

Companion Resource to

An Introduction to Inclusive Education in Emergencies: A Learning Tool for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities

Section 1: Understanding Inclusive Education

This handout is a companion piece to the online learning tool An Introduction to Inclusive Education in Emergency. This document presents key takeaways, further reading, and the answer key associated with Section 1: Understanding Inclusive Education. This is the first of a series of 3 resources linked to the online learning tool.

Key Takeaways

Humanitarian actors have a key role to play in fulfilling obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by making inclusive education a priority in emergency and humanitarian contexts, and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) have a key role to play in ensuring humanitarian actors get the advice they need on what real inclusion looks like. This partnership is essential for protecting the rights of children with disabilities, promoting their well-being, and ensuring they have equal opportunities to learn.

What is Inclusive Education in Emergencies?

Inclusive education means that education systems are inclusive of all students with and without disabilities from the beginning.

Inclusive education means all students learn together - this means that "special schools" or separate classrooms and programmes for students with disabilities are not necessary. Children with disabilities should always be in mainstream classrooms with their peers - including in emergency contexts.

Inclusion is one of four ways children with disabilities might interact with schools:

Key Terms:

Exclusion - where children with disabilities are denied access to education in any form, either directly or indirectly.

Segregation - where children with disabilities are isolated in separate learning environments away from peers without disabilities.

Integration - where children with disabilities are put in mainstream classrooms, but without any support or adjustments.

Inclusion - where all students learn together, and inclusive teaching approaches give each learner the support they need.

In many contexts, the word "inclusion" is used to describe education systems that are really examples of segregation or integration - OPDs can support humanitarian actors to recognise exclusion, segregation, integration, and inclusion to ensure the education in emergencies they deliver is truly inclusive.

Obligation to Provide Inclusive Education

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) outlines specific obligations for states and humanitarian actors to promote inclusive education. Article 11 of the CRPD requires states to take measures to prevent and protect persons with disabilities from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Article 24 mandates states to ensure that persons with disabilities have the right to inclusive education at all levels.

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What prevents access to Inclusive Education in Emergencies?

Persons with disabilities face a wide variety of barriers that prevent them access to or progression in education in different humanitarian settings, during and after a crisis.

Barriers to Access	prevent children from getting to or enrolling in school (e.g. lack of transport, or discriminatory enrolment policies)
Barriers to Progression	prevent children from progressing through levels of education
Barriers to Learning	prevent children from learning and achieving (e.g. rigid teaching methods, lack of support)
Physical Barriers	prevent children from accessing spaces or information (e.g. a lack of ramps, or the lack of a sign language interpreter)
Attitudinal Barriers	prevent children from full social inclusion (e.g. stigma or discrimination)
Institutional Barriers	prevent systems from being fully inclusive of all children (e.g. a lack of inclusive policies)
Lack of Resources	prevent students from having the resources they need to participation (e.g. lack of accessible teaching materials)

Understanding the different types of barriers is crucial for identifying and addressing challenges to inclusion in education programmes in emergency contexts. Working in partnership with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) on the ground can help humanitarian organisations recognise barriers and build a plan to remove them.

How does Inclusive Education in Emergencies make a difference?

- ✓ Ensuring access to learning, equipping children with the skills and knowledge they need to rebuild their lives
- ✓ Promoting mental health for children through providing a sense of normalcy, support with the development of coping mechanisms, and building resilience
- ✓ Fostering social inclusion in fragile communities, and preventing further stigma
- ✓ Helping governments “build back better” after crisis, integrating inclusion into systems that arise from crisis

Further Reading

- [Inclusion International’s Position Paper on Inclusive Education](#)
- [International Disability Alliance’s consensus paper on Inclusive Education](#)
- [Unicef’s “Inclusive Education: Understanding Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”](#)
- [The INEE’s “Disability-inclusive education in emergencies: 7 principles for practice”](#)

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Answer Key

The following section covers the questions from the learning tool, with the correct answers to each question.

Which of these sentences best describes the idea of "inclusive education"?

- Inclusive education means that children with disabilities attend special schools to receive specialised instruction.
- Inclusive education means that all children, with or without disabilities, attend their nearest school and receive appropriate support to learn and progress in their school journey with their peers.**
- Inclusive education means that children with disabilities are integrated into mainstream classrooms, but do not receive extra support because they are treated equally to every other student.
- Segregated classes within mainstream schools are a form of inclusive education.

The correct answer is "b". There is only one example of inclusive education on this list - "Inclusive education means that all children, with or without disabilities, attend their nearest school and receive appropriate support to learn and progress in their school journey with their peers." The other options, which mention enrolment in special schools, being in a mainstream classroom without support, or being in a segregated classroom within a mainstream school are all examples of segregation or integration - not inclusion.

Which of the following ideas is NOT one of the components of inclusive education?

- All children (with or without disabilities) attend their nearest school.
- The support that children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms should receive will be dependent on the budgets available to the Department of Education.**
- Children with disabilities receive appropriate support on an equal basis.
- Physical accommodation is provided to ensure accessibility for all students.
- A child-centred curriculum that includes diverse representations and reflects the needs of all children is used.

The correct answer is "b". Access to the support a student needs in the classroom is an inherent part of their right to inclusive education - whether or not the Department of Education in their country thinks support in the classroom is a budget priority does not impact the fact that the student is entitled to that support, and international frameworks do not tie any rights that a child has to include education to available resources. All of the other answers listed are considered essential parts of inclusive education.

Which of the following statements is an example of inclusive school environments?

- Students learn in small, collaborative classes where they work together and support each other.**
- Children with disabilities leave their separate classrooms to join the rest of the students for lunchtime, during breaks, or on playgrounds.
- Students are expected to compete with each other to achieve academic success.

The correct answer is "a". In an inclusive environment, students learn together in small, collaborative classes where they work together and support each other. The other two answers about competition and time spent with peer are not examples of an inclusive school environment.

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Which of the following is NOT an action that an inclusive school might take?

- Promoting a culture of inclusion that values diversity and fosters a peaceful and fair learning environment.
- Providing high-quality education is provided to all students, regardless of their abilities.
- Hiring more special education teachers to be able to expand the number of classrooms for children with disabilities.

The correct answer is "c". Hiring more special education teachers to expand segregated classrooms is not in line with the principles of being an inclusive school. The other two answers on this list are both actions that inclusive schools take.

A child with a disability attends their local school with other children, but is placed in a separate classroom just for children with disabilities. What is this an example of?

Inclusion | Integration | Segregation | Exclusion

This is an example of segregation. When children attend mainstream school but are placed in separate classes just for children with disabilities, this is segregation. It doesn't matter if the bigger school includes all children, if the child with a disability spends all or part of the time of the school day separated with only other children with disabilities, this is segregation.

A child with intellectual disabilities attends a mainstream school where children with and without disabilities study together in the same classroom. They are treated just like every other child in the classroom - they do not receive any different treatment or have any adjustments that would make their learning different from the other students. What is this an example of?

Inclusion | Integration | Segregation | Exclusion

This is an example of integration. It might sound like inclusion because the student is getting "equal" treatment, but inclusive education isn't about every student being equal, it is about every student getting what they need to learn and succeed. Children with disabilities have a right to differentiated instruction that is tailored to their individual learning style and pace. If they are in a classroom without these adaptations, they are just being integrated, not included.

Parents of a child with a disability approach their local school to register their child with a disability to attend. The head of the school tells them that they are not able to accept a child with a disability at this time because they do not have the funding for their support. What is this an example of?

Inclusion | Integration | Segregation | Exclusion

Actively denying access or allowing barriers for the child not to be able to enrol in the school means the child is being excluded. It doesn't matter what the reason given is - the school could say the denial is because of a policy, because of a lack of funding, because their teachers don't have the skills, or other reasons. No matter what arguments they make to explain why they are denying enrolment, this is exclusion. Exclusion is a violation of the right to inclusive education.

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A child with a disability is registered to attend their local neighbourhood school. They are in a mainstream classroom, but they are unable to access or participate in school activities due to physical barriers or lack of support. What is this an example of?

Inclusion | **Integration** | Segregation | Exclusion

This is an example of integration. Even though the student might be included with good support and adjustments in the classroom, school is not only about what happens in the classroom. Not being able to participate in extracurricular activities alongside their peers without disabilities because of barriers in place or a lack of support means the student is not fully included at school.

A child with a disability is enrolled in a special school designed exclusively for children with disabilities. It takes into account their unique needs, gives each child an individual plan, and gives them adjustments to help them learn. What is this an example of?

Inclusion | Integration | **Segregation** | Exclusion

This is an example of segregation. When children with disabilities are separated from other children, this is segregation. They might be called "special schools," "segregated schools," or other names, but it is always segregation. Sometimes special schools might argue that they can offer the best education to children with disabilities, and that they can deliver support and learning to children with disabilities they can't get in a mainstream classroom. This isn't true - mainstream schools are capable of delivering fully inclusive education, and the research shows that having children with disabilities being included in mainstream classrooms is better for everyone in the class. Segregated schools and classes are always a violation of the right to inclusive education.

A child with a disability attends a school with other children with and without disabilities. They receive appropriate support to participate fully in class activities. What is this an example of?

Inclusion | Integration | Segregation | Exclusion

This is an example of inclusion. When a child with a disability is included in a mainstream school and classroom and gets the support they need both in the classroom and to participate in other activities at the school, they are being fully included. This level of inclusion is the right of all children with disabilities. For more information about the difference between inclusion, integration, segregation, and exclusion, you can consult [Inclusion International's worksheet on inclusion, integration, segregation, and exclusion](#).

A young girl lives in a refugee camp after fleeing a conflict. Despite her eagerness to learn, she cannot attend school because the nearest one is destroyed and there are no plans for reconstruction.

Barrier to access | Barrier to progression | Barrier to learning | Physical barrier | Attitudinal barrier | **Institutional barrier** | Lack of resources

The girl is facing an access barrier preventing her from going to school - there is no school for her to attend. She is also facing an institutional barrier, because there is no action from the government to re-build the school and no political will to fix the issue.

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A boy with a physical disability is enrolled in a local school. However, the school building lacks ramps and accessible restrooms, making it difficult for him to participate fully in classes.

Barrier to access | Barrier to progression | Barrier to learning | Physical barrier | Attitudinal barrier | Institutional barrier | Lack of resources

The boy is facing a physical barrier that prevents him from moving easily around the school.

This could also be considered a barrier to access, if the inaccessibility is preventing him from getting into the school at all.

A girl with intellectual disability is attending school but struggles to keep up with her classmates. The teachers use traditional teaching methods that do not accommodate her learning style, and she feels isolated and discouraged.

Barrier to access | Barrier to progression | Barrier to learning | Physical barrier | Attitudinal barrier | Institutional barrier | Lack of resources

The girl is facing a barrier to learning, because the way she is being taught does not make it possible for her to learn and achieve. This also means it is creating a barrier to progression for her - if she is not learning, she will not be able to progress in her levels of education.

A boy, who is from a marginalised community, is enrolled in a school but faces discrimination from his classmates and teachers. They make fun of his background and exclude him from social activities.

Barrier to access | Barrier to progression | Barrier to learning | Physical barrier | Attitudinal barrier | Institutional barrier | Lack of resources

This is an example of an attitudinal barrier. In this case, the attitudes of the others in the school are what is preventing the boy from being included.

A girl who is blind is attending school but does not have access to specialised teaching materials or resources that would support her learning needs.

Barrier to access | Barrier to progression | Barrier to learning | Physical barrier | Attitudinal barrier | Institutional barrier | Lack of resources

There is a lack of resources that is impacting her learning. There also may be an institutional barrier here - if the school does not have resources for students with disabilities because of a lack of policies on inclusion, or a lack of commitment to inclusive practices.

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A young boy who has a hearing impairment goes back to school after the COVID pandemic and it is now compulsory to wear a face mask. When teachers speak during classes, they wear masks making it difficult to lip read even though the student is seated in the first row.

Barrier to access | Barrier to progression | Barrier to learning | **Physical barrier** | Attitudinal barrier | Institutional barrier | Lack of resources

This is an example of a physical barrier. Communication barriers also fall under the category of physical barriers. In this case, there is a communication barrier that is impacting the ability of the student to get information and learn.

If you received this document from a colleague and want to test your own knowledge of inclusive education in emergencies, the tool and its accompanying resources are available to access for free online. Scan the QR code to access **An Introduction to Inclusive Education in Emergencies: A Learning Tool for Organisations of Persons with Disabilities.**

