



USAID POLICIES AND PROGRAMMING FOR INCLUSION EDUCATION

A Report Commissioned by the Global Campaign for Education-US

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1997 USAID established a Disability Policy to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in USAID programs. Research studies funded by USAID have revealed the lack of educational opportunities for children with disabilities across the world. USAID Education Strategy: Education Opportunity Through Learning for 2011-2015 lists learners with disabilities as one of four cross cutting issues, highlighting the strong link between disability and non-enrollment. The strategy emphasizes the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools and recognizes the need for “political leadership, flexible curricula, accessible infrastructure, trained teachers and accessible learning materials” (USAID, 2011c, p. 17).

Some USAID projects now address inclusive education, with components that promote public awareness about disability, train teachers for inclusive education, develop inclusion pilot programs, and assist in the development of government policy. However, USAID does not require the inclusion of children with disabilities nor inclusion training for teachers to ensure quality learning in new education projects. Further, inclusion of persons with disabilities is rarely part of the application selection criteria in RFPs and RFAs. Therefore, the majority of education projects do not address the needs of children with disabilities.

The projects that have focused on the inclusion of children with disabilities are not always easy to identify, and the lessons learned from them are not shared with the developers and managers of new education projects. Organizations wishing to include persons with disabilities have few USAID staff trained in this area with whom to consult and have no central clearinghouse of information about inclusive projects to effectively integrate inclusive education in their grant/contract projects.



RECOMMENDATIONS

After review of recommendations made by other organizations that have investigated USAID's policy and programs related to disability, as well as the recommendations of USAID itself in the Fifth Report on Implementation of USAID Disability Policy (USAID, 2008) we endorse and expand on those recommendations with the following:



Students from American Institute of Research's inclusive education ENGAGE project in Pakistan.
Source: AIR (2010)

1. Make training regarding disability and inclusive education mandatory for all USAID education staff, including successful completion of USAID's Disability Inclusive Development E-Learning course.
2. Make inclusion of persons with disabilities part of the selection criteria (as opposed to leaving it in clausal language) for new education projects, requiring specific budget and program allocations for inclusive education.
3. Organize information about and lessons from inclusive education projects, especially on the USAID website, so they can be shared easily with new projects.
4. Re-establish the practice of public annual reports to Congress on how USAID programs are meeting its 1997 and other Policy statements, providing examples of exemplary missions and projects, as well as areas of needed improvement.
5. Create an Inclusive Education Clearinghouse for grantees to utilize for expertise and practical solutions to disability inclusion in the implementation of their grant projects.
6. USAID should establish staff and resources for realizing the recommendations above.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION BACKGROUND

The Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were adopted by the global community in 2000, both establishing universal primary education as a critical goal for international development. The United States joined all United Nations member states in committing to the Millennium Development Goals, and repeated in the USAID Policy Framework 2011- 2015 the importance of achieving the target of MDG 2, which is “to ensure that boys and girls everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” (USAID 2011, p.22).

In 2003, the World Bank estimated that 40 million of the 115 million children out of school were children with disabilities (World Bank, 2003). In 2013 the United Nations estimated that in developing countries more than 90 percent of children with disabilities do not attend school (UNESCO, 2013). Achieving universal primary education clearly requires addressing the issues of educating children and youth with disabilities (Evans et al., 2011).

From the beginning, the EFA declaration recognized that the “learning needs of the disabled demand special attention” (UNESCO, 1990, p. 5). Four years after the first EFA conference, representatives met in Salamanca, Spain, for the World Conference on Special Needs Education. The Salamanca Conference estimated that in many developing countries, less than 1 percent of children with disabilities were included in the existing school systems (UNESCO, 1994). The conference adopted what came to be known as The Salamanca Statement and a Framework for Action. The framework is guided by a principle of inclusive education, described as “Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

This should include disabled” (UNESCO, 1994, p. 14). This document called for national governments and international organizations to increase their efforts to provide inclusive education to children with special educational needs.

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities clearly established the importance of the right of children with disabilities to inclusive education, stating: “States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels” (UN, 2006, Article 24).

USAID DISABILITY POLICY

The USAID Disability Policy Paper, published in 1997, defined the Agency’s disability policy. This paper established a policy “to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries where USAID has programs” (USAID, 1997, p2). The Policy Paper notes that by law, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 applies to US citizen employees of USAID but not to the beneficiaries of USAID programs. However, the USAID disability policy, which applies to all program funds of USAID, intends to “extend the spirit of the ADA in areas beyond the jurisdiction of U.S. law” (USAID, 1997, p.2). In the policy framework, the paper states that people with disabilities have the same needs as others and that “many mainstream programs, with minor modification at the design stage, help address these needs. For example, education programs can be developed which promote inclusion of children with physical or cognitive disabilities to



Classroom in Catholic Relief Service's Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities Project. Source CRS (2010)

the maximum extent feasible” (p.3). This statement indicates support for designing USAID education programming with inclusive education as a desired outcome.

The disability policy of USAID was strengthened by the 2004 release of the Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive (AAPD) 05-07, which requires construction and renovation projects to meet ADA standards if possible, and AAPD 04-17, which requires that all contractors and recipients of assistance from USAID not discriminate against people with disabilities in USAID-funded programs, and make every effort to comply with the USAID Disability Policy. Within the scope of the contract, the contractor must “demonstrate a comprehensive and consistent approach for including men, women and children with disabilities” (USAID, 2004a, p.3).

Since publication of the Disability Policy Paper in 1997, the Agency has published five Reports on the Implementation of the USAID Disability Policy, in 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, and 2008. Shorter reports may have been produced to present to Congress in later years, but have not been published or made public. The published reports restate the policy from the 1997 paper and highlight the ways in which USAID missions and projects have sought to include persons with disabilities in their programs. The 2008 Fifth Report on the Implementation of the USAID Disability Policy found that only 20 percent of missions had developed disability inclusion plans, and only 10 percent of reports from that year “describe having collected explicit input from people with disabilities” (USAID, 2008, p viii). The report recommends increased consultation of disabled persons’ organizations (DPOs) by USAID,

increasing the number of missions with disability plans, and providing training for USAID staff and partners to raise awareness on inclusive practices. The report notes that “as mandated by the policy, language on disability inclusion is now standard policy for USAID solicitations” (USAID, 2008, p viii). However, the report calls for also including disability in USAID program selection criteria, stating, “often, language supporting the disability policy is found only within the clausal language of a solicitation, which can result in the information being dismissed” (USAID, 2008, p.7).

The importance of developing inclusive education systems in order to meet the global goals for universal primary education are not mentioned in the recommendations of the Fifth report. In fact, the EFA goals, Millennium Development Goal 2 and Universal Primary Education are never discussed in any of the five Reports on the Implementation of USAID Disability Policy.

Since the last report was published by USAID, The *First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review* was released in 2010 by then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, which noted the importance of bringing opportunity to all and stated “this is why State and USAID are making inclusion of persons with disabilities a central element of policies and practices” (US Dept. of State, 2010, p. 90). The document notes the appointment of a new Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the State Department, and a newly-created Coordinator of

Disability and Inclusive Development at USAID, to work to bring disability perspectives into policy and programming.

The *USAID Policy Framework 2011-2015* states seven core development objectives:

- 1) Increase food security,
- 2) Promote global health and strong health systems,
- 3) Reduce climate change impact,
- 4) Promote sustainable, broad-based economic growth,
- 5) Expand and sustain the ranks of stable, prosperous, democratic states,
- 6) Provide humanitarian assistance and support disaster mitigation,
- 7) Prevent and respond to crises, conflict and instability.



Teacher Support Supervision from Creative Associate's Unity Project in the Oyam District of Uganda. Source: Creative Associates (2010)

Education is discussed within several of the goals. The rights of persons with disabilities are specifically mentioned in the text under objective 5, and the needs of persons with disabilities are included under objective 6. The explanation under objective 4 specifically identifies the need to include learners with disabilities through education and training. Under objective 7, the agency states, “through our education programming, we will increase equitable access to education in conflict environments for 15 million learners, including those with disabilities, by 2015” (USAID, 2011, p.31). Therefore students with disabilities are mentioned twice under the objectives related to education programming, however the framework falls short of including a specific objective to make regular primary education inclusive of all children with disabilities. During USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah’s congressional hearing, testifying before the House Appropriations Subcommittee, Congressman Nita Lowey raised an important issue, asking why USAID failed to include education as one of the core development priorities (Basic Education Coalition, 2014).

In 2011, USAID released the Education Strategy for 2011-2015. *Education: Opportunity Through Learning*, which addressed “Learners with Disabilities” as a cross cutting issue and revealed that “recent research shows that disability is a stronger correlate of non-enrollment than either gender or class” (USAID, 2011, p. 17). The strategy went on to explain that even when children with disabilities (CWD) do attend school they are often neglected, illustrating the need for improved teacher training and learning materials to support good inclusive education. It highlights the US government’s commitment to improving the opportunities for marginalized groups, including people with disabilities. “This strategy will emphasize inclusion in schooling of marginalized groups, with a focus on removing barriers to the inclusion of learners with disabilities, including the physical barriers to reaching education venues, pedagogical barriers,

and the social exclusion that is a result of a society’s negative attitudes towards disability” (USAID, 2011, p. 17).

The FY13 Disability Funding Announcement, found on the website, (USAID, 2013b) informs missions, bureaus and offices of USAID that up to \$5 million in funding is available to support an increase in the participation of people with disabilities in USAID programs and activities and to strengthen the capacity and services of DPOs. The “Area of Interest” section offers examples of ideas that could increase participation of people with disabilities in programs, including: “Foster the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in inclusive education programs through teacher-training, adaptive technology and community outreach. Promote literacy of deaf and blind learners through the use of native sign languages and teaching of Braille” (USAID, 2013b, p. 3).

There is no mention of disability or inclusive education in USAID administrator Rajiv Shah’s Annual Letters released to the US public in 2013 or 2014, and no mention of either in the USAID Forward: Progress Report 2013 (USAID, 2013c). As we enter 2015, the target year for achieving universal primary education under both the EFA plan and the Millennium Development Goals, recognition of this monumental challenge and the fact that we are not likely to meet it is not discussed in any of these three recent USAID documents either.

CURRENT USAID WEBSITE

The 2008 Fifth Report claimed that “USAID’s dedicated webspace on disability has become more robust” (USAID, 2008, p.5). However, the current (2014) USAID website does not prominently highlight disability under “What

We Do.” The page called “Advancing Disability-Inclusive Development” (<http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/protecting-human-rights/disability>) is buried several layers down, under “Protecting Human Rights,” which is under “Democracy, Human Rights and Governance.” Disability and inclusive education are not mentioned anywhere on the current page for the education sector (<http://www.usaid.gov/education>).

A webinar from June 2013, “Best Practices in Inclusive Education,” is linked on the webpage and provides information on the history of inclusive education in the US and some highlights from USAID projects in Ethiopia and Eastern Europe (USAID, 2013a). Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo explains USAID’s twin track approach to disability programming which is also highlighted on the “Advancing Disability-Inclusive Development” webpage. The first track is to support disability-specific projects and the second track is to integrate disability into all USAID programs.

The USAID website also has a link to an online training called USAID Disability Inclusive Development: Introductory Course (USAID, n.d.), which provides an overview of disability, disability inclusive development and USAID policy related to disability for staff and development partners. There is no indication that the training is required for any staff. The course highlights the importance of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the fact that it has been signed by most of the countries in which USAID works, making it a legal requirement to include people with disabilities. The course also explains the cycle of disability and poverty, reminding the learner that 80 percent of people with disabilities live in developing countries and that 98 percent of children with disabilities do not attend school. Both physical and attitudinal barriers to inclusion of people with disabilities are discussed, as well as the

importance of planning for people with disabilities at every step of the development process: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The necessities of making locations and materials for development programs accessible is explained, and involving DPOs in program planning and implementation is stressed as an important part of making all programs inclusive. USAID’s Disability Policy is reviewed, highlighting the fact that USAID was the first donor to develop a binding policy on the need to include people with disabilities. Sections of the training end by requiring the learner to answer questions regarding the material covered. This is a good method for checking the learners’ understanding of materials, however at least one question (at the end of section four), is inaccurate, asking which policy directive, AAPD 04-17 or AAPD 05-07, dictates that “Funding solicitations should use the program’s inclusiveness as a selection criteria” (USAID, n.d.). This question appears to be a mistake, since that is not stated in either policy directive, although making inclusiveness part of USAID selection criteria has been suggested by the National Council on Disability and (InterAction, unpublished).

RESEARCH

USAID has funded various research studies which begin to provide a background on the educational situation of children with disabilities across the world. In 2011 USAID contracted a report under the EQUIP1 education project, titled *Access to Quality Education for Children and Youth with Disabilities in Conflict, Crisis and Stable Countries: Background* (Ellingsen & Thormann, 2011). This report examines both the history of inclusive programs and the challenges that persist in providing quality education, especially in times of

crisis or conflict. The report gives recommendations for practice and policy to support quality education for children with disabilities. It emphasizes the importance of early childhood programming to enhance primary and secondary school learning, and calls for efforts to use the knowledge about providing education to children with disabilities in the US to provide training workshops for teachers in countries which struggle to include all. The report also emphasizes the importance of “establishing a legislative framework and national policies for identifying and educating children with disabilities, clarifying the definition of disability for assessment, and standardizing documentation for program planning” (Ellingsen & Thormann, 2011, p. 54). This report states that, “Acknowledgement of the rights of children with disabilities to education, intervention and support is an important first step in promoting universal access to education.” (Ellingsen & Thormann, 2011, p.vi). The report goes on to note “Governments and donors typically fund NGOs to deliver special education in separate schools as part of the social welfare system, and on a charity basis.

However this approach is inconsistent with recent international commitments and a human rights disability framework” (Ellingsen & Thormann, 2011, p. 41).

Six years earlier the *Assessment of Educational Needs of Disabled Children in Bangladesh* (Ackerman, Thormann and Huq, 2005) assessed preschool and primary education in Bangladesh for children with disabilities, finding that “the vast majority of children with disabilities and special learning needs in Bangladesh do not have access to an education” (p. iv). While this study provides a valuable summary of the educational situation for children with disabilities (CWD) in Bangladesh, surprisingly no similar studies have been found of the education needs of CWD in the many other countries in which USAID works.

The only other study investigating inclusive education available from USAID in the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) is *Best Practices in Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities:*

Sabiyan School wall mural from Handicap International's Pilot project to expand participation of persons with disability in educational programmes in Ethiopia. Source: Handicap International (2013)



Applications for Program Design in the Europe & Eurasia Region (Losert, 2010). This study reveals that there are some promising practices across the region and provides recommendations that could be valuable to implementation of inclusive education around the world, although the study reports, “Scarce financial and human resources are the most often cited barriers to the expansion of inclusive education” (p. viii). The study tells us that NGOs have been the leaders in piloting regional inclusive education programs, yet the efforts to scale these projects nationally have been limited. The report credits the efforts of parents to acquire improved services for their children with disability as a major force in introducing inclusion into primary education, and states, “the direct success of inclusive education is strongly linked to the abilities of teachers in classrooms; therefore knowledgeable and motivated teachers are essential” (p. ix). For the Europe & Eurasia Region, Losert (2010) reports that “The issue of addressing education needs of special children seems to be on the agenda of all of the countries in the region” (p. 25). Inclusive education appeared in about half of the education strategies examined, yet few budget commitments or implementation plans were attached. Inclusive classrooms appeared to be operating somewhere in all of the countries but special facilities remained the most popular placement (Losert, 2010).

Losert (2010) provides multiple recommendations for the advancing of inclusive education that will be summarized here, but deeper investigation of this report would be advisable for anyone developing inclusive education programs and policies. The report endorses creation of an independent government office responsible for guiding inclusive education if possible, and applauds support for “a strong network of local and international NGOs and Disabled People’s Organizations” (Losert, 2010, p. x). We are further reminded that policy should establish inclusive education across all levels of regular education.

National Awareness campaigns are suggested in order to inform all community organizations and education stakeholders of the importance of inclusion, and model inclusive schools are recommended as a tool for displaying the benefits of this service. Losert (2010) highlights the importance of schools or communities implementing a “school mapping or child-search activity in the school catchment area which locates children, particularly pre-school and early primary age, who are not receiving education” (p. x). The building of human capacity by training teachers, administrators and other professionals in child-centered methodologies is given as an important step in helping to improve learning opportunities for children with diverse needs. Governments are called to develop a system to collect, manage, and track data related to children with disabilities in the school system in order to develop and assess inclusive education. The report also recognizes the need for schools and communities to seek more funding sources that support inclusion in their schools.

USAID INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

As the idea of inclusive education and respecting the diversity of learners’ needs has gained prominence in the USA and the realization has been made that we will never achieve the international Education for All Goals without including children with disabilities in education systems around the world, inclusive education has become part of some USAID projects. UNESCO’s *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education* identify five important areas of action in the development of inclusive education: Attitudinal changes and policy development; Ensuring Inclusion through early childhood care and education; Inclusive curricula;

Teachers and teacher education; Resources and legislation (UNESCO, 2009). Examples of USAID programs which are implementing steps toward inclusive education exist in various countries around the world. These programs address different aspects of the complicated process required to establish successful inclusive education. They are discussed below, organized under the aspects of the inclusion process that have been developed in the projects.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ATTITUDINAL CHANGES

A preliminary step of many USAID projects seeking to meet the needs of children with disabilities has been campaigning for public awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and positive attitudes for inclusive programs and society. The Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities (IVWD) program managed by CRS supported awareness raising activities including film development on inclusive education and public events such as Disability Day to promote “community awareness of rights, needs and abilities of PWDs” (CRS, 2009, p. 14).

In fact CRS recognized that strengthening community involvement in inclusive education promoted project sustainability (CRS, 2009). As part of the FIELD project in Mongolia, Mercy Corps conducted an awareness raising campaigns to promote Inclusive Education (Mercy Corps, 2011). In Bangladesh, USAID funded the production of *Sisimpur*, an adaptation of *Sesame Street*, to promote early childhood education and in its second season, the series highlighted disability awareness and inclusion by presenting characters with disabilities playing and performing regular tasks with other characters across the community (Lee, 2009).

In Russia, the NGO *Perspektiva* implemented a USAID-funded program to ensure educational equality for Russian youth and children, establishing several successful public awareness campaigns and provided training and public education activities on the importance of inclusive education for more than 5,000 people, including teachers, government officials, media and members of the community (USAID, 2007). The program funded several public service announcements, disseminated brochures on inclusive education, and organizing several public rallies in various regions throughout Russia. In Uganda, the UNITY project organized a Health Science Fair in 2010 which “included performances by children with special needs to educate the community that disability is not inability” (Creative Associates, 2010, p. 23).

When Handicap International began an inclusive education pilot project in Ethiopia they determined that a heavy focus on awareness raising and information sharing was needed in first half of the project to develop the interest and commitment of all necessary groups (Handicap International, 2013). Mobility International USA’s Building an Inclusive Development Community Project hosted a television debate on disability issues in Albania (Mobility International USA, 2011). The REACH program in Kolkata, India, also made use of volunteers from the local community, calling them the “backbone of the TEAM project” (Sreenath, n.d., p. 19) and credited the involvement of the parents and the local community in general as contributing to the success of the inclusive education project.

TEACHER TRAINING

Campaigns to improve public awareness of disability rights and needs may improve teacher attitudes toward inclusion, a necessity emphasized by the managers of the ENGAGE project in Pakistan below.

To become inclusive, the first step for a teacher, school, or education system is to change attitudes. Through trainings and cluster meetings, teachers began to recognize their prior beliefs and behaviours toward people with disabilities. Teachers' attitudes are critical. Inclusion cannot advance until attitudes change and teachers become more sensitive to the needs and abilities of children with disabilities. With sensitivity, more welcoming environments can be created. (Caceres, Awan, Nabeel, Majeed & Mindes, 2010, p.13)

However, those teachers also need direct training regarding the rights and needs of children with disabilities, as well as strategies for inclusive education if they are to be successful at including children with disabilities into their classrooms and providing them with quality education. In addition to sensitization, The ENGAGE project offered student-centered and active learning methods to illustrate how these practices encourage the participation of all children and it developed inclusive education curriculum and materials which were used to train 7,000 primary teachers to create inclusive classrooms, which “resulted in them becoming more sensitive to the needs of all of

their students” (Caceres, Awan, Nabeel, Majeed & Mindes, 2010, p. v).

The Building an Inclusive Development Community (BIDC) Project held trainings for schoolteachers, parents and students on inclusion of children with disabilities in schools in Guatemala and on the implementation of Individual Education



Plans in Albania (Mobility International USA, 2011). In Mongolia the Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled (FIELD) project conducted training on Inclusive Education principles and ways to work with disabled children for 728 people, including school managers, kindergarten teachers and parents (Mercy Corps, 2011). Save the Children gave priority to building the capacity of primary grade teachers, providing training in understanding inclusive education, different types of disability and their needs, child developmental milestones, individual education

planning, and teaching strategies as part of the Supporting Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities project in Georgia and a study tour was arranged for a team of teachers visit Lithuania to observe the practical aspects of inclusion in their schools (Save the Children, 2012).



Mobility International USA's Building an Inclusive Development Community (BIDC) project.
Source: Mobility International USA

In Uganda, the UNITY project supported the Department of Special Needs Education to develop five manuals and train 946 teachers in the areas of Braille; Specialized Guidance and Counseling; Deaf Blind; Sign Language and Dyslexia (Creative Associates, 2010). Ummeed, a nonprofit organization working with the REACH project in India, worked with teachers on classroom management so they could improve the quality of education for children with emotional and behavioral learning disabilities (Sreenath, n.d.). In 2012, the Community Connections program

brought education professionals from Ukraine to Virginia for a training program on Inclusive Education covering Models of Inclusive Education, Inclusive classroom practices and design; modification of curriculum; and Methods for adapting independent external testing materials for children with special educational needs (Alliances for Quality Education, 2012). Community Connections also brought teachers from Armenia to Michigan to observe academic instruction and parent training programs for the students with severely mental illness and students with autism (World Learning, 2011). Meanwhile, the long running Inclusion of Vietnamese with Disabilities Project (IVWD) has trained close to 3,000 teachers and school managers in their capacity to implement an inclusive education system (Lindskog, Tran, & Hoang, 2010).

In India, the REACH program worked with a local NGO to train 1,500 teachers in innovative teaching methods to reach out to children identified as having disabilities (Sreenath, n.d.). The BESST program had the goal of strengthening teaching in 11 provinces in Afghanistan. Teacher trainers in the program asked for more materials about ways to address needs of students with suspected learning disabilities (Boardman, LeBlanc, Oria & Muradi, 2009). This request direct from teacher trainers in Afghanistan provides evidence of the need for providing sufficient teacher training on strategies and methods for providing quality inclusive education across all countries in which USAID works.

INCLUSION PILOT PROGRAMS

Along with training teachers, USAID has helped to develop inclusive education pilot projects in the schools of various countries. In Mongolia the

“60 global disability rights libraries have been installed in 12 less-resourced countries allowing web-like access to current practices, tool and resources.”
Source: USAID



FIELD project supported DPOs in partnership with local schools, kindergartens, and a teacher training college, to implement five inclusive education projects at the pre-school, primary school, and vocational & technical schools levels (Mercy Corps, 2011). The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia asked Save the Children to pilot an inclusive education model through the USAID funded Supporting Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities program in one region. Seven children with different disabilities were officially enrolled in two public schools and their teachers were supervised by a psychologist who conducted on-the-job training for development of individual education plans and successful inclusive education. Both schools were made accessible with ramps and removal of barriers, and a resource room was staffed to provide necessary assistance to the children (Save the Children, 2012).

The REACH program in India worked with the local organization AADI, which ran a special school for children with disabilities, to begin transforming its own school to include all children, and worked to establish pilot inclusive education projects in five government schools in Delhi. The project “promotes inclusive practices and culture through a whole school development approach by influencing existing practices at the school level to support inclusion of children and by evolving appropriate and replicable models that address specific educational and social needs of children with disabilities” USAID. (2007, p. 3). The program worked with another NGO, Manovikas Kendra, to promote inclusion for children with specific learning disabilities in 21 government schools of Kolkata. Manovikas Kendra began with assessment to identify close to 900 children with specific learning disabilities or “mild Attention Deficit Hyper Activity Disorder (ADHD), Autism and



those with physical disability and mild visual and hearing disability” (Sreenath, n.d., p. 11). Individual remedial education plans (IREP) were developed for these children, remedial classes were provided after school, and teachers were provided training in active learning strategies, active assessment in classrooms and working with children with handwriting difficulties (Sreenath, n.d.).

In Ethiopia, Handicap International began a program to “develop a model of ‘disability friendly schools’ that fosters inclusion of children with disabilities in educational programmes in collaboration with Disabled People’s Organisations, Regional Education Bureaus and USAID” (Handicap International, 2013, p. 7). The program created Disability Resource Centers (DRC) in six schools and organized ‘Task Force’ teams to improve teaching and learning resources and ‘Supportive Teams’ of teachers and volunteers to

provide advice to teachers and parents. Accessibility modifications were made to schools and awareness raising sessions were provided for all parents and children about disability and inclusion (Handicap International, 2013).

The ENGAGE project developed a pilot inclusive education program in Pakistan providing additional training and support to 25 teachers to educate 48 children in their classrooms with a range of disabilities, including emotional/behavioral, intellectual, physical, vision, and hearing (Caceres, Awan, Nabeel, Majeed & Mindes, 2010). The teachers met with university professors who were inclusive education experts to ask questions and discuss solutions for challenges. After the training, teachers used more interactive strategies like demonstrations and peer tutoring, and showed confidence in their ability to teach children with disabilities. “The training provided by ENGAGE and the presence of children with disabilities created a catalyst for teachers to consider the diverse learning needs of all students” (Caceres, Awan, Nabeel, Majeed & Mindes, 2010, p. 13). The project worked with parents of children with disabilities and members of the School Management Committee as part of establishing an inclusive school.

Catholic Relief Services has been funded by USAID to assist Vietnam in the development and implementation of a large project for inclusive education in two provinces. This work has led to 2035 children with disabilities enrolled in school, 4640 teachers and service providers trained, 2278 parents and community members trained as well as 309 persons with disabilities that received vocational training and job orientation, as of 2009 (CRS, 2009). The projects has included training and support for professionals in the Ministry of Education at the provincial and national level related to “development of transition mechanisms, learning assessments, distribution of IE training materials, communication and advocacy via media,

development of resources rooms in Secondary schools (9 schools in the two provinces)” (Lindskog, Tran, & Hoang, 2010, P. 25). The project has employed information communication technology (ICT) to facilitate implementation of inclusive education. “However there are challenges such as lack of devices and limited capacity of the teachers to use the devices in the classroom setting.” (Lynch, & Pham, 2013, p. x). Despite the success of this program and work done in other provinces funded by the World Bank and the governments of the United Kingdom, Norway, Canada and Australia, attitudes of families and educators that CWD are not able to learn, as well as the inaccessibility to school structures and lack of trained teachers, still pose a barrier to educational opportunities for CWD (Lynch, & Pham, 2013).

GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education, notes that “the promotion of quality in inclusive education requires a clearly stated policy” (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2009). This guide goes on to explain the importance of legislation and funding policy which supports inclusion of children with disabilities to public education. USAID has worked with the education offices of some countries to help develop the necessary policy to establish inclusive education.

The Building an Inclusive Development Community (BIDC) program, a USAID funded program directed by Mobility International, has worked toward inclusive education in multiple countries. BIDC worked with the Ministry of Education of Guatemala to establish the necessary funding for a national strategy for education for

students with disabilities, and worked to develop educational standards for kindergarten to sixth grade that addressed inclusion of children with disabilities and ensured that assessment materials were accessible for children with disabilities. Through BIDC, USAID helped the Ministry of Education draft the National Policy on Inclusive Education. In Albania, the BIDC program worked with Save the Children to influence legislation to support inclusive education (Mobility International USA, 2011).

A training session organized by ChildFund Belarus analyzed the opportunity for inclusive education, developed a master plan for the development of inclusive education in Belarus, and later conducted roundtable discussions with national education authorities and parents. The plan included training of specialists, raising of public awareness and removal of barriers. At the request of the Ministry of Education, training participants began the design of a new inclusive educational program for pre-school children (Mironova, 2012). In Uganda, the UNITY project supported the Department of Special Needs Education (SNE) in the development of a special needs and inclusive education strategy which led to training for teachers and district education leaders (Creative Associates, 2010).

The IVWD project run by CRS was described above for its training of teachers and the initiation of a pilot inclusive program, but this project is also significant for the impact on inclusive education policy in Vietnam. The project gave assistance to the Ministry of Education in the development of MOET Decision 23, “which regulates the duties, responsibilities and rights of the CWD, the teachers and the educational institutions” (Lindskog, Thiep, & Yen, 2010, p. 16).

Inclusive education is now established as national policy with state budget allocations.

However, they report that even after establishing this policy, many challenges still hinder successful inclusive education, including a “lack of trained teachers and an inadequate number of teachers, lack of knowledge of teachers and school managers regarding their responsibilities for IE, poor application of early detection and poor coordination between education and health as indicated by the MOH and in the baseline assessment, limited access to educational structures with only 20.8 percent accessible to PWD [persons with disabilities], lack of assistive devices, and stigma and discrimination by parents of children without disability (CWOD), teachers, and fellow students” (Lynch, & Pham, 2013, p. x).

DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE CURRICULA

In addition to making school buildings accessible to all children, and inclusive education systems must offer flexible curriculum that can be made appropriate to each child. The REACH program in India reported work in Kolkata “unpacking the curriculum and identifying core concepts to enhance learning among children” (Sreenath, n.d., p. 6). The ENGAGE program in Pakistan noted the frequent use of “memorization and rote learning, which creates an inaccessible curriculum and learning environment for many children with disabilities” (Caceres, Awan, Nabeel, Majeed & Mindes, 2010, p. 10). The project did not report working on adapting the curriculum but did recognize this as a necessary step forward in the process. In Vietnam, CRS stated, “At the central level, the project’s emphasis on policy change and curriculum development is creating more equitable opportunities for PWD throughout Vietnam” (CRS 2009, p. 31).

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The importance of early identification and intervention was recognized in the *Best Practices in Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities Applications for Program Design in the Europe & Eurasia Region*. This study examining all local program in the region, not USAID projects, noted that most current inclusion efforts in the region were found at the pre-primary and primary levels (Losert, 2010). Minimal discussion of inclusive early childhood programs was found in USAID project reports. However, CRS repeats its support for interventions starting at early childhood and preschool age in Vietnam (CRS, 2009). The adaptation of Sesame Street as Sisimpur clearly targeted the early childhood population in Bangladesh (Lee, 2009). As noted above, training participants in the Childfund project in Belarus began designing a new inclusive education program specifically for pre-school children, at the request of the Ministry of Education (Mironova, 2012).



Source: Family Educational Services Foundation

RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2013 the National Council on Disability (NCD) produced the report *Toward the Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities: Examining the Accessibility of Overseas Facilities and Programs Funded by the United States*. While this document does not specifically examine inclusive education, it provides an excellent investigation of USAID Disability Policy and its implementation. The NCD found little evidence of inclusion of people with disabilities in USAID's general programming, and noted that USAID staff interviewed from various missions revealed a lack of knowledge "about disability issues and how to include people with disabilities in development work" (US National Council on Disability, 2013, p. 82). The NCD critiqued USAID's twin track approach to programming for disabilities, saying "in the programming reviewed, there were very few general development programs that meaningfully included people with disabilities. Most general development programs had no provisions to include people with disabilities or to provide reasonable accommodations or modifications to facilitate access" (US National Council on Disability, 2013, p. 88).

Despite USAID's Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive, AAPD 04-17, requiring that solicitations from USAID reflect its policy on disability, the NCD reviewed 66 full solicitations issued in 2010 and found that only 33 of the solicitations included the standard disability provision language required (US National Council on Disability, 2013, p. 83). The NCD went on to highlight the serious limitation of these directives, stating that they place disability provisions at the end of solicitations where they are less likely to be reviewed by applicants and more importantly, they leave an "absence of any requirement that points be allocated for inclusion of people with disabilities in the application grading process" (US National Council on Disability, 2013, p. 75).

The NCD recommended that USAID require disability inclusion in solicitation statements of work, and holds that "there is a ready model for this type of approach in gender statements in statements of work" (US National Council on Disability, 2013, p. 148). Furthermore the NCD report noted that the USAID Evaluation Policy: Evaluation Learning from Experience, "fails to mention disability, but the section on gender provides a useful example of how USAID should draft language on disability in evaluations" (US National Council on Disabilities, 2013, p. 90). The USAID Evaluation Policy requires that all evaluations include "gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data" (USAID, 2011a, p. 9), and the NCD suggests that USAID Evaluation Policy should include disability-sensitive indicators in the basic features of evaluations. The NCD's recommendations to USAID include updating the disability policy to provide more guidance on how to make all programs inclusive, introducing mandatory training in disability rights and inclusion for employees at all missions, requiring disability inclusion in solicitation statements of work and technical evaluation criteria, developing disability indicators for monitoring plans, and including

reasonable accommodations for disability in cost proposals.

More recently, a study on the inclusion of disability in USAID solicitations was conducted by the InterAction Disability Working Group. The study analyzed 85 solicitations issued between December 2012 and May 2013, and found that 10 percent of the solicitations did not follow USAID's minimal requirement of placing the USAID Policy on Disability in all solicitations. Only 34 percent recommend or require disability inclusion in projects, while the remaining 56 percent make minimal mention of disability, or only include the disability policy in clausal language at the end of the solicitation, which is often ignored as it carries no value in the selection of awards. The InterAction research found that the Education Sector had the highest percentage of solicitations categorized as having significant disability language requiring inclusion, which was found in 43 percent of education solicitations reviewed. Similar to the NCD, InterAction recommended requiring inclusion of people with disabilities in selection criteria for solicitations, and making inclusion training mandatory for USAID staff.

InterAction also recommended ensuring that disability is included as a theme in future USAID sector strategies, supporting missions to develop internal disability strategies and sharing of solicitations with significant disability language, like the recent RFP for an Early Grade Reading Activity in Malawi, to promote good disability inclusion in solicitations. InterAction stated the need for further research "to assess the correlation between significant language solicitations and inclusion in the resulting programs" (InterAction, unpublished).

Ellingsen and Thormann (2011) stated in their report *Access to Quality Education for Children and Youth with Disabilities in Conflict, Crisis and Stable Countries: Background Report*,

“there should be a concentrated effort to synthesize what is known about providing educational services to children with disabilities in countries that have experienced challenges similar to those in conflict and crisis states, with lessons learned” (Ellingsen & Thormann, 2011 p. 53).

The lessons learned from these projects are valuable and deserve to be provided in an easily accessible location where they can be of use to project planners and implementers from every USAID education project. Project reports are accessible online in the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC), however, it appears that there is no requirement to place reports and evaluations from every USAID project in the DEC. Several of the documents reviewed here, reporting on recent projects that involved inclusive education, were not found in DEC and could only be acquired directly from the contractors responsible for the projects. Documents in the DEC are searchable by subject, however neither “disability” nor “inclusion” are included in the more than 250 primary subjects available for choice in the advanced search on DEC. It would be helpful if “Inclusive Education” were listed as a Special Collection or Highlighted Topic on the DEC search page. The USAID website could also include an Inclusive Education Resource Center, a webpage with reports and research on inclusive education all linked in one place. Furthermore, a single desk study could be organized to consolidate the lessons learned across multiple inclusive education projects, and a training manual for inclusive education could be produced to assist any mission or project staff working to make education programs more inclusive of children with disabilities.

Such projects could be implemented by USAID staff dedicated to inclusive education. The *Best Practices in Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities: Applications for Program Design in the Europe and Eurasia Region*, recommended

that counties developing inclusive education should form national “central government offices” designated to “lead, promote, guide, and monitor IE implementation” (Losert, 2010, p.x). It would be equally valuable for USAID’s Education office to have specific staff dedicated to promote and guide inclusive education. While the US National Council on Disability (2013) recommended making the e-training course entitled “Inclusive Development, already developed by USAID, mandatory for all USAID staff, a further step could be requiring training on “Inclusive Education” for all education staff at USAID, in support of the Education for All goals.

The recommendations from USAID’s 2008 Fifth Report on the Implementation of USAID Disability Policy, should also be examined and made a priority today.

7. Increase outreach to and consultation of disabled persons organizations and disability leaders by USAID missions, offices, and bureaus.
8. Systematize the inclusion of disability into USAID program selection criteria.
9. Increase formal and nonformal training opportunities, and raise awareness on inclusive practices for USAID staff, implementing partners, and disabled persons organizations.
10. Increase the number of missions with disability plans. (USAID, 2008, p. viii-ix)

Similar suggestions for increasing training and using inclusion in selection criteria have been repeated by multiple outside parties, including the US National Council on Disability (2013) and InterAction (unpublished), as mentioned above. The first suggestion, to consult with DPOs, could only help to make projects to promote inclusive education more successful and sustainable, as people with disabilities are always important stakeholders in the process of developing equitable education for all. Of course disability plans belonging to individual

missions are necessary components in making sure projects address the issues most important to local people and do not exclude any groups.

Ultimately, the NCD endorsed providing adequate resources for the USAID Coordinator on Disability and Inclusive Development and InterAction (unpublished) also proposed that increased staff expertise on disability inclusive development could serve as a resource within USAID. These resources would be ideal for working to realize all of the recommendations and projects listed above. They could help to publish a current report on the implementation of USAID's Disability Policy, which has not been updated in six years, although many new projects have been designed and implemented in that time. Improved resources could also assist in the creation of an Inclusive Education Resource site and a training manual, which would organize lessons on providing educational services to children with disabilities, as recommended by Ellingsen & Thormann (2011), and "share inclusive education training materials that are developed across projects to reduce duplication of efforts" (Caceres, Awan, Nabeel, Majeed & Mindes, 2010, p. 15) as suggested by the ENGAGE project.

If USAID is expected to improve the quality of education for a population as large and usually excluded as those with disabilities across the world, the agency must have the adequate resources and a clear plan dedicated to this important goal.

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