

Inclusive Education Task Group



FAO: Beth King – Director for Education, Aleksandra Posarac – Team Leader (Disability & Development)

Cc: Carolyn Reynolds – Senior Communications Adviser, Christine Horansky – Education Communications Specialist

30 July 2012

Dear Ms King and Ms Posarac,

We are writing to you as a network of 25 international NGOs¹ supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development efforts in over 100 countries. The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) promotes inclusive development, i.e. respecting the full human rights of every person, acknowledging diversity, eradicating poverty and ensuring that all people are fully included and can actively participate in development processes.

There is strong evidence that disability is a major issue for the education sector. Being disabled more than doubles the chance of never enrolling in school in some countries; it is often a more significant factor when it comes to exclusion from education than gender or geographical location.² Moreover, there is a clear relationship between poverty, disability and access to education. For example, having a parent with disabilities who is poor increases the likelihood of seven to sixteen year olds never having been to school by 25% in the Philippines and 13% in Uganda.³

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities commits State Parties to ensure that 'persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and

¹ A full list of IDDC members may be found at the end of this letter.

² Disability, Poverty, and Schooling in Developing Countries: Results from 14 Household Surveys, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/280658-1239044853210/5995073-1246917324202/Disability_Poverty_and_Schooling_in_Developing_Countries.pdf.

³ EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-internationalagenda/efareport/reports/2010-marginalization/>.

secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live'.⁴ In 2010, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed the importance of engaging with disability by '...developing and operationalising an inclusive education and defining targeted, proactive strategies, policies and programmes, including cross-sectoral approaches, to promote accessibility and inclusion'.⁵

The IDDC has some serious concerns and concrete suggestions regarding the international community's commitment to addressing the needs of the most marginalised children, including children with disabilities as stated in MDG 2 on universal primary education.

In particular we would like to draw your attention to some gaps which the World Bank could address:

- The World Bank successfully partnered with the World Health Organisation to produce the important *World Report on Disability*, highlighting the exclusion of children with disability from education at all levels, which IDDC welcomed strongly. However, the Bank's 10-year education strategy, *Learning for All*, does not adequately address disability.
- When the strategy does refer to disability, there is not adequate attention paid to the barriers children with disabilities face; they are treated instead as one of many 'disadvantaged groups'. Without adequate analysis of the situation of children with disabilities and their exclusion, there is a danger that equity and inclusion of children with disabilities will not take place in education programmes.

We also note that the **IEG Annual Report 2011** identifies education as one of three 'sectors with the lowest proportion of satisfactory projects'.

In view of this, IDDC would like to point out opportunities ahead for a more enhanced approach with regard to inclusive education following the findings of the World Report:

- Now is a perfect time for international organisations such as the World Bank, in view of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their role in supporting States Parties to deliver on their duties, to **revise strategic documents to prioritise disability** in a manner that is rigorous, coherent and promotes a joined-up approach to tackling marginalisation more

⁴ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24(2)(b).

⁵ Keeping the promise: United to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Paragraph 71(d).

broadly. This will include working with developing country partners, donors and other stakeholders to: develop strong targets for including children with disabilities in education; dedicate adequate financing to achieving these targets; and report on progress in a transparent manner. Using the **Equity and Inclusion in Education guide**⁶ developed by the Global Partnership for Education and United Nations could be a useful way for ensuring that disability (and other issues of marginalisation) are addressed in an effective and holistic way in both policy and programme initiatives.

- On the question of financing, we have noted the World Bank's pledge (originally made in 2010 and since repeated) to provide an additional US\$750 million (in IDA support) for basic education by 2015. **Dedicating the majority of this financing will ensure that the hardest to reach children – including children with disabilities – can access a quality education.** Moreover, we strongly encourage guaranteeing that this additional financing relates to a reasonable baseline figure and is provided in the form of grants and not loans.

Several IDDC members are also members of the **Global Campaign for Education (GCE)**. GCE Norway and GCE UK met with World Bank officials in October 2011 and May 2012, respectively. In these meetings the Bank recognised that it could do a lot more on disability.

IDDC stands ready to advise and assist in any way the World Bank would find useful to make this happen.

We would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with you on the points raised and look forward to hearing your response on which actions you are planning to take up in relation to inclusive education.

Yours sincerely



Catherine Naughton
IDDC Chair

⁶ Equity and Inclusion in Education guide: http://www.educationfasttrack.org/media/library/Themes/vulnerable-groups/Equity_and_Inclusion_Guide_First_Edition_April_2010.pdf.

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Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau (AIFO)

The Atlas Alliance

CBM

Disabled Peoples Organisations - Denmark (DPOD)

Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development (DCDD)

EducAid

EU-CORD

Finnish Disabled People's International Development Association (FIDIDA)

Handicap International Federation

International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP)

Leonard Cheshire Disability

The Leprosy Mission International

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

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Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD)

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Platform Disability and Development Cooperation (PHOS)

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Save the Children UK

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Swedish Organisations of Persons with disabilities International Development Cooperation Association (Shia)

World Vision UK

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