, or action, can be described as 'reflection-in-action' (Schon, 1983). Reflective practitioners will construct, frame and re-frame problems, challenges and issues through engagement with the context in which they work. This will necessitate consideration of new information and changing circumstances to enable the professional to see issues from different perspectives (ibid).

This is also critical for the development of more inclusive schools. The importance of school culture and the underlying knowledge and values which accumulate over time and help to shape the development of (inclusive) practice are a critical part of such a process and encourage to support colleagues to collaborate, reflect and problem solve together as part of their everyday practice (Zeichner and Liston, 1996).

### **4.2 The role of facilitator or 'critical friend'**

The two facilitators or 'critical friends' acted as a reflective sounding board for the two country teams. Both facilitators were considered trusted persons who could provide technical support during the peer review process but also ask challenging questions, suggest reframing of approaches, provide information to be examined through another lens and offer *critiques or commentaries* as friends. In this section of the report, we explore the theories which underpin the way in which we, as facilitators, approached our role.

Successful inclusive education initiatives have tended to be those which have focused on restructuring schools and education systems to enable them to become more responsive to every individual learner, whatever his or her learning needs. This reflects a shift in thinking which is

based on the belief that organizational and teaching-learning changes made to address the needs of learners experiencing difficulties can benefit all children and respecting or even celebrating the uniqueness of every individual, creates a more enriching learning environment for all.

Reflective enquiry and collaboration are two important strategies that support teachers to develop an approach to teaching, whereby they are able to understand and use a 'wider curriculum perspective on educational difficulties' (Ainscow, 2004, p83). As such, the role of facilitator or 'critical friend' is to help colleagues '*....to learn from their experiences and, in so doing, to point to patterns and examples of practice that might be instructive to others who are addressing similar agendas. In this sense (the) aim is not to propose recipes that can be applied universally but rather to suggest ingredients that might be worthy of further consideration within specific contexts*' (Ainscow 2003, 26). One outcome of this process is that it can help to develop teachers into reflective practitioners and problem-solvers.

The collaborative aspects of this approach should not be underestimated. The importance of the dialogical aspects of learning emphasises the way in which colleagues can be supported to share and reflect together as part of their everyday practice leading to problem solving. In this sense, collaborative reflective practice can be seen as continually evolving. In the SC Peer review program, the role of the two project facilitators was to encourage participants to think about the action within their context in such a way that their routine patterns of thinking are 'interrupted' (Ainscow, 2003) enabling them to set and frame problems through inclusive perspectives, generating new and creative solutions and developments in practice. The facilitators aimed to support engagement with evidence generated through the peer review, leading to '*... a reframing of perceived problems that, in turn, draws ... attention to overlooked possibilities for addressing barriers to participation and learning*' (Ainscow et al. 2006, p120).

## **5. SAVE the CHILDREN SWEDEN (SCS) INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROJECTS**

The IKEA Foundation (Soft Toys campaign) supports projects towards inclusive education as a response to deprived children being denied their right to education (CRC Art. 2/28-29). In the countries<sup>5</sup> where Save the Children implements these projects, children with disabilities - in addition to those from (ethnic) minority groups - have been identified as one of the most discriminated children. The focus of these programs is therefore on promoting, implementing and monitoring equal opportunities to education for all deprived children, with a special focus on children with disabilities. Project interventions include advocacy, awareness raising, capacity building and education strategies to make public schools into diversity-friendly and responsive schools, and such approaches ultimately benefit all children.

In the project countries, inclusive education has been piloted and implemented for at least 3 years while the process has been monitored and documented in various ways. As a learning organization Save the Children decided to create the opportunity for project staff to visit, review

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<sup>5</sup> Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Kosovo, Myanmar, Philippines, Romania, Vietnam

and learn from similar projects in another project country so that key lessons learned can be collated and used to inform the final year of implementation across all countries. This documented (pilot) peer-review covers Bangladesh (HOPE project) and Indonesia (IDEAL project).

### **5.1 HOPE project (Bangladesh) as reported by Indonesia peer-review team**

The Holistic Approach towards Promotion of Inclusive Education (HOPE) Project aims to reduce discrimination against children with disabilities in the education system and improve the quality of education for all children through inclusive education. HOPE is implemented in 3 districts: Dhaka, Kishorganj and Sirajganj and works with key stakeholders such as government, school management committee (SMC), Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Resource Persons, Children's Forum, local NGOs and other development partners for the implementation of the program. The peer review took place in Sirajganj District and included two school visits.

*"[Before this project started...] there were only three children with disabilities in this school. Now, more than ten have enrolled!" (Teacher)*

Save the Children brings technical expertise from Education, Child Protection and Child Rights Governance to impact the project goal and objectives. Key activities include training, mentoring and strengthening stakeholder capacity to support the provision of quality education for all.

HOPE project objectives:

- In targeted communities, children with disabilities and their peers in the same age group have increased learning outcomes and wellbeing.
- Strengthened capacity, methods and curricula of national teacher training institutes and of national education monitoring and information systems.
- Local governments and communities take responsibilities to realize children with disabilities' rights to education and child protection

Aside from collaborating with different NGOs and development agencies such as UNESCO, Plan International, Asian Center for Inclusive Education, and Institute of Education and Research of Dhaka University, Save the Children also works with government offices, community organizations and school committees to create impact through multi-agency coordination, capacity building, advocacy and school and community-based activities.

#### **5.1.1 Partnerships**

*"[Before this project started...] we had no proper data on children with disabilities. With the help of Social Welfare, we identified 40 children with disabilities. Now, with the support of the HOPE project we have found more than 400, both in school and out-of-school" (Union Parishad Chairman)*

**Union Parishad (UP)** is the lowest level local government in Bangladesh. For this project, they took up responsibility to create activities to eliminate stigma and discrimination against children

with disabilities, making sure these children and other out-of-school children enroll in school and are supported (also with CBR therapy services if needed). UP members engage in monitoring and supervision of plans prepared by the community and by the schools.

*"[Before this project started...] I didn't know what to do with children with disabilities in the classroom. Nowadays when there are children with learning difficulties, I will ask them to come to the front of the classroom and I give them individual teaching-learning support" (Teacher)*

The **School Management Committee (SMC)** supports the enrollment of children by visiting the homes of out-of-school children and persuading parents to enroll their children. The SMC also checks classroom conditions and monitors the teaching-learning process. The SMC encourages parents to continue prioritizing children's regular school attendance.

Commentary by critical friends: (1) What has been the success rate of SMC members visiting households in the community to convince parents to send all their children – including those with disabilities – to school? (2) Do SMC members represent the diversity in a community? Are parents of children with disabilities represented in the SMC? How are SMC members accountable to other parents? (3) What do SMC members look at when they observe classrooms? For sustainable school governance we may need to build the knowledge and skills of SMC members to conduct classroom observations using an inclusive lens.

**Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR)** Resource Persons, after receiving training, are utilized by the program to provide *free* therapy for children with disabilities. They provide therapy services after a child has been clinically assessed and its diagnosis reported in a *medical record*. The CBR center is housed in the Union Parishad (UP) office. The CBR Resource Person makes home visits and models to parents how to stimulate their child's development and do physical exercises at home. CBR Resource Persons collaborate with schools to provide therapy for children with disabilities in school if needed. Professional fees of CBR Resource Persons are currently shouldered by the HOPE Project.

*"[Since the start of this project...] I have learned and now understand about children with disabilities. I want to continue to provide therapy for them even when the project ends." (CBR Resource Person / HOPE Project)*

The **Children's Forum** is a new 'actor' – established by the HOPE project - and is engaged in developing child-friendly campaigns. Members learn about children's rights, inclusive education and disability. These forums organize events for children with- and without disabilities to play together, promote education and CBR services to parents, reach out to out-of-school-children and welcome them to school and consult with local government officials, school principals and other stakeholders. One of the key objectives of the Children's Forum is to establish child friendly local governance at the Union Parishad.

*"[Since the start of this project...] I understand about children's rights. I have learned about children with disability and I am happy when children with disability enroll in school" (Children's Forum member)*

**Local NGO partners** are engaged in the implementation of the project by providing technical assistance and strengthening the capacity of existing institutions and actors as well as new

stakeholders. These NGO partners coordinate and manage activities in the field, work directly with Union Parishad members, and advocate with local government, schools and communities.

In some areas, HOPE project and UNICEF work in the same schools and closely collaborate at that level. This reinforces the effects of UNICEF's WASH interventions and active teaching-learning approaches while HOPE brings an inclusive lens and the use of the Quality Learning Environment (QLE) framework<sup>6</sup>. This is a win-win (informal) partnership as the project impact in these schools is further maximized.

### **5.1.2 Challenges as identified by visiting peer-review team**

The following challenges to the successful implementation of the project and sustained impact were identified:

- Lack of accurate data on the number of children with disabilities. A factor contributing to this is the stigma associated with disability which prevents families of children with disabilities from enrolling their children in school or bringing them to health centers or CBR services.
- Poor quality learning environments in rural schools and inability of teachers (and lack of tools) to conduct education assessments to identify support needs for individual children.
- A centralized government system exists which limits policy influencing even at the local level. The Union Parishad develops and manages its own budget but has no power to make policies or regulations supporting inclusion at the district or sub-district level.
- Workshops actively involve important local actors and stakeholders but do not result in policy change at the national level
- Much of the project work is undertaken by Save the Children's NGO partners, who are very experienced in disability programs and highly trusted by the community. It is however not clear what will happen with those partners when the project ends. Capacity building, cross-sectoral coordination and continuation of inclusive interventions at (sub-) district, school and community level may also end.
- Lack of community-based organizations (CBO) involved which makes the project's sustainability a challenge.

### **5.1.3 Project outputs and outcomes in a nutshell**

- Children with disabilities who were previously hidden in their families or communities are made visible, are professionally assessed and are provided with the support they need;
- Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) services have been made available where they were absent before;

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<sup>6</sup> The QLE is a conceptual framework that describes dimensions, principles or standards in one holistic, integrated tool that schools can use for self-assessment focusing on (1) emotional and psychosocial protection indicators, (2) physical protection indicators, (3) teaching and learning (process) indicators and (4) parents and community participation indicators

- Data-collection on children with disabilities is improving and the HOPE project was able to correct the local government data on children with disabilities, those accessing CBR services and those getting enrolled in public schools;<sup>7</sup>
- Union Parishad officials are beginning to take up their responsibility to support all children and their families in their administrative catchment area;
- Attitudes and behaviors of local government officials, teachers, parents, school management committee (SMC) and the community at large towards children with disabilities are starting to change.

*"[Since the start of this project...] if there is information about a child with a disability who is out of school, I will go to the home and ask the parents to enroll their child." (SMC member)*

- Head-teachers, SMC members and teachers in project schools are oriented on inclusive education (IE). Government schools are becoming more inclusive, while before this project started, such schools refused to admit children with disabilities.
- Other children – also through the Children’s Forum – have become vocal in their campaigns for support to all children based on equal rights and opportunities.
- Parents start to feel empowered to use their voice and lobby for their children so they get the same opportunities as children without disabilities.

*"[Before this project started...] I didn't know how to take care of a child with disabilities. Now I know what to do and my child has progressed during therapy services" (Parent)*

#### **5.1.4 Good practices from Bangladesh for Indonesia to replicate:**

1. **Annual school census:** teachers and community members conduct a household survey before the new school-year starts to list all school-age children, identify possible barriers to school access and encourage parents to send their children to school. Teachers also visit the CBR center to identify school-age children that are receiving therapy and could be enrolled in the inclusive government schools. *Important is that children are not just enrolled on the school-register, but that their attendance and learning is also monitored.*
2. **Information, education and communication (IEC)** materials developed in the form of flash-cards are used in community or “court-yard” meetings to discuss issues ranging from equal opportunities, non-discrimination and disability to health and education (and recently expanded with messages to prevent and/or address violence against children). This way child protection can be strengthened at community and school level.
3. **A Children’s Forum** that actively campaigns and lobbies for children’s rights and for equal opportunities for children with disabilities with local government officials, community leaders, parents, schools and other children. *However, such an initiative should not remain a Save the Children initiative and become part of existing structures.*

<sup>7</sup> This project is linked to the disability-inclusive Education Management Information System (EMIS) research project

4. **Spreading Inclusive education messages** innovatively and effectively through rallies, with support from religious leaders (during Friday prayers) and through the Children’s Forum.

## 5.2 IDEAL project (Indonesia) as reported by peer-review team from Bangladesh

IDEAL Project aims to help children with disabilities attain their right to education and protection by developing minimum standards for inclusive education in West Java and establishing a Community-Based Child Protection (CBCP) system to prevent and respond to violence against children. IDEAL works directly with children, youth, people with disabilities and Disabled People Organizations (DPOs) to ensure their participation in the project’s design and implementation, raise awareness and reduce stigma and discrimination for children with disabilities. This peer-review took place in Garut district and Bandung Municipality and included two school-visits.

The IDEAL project objectives are:

1. Strengthen Provincial and District Governments to ensure rights to education and protection for children with disabilities in West Java.
2. Support government in strengthening integrated community support for children with disabilities through Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and Family Forum (FF).
3. Increase awareness on Inclusive Education and Family Based Care (FBC) for children with disabilities through promoting best practices at provincial / national level.
4. Strengthen civil society to promote the rights of children with disabilities particularly the right to education and protection.

Project beneficiaries are boys and girls with and without disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, teachers, government staff, Community Based Rehabilitation’s cadres (volunteers), partner staff and adults with disabilities. IDEAL is implemented in 4 districts: Bandung, West Bandung, Garut and Tasikmalaya, and 3 municipalities: Bandung, Cimahi, Tasikmalaya. The project works with 86 primary schools and 3 lower-secondary schools in these areas.

### 5.2.1 Partnerships

The **government** – at all levels – is IDEAL’s most important partner. IDEAL provides support to existing government structures to help the government to achieve its own goals. Government partners ask the project for technical support such as with the development of a Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) for Child Protection as part of the Mayor Regulation on Child Protection in Tasikmalaya and Bandung District. The project also developed a database on people with disabilities, including children, in West Java Province. Local officials and teachers demonstrate knowledge and ownership of the interventions and it is thus likely that the project impact will be sustained beyond the life of the project. Local governments have started to allocate budgets for CBR and teacher training. Due to working closely with government partners, the IDEAL project has built the capacity of government departments and officials and other key stakeholders and strengthen their role in inclusive education and child protection.

**School Management Committee (SMC)** supports the overall management of the school and monitors school performance. The SMC supports improved enrolment and attendance. Effective SMCs link schools with parents/communities for improved understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. Such schools also welcome feedback from parents/communities.

*"[Since this project started...] we are happy that our children can go to school. Teachers are friendly and cooperative. Now we understand what our children learn, and we can take care of them at home also. Children share their problems with their peers and teachers and they are also happy to teach us new things." (Mother of a child with a disability)*

**Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR)** and **Family Forum (FF)** are two structures that work closely together and are considered important partners for the IDEAL project. They provide services and activities for children with disabilities (e.g. physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, child protection hot-line, referrals, inclusive ECCD). CBR volunteers do not assess children; this is done by professionals from the *district* health center and *district* rehabilitation service center when they visit the CBR centers, using a government approved tool for children under 5 years of age.

The **Community Health Center** collaborates with the project by providing health services for all children, while at the same time promoting better coordination between community health center and local government. Some health centers started to allocate budget for integrated health and child protection services, especially when children with disabilities are involved.

The **Youth Forum**<sup>8</sup> is an existing structure in Indonesia supported by the government. The Youth Forum mobilizes committees and organizations at the community level to e.g. ensure children's rights – especially to education and protection – also focusing on children with disabilities.

IDEAL project works with **NGO/CSOs** (Semak Foundation in Garut and Lakpesdam NU in Tasikmalaya) to implement the project at local level. Both are experienced social development organizations.

*Students shared they forgot that their friends have disabilities because they believe children with disabilities have knowledge and skills and can do many things, but maybe in different ways. As peers they work and play together (FGD with children)*

### **5.2.2 Challenges as identified by visiting peer-review team**

- The IDEAL project experienced challenges in finding a partner NGO with disability experience and a technical capacity for inclusive education. They addressed this by building the capacity of some potential partners, so that they can support the community and monitor the situation of children with disabilities. Capacity however, may still be inadequate.
- Getting access to services, including education, can be a difficult and long process for children with disabilities, because these children often lack an identity number. Parents need to

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<sup>8</sup>Indonesia Student & Youth Forum (ISYF) established in 2011 (Ministry of Laws and Human Rights)

register a new-born child at the District Population Office for a birth certificate, but parents may not do so with a child that has a disability.

- Schools have their own management information system (MIS) and data is sent monthly to the District Education Office. As this is a school-based system, information on school-age children who are out-of-school is missing. The system is thus not inclusive of all children.
- IDEAL mainly focuses on children with disabilities while other out-of-school-children may also face serious barriers to inclusive education. There is no adequate system to identify out-of-school-children.

*“Would it be an idea to help develop and maintain a data base of out-of-school-children?” (Visiting peer reviewers)*

### **5.2.3 Project Outputs and Outcomes in a nutshell**

- There are positive behavior changes resulting from IDEAL trainings, evidenced by improved teacher motivation and increased visibility of children with disabilities. Students do more actively participate in school and show respect to each other. The relationship between teachers and learners has also improved.
- School enrollment of children with disabilities has increased in the target areas. Parents have gained more access to information regarding their children’s performance and what they learn in class. Teachers said that parents participate in school matters more than before.

*“Now there is no longer discrimination. [before this project...] the school Code of Conduct was violated because teachers had no idea about inclusive education and how to manage children with disabilities. Now there are no problems anymore. We are happy to enroll our children.” (Parents of children with disabilities)*

- Inclusive Education *standards* were developed and used for inclusive education Training of Trainers to be cascaded with teachers, school principals and school supervisors. These standards have also informed the revision of the National Regulation on Inclusive Education.
- IDEAL uses a variety of approaches to campaign for the rights of children with disabilities<sup>9</sup> such as mass media, social media, radio ‘talk-shows’ and government events.
- The project has informally partnered with Room to Read which has resulted in project schools receiving story-books for classroom reading corners and school libraries.
- Supporting the development of new enrolment regulations has resulted in more (disability) inclusive enrolment regulations for public schools.
- Community-Based Child Protection system, linked to the existing government system and services, is in place, including the protection and safeguarding of children with disabilities.

*As observed in the schools visited, classrooms and school-environments are safe – also for children with disabilities. Classrooms are colorful and have lots of learning materials. The Community-Based Child Protection committee supervises and monitors child protection in school and community. Play-grounds are clean and safe. Teachers supervise during play-time and interact with children in a friendly way. However, no ramp was found in either school, creating barriers for children using a wheelchair. (observation visiting peer reviewers)*

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<sup>9</sup> As guaranteed in the Indonesian Constitution No. 8/2009

#### 5.2.4 Good practices from Indonesia for Bangladesh to consider:

1. Spreading Inclusive education messages using **radio ‘talk-shows’** to campaign for the rights of children with disabilities. IDEAL organized talk-shows with government officials, school-principals, teachers, parents and children who act as *champions* for inclusive education. Listeners call in with questions and/or talk about their own experiences.
2. **Embed project activities** in existing government structures and government plans so that it looks more like a government led and owned project rather than an INGO project that needs to be handed over at the end of the project duration.
3. **Community-Based Child Protection system.** In Bangladesh the Union Parishad standing committee is responsible for child protection at community level. Most Community-Based Child Protection systems are not active, and HOPE would like to learn from IDEAL how to improve such a system, better linked to the existing government system and services, while consciously including the protection and safeguarding of children with disabilities.
4. **CBR volunteers** instead of *paid* CBR Resource Persons: IDEAL project uses volunteer CBR workers (assigned and trained by the government) who provide rehabilitation services at the CBR centre and during home-visits. These volunteers come from the communities that they visit to support families with children with disabilities.

### 6. FINDINGS and COMMENTARY by critical friends

Both projects identified key barriers, which they felt were significant when trying to increase access and participation of children with disabilities in their project services and schools.

#### 6.1 Lack of accurate data on the number of children with disabilities.

Data on children with disabilities is limited and often unreliable, underestimating prevalence due to varying definitions of disability and weak data collection processes. Collecting accurate disability data is a challenge internationally. It is still not possible to say how many children with disabilities are attending school worldwide, nor how many may be out of school. The likely percentage of school aged children having a disability using WHO estimates may vary between 6% to 17% depending on definitions used and on contributing factors such as poverty and conflict. However, we may assume that in most countries at least 6-7% of school aged children are likely to have impairments which, when combined with exclusionary environmental barriers, will lead to low rates of access, participation and learning. In Bangladesh, the HOPE project faced significant challenges in identifying accurate numbers of children with disabilities. This was partly caused by poor quality of identification and data collection systems used, but was also compounded by attitudinal barriers at community level, whereby parents and families of children with disabilities may be unwilling to identify children with disabilities within the family and community and unwilling to enroll them in school or bring them to health centers. Such negative

attitudes are powerful, also affecting the quality of data collected through baseline surveys and situation analyses. Where identification systems are still based on the (out-of-date) International Classification of Diseases, the stigma surrounding disability is likely to be re-enforced.

The lack of reliable baseline and impact data affects a project's capacity to measure its effectiveness. However, it is not a barrier to the implementation of project activities. As Croft (2013) noted, the project can still emphasize activities which likely have a positive impact (however gradual) on the quality of life and education for children with disabilities. Outputs focusing on awareness raising, improving knowledge and understanding, changing attitudes and developing more inclusive practices are good to implement.

Despite this, projects should map the current situation for children with disabilities prior to the start of a project and then (through activities linked to a clear theory of change) track progress through a variety of data collection exercises. Part of this involves promoting the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, Health (ICF) and building systems capacity for effective use. This will also have an impact on negative attitudes and stigmatization.

## **6.2 Challenges for teachers/schools to provide quality education for all children**

The World Bank's report – *Learning to realize education's promise* (2018) - identifies building teacher capacity to provide quality learning experiences as an ongoing challenge for many countries. The 2014 Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO) on Teaching and Learning observed that an education system is only as good as its teachers. It improves when they are supported and decreases in quality when they are not. The important word here is '*support*'. Teachers need support to develop their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. Many governments and development aid programs have identified teacher training as a priority but still rely heavily on *cascade training* delivered by government and other staff who themselves may have a limited understanding of the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. These approaches are generally ineffective as they are not based on an evidence informed approach to teacher learning. Teachers work and learn as individuals and as a group. Successful schools are composed of groups of teachers coming together to reflect on their practice, identify areas where they can improve and then introduce small innovations into the classroom which are manageable. This is supported through coaching and mentoring initiatives whereby teachers continue to work together, observe each other's' practices and collect ideas about ways to improve their own teaching by 'watching and listening and thinking on their feet and making adjustments' to their own practice (Ainscow, 2018).

The project challenges in teacher development and support are compounded by a weak understanding of the relationship between quality education and inclusive education. Often governments and development aid programs make the mistake of believing, that these are two different approaches – quality education is for children *without* disabilities and inclusive education is for children *with* disabilities. This is not helpful as it assumes firstly that the two positions are not compatible and secondly it re-enforces the notion that teachers need specialized, additional and different training to support inclusive education. Research and

international best practice indicate that inclusive education, quality education and child- or learner centered teaching and learning are one and the same thing. Children with disabilities will learn very well in a learner centered environment with a supportive and flexible teacher who adapts curriculum and assessment to remove barriers to participation and learning for all children. Furthermore, children without disabilities also experience difficulties in learning. Good teachers therefore provide a variety of learning experiences which accommodate different learning styles and preferences and address directly any difficulties which any children may be experiencing. Good teachers will identify a child (or children) having a specific difficulty and instead of locating the problem as within the child, will ask themselves: ‘How can I provide an alternative to the way I am currently presenting the curriculum, to enable this child (and others) to learn more easily and effectively?’ In addition, such teachers are more likely to create a learning environment where talk, help, collaboration and kindness is fostered and enabled.

Therefore, projects need to focus their attention on:

1. Making sure teachers are supported in an ongoing school-based collaborative approach to share, reflect and learn as groups by e.g. building a network of schools whereby teachers can share good practice across schools and by building the capacity of local actors such as district education officials or those working in pre and in-service training to work alongside groups of teachers as *critical friends*.
2. Introducing learner centered approaches which build teachers’ capacity to adapt and be flexible rather than assuming they need additional skills specific to disability and not related to other children. An inclusive teacher is a good teacher for all children (Howes et al, 2011). What teachers need to do to successfully include children with disabilities is what they must do anyway to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for all children. Indicative examples include:
  - Have a clear plan for the lesson and set out the activities you will cover at the beginning and review the learning which has taken place at the end. Anticipate which children might find certain activities difficult and prepare adaptations to ensure they can access the learning.
  - Be positive towards all children and model kindness, respect, patience and love to all of them.
  - Focus on learning and be clear that you expect that everyone in class will work hard and learn during the lesson.
  - Present the key learning points of the lesson through visual, auditory and if possible tactile cues – responding to different learning styles.
  - Provide a variety of teaching and learning approaches in the lesson and encourage, talk, sharing, collaboration and helping and learning together.
  - Have extension activities ready for children who may finish their work more quickly.
  - Allow children who need it, more time to complete work
3. Projects may want to build critical friendships into their overall approach to supporting and monitoring change in classroom practices. Asking reflective questions to support practice development can also be used as monitoring and evaluation questions for teacher

professional development tracking. E.g.: “How has your practice changed since the beginning of the project? Do you do anything differently now? Why is this? What has supported you in making these changes?”

### 6.3 Centralized government systems, limiting policy-influence

A restrictive policy context creates challenging barriers for projects to navigate. One of the aims of any development aid program must be to leverage inclusive policy development by building the capacity of local and national government officials to support the expansion of existing policies into more inclusive policies. The UNCRPD, Article 24, General Comment No.4 (2016) is helpful in this regard. Most countries have ratified the convention and this comment provides a detailed overview of what is expected in relation to inclusive education. It provides a model of quality education which is equitable and inclusive to all children and therefore supports initiatives to build more inclusive policies. Building knowledge and understanding of the Convention and the requirements to report on progress against these, can thus be very effective.

At school and community level it often appears that weak, unclear or inequitable policies create an insurmountable hurdle to a project trying to support the inclusion of children with disabilities. A DFAT<sup>10</sup> review of barriers to inclusive education in Indonesia identified the lack of clear policy direction as a significant issue (Grimes and Stevens, 2015). One example of this in practice is that the Indonesian project found that certain teachers might refuse to accept children with disabilities in their class. However, there are always possibilities to navigate around such challenges. One way is to focus on working with teachers on how they can support any child who *may be experiencing difficulties* and then, as in the previous section, support their capacity building to develop flexibility and adaptation to the curriculum and assessment in the classroom. Student voice activities can create opportunities for children to reflect on ways in which teachers and schools help them to learn but also on ways in which they could be *better supported* to learn. These can then be used to provide feedback to teachers on aspects of their practice which children find helpful and areas where they can consider introducing an additional variety of approaches and activities to support learning. These *inclusive* and *responsive* approaches will improve the quality of education for all children and also for those with disabilities.

Encouraging schools to work together in networks or clusters, not only offers opportunities to share practice but also to demonstrate what is possible (like a reality check). Often teachers who *refuse* to have children with disabilities in their class are anxious about their own capacity to teach them. Usually they are under the impression that it requires highly specialized teaching skills. In communities where there is stigmatization of children with disabilities, this is usually underpinned by a lack of knowledge and understanding. In some cultural contexts it may be re-enforced through religious beliefs (e.g. thinking that disability is somehow a punishment for sins committed in a previous life). Lack of understanding and negative values can be shifted by the sharing of practice. When teachers understand more about disability but also see examples of teachers in other schools in the same context changing practice and *enjoying* their teaching, this

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<sup>10</sup> DFAT: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)

becomes a strong lever to support them in starting to reflect on their own practice. To enable this, it is crucial that teachers visit each other's classrooms, collaborate, work, plan and review together, and *see* what different practice can look like.

#### **6.4 Sustaining localized funding beyond the lifetime of the project**

Many projects have an approach which includes funding for local NGOs to implement certain activities. However, when the project funding ends, the local NGO partner activities often cease as well. This may have a long term negative impact on sustainability, affecting ongoing capacity building, cross-sectoral coordination and advocacy at local government, school and community level. It is important to view sustainability as complex and multi-faceted rather than assessing it simply on the basis of whether new systems are in place which will continue beyond the life of the project.

A key aspect of this is using a coherent and evidence-based Theory of Change. A helpful way of understanding successful inclusive education initiatives is to identify that to change practice (in schools or in society) a project needs to build knowledge and understanding to help develop more positive attitudes towards disability. The aims of a project such as HOPE or IDEAL involve capacity building through training and awareness raising and identify ways in which practice can start to change. Impact evaluation would then use this as a focus to determine how the project is beginning to influence change at different levels of the system.

The projects use various initiatives to contribute to the expected outcomes of the Save the Children Theory of Change.<sup>11</sup> The sustainability of funding for a local NGO can be measured in different ways. It can for example be considered a contribution to the establishment of knowledge, understanding and attitudes that lead to practice and system change. The functions of the NGO may not be continued after the lifetime of the project but that does not mean there has not been a sustainable impact on aspects of the projects expected outcomes. Having said this, international best practice would indicate that where a project is funding local actors such as NGOs to undertake specific project functions, there should be a clear exit strategy in place to build the capacity of local systems or services to take on especially critical roles to maintain ongoing development and improvement.

### **7. CONCLUSIONS and LESSONS LEARNT**

The cross-country peer review has been experienced by both country teams as a very useful and enriching experience. It has been mutually beneficial in generating new knowledge and ideas. It has worked out as a dialogue between the two countries to better understand conceptual and operational aspects of the projects and thus learn from both successes and failures. Though

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<sup>11</sup> Save the Children's Theory of Change promotes staff/projects (1) to be innovative and work evidence-based, (2) to be the voice (advocate for child rights based improved practices/allow children to be heard), (3) to achieve results at scale (programs & policies with sustainable impact) and (4) work through partnerships (with diverse actors)

contexts and government systems were different, there were also similarities in opportunities and challenges. In both countries it has been difficult to actively engage males in project activities and events, and the Bangladesh team observed how the Indonesia (Muslim) context seemed more openminded with many women seen driving motor-cycles.

The two teams of practitioners felt confident with each other to ask critical question and to make observations that had not been observed before by the respective country team. The review provided an opportunity to learn how a similar project prioritized and implemented activities differently with sometimes different results. E.g. when education officials observe a classroom where teachers are motivated and treat all students with respect – including those with disabilities – more could be achieved in successful advocating for inclusive education. Positive relationships between teachers and learners are likely to also have positive effects on learning outcomes for all children. This also raises the question of how projects can advocate for a more holistic approach to student learning. The UNCRPD, Article 24, General Comment No.4 argues strongly that there should be a *'whole person approach: recognition is given to the capacity of every person to learn, and high expectations are established for all learners, including learners with disabilities'*. This requires that also assessment is holistic and measures what children can do and what they have achieved, rather than measuring progress against artificially constructed standards. For many children with disabilities, standardized assessment is a major barrier to their ongoing progress through the education system.

Peer review challenges experiences included:

1. Not all project schools in the selected target areas could be visited for interviews, observations or discussions with teachers and students due to time constraints. Therefore, the obtained information may not be representative for generalized conclusions, but rather as being indicative of the current situation of children with disabilities and their rights to education and protection.
2. It has been challenging to spend sufficient time in classrooms to observe the teaching-learning process and potential improvements towards inclusive practices and the development of quality learning environments for all learners.
3. Language was at times a barrier. In Bangladesh translations were required from Bangla to English, while in Indonesia the teams had to tackle two languages: Bahasa and Sundanese. This may have resulted in gaps in information or even some misinterpretations during translations.

The Indonesian team shared that the peer review has greatly helped them to reflect on their own project and realized that they are not alone with their challenges. The Bangladesh team shared that this was a cost-effective way to reflect and learn because a mid-term review (MTR) with an independent consultant would have been more expensive and without this enriching learning. The peer review has empowered national staff to discuss and document their experience for the benefit of each other's projects and others implementing similar projects. The experience has shown that a peer review is a good approach to (1) achieve improvements and (2) exchange knowledge between projects.

*“The peer review has helped us to ask more and better questions and not be satisfied with just knowing that we are finding more children with disabilities in the communities.” (peer reviewer)*

This peer review illustrates how interesting and pioneering practices to make education inclusive are happening in Bangladesh and Indonesia, demonstrating how it is a participatory and evolving process where local communities are involved in children’s learning, and the importance of children learning together is demonstrated. It is also showing the importance of a quality learning environment, teachers’ (and other adults’) attitudes, behaviors and practices and that learning achievements can be measured in different ways.

The most important ‘learning’ *Indonesia took away from Bangladesh* included: (1) more actively engaging children in local level campaigning and advocacy with government, communities, parents, schools and other children, (2) expanding the function of CBR to also link with schools and provide therapy to school-going children when needed and monitor how children who previously received CBR support are progressing, (3) focusing more on technical capacity building of NGO partners on (disability) inclusive education.

The most important ‘learning’ *Bangladesh took away from Indonesia* included: (1) focusing on sustainability planning for continuity of activities, e.g. by progressively handing over responsibility to local governments and schools (based on national policies supporting inclusive education), (2) concentrate on existing institutional structures and systems rather than individuals (such as UP chairman), (3) positive relationship between teachers and learners with disabilities is critical for improved learning.

The cross-country peer review facilitated improved communication between both projects. The two teams identified areas for continued collaboration such as supporting each other’s exit strategy development, sharing ideas and samples of IEC and training materials, exploring how to actively and visibly engage adults with disabilities and examine a CBR approach that moves into Community-Based Inclusive Development.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS and NEXT STEPS**

1. **The need for champions:**<sup>12</sup> Identifying and supporting Inclusive Education *Champions* is an essential aspect of an evidence-based theory of change to ensure children with disabilities have equitable access to education. Champions operate at all levels of the system. At school and community level they advocate for and demonstrate application of disability rights. The voices of parents of children with disabilities are particularly powerful in helping others to understand how society needs to change. Furthermore, teachers with disabilities working in public schools teaching children with and without disabilities can especially be instrumental

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<sup>12</sup> See also: <https://inclusiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Champions-of-Inclusion.pdf>  
<https://www.sightsavers.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Education-Champions-Handbook-FINAL.pdf>

in tackling stigma and discrimination.<sup>13</sup> Local political actors such as district officers or community leaders can identify and remove bottlenecks which create unnecessary barriers to systems and to societal change. At government level champions are required with the technical understanding to design and implement the necessary policies that will support effective inclusive planning. Save the Children and other development partners play a vital role in identifying champions, building their capacity to enable them to emerge and then in supporting them in their ongoing actions. Where projects are phasing out, exit strategies need to be in place that also identify the sustainable components to enable the champions to continue their work. It is especially important that champions are connected to each other and systems are in place that enable collaboration and coordinated action.

2. **Disability: Identification, Intervention and Early Childhood Development:** there is much emphasis on clinical assessments in both countries. In case a disability diagnosis is required to receive government support, it is important to use (and lobby for) a comprehensive, multi-professional approach to such an assessment. Clinical assessments tend to overlook developmental and behavioral aspects. Disability screening must include social, emotional and educational dimensions, while it is also important to re-assess children while growing up, as (dis-)abilities are not static. In many countries, development partners work with government actors to approach disability through a more inclusive lens, based on principles underpinning the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). This can help transform assessment from a seemingly complex process into one which is simple for families and professionals to understand.<sup>14</sup> Within the family and in classrooms, it encourages conversations which focus on “*What is the child able to do and what is the child finding it difficult to do?*” This enables, for example, parents to identify the things which they may need to support their child with, whilst encouraging them to be as independent as possible in other aspects of their life. In the classroom, it enables the teacher to have higher expectations of what children can achieve when given the opportunity.

As an illustration of this approach, when applied to the curriculum, this acknowledges that some children (for various reasons) may find it difficult to follow spoken/auditory instructions. Therefore, the teacher needs to provide flexible learning experiences and alternative modes of delivery, through written instructions, pictures, modelling and demonstration, pairing children to work collaboratively together, etc. Successful projects in Inclusive Education for children with disabilities, recognize that they must build **Capacity in Early Identification, Effectiveness in Early Intervention and Quality in Early Child Education**. Without attention to this critical stage of development, the foundation for children’s future well-being and learning may be undermined. Where there has been a failure to invest in Early Child Education, developmental delay and disability may be further increased. Projects which

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<sup>13</sup> MoE in Nepal allocates a quota for teachers with disabilities for all teaching jobs in the country; nearly 350 teachers with visual impairments work in mainstream schools all over the country (Howgego, Miles, Myers – 2014)

<sup>14</sup> See Module on Child Functioning: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-disability/module-on-child-functioning/>

only focus on basic education are too late as for many children their life chances have been significantly diminished in the years before basic education.

- 3. Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR)** services in the two peer reviewed countries are limited to physical therapy. There is no mobility training for children with visual impairments or sign language training for children with hearing impairments or behavior management support for children with communication difficulties or emotional problems. Such children and their parents may thus not come to a CBR center and receive no support. In both countries the setting up of a CBR system has progressed well. IDEAL (Indonesia) uses CBR volunteers and links up with the district health system for assessments. HOPE (Bangladesh) CBR services are provided within the local government structure (Union Parishad) and are as such free of charge. However, salary costs of CBR Resource Persons may become a challenge after the project. The project has therefore made an agreement with the Union Parishad (UP) to continue CBR services. With a budgeted action plan the local government will share the salary costs in 2018 and is expected to fully pay these salaries when the project ends. One UP is also no longer taking project money for assistive devices as this has been incorporated in the UP budget.

Continuing CBR after projects phase out, is an example of where local champions (1. above) are helpful, as these individuals can work with communities and local governments to establish systemic processes for sustainability.

To make CBR sustainable may require a Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) approach. CBID considers the wider needs of children with disabilities and their families and includes health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment activities, working closely with local partners, local governments and representative groups of people with disabilities to bring about change. CBID actively seeks to ensure the full participation of people with disabilities as empowered self-advocates in all development processes and works to address the barriers that hinder access to mainstream services and participation in community activities as well as to impairment-related services.

- 4. Individual learning needs:** assessment can sometimes be understood as a complex process and this in turn leads many teachers to think that disability is a complex concept, which they are not 'trained' to deal with. Where teachers think that they are expected to 'diagnose disability' this can lead to significant resistance on their part. However, as noted in 2. if teachers can be supported and encouraged to identify a child's learning strengths and weaknesses, based on the principle that all children are unique with their own learning needs and learning speeds, a space for teachers to initiate inclusive education can be created. Sometimes, resources or approaches which have been created to support children with disabilities can become a barrier to inclusion. A case in point is Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which were developed in Western Europe in the 1990s and have been exported around the world as part of the perceived solution to inclusive education. Unfortunately, these plans often prove to be exclusive rather than inclusive. They re-enforce the notion that children with disabilities need something different and special from other children, causing teachers

to believe that they may not have the skills and training to meet these children's needs and stigmatize them by making them stand out as different. Supporting teachers to develop an inclusive, flexible, learner-centered approach to the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment is more likely to lead to successful inclusive practice. Examples of these approaches being applied successfully, can be seen in many low-middle income contexts. They often require capacity building at all levels of the system to support strategic planning based on evidenced based change-theories. However, where successful, such approaches lead to the development of broad and flexible curriculums and formative assessment based on universal design<sup>15</sup> principals, support for teachers to develop and implement tools for varied and flexible pedagogical approaches, and re-structuring of pre-service and in-service teacher to make it more school and practice based.

5. **Changed teaching practices:** Although time was too short for extensive lesson observations during the cross-country peer review, teachers shared that they had greatly benefitted from the projects' on-going professional development workshops. Based on new knowledge and skills they had changed some of their classroom practices such as classroom seating arrangements (placing children who experience learning difficulties closer to the teacher or next to a peer for more intensive support), creating places where children can work together around a bigger table, and developing more visual aids to attract student interest, explain an idea or help a student understand a lesson. Inclusive classroom practice also recognizes the importance of play and breaks during lessons. Play fosters critical skills such as problem solving, planning, turn taking and sharing. There must be accessible (fun) reading materials for children, including those with disabilities (e.g. big print, simple stories, braille- and audio-books) and existing activities and games may need to be adjusted so that all children can be meaningfully engaged.

Teachers have learned how to adjust standard curriculum and instruction to make sure all children benefit, including those with disabilities. Central to these changes are questions teachers need to ask themselves to reflect and explore the ways in which their practice has changed and identify what has supported this. Research indicates that teachers need to work collaboratively to improve their practice through small steps. NGOs such as Save the Children can support this by finding ways in which schools can gradually be re-structured to allow teachers 'to be inside each other's classrooms to see what's going on' (Ainscow, 2018). Examples of this might include school-principals covering classes to allow teachers to plan and collaborate together or to observe each other. And, identifying ways in which traditional approaches to in-service training can be adapted to cluster-based school development and school-based teacher support should be a priority for current and future programs.

6. **Document inclusive education success stories:** Building knowledge helps to shift negative attitudes, and these are at the heart of changes in practice. An effective theory of change for inclusive education integrates Communication for Development (C4D) strategies into

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<sup>15</sup> Universal Design for Learning (UDL): <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/whatisudl>

programming. This ties together capacity building with champions and advocacy strategies, mentioned throughout this report. At each stage of programming there should be linked C4D strategies which support the change theory that is being implemented. For example, this might include media campaigns with champions (children and adults with disabilities) sharing *significant stories of change*; teachers talking about and sharing examples of how their practice/school has developed, illustrating what inclusive education might look like in different contexts. Where projects have been active over a longer period, they should be able to identify children with disabilities who have gone through the system successfully who can be supported to use their voices for advocacy.

7. **Stakeholder networks:** it is important to create collaborative links between structures/institutes. The Inclusive Education Working Group in Bangladesh is one way of working together on inclusive education research and advocacy. At local level, the use of household databases, birth registration, parents' groups, CBR centers, early intervention programs, school census', etc. if coordinated, can improve developing and monitoring support and services. When such groups are linked and taught how to share information, solve problems and plan together, the outcomes will be more realistic, creative, practical and one of the best ways to sustain the practices of inclusion.
8. **Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning:** the use of different types of evidence (Annex 1) can be improved and monitoring questions added to existing tools that further probe into the situations of children with disabilities and their education.<sup>16</sup> Similar to the databased developed in Indonesia, government partners can be supported to build an efficient system to maintain *comprehensive* data on children with disabilities for planning appropriate early intervention and educational provision, resources and support services. Data on out-of-school children with disabilities can be collected through community-mapping or (like in Bangladesh) through annual school census. A sustainable approach to IE programming is to focus on building government capacity in gathering disaggregated data. This should include identifying different ways of collecting evidence on barriers that prevent children with disabilities from having access to, remaining in, and making progress in school to enable the adoption of effective measures to dismantle such barriers.
9. **Future cross-country peer reviews:** based on this pilot cross-country peer-review experience it is recommended that *more time* is allocated for future peer reviews. More in-country face-to-face rather than distance technical support may need to be provided especially when developing tools and for improved understanding of the process. The peer review questions were well formulated, but the agenda was too tight with only 5 days for country visits. Most of the research on peer-reviews supports the argument that it is a very effective way of building program capacity but also in collecting reliable evidence bases for program development and evaluation. However, it is also true to say that it is most effective when it

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<sup>16</sup> E.g.: "How can we support teachers to ask the right questions to help them reflect on their teaching styles and methodologies and how these may impact on the learning of different students?" or "How can we help teachers to look for learning strengths and weaknesses among all students, also those facing learning challenges but not having a disability?"

is facilitated and supported by experienced critical friends. The model applied in this pilot combined distance support and in country support. Future initiatives should consider incorporating in-country support for both visits including pre-visit preparation and post visit evaluation.

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**ANNEX 1: DIFFERENT TYPES OF EVIDENCE** <sup>17</sup>

Evidence that already exists	Additional ways of collecting evidence
Student performance data	Records of discussion – notes, tapes, flipcharts
Minutes of meetings	Observations in class, at playground etc.
Specifications (e.g. from manufacturers making claims for equipment and materials)	Photographs annotated by different groups
Baseline data	Observations of tutorial/mentoring work and follow up conversations
Policies and other documentation	Observations and conversations in other schools
Children’s work	Video or audio recording (digital cameras and camcorders can be used by students to present their own perspective)
Other people’s evidence – the web, reading, journals, conferences, etc.	Interviews – parents, students, teachers
Marking and assessment	Classroom journals or research diaries (paper, computer, Dictaphone)
School self-evaluation data	People’s reflections expressed verbally, in writing (poetry, story, analogy and factual) and in pictures or diagrams
Professional development documentation (performance management summaries, notes from workshops, courses, mentoring)	Conversations – recorded as notes
	Critical incidents (analysis based on incident log)
	Questionnaires, audits and surveys
	E-mails and discussion board correspondence

<sup>17</sup> Durrant and Holden, 2006:112

**ANNEX 2: TEMPLATE CROSS-COUNTRY PEER REVIEW <sup>18</sup>**

Review focus	Questions to be asked, discussed, understood and interpreted	Comments & further reflections
1. Peer review <b>preparation</b>	Type of documents shared and read before the peer review and country visit	
2. <b>General description</b> of the project	Overall aims and procedures; geographical coverage; role government, Save the Children and NGO/CSO partners; Theory of Change; use of QLE <sup>19</sup> framework; how are project ideas, questions and solutions shared more widely.	
3. Project <b>focus</b> : children with disabilities	Are children with disabilities reached as intended; what is the evidence; who monitors; how are children with disabilities identified and by who, using what tools; are these tools effective? (why [not]?)	
4. <b>Scope</b> of the peer review	Project interventions discussed and/or observed; partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries met; innovative project ideas; collaborative initiatives; project challenges and their response; cross-sectoral project linkages.	
5. The most critical peer review <b>findings</b> ?	Project implementation; possible achievement of objectives; what works well; how are teachers changing behaviors and practice; what is the evidence; what data is still missing; progress of capacity building of stakeholders; project strategies and their monitoring; likely priorities for final project year and exit.	
6. <b>Peer review</b> teams	How will the results of the peer review be used (inputs from the other team regarding their own project as well as what has been learned from the country visit); continued collaboration between both countries.	
7. Peer review <b>report &amp; follow-up</b>	How to document the peer review experience; sharing with other IF-ST IE project countries; post pilot follow-up of cross-country peer review in other countries/projects.	

<sup>18</sup> To guide both peer-review teams

<sup>19</sup> QLE: Save the Children’s Quality Learning Environment “standards”