Helping Teachers Build Skills

to deliver

Inclusive Education in Emergencies (EiE)

Case Study & How To Guide

THE CHALLENGE

Children with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing inclusive education in emergency contexts because teachers do not understand how to accommodate diverse learners.

THE SOLUTION

Training teachers on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), learning styles, and multiple intelligences helps them to build inclusive, flexible classrooms and become champions for diversity in emergency contexts.

Overview

Children with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing education in emergency contexts. In these situations, teachers are on the front lines, acting as the primary facilitators of learning and inclusion. However, in many crisis-affected regions, the lack of qualified and trained teachers is one of the main obstacles to inclusive education. Access to pedagogical training does not necessarily remove this obstacle - many training programmes fail to adequately equip teachers to fully include children with disabilities in the classroom.

> We can want to give the best to the students, but if we are not trained enough, if a child is deaf and I don't know this, I don't know how to express myself to him, I just keep him there and can't do anything. We need to be trained – I am licensed in child pedagogy and I'm specialised and doing a Masters but I don't even know about this [how to include children with disabilities].
>
> *Teacher from Arauca, Colombia*

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Teachers operating in emergency settings face overcrowded classrooms, lack of materials, and an increasingly diverse student body - including growing numbers of children facing the psychosocial impacts of growing up in crisis-affected areas. Without formal training in inclusive education practices, teachers often feel overwhelmed, leading them to rely on outdated practices like requesting specialized "shadow teachers", expecting parents to provide full time in-classroom support, or attributing learning difficulties to the students' disabilities or a perceived lack of support from families, often leading to grade repetition.

To guarantee the right to inclusive education, teachers need knowledge, skills, and practical tools. This case study shares strategies for training teachers to implement inclusive educational practices - specifically focusing on learning styles, multiple intelligences, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - in emergency situations. These specific practices are critical for building teaching resilience in emergency settings, where educators frequently manage overcrowded classrooms and a lack of specialized materials. By understanding learning styles and multiple intelligences, teachers are empowered to move away from rigid, one-size-fits-all teaching methods and medicalized views of disability. Furthermore, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) equips teachers with practical, actionable strategies to engage diverse learners using the resources they already have. Together, these approaches allow teachers to confidently adapt their lessons to accommodate all students in classes that frequently change in size and students' backgrounds and abilities.

This training package, its approaches, and the linked resources are rooted in the principles mandated by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its General Comment No. 4 on inclusive education. Training teachers on inclusive practices is not just good pedagogy; it is a "must-do" action to achieve compliance with human rights frameworks such as the CRPD, and to align practice with widely accepted evidence-based frameworks designed to coordinate and improve humanitarian responses, such as the IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

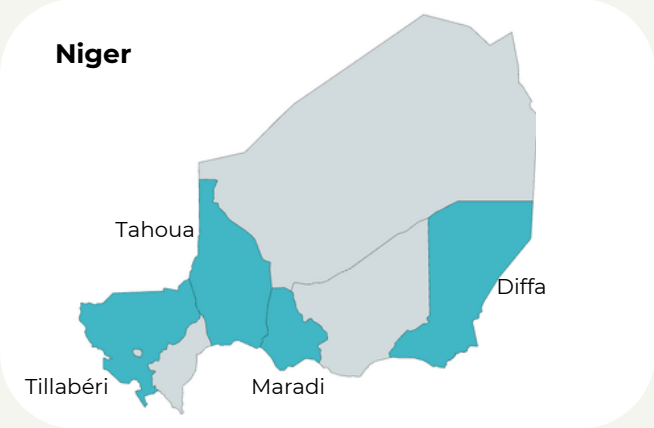
Teachers are the ultimate facilitators of the right to inclusive education, and they need safe, non-judgmental spaces to unlearn low expectations of children with disabilities, confront their fears about workload, and acquire the practical tools necessary to confidently teach diverse learners in low-resource and/or emergency settings.

> It is important for teachers to know how to teach in an inclusive way because the children with disabilities also have the same right like all other children to be educated.
>
> *Teacher from Tillabéri, Niger*

Supporting Teachers to Build Inclusive Classrooms: A Case Study

This case study examines the methodology used to train teachers operating in protracted crises in Colombia and Niger. This work was delivered by Inclusion International, the International Disability Alliance, and their national partners Asdown Colombia and the Fédération Nigérienne des Personnes Handicapées. This work was funded by Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

Through workshops, teachers and educational supervisors in the Maradi, Tillabéri, Diffa, and Tahoua regions of Niger and the Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño regions of Colombia were supported to shift their pedagogical approaches to meet the needs and learning styles of all students. In Niger, the training directly reached 75 teachers and other educational professionals across multiple schools. In Colombia, workshops trained 96 teachers across multiple schools.



In all targeted regions, the educational communities face complex, protracted crises, including armed conflict, internal displacement, climate shocks, and an influx of refugees from neighbouring Venezuela (Colombia) and Nigeria or Mali (in Niger). These crises exacerbate the challenges of already under-resourced schools, in which teachers must navigate managing overcrowded classes, high heat, noisy environments.

Before the training, teachers in both Niger and Colombia largely held onto outdated beliefs about inclusion, frequently assuming that students with disabilities required a dedicated educational assistant or one-on-one aide (often called a *shadow teacher*[1]) to manage their school experience. Rather than adapting their own teaching methods, many teachers operated under the misconception that inclusion could only be achieved by outsourcing their educational responsibilities to specialized staff. This belief was so deeply ingrained that some participants in Colombia initially expected the training program to assign and fund support teachers for their schools. Furthermore, in contexts where the education system does provide formal, pedagogically trained support teachers to act as advisors, mainstream educators often misunderstand this role, expecting them to act as segregated, full-time tutors for children with disabilities instead. Ultimately, this reliance on the concept of a shadow teacher prevents educators from transforming their own classroom practices to accommodate all learners.

Despite conflicting ideas of what inclusion meant and how to achieve it, all of the training participants arrived at the workshop with a shared understanding of the essential role that education plays for children in emergency contexts more broadly. Going to school during emergencies provides children with a safe environment and a sense of normalcy in difficult

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[1] In many under-resourced contexts, a "shadow teacher" refers to a one-on-one aide—often a para-professional, community member, or even a parent without formal pedagogical training—who is assigned exclusively to a student with a disability. Mainstream teachers frequently hold the misconception that this individual should take sole responsibility for the child's entire educational experience. In contrast, a formal "support teacher" (where the system provides one) is a trained education professional intended to assist the mainstream teacher in designing pedagogical strategies and reasonable adjustments for the classroom, rather than separating the student from their peers.

times. It can also ensure access to what may be their only daily meal, particularly for those living in poverty. Teachers from Nariño, Colombia, further emphasized that attending school can help protect girls—with and without disabilities—from risks such as disappearance, abuse, and sexual exploitation, as well as prevent children from being recruited into armed groups. This shared recognition was a key building block for expanding the teacher's ideas about the value of education to also include children with disabilities.

Why is teacher training essential for inclusive education in emergencies?

Much of the work to improve access to school for children with disabilities in emergency contexts focuses on the removal of barriers to accessing school - interventions like providing safe and accessible transport to school, supporting parents to understand their child's right to education, and ensuring school administrators adopt zero rejection policies. While the removal of barriers to accessing education is a key precondition for inclusive education, it does not necessarily result in access to learning. Removing barriers to access and enrollment is a first step, but having girls and boys with disabilities in the classroom does not automatically enable learning if education systems continue to take a one-size-fits-all approach that is not designed to accommodate each learner's needs.

When teachers are not included in interventions to improve access to education for children with disabilities in crisis situations, children newly enrolled in and accessing school will face a new slate of barriers once inside the classroom that teachers are not equipped to remove. These in-class barriers range from a lack of knowledge about diverse learning styles and Universal Design for Learning, attitudinal barriers from peers that teachers need to play a key role in addressing, and assumptions or medicalised understandings of disability that are not conducive to an inclusive learning environment.
Teachers have the potential to be partners for inclusive education, but practical support and training on delivering inclusive education in the classroom - based on principles of Universal Design for Learning - is essential for making sure that inclusion in the classroom is real for children with disabilities.

What do teachers need to become inclusive educators?

Many teachers in emergency contexts have never received formal training on inclusive education. As a result, they are more vulnerable to harmful stereotypes about persons with disabilities, which lead to low expectations of what children with disabilities can achieve in schools. The pervasiveness of segregated special education systems has meant that children with disabilities, particularly the most marginalised, have been absent from mainstream classrooms for many years, resulting in a significant gap in knowledge among teachers in mainstream schools about what meaningful inclusion looks like. Teachers need:

1 Practical training to deliver inclusive practices

Teachers on the frontlines of protracted crises often have a profound desire to support all of their students, but the absence of practical, inclusive pedagogical training leaves them feeling ill-equipped. Teachers need specific, actionable strategies needed to bridge the gap between their good intentions and their daily classroom reality.

> We want to help children and the parents as well. [...] to get to a classroom with a child with a disability but not have the tools makes me overwhelmed and stressed, knowing that they shouldn't be there just sitting, they should be there to find opportunities and happiness in the school.
>
> *Teacher from Arauca, Colombia*

There is often an underlying assumption in the classroom that all students must reach the exact same academic level via the exact same path, which leaves educators feeling fearful or inadequate when children inevitably learn differently and advance at different paces. Teachers are often bound by rigid curricula and teaching and assessment methods, and not empowered to be flexible and make adaptations to ensure that all of their students can participate. This often results in further exclusionary measures such as drastically shortening a student's school day or viewing extreme grade repetition as a valid pedagogical solution, with some children in Colombia, for example, repeating the same grade up to three times. Effective training can ensure that teachers know what their options are to support students, and how to deliver it in practice.

Teachers need practical tools - not theoretical mandates. Without frameworks like Universal Design for Learning (UDL) or an understanding of multiple intelligences, even the most well-intentioned teachers risk perpetuating an environment where children with disabilities are physically present but barred from actively engaging. To become truly inclusive, teachers need safe, non-judgmental training spaces where they gain the everyday classroom strategies that allow all students to participate on an equal basis.

2 Support to unlearn reliance on diagnosis

In many under-resourced contexts, understanding of disability is inextricably tied to a clinical perspective. Teachers and school administrators frequently operate under the mistaken belief that a formal medical diagnosis, specialized medical treatment, or the assignment of a dedicated "shadow teacher" is a strict prerequisite for a child to begin learning. Relying on a medical understanding of disability leads schools and teachers to believe that the reason a child with a disability is struggling in school is inherent to their disability, as opposed to the barriers in the learning environment the child is placed in. In many cases, medical professionals explicitly tell parents and teachers that a child will never learn foundational skills like reading or writing, causing schools to stop viewing these students as capable learners.

This medicalized view creates a systemic barrier where schools excuse themselves from their educational responsibilities by claiming they cannot help a child without clinical guidance or specialised personnel. Some teachers in Colombia reported regularly writing to local doctors for advice about how to teach a child with a disability in their class - despite the doctor having no educational background or knowledge of pedagogy. Rather than focusing on pedagogical adjustments, some educators feel like they need to focus on the child's "deficit," waiting months or even years for medical guidance to integrate the student into the learning process. In contexts with overburdened or weak health systems, such as Colombia, this prolonged wait for a medical assessment is frequently used as a justification to outright deny school admission or withhold necessary educational support.

3 Removal of barriers that hinder effective teaching

Ultimately, teachers working in conflict affected areas face severe structural and resource deficits on a daily basis, impacting all areas of their work from physical learning spaces to the curriculum. Educators are surviving in environments that actively hinder the learning process.

For example, teachers in Chocó, Colombia, are managing crowded classrooms of up to 46 students while contending with poor lighting, inadequate ventilation, extreme heat, and constant outside noise. In Niger, classrooms can average 60 students per teacher, and sometimes lack basic electricity.

Teachers are rarely provided with accessible teaching materials or specialized guidance. As one educator in Colombia noted, they want to give their best to their students, but without adequate training or tools, they are left feeling helpless.

> If a child is deaf and I don't know this, I don't know how to express myself to him, I just keep him there and can't do anything. We need to be trained.
>
> *Teacher from Arauca, Colombia*

When teachers are drowning in these systemic deficits and overwhelming workloads—such as managing up to 60 students in a single classroom without basic electricity, or contending with extreme heat and constant outside noise—they lack the practical pedagogical tools to support each child. Rather than faulting teachers for the realities of a broken system, we must equip and support teachers with the pedagogical tools to enable them to facilitate inclusive classrooms.

4 Safe, non-judgmental spaces to work through misconceptions

Ultimately, teachers working in conflict affected areas face severe structural and resource deficits on a daily basis, impacting all areas of their work from physical learning spaces to the curriculum. Educators are surviving in environments that actively hinder the learning process. For example, teachers in Chocó, Colombia, are managing crowded classrooms of up to 46 students while contending with poor lighting, inadequate ventilation, extreme heat, and constant outside noise. In Niger, classrooms can average 60 students per teacher, and sometimes lack basic electricity.

Teachers frequently express fear that adapting the curriculum or offering flexible pathways means they are "lowering standards," or that they simply lack the time and resources to teach diversely. This anxiety is often deeply rooted in traditional education models, where success is rigidly defined by every student reaching the exact same academic level via the exact same method. When students fail to meet these uniform benchmarks, teachers often feel they are failing in their professional roles.

> I arrived with many doubts and fears because I felt I wasn't doing well when I saw that the children weren't reaching the same level as their classmates.
>
> *Teacher from Colombia*

To become confident inclusive educators, teachers need safe spaces to voice these fears and unlearn this rigid mindset. They must be supported to understand that utilising Universal Design for Learning (UDL) does not mean lowering academic expectations; rather, it operationalises a "whole person" approach that maintains high expectations for all learners based on their individual strengths.

Training helps teachers realize that inclusion is not about everyone reaching the same point, nor about them doing it in the same way, but rather about supporting every child to learn and succeed through the pathway that works best for them. For example, when implementing the training in Colombia, facilitators found it necessary to explicitly clarify that curricular flexibility is already legally permitted within the national education system—alleviating a major source of anxiety for educators who were completely unaware they had this freedom.

To become confident inclusive educators and allies for their students with disabilities, teachers also need:

- Safe and non-judgmental spaces to discuss the challenges they face including children with disabilities their context and their fears about what classroom inclusion means for their workload
- Support to unlearn low expectations and to see the potential in all of their students, both with and without disabilities
- Tools to recognise barriers in the classroom and identify solutions to remove those barriers
- Practice to turn pedagogical theories into practice in low-resource settings; and Support to build a vision where families are critical allies and partners in identifying a child's learning style and support needs

The training methodology delivered in Maradi, Tillabéri, Diffa, and Tahoua regions of Niger and the Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño regions in Colombia was designed to respond to these needs and gaps - developed based on real experiences of teachers in the target regions.

Methodology for Teacher Training

The training was built on interactive, practical methodologies to help teachers shift from theory to everyday classroom application. Importantly, this methodology is not a rigid prescription; it should be adapted to each unique context and timeline, ensuring it remains relevant and effective for the specific needs of local schools and teachers.

The core principles of the training were:

Self-Reflection and Empathy	***Rights-Based***	***Practical and Rooted in Local Realities***
Teachers were guided to discover their own learning styles first, helping them realize that everyone learns differently and, in turn, often tends to teach in the way that is most familiar to them.	Teachers were supported to view education through a rights-based lens, through which they analysed curricular and structural barriers - shifting their pedagogical focus away from a student's "deficit" to the barriers that stand in their way.	The training moved quickly from theory to practice, requiring teachers to design actual lesson plans utilising Universal Design for Learning (UDL) that were adapted to their context.

The training methodology was designed by organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), with guidance from experts in pedagogy, educational rights, and education in emergency contexts.

People embedded in OPDs who had teaching backgrounds themselves were essential for building the methodology and resources, ensuring that the content was rooted in the reality of what teaching in emergency contexts looks like while also harmonising that reality with the right-based perspective.

Through the two-day training, teachers were guided through the following methodology, moving them towards more inclusive practices for education in emergencies:

Making learning personal - seeing themselves in their students

For the training to be rooted in empathy and self-reflection, the training began with teachers looking inward and thinking about their own learning styles - with emphasis on multiple intelligences and where they fall on the spectrum. Teachers took quizzes to identify their own learning styles (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, etc.). By recognizing that they themselves process information differently, teachers easily grasped the concept of Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and understood that they as teachers would teach the same way they learn - which can unintentionally leave some students behind. They learned that recognizing these styles opens the door for every child to learn in the way they need - combining their learning style and preferred “intelligences” - which do not ultimately depend on their diagnoses or lack of. Importantly, the conversation in this opening session also focused on how parents and other caregivers are key partners for identifying learning styles and what works for children in the classroom - introducing the need for partnership with parents and families from this first session established the value of continued collaboration at an early stage, setting the scene for meaningful engagement with families as a key element of inclusive education.

Group problem-solving

Armed with information about different learning styles and what works for different types of learners, the participating teachers worked together to design classroom activities that respond to different intelligences and learning styles. By working in groups, teachers got to see in action how their peers with different learning styles approached classroom activities differently, and the collaboration and validation from peers helped the group build rapport and co-create solutions that all teachers could use in their classrooms.

Turning Theory into Practice

Understanding what universal design looks like in theory, teachers reflected individually and as a group about changes they can make to the way they teach to better align with the principles of universal design. Using sticky notes, each teacher made a private, anonymous written commitment to three specific changes they will make in their teaching upon returning to work. These were displayed on the wall for teachers to be inspired by the commitments of others, and to see how their peers were interpreting what UDL would look like in their own classrooms.

Introducing Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

The teachers took part in different activities to show how people's needs and approaches are different based on their backgrounds to introduce the idea of universal design.

First, teachers completed a fill-in-the-blank story and shared their work to show how differently everyone fills in the blanks based on their background and imagination - an analogy for the diversity of their students. Before discussing education, they also worked in pairs to identify everyday examples of "Universal Design" (e.g. curb cuts, motion-activated doors, rolling suitcases, etc.) to start thinking about how things are designed to be usable by everyone, not just people with disabilities. UDL is the application of this concept to learning.

With that context in mind, teachers were trained on the three core principles of UDL: providing multiple means of engagement (the "why" of learning), representation (the "what"), and action and expression (the "how").

Facilitators emphasized how UDL offers an equal opportunity for all students and is different from just making an isolated "reasonable accommodation".

Collaborative Lesson Planning

Teachers paired up and looked at an existing lesson plan they brought from their own school. Using the discussions they had just had and a series of handouts as resources, teachers adapted their own lesson plans to make them better align with UDL principles.
In Tumaco, Colombia, for instance, teachers collaboratively planned lessons that integrated songs, dances, and rhymes to cater to diverse student characteristics. Teachers got to share their work, and also reviewed sample UDL lesson plans to see other concrete examples of what a successfully revised lesson looks like.

Space for Discussion

Trying the practical application of teaching for different learning styles and working with UDL for the first time creates lots of questions for teachers - and the training wrapped up with space for the teachers to bring their questions and concerns to the group - getting support and additional answers from both facilitators and from their peers.

Post Workshop Evaluation

A post-training evaluation is critical because shifting pedagogical mindsets in emergency contexts cannot be measured by attendance alone. It helps facilitators gauge if teachers have successfully moved away from the medicalised view of disability (which relies on clinical diagnosis) toward understanding Universal Design for Learning, multiple intelligences and learning styles. The evaluation asked teachers to rate whether they have more ideas about how I can implement UDL in their schools and/or classrooms, even during emergencies and/or humanitarian settings. This evaluation activity helps facilitators to understand whether the training successfully bridged the gap between theory and realistic application, and to measure the level of confidence teachers leave with. The anonymous nature of the feedback form means that facilitators will be guided by the honest reflections of teachers when strengthening the training going forward.

Follow Up Support

The training should not be viewed as the end of the intervention. Based on feedback from implementation in Colombia and Niger, teachers need ongoing support to sustain these inclusive practices.

Specifically, teachers shared that they need:

- Ongoing support to effectively create, implement, and monitor individual reasonable adjustment plans for their students who require higher levels of targeted intervention.
- Additional support in managing classroom behavior, as many behavioral issues are linked to contextual factors like poverty, hunger and exposure to conflict, which impact all students, not just those with disabilities.
- Dedicated support to effectively create, implement, and monitor individual reasonable adjustment plans for their students.

Future training must build in these additional support layers to ensure teachers have what they need to apply their new knowledge.

All handouts and slides used and the facilitator's guide are available here as open resources at this link.

Outcomes

The training methodology brought about immediate and profound shifts in teacher attitudes, pedagogical confidence, and daily classroom practices across both countries. By demystifying inclusive education, the training helped educators transition from feeling overwhelmed by classroom diversity to feeling equipped to respond to it.

The training achieved its goals of supporting teachers to:

Gain the confidence to deliver on inclusion

Many teachers entered the training feeling intimidated by the prospect of teaching children with disabilities, often believing they lacked the necessary specialised training or medical knowledge. The training successfully broke down this mindset. Teachers reported losing the fear of having a child with a disability enrolled in their classrooms, realising that they did not need to wait for clinical guidance to start teaching *all* children.

Embed flexibility into the classroom

Teachers also shifted away from the idea that inclusion means every student must reach the exact same goal via the exact same path. As one teacher in Colombia noted: "I arrived with many doubts and fears because I felt I wasn't doing well when I saw that the children weren't reaching the same level as their classmates, but I now understand that it's not about everyone reaching the same point, nor about them doing it in the same way".

Embrace Universal Design for Learning

Rather than feeling they needed highly specialized resources, teachers were empowered to realise they already possessed the tools necessary to foster inclusion. When engaged in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) exercises, teachers demonstrated immense creativity, brainstorming ways to integrate singing, movement, and riddles into their everyday lessons. Teachers reported back on how they immediately put their new skills into action after they returned to their classrooms - for example, by actively applying UDL principles to their classroom evaluations.

One teacher reported offering alternative assessment formats for the first time—such as letting students explain what they learned by creating an image or video rather than relying solely on standardized written tests. The teacher noted that this flexible approach made learning easier and more accessible for all students, not just those with identified disabilities. Through embracing UDL, teachers realised that inclusive education is achievable even in under-resourced settings - as a teacher in Colombia remarked, "I was surprised to realize that small changes in my teaching methods can greatly help everyone learn".

Strengthen relationships with families:

A significant systemic barrier in under-resourced schools is the mutual blame often shared between teachers and parents when a child struggles. Following the training, teachers reported a transformed perspective, viewing families as critical allies rather than adversaries. A teacher in Tahoua, Niger, said: “This training was also a very important opportunity to bridge the gaps between teachers and families and it helped teachers to understand how to teach all children - because in situations of emergencies, these learnings can truly help them. It is important to involve parents in the creation of inclusion in schools, because without their help, we can’t really make it alone. It is them who know their children more than we do.”

Feel prepared to take action

The training fostered a deep sense of personal accountability among the educators. Teachers concluded their training by making private commitments - written anonymously on post-it notes detailing three specific pedagogical changes they would implement upon returning to their classroom to promote Universal Design for Learning. Empowered by the workshops, some teachers took immediate proactive steps to reintegrate students who had previously been pushed out of the education system. For example, a teacher in Tumaco, Colombia, was so motivated by the training that she immediately contacted the mother of a previously rejected girl to say: "Bring her back to my classroom, bring her back". Another teacher boldly accepted a student who had been rejected by a private school due to his support needs, taking personal responsibility for his accommodations and successfully welcoming him into a classroom of 18 other children.

Importantly, this training methodology was not only successful at building skills for individual teachers, it also catalysed systemic change. In Niger, the teacher cohort came together to formulate official recommendations to the Ministry of National Education, urging the generalisation of teacher capacity building on learning styles and multiple intelligences to all regions of the country. They called for the National Education Cluster to formally incorporate these inclusion themes into their emergency management. Similarly, in Colombia, local leaders and educators advocated for these inclusive methodologies to be formally embedded into their schools' Institutional Educational Projects (PEI). This systemic integration would ensure that diverse pedagogical planning becomes a mandatory, standardised practice across the education system rather than relying solely on the goodwill of individual teachers.

Cheat Sheet for Effective Teacher Training on Inclusive Education

This training methodology for teachers in emergency situations was successful because it was contextually relevant, focused on realities in the community, engaging, action-oriented, and met teachers where they were - even when their starting point was not inclusive.

The training approach can be summarised as:

Do's	*Don'ts*
Support teachers to analyse their own learning style	Don't allow teachers to focus on clinical diagnoses
Address the realities of the emergency context	Don't blame teachers for the impacts of a lack of classroom inclusion
Use participatory, practical exercises like role-playing, group lesson planning, and interactive games to demonstrate flexibility	Don't rely solely on theory
Emphasise family-teacher partnerships, helping teachers see parents as allies	Don't promote misconceptions about how families create educational barriers
Instill a sense of ownership for delivering on inclusion	Don't allow "shadow teachers" or third party solutions to be seen as the only answer
Build on teachers' existing knowledge and experience	Overlook contextual challenges

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What works?

Organisations looking to replicate these trainings that help families to become key partners for inclusive education in emergencies should consider these fundamental design elements:

- **Engage Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and Local Leaders:**
  Actively involve OPDs in the training design to ensure it is rooted in lived experiences. OPDs are best positioned to understand the true barriers children and parents face in the classroom. When formal OPDs do not exist in rural protracted crisis settings, identify and elevate local individual leaders with disabilities or community referral points. Additionally, leverage teachers who are themselves family members of persons with disabilities; they serve as powerful, empathetic allies and role models within the school system.

- **Promote peer leadership:**
  Ensure that training is guided by teachers who are strongly linked to OPDs. In Colombia and Niger, facilitators of the teaching training have included family members or persons with disabilities who are part of the umbrella OPD or a national OPD and who themselves have teaching backgrounds Peer-led learning builds trust, reduces fears of the unknown, and validates the educators' real-world experiences while linking them closer to the lived experiences of children with disabilities and their families.

- **Start with Self-reflection:**
  Before introducing new pedagogical concepts, guide teachers to explore their own personal learning styles. When educators internalise that they process information differently than their peers, they more easily grasp the concept of student variability and recognise that diverse teaching methods are necessary, not a luxury.

- **Co-create solutions:**
  Avoid relying solely on theoretical lectures or simply prescribing top-down solutions. Instead, give teachers practical, collaborative spaces to work together to identify barriers and design their solutions. Activities like group lesson planning and curriculum troubleshooting help them translate theory into everyday classroom application using the resources they already have. Give teachers the opportunity to work together to solve problems, don't just tell them solutions, help them create their own.

- **Commit to Continuous Accompaniment:**
  Avoid treating the training as a one off event. To ensure sustainability and long-term learning, plan for continuous follow-up and dedicated support. Teachers need ongoing accompaniment to monitor individual adjustment plans, manage classroom behaviours linked to contextual factors (like poverty and conflict), and maintain the peer teachers and family support networks initiated and strengthened during the training.

For more information about how to replicate these trainings for teachers in emergency contexts, contact Inclusion International at info@inclusion-international.org.

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Annex A

Day 1 Agenda: Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences	
Time	**Session**
9:00 – 9:30	Ice-breaker and introductions • Introduction & Agenda • Learning Objectives
9:30 – 9:40	Reflection Activity - Learning Styles
9:45 – 10:15	Reflection Activity - Quiz to identify your own intelligence and learning style
	Tea/Coffee Break
10:45 – 11:15	Understanding Learning styles • Examples of learning styles: Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic
11:15 – 12:30	Case Studies – Work it out • Group work to try adapting teaching to different learning styles + Discussion in plenary
	Lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Multiple Intelligences theory • Key points
14:30 – 15:30	Multiple Intelligences • Group Work + Discussion in plenary
15:30 – 16:00	Wrap Up & Questions & Answers

Day 2 Agenda: Universal Design for Learning	
Time	**Session**
9:00 – 9:30	Introduction • Learning objectives • Summary of Day 1
9:30 – 10:00	Reflection Activity - Differentiation by task • Individual exercise with fill-in-the-black activity + Discussion in plenary
10:00 – 10:45	Introducing Universal Design • Defining UDL • Pair work - Examples of universal design
Tea/Coffee Break	
11:00 – 12:00	Unpacking UDL • Understanding the 3 principles
12:00 – 12:30	Universal Design for Learning Principles • Looking in the mirror: Individual exercise
Lunch	
13:30 – 14:30	UDL and a system of support for inclusive education • Matching UDL to General Comment 4 principles • Making and reviewing individual commitments
14:30 – 16:30	Revising (own) lesson plans according to UDL principles • Pair work + discussion in plenary
16:30 – 17:00	Wrap Up & Questions & Answers