

**Justification:
to support the inclusion of a disability
perspective in the Education Sector**



Every child has the right to a good quality, free education ([UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)¹). Traditionally, children with disabilities and those with other special educational needs have experienced exclusion from education. These children are oftentimes destined to a life of poverty. The fact that they are kept at home can also be a drain on family resources leading to increasing poverty. There are many barriers contributing to the exclusion of children with disabilities from education: attitudes (lack of belief in their ability to learn, etc), environmental barriers (school or latrines not accessible, teachers not trained or supported, appropriate materials and equipment not available), legal (their right to education may not be guaranteed in their country), and resources (inadequate investment) ([EC Guidance Note on Disability and Development 2004](#)). Following are some clear justifications for including a disability perspective in the education sector from statistical, economic, legal standpoints

NOTE: this manual is not promoting a particular form of education for children with disabilities, but rather that where the EC is supporting an education sector, project or programme that measures are taken to ensure that every child with disability can exercise their right to good quality education. If an education system does not have a strategy for ensuring children with disabilities will have access to education, children with disabilities will be excluded; this constitutes an exclusion of one third of out of school children² (UNESCO, 2007). In addition tot this, Education For All is not just a question of ensuring that children with disabilities are **present** in school but also that **they participate and achieve**. (UNESCO, EFA, 2007)³

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| Statistical | The Education for All, Global Monitoring Report (2007) ⁴ estimates that one third of the worlds 77 million out of school are children with disabilities. The EC is committed to the achievement of the MDGs; MDG II, universal primary education (UPE) includes ALL children. In order to meet the target of UPE by 2015 measures need to be taken to ensure that the huge number of children with disabilities currently excluded need to be included in school. |
| Economic | Lack of access to education reduces opportunities for full inclusion in the social, cultural and economic life of the community, reduces chances of employment and leads to further poverty ⁵ . While investment is needed to include children with disabilities adequately in educational systems, the net benefits far outweigh |

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

² UNESCO EFA GMR 2007, p88, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001477/147794E.pdf>

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⁴ UNESCO EFA GMR 2007, p88, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001477/147794E.pdf>

⁵ DFID: Disability, Poverty and Development. 2000. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/disability.pdf>

⁶ The World Bank: Education Poverty and disability in developing countries.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/280658->

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| | the costs in terms of lifetime productivity versus the risk of dependence on family/ social welfare ⁶ . |
| Legal | <p>The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed and ratified by all member states of the EU, as well as all other member states except the USA and Somalia, enshrines the right of all children to education (Article 28) and specifically mentions non-discrimination on the basis of disability (Article 2). Article 23, which focuses on children with disabilities, has provision for “international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of ...education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.”</p> <p>Article 3, Clause 5 of the World Declaration on Education for All states: “The learning needs of children with disabilities demand special attention. Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system⁷.”</p> <p>The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) establishes the right to education for children with disabilities (Article 24), and the role of International Cooperation in helping governments in achieving this (Article 32).</p> <p>The UNCRPD also highlights the right of children with disabilities to learn life, social and development skills and calls on State Parties to take appropriate measures including facilitating the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Learning of Braille, alternative script, orientation, mobility skills, alternative forms of communication○ Learning of sign language and promoting of linguistic identity of the deaf community |

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⁷ UNESCO World Declaration on Education for All 1990, Article 3, Clause 5,
http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/jomtjen_declaration.shtml