

Myths about inclusive education

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Inclusive Education Task Team, EiE Sector Working Group

Myths	Facts / clarification
Persons with disabilities are those with physical, visual, hearing and mental impairments	Physical, visual, hearing and mental “impairments” are the medical conditions of a person, which is not the same as “disability”. Disability means medical conditions of a person, <u>affected by barriers</u> , in a way they limit a person’s participation in society (See Box 1, IE Brief No. 1.)
Inclusive education is only for children with disabilities.	Inclusive education is for EVERY child, and not limited to children with disabilities.
Teachers with a Special Needs Education background only teach children with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can teach not only children with specific impairments (e.g. children who are Deaf) but all children. • They can also support teachers in mainstream classrooms to provide differentiated teaching for all learners. • SNE teachers can help build capacity of other teachers, and break stigma associated with disability.
Children with disabilities cannot learn.	They can learn, just like other children (without disabilities). Remember, all children learn in their own unique way, at their own pace, so it is important to remove barriers to their learning e.g. by changing attitudes, training teachers, adjusting curriculum, equipping classroom with various learning materials.
It is better for children with disabilities to learn in special schools (or in special needs units).	Ideally, all children can learn in the same, inclusive schools. Special schools or units may be only a temporary solution on the way towards inclusion. Keep in mind, however, that placing a child in a mainstream class without changing environments, curriculum, teaching strategies etc. does not constitute inclusion.
Impairments can always be seen physically.	Many impairments originate from a person’s brain or can only be felt internally. You may need to analyze a child’s learning or behavior carefully to identify an impairment like this. Do not make assumptions if a person has impairment or not.
Children with intellectual disabilities only need to learn basic daily activities.	They also need to and can learn academic subjects the same as any other learner. They simply need differentiated or personalised learning support.
Inclusive education focusing on children with disabilities is the same as special needs education.	Inclusive education is for all children, not only focusing on children with disabilities. Hence it is different from special needs education which is education for children with specific types of impairments, often in a special school, or, a special unit inside a mainstream school.

Myths	Facts / clarification
Integrating children with disabilities in mainstream schools (i.e. special units) means inclusive education	<p>Integration is not the same as inclusion. Education is only inclusive when all children are learning in the same classrooms, where they are offered sufficient support, assistive technologies if needed, and learning experiences that are differentiated according to their unique learning needs. The teaching is adjusted to the learners, instead of the learners adjusting to the standard learning space and content. Remember, provision of reasonable accommodations is an obligation in Uganda (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD] Article 5, 24-2(c), etc. Note that Uganda ratified CRPD in 2008).</p>
Teaching children with disabilities is expensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children with disabilities may require specific support or assistive technologies which may cost some amount. But not every child with disabilities needs such intervention and not every intervention is expensive. • Also, if the infrastructures, facilities and services are designed in an inclusive way based on the “Universal Design” concept from the very beginning, it will cost 0.5- 1 % of the total budget¹, and comes at a lower cost than special/segregated education². • Let’s keep in mind that exclusion comes at a high cost – persons with disabilities who are excluded from education and employment can lead to 1-7% loss in GDP³.
Adding a ramp to a school makes it accessible.	<p>Making a facility such as a school physically accessible is not only constructing a ramp but also includes other accessibility features such as: flat landing area at the bottom and the top of a ramp; handrails on both side of a ramp; wide doors; standard size of the space e.g. inside space of a latrine or toilet; painting door frames and windows in contrasting colors from the wall; user friendly routes or corridors; tactical marking on the floor; labelling in large print and in contrasting colours, enough light, etc.</p> <p>For more information, please see <u>Statutory Instrument 2019 (No 52) the Building Control (Accessibility Standards for Persons with Disabilities) Code.</u></p>
Accessibility is about the physical infrastructure of a facility like a school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility needs of persons with disabilities not only consider the physical infrastructure but also other non-physical accessibility indicators. Article 9 of CRPD says accessibility is “to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.” Non-physical aspects of accessibility include, for example, information in accessible formats such as Braille, availability of support services such as sign language interpreters, sound/flashlight devices on facilities, availability of a shared taxi/boda system. • Remember, accessibility improvement for persons with disabilities benefits everyone! When you are sick, pregnant, temporally injured, or aged, handrails and information in audio or big fonts are very helpful.

For more information or inquiry, please contact co-chairs of Inclusive Education Task Team
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¹ IASC (2019). Guidelines: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. Page 10. Footnote 35 states “To meet the physical accessibility requirements of persons with disabilities (for example, when constructing buildings or WASH facilities), it is estimated that between 0.5 per cent and 1 per cent should be added to budgets.”

² IDDC Inclusive Education Task Team, Myers, J., (2016). #CostingEquity. The case for disability-responsive education financing

³ ILO, as cited by UNICEF (2021). Combatting the Costs of Exclusion for Children with Disabilities and their Families