



Inclusive Futures
Promoting disability inclusion



Support Mainstreaming Inclusion so all can Learn Equally (SMILE)

Compendium

Kaduna State, Nigeria
2021-2023

Supported by



Contents

Executive summary	4	5.0 Strategies to ensure equitable access to quality education	29
Authors	5	5.1 Support for the review of National Policy on Inclusive Education	31
SMILE compendium acronyms	7	5.2 Review of the Kaduna State Inclusive Education policy	32
1.0 A need for inclusive education	9	5.3 Kaduna State Disability Law review	32
2.0 The birth of SMILE	10	5.4 Introduction of inclusion courses into the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) curriculum	33
2.1 Building the foundations	12	6.0 Monitoring, evaluation and learning	34
2.2 The planning process	14	6.1 Adapting to the challenges of implementing SMILE	35
2.3 Inclusive design recommendations	16	6.2 Development of a wellbeing and inclusion checklist	36
2.4 Setting goals and objectives	17	7.0 Conclusion	41
3.0 The launch of SMILE	18	8.0 Reflections of SMILE steering committee members	42
3.1 Reactions to the launch	18	9.0 Acknowledgements: Thank you to everyone involved!	47
3.2 School visits after the launch	19	10.0 Annex	49
4.0 The creation of SMILE tools	20		
4.1 Child Functioning Module	20		
4.2 Inclusive education and safeguarding training manuals	23		
4.3 SBMC manual and guide	24		
4.4 Inclusive school assessment tool manual	25		
4.5 The School Improvement Planning manual	26		
4.6 Remote learning materials	26		
4.7 Support guide for parents of children with disabilities	27		
4.8 Inclusive School Children's Club	28		



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Executive summary: leaving no child behind



Dr Sunday Isiyaku
Country Director
Sightsavers Nigeria
and Ghana

“The aim was to make schools more inclusive and ensure that no Nigerian child is left behind in accessing quality education in their own community.”

The SMILE project was part of the Inclusive Futures programme, a Sightsavers-led initiative funded by UK Aid. Inclusive Futures aims to improve the wellbeing and inclusion of people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries. It focuses on creating development programmes in line with the UNCRPD principles and promotes disability inclusion in all development initiatives.

Nigeria faces an education crisis, with a high number of out-of-school children, particularly in the northern states. Barriers such as inaccessible schools, cultural beliefs, insufficient teachers and a rigid curriculum contribute to low enrolment and retention rates, especially for girls and children with disabilities. In Kaduna State, the aim of SMILE was to ensure quality and accessible inclusive education, leaving no child behind. Eight public primary schools in Jema'a LGA served as pilot schools for the project.

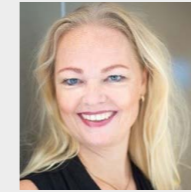
The objective was to gather evidence on effective inclusive education practices that could inform the education sector at state and federal levels in Nigeria. This would enable them to strengthen existing government structures and ultimately make the education system more inclusive and disability friendly. The project took a child-centred and rights-based approach, aligning with the principles of the UNCRC and UNCRPD.

It acknowledged that every child has the right to education and personal development. It also emphasised the importance of removing barriers and ensuring successful participation for all children, including children with disabilities. In collaboration with the Kaduna State educational sector, SMILE provided technical support to enhance the inclusive education system.

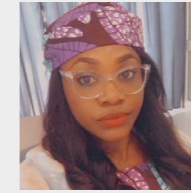
SMILE adopted a participatory and inclusive approach, involving government, development partners, CSOs, NGOs and stakeholders at federal, state and local levels. The aim was to make schools inclusive for children with disabilities and ensure that no Nigerian child is left behind in accessing quality education.

By gathering evidence, advocating for policy changes and implementing inclusive education practices, SMILE created a sustainable and scalable model with interventions that can be replicated at scale. This will help improve the enrolment, retention and learning outcomes of all learners, especially children with disabilities, and support the government in making its education system more inclusive.

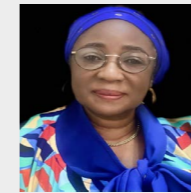
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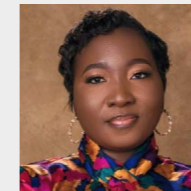
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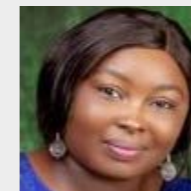
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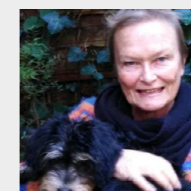
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Creating art unites and brings joy.

SMILE compendium acronyms

CFM	Child Functioning Module
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAPWDA	Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Prohibition Act
DID	Disability Inclusive Development
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
ISCC	Inclusive School Children’s Club
LGA	Local Government Area
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
KSDA	Kaduna State Disability Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
NCCE	National Commission for Colleges of Education
NTI	National Teacher Institute
NCE	Nigerian Certificate of Education
OPD	Organisation of people with disabilities
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SMILE	Support Mainstreaming Inclusion so all can Learn Equally
TAF Africa	The Albino Foundation Africa
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



A child drawing flowers during Children's Day at a school in Kaduna State.

1.0 A need for inclusive education

The Nigerian Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (2019) serves as the cornerstone for meeting the obligations outlined by UNCRPD, particularly in education and inclusion. There are significant hurdles to overcome to ensure inclusive education practices in Nigeria.

Learners with disabilities often experience exclusion within classrooms and schools, primarily due to a lack of capacity among teachers and administrators to create a supportive learning environment. Additionally, a considerable number of children with disabilities are denied access to education altogether. Statistics reveal that a substantial percentage of children not in school have disabilities that affect their regular attendance, participation, learning and completion of basic education.

The exclusion of people with disabilities from learning deprives them of their basic rights and this impacts their lives, families and broader society. By denying them the opportunity to contribute socially and economically, we hinder overall societal progress. In 2019, as part of the DID programme, Sightsavers received funding to initiate a comprehensive, inclusive, participatory design process to develop an innovative education project with key stakeholders. This led to the SMILE project, which was launched in 2021.

SMILE was designed to address the challenges of physical, social and economic exclusion faced by people with disabilities in accessing and completing basic education. A thorough situation analysis was conducted

during the design phase. SMILE operated under a well-defined 'Theory of Change' framework to achieve a long-term vision of enhancing access to quality education.

The primary objective of the project was to ensure children with disabilities receive quality education in their local community. It also aimed to improve the overall wellbeing of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

This compendium contains a collection of learnings and documentations about the project. It highlights the approach and shares various events, activities and success stories when promoting mainstreaming inclusive education in selected primary schools at Jema'a LGA in Kaduna. These were developed and gathered from January 2021 until September 2023.

You will read about the learnings, achievements and challenges. You'll also discover the benefits of partnerships and engagement with relevant government partners, OPDs and stakeholders to provide a locally driven, scalable and sustainable model of inclusion education.

2.0 The birth of SMILE

Disability inclusion is a neglected, under-prioritised issue in international development. There is a lack of evidence around what works in practice to deliver inclusion. This contributes to the difficulties in building effective programmes. For too long, policies have been designed without consultation with people with disabilities, leaving implementation faltering or failing to meet expectations. This is what we wanted to change.

As recommended by the UNCRPD principle ‘nothing about us, without us’, true inclusion in education requires structural, coordinated engagement from OPDs to facilitate joint decision-making. This will ensure the needs of learners with disabilities are addressed more effectively.

Following this recommendation, Sightsavers facilitated a 15-month creative, participatory planning process to develop a new inclusive education project in Nigeria, designed with and for people with disabilities.

We established a steering committee with 20 key stakeholders from federal, state and local government and the OPD community. The aim was to create a small-scale, community-driven, inclusive education innovation to identify what works. This can then be used to help the Nigerian government improve its approach to inclusive education.

After an intensive process of research, analysis, consultation, reflection and negotiation, SMILE in Kaduna State was born. The aim of the project was to promote a new way of thinking about inclusive education in Nigeria.

The three focus areas of the project were:

- ▶▶ **To support the government of Nigeria in addressing equity and inclusion.**
- ▶▶ **To develop an innovative approach in Kaduna State to promote inclusive education in support of national and state policy frameworks.**
- ▶▶ **To build upon existing structures and initiatives of inclusive education and to demonstrate a participatory, inclusive approach.**



A teacher provides support to a learner after receiving SMILE inclusive teacher training.

2.1 Building the foundations

The following key principles provided the foundation for the project design and guided the identification of suitable approaches and activities to demonstrate innovative and inclusive education practices.

1 System strengthening

The project used a system-strengthening approach to equip school leaders, SBMCs and PTAs with the understanding, skills and tools necessary to establish effective disability inclusion approaches in mainstream schools.

2 Capacity-building

The project invested in capacity-building and professional development of teachers, school staff and key stakeholders. This was to ensure sustainability and to inform future policy and programme decisions through evidence generated in the project.

3 Community driven

The SMILE team facilitated a locally driven and decentralised process for developing a community-based model of disability-inclusive education with stronger links between schools and the community. This includes the establishment of local support networks (various stakeholders and the OPD community) for parents of children with disabilities.

4 Child participation

Child participation strategies provide children with and without disabilities with meaningful, accessible, non-exploitative and enjoyable opportunities to express their views about inclusion and educational provision at their schools.

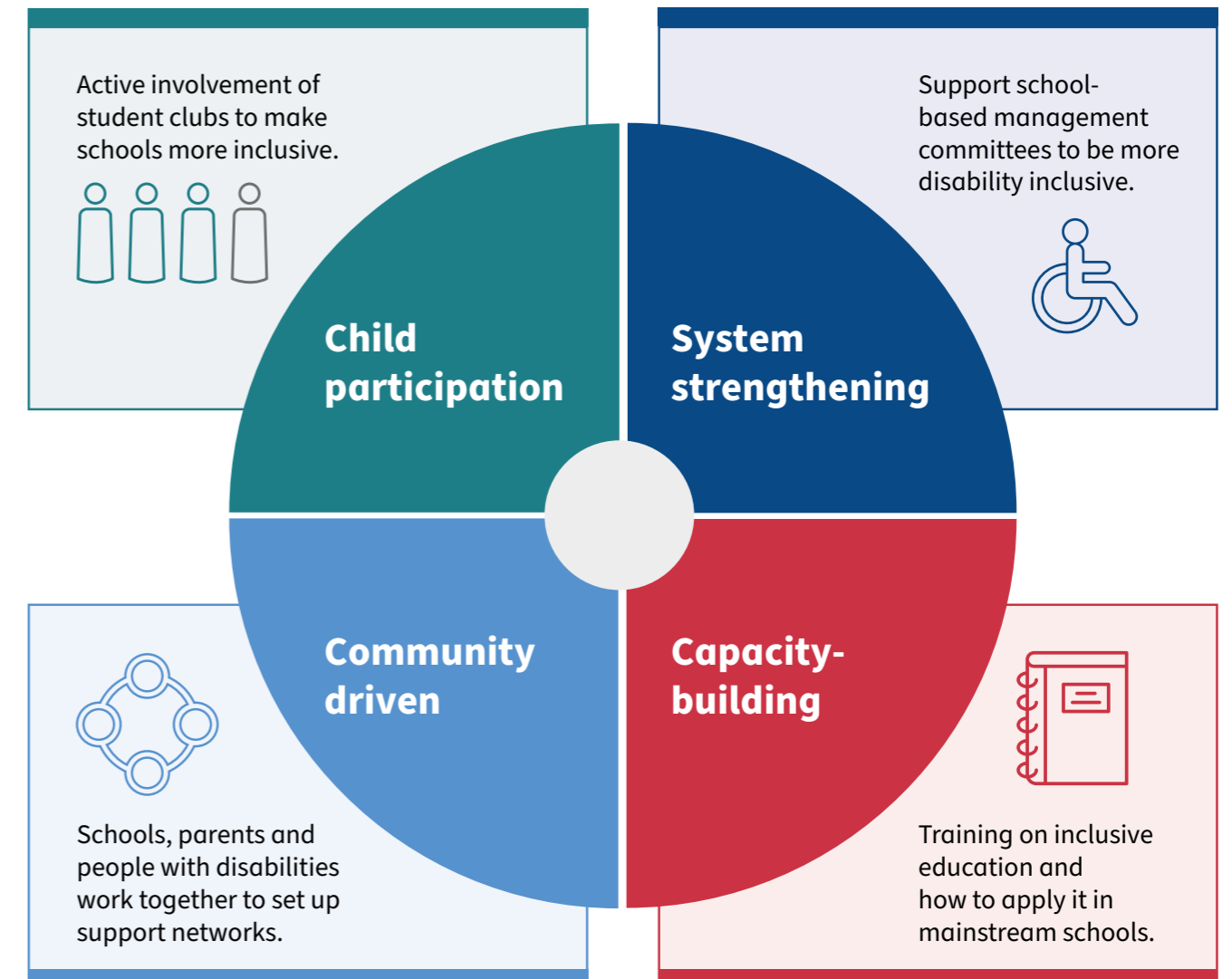
The strategies will provide them with opportunities to work together on making their schools more inclusive, with the aim of improving the attendance and wellbeing of children with disabilities. Promoting inclusion at school level will allow learners to embrace diversity, which ultimately supports building inclusive societies.

The SMILE project

A **local** project to promote inclusive education through a holistic approach with **active engagement** of a variety of **stakeholders**.

Implemented through a project steering committee made up of:

- Government employees
- OPD members
- Consortium (Sightsavers and IDS)



2.2 The planning process

Reflecting on the participatory project design process, participants said that they perceived the planning process to be inclusive, accessible and participatory. Stakeholders reported that they had been continuously engaged, their suggestions had influenced the design, and they had been part of decision-making. This resulted in strong ownership within the government as well as the OPD community.

Comments on the design process:

“SMILE is a Nigerian project for Nigerians. All steering committee members are given the opportunity to participate, suggest and implement all the strategies that have been agreed together. Project partners are empowered to implement their ideas by themselves to ensure it is relevant for the specific local context. We are happy with this strategy; it has worked, and we call on others to learn from it.”

Jake Epelle, former chairman of the SMILE steering committee, CEO/founder of The Albino Foundation Africa and convener of Disability Inclusion Nigeria.

“I advised on how to organise this project for children with disabilities. We attended workshops, had a series of meetings and selected the pilot schools together. The project will allow us to work with communities to show them that disability has ability in it. Disability is not the end of a life; we want them to know that there is hope. They can learn, become good citizens and be self-reliant. So, we are ready to put in our best effort to support this project and make it successful.”

Josephine Paul Danbo, inclusive education officer, Jema'a LGA.

“The participatory design process gave a sense of ownership to all the participants. By facilitating awareness and advocacy activities, it increased buy-in from key stakeholders and allowed more space for knowledge sharing. This resulted in a project design that is in accordance with the country’s education context, policy environment and institutional and stakeholder strengths to support inclusive education.”

Dr Ndubuisi Iroham, representative of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council.

“I believe the SMILE approach works because it has people with disabilities at its heart. I hope this approach will be adopted for all future intervention for people with disabilities.”

Monday Okwoli, former programme manager, Hope for the Handicapped Persons Foundation.



This father enrolled his son after learning that the school welcomed children with disabilities.

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2.3 Inclusive design recommendations

Based on the learnings from the SMILE development phase, key recommendations for a participatory, inclusive project design were identified.

The recommendations were to:



Ensure the preconditions to inclusion are met (including accessibility of content, communications and collaborative spaces, and diversity and representation of stakeholders).



Establish desired levels of participation at the start of each project.



Undertake participatory stakeholder mapping and a power analysis.



Build stakeholders' knowledge of the subject area before commencement of design work.



Agree on appropriate methods to ensure meaningful, accessible and inclusive consultation with partners at the commencement of the project.



Facilitate varied methods of engagement.

These recommendations have also guided the implementation of SMILE and resulted in a committed and effective project steering committee. The committee demonstrated tremendous ownership and engagement

throughout the entire project development and implementation period. This led to the achievements that are shared with you in this compendium.

2.4 Setting goals and objectives

The project began with a series of engaging activities conducted at various locations. These involved the active involvement of individuals and organisations to raise awareness of SMILE within communities and the education sector.

One significant milestone in this journey was a workshop held on 19 February 2021. A wide range of representatives from government and civil society participated in the event. These included key people from the Federal Ministry of Education, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, State Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education Board, Kaduna State Disability Affairs, Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, National Commission

for Colleges of Education, National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna State College of Education, Jema'a LGEA, National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, OPDs, CSOs and the project team from Sightsavers and IDS.

The outcome of the workshop showcased the commitment and collaborative spirit towards the project's goals and objectives.

The workshop achievements included:

- The formation of a steering committee to drive the implementation of the project
- Appointment of a steering committee chairman and assistant chairman from the OPD community and government to provide them the opportunity to lead the initiative
- A draft of an advocacy activity plan, outlining strategic actions to be undertaken throughout the project
- An agreement to develop inclusive education training manuals for teachers and SBMCs of participating schools and communities
- The establishment of clear roles and responsibilities of the steering committee
- Comprehensive discussions about the monitoring, evaluation and learning approach adopted for SMILE



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The steering committee had a series of meetings to discuss the project's objectives.

3.0 The launch of SMILE

Launching SMILE in the communities where it was set to be piloted helped gain acceptance and support for the initiative. The benefits and impact it aimed to have on the community were witnessed by parents, teachers, community leaders and relevant stakeholders.

It launched in Jema'a LGA on 12-15 April 2019. The launch brought together various attendees, including headteachers from all eight intervention schools, chairmen and members of SBMCs, the LGEA education secretary, the inclusive education desk officer, department heads, community leaders, parents of children with disabilities, participating OPDs and the Sightsavers project team.

The occasion also served as a platform for raising awareness about every child's right to education, irrespective of their disability, gender or family background. The importance and benefits of inclusive education and the vital role of parental and community support for children with disabilities were demonstrated by participating OPDs and the SMILE team.

3.1 Reactions to the launch

The launch received a warm and enthusiastic reception. It resonated with the attendees, who expressed their support and appreciation with resounding applause and accolades. The SBMCs pledged their steadfast commitment to the project and highlighted their dedication to make it succeed. Testimonials from the participants further reinforced the positive impact and potential of SMILE, creating an atmosphere of inspiration and motivation for all involved.

“I am very pleased and grateful to Sightsavers for the wonderful initiative to support access to education for children with disabilities. So many of our children in this community are left without schooling because of disability and thinking they are useless. But seeing and listening to these people with disabilities today, and who they are and all they have attained, I am enlightened and encouraged to support children with disabilities access education.”

3.2 School visits after the launch

Following the launch of the project, the SMILE team and representatives from OPDs visited each of the pilot schools. These visits were to facilitate meaningful interactions with head teachers and enrolled children with disabilities and their parents. There was a specific focus on promoting the concept of inclusive education in the communities to encourage families with children with disabilities not in school to enrol them.

At one of the pilot schools, 186 parents of children with disabilities from the eight communities where the participating schools are situated attended the interaction. The parents exhibited high levels of enthusiasm and demonstrated a keen willingness to learn and actively engage in the project. The visit served as an important platform for sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas and fostering a collaborative environment between the SMILE team and parents of children with disabilities.

The SMILE team created a sense of empowerment and ownership among the parents by directly involving them in the

project's implementation. This approach bolstered their confidence and reinforced the notion that inclusive education is a shared responsibility and a pathway to better educational opportunities for their children.

The visit to the pilot schools and the positive response from the parents emphasised the community's support and willingness to actively participate in the project. It paved the way for continued collaboration and cooperation, ensuring that the project's objectives are effectively realised and that children with disabilities receive the inclusive education they deserve.



A teacher puts SMILE training into practice by supporting one of his pupils during a lesson.

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4.0 The creation of SMILE tools

A wide range of inclusive education tools, guidelines and training manuals were developed to help implement SMILE. They will be discussed in this chapter and the complete list of resources is included in Annex 1.

4.1 Child Functioning Module

SMILE implemented the Child Functioning Module as a crucial tool to identify possible functional difficulty that may impact the performance of learners. Recognising the indispensable role of inclusive education in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), the steering committee acknowledged the critical importance of accurate data on children with disabilities to create a truly inclusive education system. Without this information, we would not be able to fully understand the specific needs of individual students and provide tailored support to ensure they can participate successfully.

After a comprehensive analysis of the education barriers in Nigeria, it was clear that a deeper understanding of each child's individual learning needs was essential for their success.

Assessment tools were not available and used in a systematic way. To address this, SMILE piloted the use of the Child Functioning Module¹ during school enrolment.

All teachers and school administration from the eight pilot schools were trained in the use of the Child Functioning Module. They subsequently used the tool on learners in primary classes 2-6 to identify and determine functional difficulties and specific learning needs.

Translated into Hausa specifically for the project, the module includes a questionnaire, administered by teachers and completed by parents or guardians. It identifies any functional difficulties that could impede a child's learning experience.

The module focused on areas such as seeing, hearing, mobility, self-care, fine motor skills, communication and information processing. It aimed to identify challenges without providing medical diagnoses or conditions. In cases where a child was identified with a functional difficulty, the information was shared with their parent or caregiver, along with recommendations for further medical assessment.

SMILE, in close collaboration with OPD partners, produced a support guide for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities.

This guide includes a directory of services to assist parents in accessing follow-up support. It fosters a sense of community with shared resources to ensure parents are supported in guiding the education journey of their child.



Upon registration for enrolment, a head teacher uses the Child Functioning Module while interviewing a mother to identify possible areas of functional difficulty.

Feedback from teachers and parents

Among the 671 newly enrolled students in the eight piloted schools, teachers identified 166 children with additional support needs and recommended educational interventions and medical referrals to parents. The feedback from teachers regarding the use of the Child Functioning Module was overwhelmingly positive. They found it to be a practical tool for gaining a better understanding of each child's requirements and helped them adapt their teaching methods and classroom environment accordingly.

A teacher who received training on the Child Functioning Module expressed the value of this initiative:

“The Child Functioning Module has given me a guide on how to handle children with disabilities. Those who used to think people with disabilities have no impact in society are beginning to see that they have impact. Once enrolled, they have access to knowledge just like other children.”

Parents themselves shared the positive impact of SMILE, noting that it has motivated them to enrol their children in the pilot schools.

One parent shared their experience:

“The school-based management committees came to our community, and it was through them I knew I could enrol my child in school. I became more convinced that my child could do well when I started attending sensitisations led by people with disabilities. There was one who came and said she's a lawyer. I was impressed. Seeing the woman, I made up my mind that my daughter will go to school and become like her.”

¹ The Child Functioning module is a tool designed by the Washington Group and UNICEF to better identify children with functional difficulties/disabilities.

Importance of identifying functional difficulties

SMILE demonstrated the crucial role of early identification of functional difficulties to transform the lives of children with disabilities.

Using the Child Functioning Module and tailoring teaching accordingly, schools have created enriching environments that promote the development, inclusion and active participation of children with disabilities from an early age.

SMILE has strengthened the local education system and positioned it as a noteworthy inclusive education model, garnering recognition from the Nigerian government.

A parent shared their inspiring experience, stating:

“I believed my child could do well when I started attending sessions led by people with disabilities.”

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A SMILE-trained teacher provides individual guidance to a child with a disability.

4.2 Inclusive education and safeguarding training manuals

As part of the project's system strengthening strategy, a collaboration with the Nigerian Teachers' Institute (NTI) was established to jointly develop, publish and implement an inclusive education training for primary school teachers.

A comprehensive training manual and facilitator guide on inclusive education were developed to empower teachers and school administrators in the participating schools.

We wanted to equip them with the knowledge and understanding of inclusive education practices while nurturing their skills in supporting learners with diverse functional difficulties.

The manual placed a particular emphasis on raising awareness among school administrators to foster a supportive and accessible school environment where learners with disabilities are embraced and accommodated.

Through the SMILE initiative, investments were made to further strengthen institutional capacity and sustain inclusive education.

All staff of the NTI Academic Services Department were trained to facilitate the training for 100 primary school teachers and administrators involved in SMILE.

They received professional development support throughout the lifetime of the project to create inclusive learning environments in their schools. Their experiences are intended to guide future inclusive education policy and practice in Nigeria.

Collaboration with the NTI has led to the inclusion of the SMILE training materials into three mandatory inclusive education courses in the Nigerian College of Education programme. This illustrates the SMILE approach will be sustained.



Head teachers and OPD members photographed with parents of children with disabilities after receiving the parent support guide.

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Safeguarding training

SMILE recognised the importance of safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of all individuals involved, especially children. There was a commitment to uphold the highest standards of ethical practice. We made significant investments in safeguarding training, ensuring increased awareness and a robust reporting system. We implemented comprehensive training, refresher training and awareness sessions to equip staff, partners and stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify, prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns effectively.

Through the training and sessions, our participants and stakeholders gained a deeper understanding of safeguarding principles and best practices. They were empowered to create a safe and supportive environment for all.

In addition to training, we made substantial improvements to our reporting mechanisms to streamline and strengthen the process

of reporting safeguarding concerns. By recognising the importance of providing accessible and confidential channels, we established clear and transparent procedures for reporting incidents. All individuals we were working with felt safe and empowered to come forward with any concerns and foster an environment of trust. They felt confident that their concerns would be heard and addressed promptly.

4.3 SBMC manual and guide

SBMCs typically include parents, community members, teachers and school administrators. Their primary role is to enhance community participation and involvement in school decision-making processes. A specialised training manual and facilitator guide were specifically crafted for SBMCs to enhance their understanding and acceptance of inclusive education.

These resources aimed to empower SBMCs in promoting inclusive learning environments and provide guidance in inclusive school planning and management. They also discuss how to increase engagement with parents of children with disabilities and their communities, encouraging them to enrol their children in regular primary schools.

The comprehensive training was conducted with all SBMCs of the pilot schools. The training resulting in a profound impact on their comprehension of inclusive education principles and its significance.

One notable outcome of this training was the remarkable response from parents of children with disabilities. They displayed an eagerness

to enrol their children in the pilot schools. This positive outcome directly stemmed from the increased awareness and efforts facilitated by empowered SBMCs.

Through the implementation of the training manual and facilitator guide, SBMCs became key catalysts in driving inclusive education initiatives. They fostered a supportive environment that actively involved parents and communities in the education of children with disabilities.

This achievement emphasised the transformative power of equipping stakeholders with the knowledge and tools necessary to champion inclusive education practices at grassroots level.



SBMC training in one of the participating SMILE schools.

4.4 Inclusive school assessment tool manual

Another noteworthy contribution was the development of an inclusive school assessment tool by a dedicated sub-committee of the steering committee. This tool served as a comprehensive instrument for conducting inclusive school assessments and gauging the degree of accessibility and inclusiveness.

These assessments included school administration, policies, the physical environment, proficiency of teachers in inclusive practices, availability of accessible infrastructure, and adequacy of instructional materials.

The tool enabled the project to gain valuable information about how inclusive the schools were. It also identified areas that needed improvement to make the learning experience better for all students.

The tool also serves as a self-assessment tool for schools to inform school planning and measure progress on establishing inclusive learning environments.

4.5 The School Improvement Planning manual

This manual helped SBMCs plan and prioritise identified developmental needs informed by the inclusive school assessments. This then helped the School Improvement Planning committee to produce a well-articulated plan on how to promote inclusion in their schools so that they can accommodate different educational needs of learners with and without disabilities. This encouraged a conducive learning environment where no learner is left behind. The aim is for improved learner retention and transition to the next level of education.



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A mother is answering questions during her daughter's enrolment in school.

4.6 Remote learning materials

During the implementation of SMILE, we faced several learning disruptions due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and local insecurities, both resulting in regular school closures. Teachers and learners with disabilities were trained on essential skills of communication and mobility, as well as safety and protection measures, in the event of another disruption.

In addition, to support continuation of the learning process, remote learning materials for primary classes 1 to 6 were developed by the NTI with collaboration of special needs education experts. They were designed to help children with disabilities learn at home,

with support from parents or an adult, in the event of another lockdown. The SMILE team collaborated with the NTI and reviewed the materials to provide recommendations on how to make them more accessible to children with disabilities.

4.7 Support guide for parents of children with disabilities

This guide was designed to help parents support their children with learning and retention in school. The guide includes information on accessing services and resources relevant to their child's education, medical and social needs. This helped ensure that the learning was reinforced at school, at home and in the community.

The document outlines the importance of parents and teachers working together to stimulate the development of children. It also describes the support systems and networks available inside and outside of school. These help children to complete their education,

which is expected to lead to improved living standards and higher educational attainment.

No child can function well in school without a nurturing, supportive environment and close collaboration between schools and homes.



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Mothers showing the parent support guide they received from school.

4.8 Inclusive School Children's Club

Child participation increases self-esteem and self-belief. Creating opportunities for children to be part of decision-making on matters that affect them directly has a positive impact on community engagement and active citizenship. This is why we wanted to actively engage students in promoting inclusion in school.

Setting up an Inclusive School Children's Club offers opportunities for effective collaborative learning and enhanced inclusion strategies for all learners.

It also provides a safe space for children with and without disabilities to work together in a small group outside of the classroom.

It enables them to jointly identify activities they can initiate to promote and enable inclusion at school.

Giving students this opportunity and experience will stimulate tolerance and teach them to embrace diversity. This will lead to more inclusive school environments and societies.



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The Inclusive School Children's Club allows children to share learning and embrace diversity.

5.0 Strategies to ensure equitable access to quality education

Sightsavers aims for all its programmes to lead to sustainable change. A critical element of that is to ensure that governments take up their responsibility to equitably meet needs and respect human rights.

Advocacy is one of the important strategies we use to influence public policy and systems. The aim of all our advocacy is to reduce inequality and improve life chances.

SMILE's advocacy change objective was for children with disabilities and other marginalised children in Kaduna State to

access inclusive and quality education, aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4. To achieve this, a clear policy framework needs to be in place, one that will help create an enabling environment for the project to thrive.

The advocacy actions identified during project implementation was led by the steering committee. Working closely with OPDs and key stakeholders in the steering committee, we were able to achieve the following advocacy successes:

▶▶ Support the Kaduna State Disability Board to develop and disseminate an implementation strategy for the Kaduna State Disability Law.

▶▶ Support the Kaduna State Ministry of Education to review the State Inclusive Education Policy.

▶▶ Support the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with TAF Africa to review the National Policy on Inclusive Education.

▶▶ Support the NTI to include courses on inclusive education as part of the curriculum for distance learning requirement for Nigerian Certificate in Education certification.



Members of the SMILE team visit the NERDC executive secretary.

SMILE actively engaged in advocacy efforts to drive government support and secure resources for the sustainable continuation of the project. Various dynamic advocacy activities were undertaken, including:



A strategy workshop focusing on the implementation of the Kaduna State Disability Law, aimed at influencing policies and practices to create an inclusive environment.



An advocacy refresher training for government partners and partners from OPDs to reinforce the significance of inclusive education and build collaborative relationships.



Advocacy visits to key stakeholders, such as the Commissioner of Education in Kaduna State and the Honourable Chairman of Jema'a LGA, to highlight the importance of inclusive education and garner their support.



A courtesy visit to the executive secretary and the team of NERDC, introducing SMILE and seeking their collaboration for a collective impact.

These strategic advocacy initiatives played a key role in fostering awareness, influencing policies and establishing partnerships to ensure sustained success of SMILE.

This ultimately benefits children with disabilities and advances inclusive education in the region.

5.1 Support for the review of National Policy on Inclusive Education

Despite considerable progress being recorded on the acceptability of inclusive education practices at basic education level, there are still significant gaps and emerging issues in the delivery of disability-inclusive education in Nigeria. SMILE supported TAF Africa and the Federal Ministry of Education for the revised edition of the National Policy on Inclusive Education.



A meeting with OPD and government representatives to review the National Policy on Inclusive Education.

5.2 Review of the Kaduna State Inclusive Education policy

The process of developing the Kaduna State Inclusive Education Policy has advanced steadily, with active support and meaningful engagement of the project team and the Kaduna State government.

Through collaboration with key stakeholders, including government officials, educators, disability advocates and community members, SMILE played a significant role in shaping the policy framework.

It provided valuable insights, research findings and practical recommendations to ensure that the policy addresses the diverse needs of learners with disabilities and promotes a truly inclusive educational system. The policy discussions, working group

meetings and consultation sessions helped to shape the policy's guiding principles, strategies and action plans. They all align with international standards, evidence-based approaches and the unique context of Kaduna State.

The active support and participation of the SMILE team enriched the policy development process and strengthened the inclusive education commitment of stakeholders.

5.3 Kaduna State Disability Law review

Within the landscape of various challenges faced by OPDs, CSOs, INGOs and individuals, the intervention undertaken by SMILE stands out as a worthy achievement. Sightsavers embarked on a compelling high-level advocacy campaign targeting the Kaduna State government. This yielded a positive response from the deputy governor.

This response led to a promising commitment to advance the passage of the Disability Law. Subsequently, the dedicated efforts yielded results when the governor of Kaduna State endorsed and assented to the Disability Law in April 2021.

This significant achievement exemplifies the impactful work carried out by Sightsavers and the SMILE team in bringing about positive change for people with disabilities in the region.



Mother and daughter on the first day of the new school year.

5.4 Introduction of inclusion courses into the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) curriculum

Through the advocacy efforts of SMILE and the close collaboration with the NTI to enhance technical capacity of teachers, a significant milestone was achieved in the field of inclusive education in Nigeria.

The partnership between SMILE and the NTI birthed the successful integration of the SMILE inclusive education courses into the curriculum of the NCE programme.

This illustrates our systems approach and creates sustainability. The project resources are now adapted for use in government teacher training programmes to ensure inclusive education is covered and continues to be promoted after the lifetime of the project.

6.0 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

SMILE used developmental evaluation in line with an adaptive management approach. This involved a well-organised and interactive approach to decision-making in response to environment changes where the project is being conducted, or from latest information.

SMILE used the developmental evaluation to:

- Assess the provisions for improved access to quality education and increased participation of children with disabilities
- Support decision-making to achieve SMILE outcomes and inform potential scaling up of the project

The methodology was participatory, gender and disability inclusive, and primarily qualitative. Key SMILE stakeholders developed the evaluation questions, which fostered learning and ownership. Meetings were held with the steering committee and OPDs during the development of the evaluation questions. This helped capture learnings and analyse results.

The findings from the developmental evaluation highlighted barriers in schools, including:

- ✗ A lack of disability-friendly infrastructures, including ramps and disability-friendly toilets.
- ✗ A lack of assistive learning devices
- ✗ Unavailability of special education teachers

The findings also showed the effectiveness of the SBMC's advocacy and engagement with parents. The parents indicated that they brought their children with disabilities to schools, thanks to door-to-door engagement and religious institution advocacies of the SBMCs.

SBMCs and teachers mentioned that barriers to enrolment are the same for girls and boys and are culturally ingrained. For example, some parents mentioned that they grew up thinking a child with a disability is not meant to be in school as there are no provisions for them.

Parents and SBMCs mentioned that they greatly appreciate SMILE because it has changed their attitude about the ability of children with disabilities. Before SMILE, parents did not think their child could be in the same classroom with children without disabilities. Thanks to SMILE, they have been convinced about the possibilities for their children.

The evaluation recommended that the government could support SBMCs in creating ramps and making toilet facilities accessible to children with disabilities. It also recommended partnering with the College of Education in Kafanchan to provide all teachers with intermittent teacher training in special education.

It further recommended encouraging children with disabilities to increase school attendance.

The key audiences for the evaluation report were the Ministry of Education at national and state levels, the donor, the fund management team who administers the contract, Sightsavers, DID consortium partners and the wider disability inclusion community.

6.1 Adapting to the challenges of implementing SMILE

Adaptive management is a fundamental guiding principle of the Inclusive Futures programme and a crucial approach for SMILE. It allowed us to effectively navigate the complex challenges of implementing inclusive education in Kaduna State. This involved continuously learning, adjusting and making informed decisions based on real-time feedback and changing circumstances. This approach enabled us to respond promptly to disruptions and unforeseen events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenging security situation in Kaduna State, while prioritising the safety of staff, partners and beneficiaries.

Despite the challenging security situation in Kaduna State, SMILE ensured that there was continued implementation of activities by carrying out specific safety measures. Recognising the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in such circumstances, the project team was able to navigate the complex security environment by adapting strategies and adjusting plans as needed.

When the security situation necessitated temporary halts to project activities and travels, we leveraged the expertise and local presence of OPDs and other local education resource people to monitor and report on developments. The collaboration with OPDs was crucial in maintaining the momentum of the project. Their close connection to communities and their understanding of the local context allowed for timely information sharing and risk assessment.

By engaging OPDs, our security team and worthy news sources, SMILE could monitor the security situation and make informed decisions about resuming activities. This collaborative approach ensured the safety of project staff and beneficiaries. It also contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by people with disabilities in volatile environments.

During the implementation of the programme, there were certain challenges arising from the volatile security situation

in the LGA and surrounding areas. At a particular juncture, the authorities in the state imposed a curfew due to escalating security concerns. This curfew restricted the movement of staff and posed logistical difficulties in accessing the project sites and engaging with the participating schools. However, despite these challenges, the programme persevered and found alternative ways to continue its activities, guided by the Sightsavers' security team and government and OPD partners.

As the security situation gradually improved, and the curfew was eventually lifted, the project's security team took proactive measures to assess and clear the routes leading to the project sites. This assessment aimed to ensure the safety of the staff during their visits to the schools. It also aimed to create a conducive environment for the project activities to resume without compromising the wellbeing of the team. These adaptive strategies and collaborative efforts demonstrated the resilience and commitment of the project team in effectively managing the challenges posed by the volatile security situation. Through their determination and resourcefulness, they ensured that SMILE could continue without significant delays, albeit with necessary adaptations, and resulted in a timely delivery of the project within the given time frame.

6.2 Development of a wellbeing and inclusion checklist

SMILE’s consortium partner IDS contributed a piece of research to enable children with disabilities and their parents to tell us about their day-to-day experiences at school and in the community.

We set out to use participatory, inclusive, child-friendly methods by working directly with small groups of children with disabilities and their parents. We asked them to help us design a checklist, which can be used in Nigeria and potentially elsewhere, to see how they viewed inclusive schools and communities.

There is not one clear definition of wellbeing or inclusion used widely. Both are rather subjective, experienced concepts and may be influenced by an individual’s beliefs, attitudes, expectations and the culture

in which they live. There are a few tools which assess the wellbeing of children, including children who are ill or have specific impairments. There are also some tools that assess inclusive practices in schools and various aspects of accessibility.

Existing tools have mainly been designed and validated in high-income settings. They do not generally engage directly with children or parents to find out what questions they think are important to ask to measure progress towards increased wellbeing and inclusion.

The aims of the checklist

Phase 1

- ✓ Use participatory, inclusive and child-friendly approaches to find out what children with disabilities in Jema’a think are the priorities for their wellbeing and inclusion at school and in their community.
- ✓ Find out what parents of children with disabilities think are the priorities for their children’s wellbeing and inclusion at school and in their community.
- ✓ Use the thoughts of the children and their parents to design two checklists to assess wellbeing and inclusion in a user-friendly way.
- ✓ Trial the draft checklists with children with disabilities and their parents in Jema’a SMILE schools.

Phase 2

- ✓ Revise and redesign the checklists.
- ✓ Trial the new versions of the checklists after one year.
- ✓ Compare the findings from the two phases to assess the usefulness of the tool and to measure potential change in the experiences and perceptions of the children and their parents over time.
- ✓ Finalise the checklist format and produce a final version for trialling and use elsewhere in Africa and further afield.

What’s new about the checklist?

There is no existing checklist which asks children with disabilities about their situation at school and at home in an accessible way.

The checklist:

- Involves children in designing a tool to be used by them
- Recognises children’s views as valid and different from adults
- Is designed according to what the children and parents have to say
- Is accessible and inclusive to allow children with different impairments to participate and express their views
- Uses visual methods and a very flexible approach – it’s not a test!
- Is simple, easy and quick to use, and can be repeated to measure progress over time



A child with her mum after enrolling in school.

© Sightsavers

Step-by-step development of the checklist

1 The IDS team trained consultant and steering committee members in participatory, inclusive and child-friendly methods. These included facilitation techniques, ethics and safeguarding, planning sessions, concepts of disability and inclusion, building rapport, and producing checklist designs.

2 The team facilitated participatory workshops to establish what children with disabilities and their parents think are important aspects of wellbeing and inclusion at school and in their community. Three-day, play-based, creative workshops were held in two schools with seven and eight children respectively. One-day workshops were held with their parents. They discussed key topics and suggested questions that should be asked and roleplayed.

3 Online sessions were held with the team to analyse findings from the workshops and design the draft checklists. Ten important areas were established after the children expressed the important issues to address wellbeing and inclusion at school and in their community.

4 Similar or parallel questions were designed for the checklist for parents. There were six response options for each question, represented by emoticon faces (very bad, bad, neutral, good, very good, don't know) and a column for comments or examples given by the participants.

5 Draft checklists were trialled on about 35 children and parents in two schools. Results from their responses and from observations of how the checklist items worked were produced. The team noted the questions that worked well and the ones that didn't and suggested changes.

6 These fed into the revisions and redesign of the checklists. More questions were added, making a total of 20 in each version for children and parents. Further discussion on translation issues and changes to the response categories and visual choices were also carried out.

7 The new checklists were trialled in the same schools in June 2023.

Checklist feedback

The team reported that the use of participatory, child-friendly, interactive methods had been successful. However, some children were shy initially or had impairment-related difficulties with participation, such as having communication or behavioural difficulties. The parents enjoyed the workshops and were very interactive in making suggestions.

Children's questions

The key questions in the phase 1 checklist centered around the following topics:

1. Journey to school
2. Classroom
3. Playground/compound
4. Toilets
5. Help from others
6. Treatment by teachers
7. Bullying
8. Treatment by other children
9. Treatment by others
10. Feeling included

How the children responded

For the vast majority of the questions, the children gave positive answers ('good' or 'very good') and relatively few negative answers ('very bad' or a 'bad'). The worst rated areas were about the toilets and bullying, 13 and 14 children saying these were 'very bad' or 'bad' respectively. In contrast, questions about relationships with others (topics 5, 6, 8 and 9) were very positive.

There may be several reasons for the positive ratings:

- The children are genuinely happy with their experiences
- They are not confident or used to being negative or critical about things, particularly when going to school may be a new experience
- They may not feel able to rate badly or feel pressure from the school or parents not to
- The questions are not sensitive enough and so the responses are 'close to ceiling' (most of the responses were at the highest level)
- The response options may not suit the children, or they may not understand them

In response to these different possibilities, the questions were revised to make them clearer and more specific, in the hope that the children would be able to respond to them more confidently.

Parents' questions

The key questions in the phase 1 checklist centred around the following topics:

1. Teachers' skills
2. Teachers' attitudes
3. Child's relationship with others
4. Attitude of other parents
5. Community attitudes to child
6. Physical environment at school
7. Toilets
8. Child's inclusion in school
9. School is adapted to child's needs
10. Child safety at school

How the parents responded

Similar to the children, the parents' responses were mainly positive. Topics 8, 9 and 10, which are rather generic questions about the general inclusive ethos of the school, were the most positive.

The lowest ratings were about the physical environment and the toilets. However, many parents said they had never seen the toilets in the school, hence a high number of 'don't knows'.

Attitudes of other parents towards their child was rated with a spread of views rather than being overwhelmingly positive. There was some confusion about the difference between teachers' skills and attitudes. These questions will be reworded alongside some other adjustments and the ordering of questions.

Some amendments to the instruction sheet of the checklist were made to help with consistent and flexible use of the checklist. It was not intended that there would be a quantitative scoring system included. The response categories are recognised to be subjective to some extent.

The idea is that the checklists can be used descriptively to measure change over time in environments where the aim is for greater inclusion and wellbeing.

A lot of discussion in the team was about how to make the children's checklist more accessible to children with a greater range of impairments, such as children with intellectual and/or complex sensory impairments. We would like to develop a picture version of the questions in a simple booklet. We feel this would be a unique innovation and useful in many contexts. We are currently looking for further funding for this development.

The findings from the trialling of the revised version of the checklist will be analysed in July and August 2023. It will be published in late September/early October in an IDS Open Document Format. An academic journal article about the process and findings is also planned.

For more information about the current version of the checklist, please email the IDS team: M.wickenden@ids.ac.uk

We may be interested in collaborating with you to try it out in other settings.

The checklist team comprised of IDS researchers Mary Wickenden and Stephen Thompson, Nigerian consultants Oluwatosin Adekeye and Noela Gwani, and steering committee members Ndubuisi Sylvester Iroham, Risikat Toyin Muhammed and Magaji Waziri.

7.0 Conclusion

SMILE represents a beacon of hope and progress in the realm of disability-inclusive development, particularly in Nigeria.

Our goal was to provide valuable insights to state and federal education ministries, inspiring them to adopt effective, low-cost approaches that would make Nigeria's education system truly inclusive for children with disabilities.

The project was grounded in the principles of participation and meaningful engagement. We actively involved partners, including OPDs, government representatives from federal, state and local level, and IDS at every stage of our journey. Together, we equipped SBMCs and PTAs with the knowledge, skills and tools they needed to champion effective disability-inclusive approaches.

But our efforts didn't stop there. We understood the vital role of teachers, school staff and key stakeholders in creating an inclusive environment. Moreover, we established robust support networks for parents of children with disabilities, providing

them with the resources and guidance necessary to navigate the educational journey alongside their children.

We also implemented child participation strategies, valuing the perspectives and voices of learners themselves to shape the inclusive nature of their schools.

SMILE embodies the power of collaboration, empathy and unwavering commitment to transforming lives. It is through initiatives like these that we can drive positive change and create a future where every child, regardless of their abilities, has equal access to a quality education.

Together, we can break down barriers, foster inclusivity and light the path towards a more inclusive and equitable society for all.



Participants at the National Policy on Inclusive Education review sessions held in Abuja.

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8.0 Reflections of SMILE steering committee members

Under the guidance of the SMILE steering committee, innovative strategies and evidence-based practices have been implemented to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment in SMILE pilot schools.

The committee's expertise and insights have been instrumental in formulating policies, designing interventions and monitoring progress towards the project's goals. Their unwavering dedication to the principles of inclusivity, equity and quality education for all has been a driving force behind the project's accomplishments.

The SMILE steering committee has fostered strong partnerships with key stakeholders, including government agencies, OPDs and community representatives. Their inclusive approach to decision-making has ensured that the voices of all relevant stakeholders are heard and valued, leading to greater ownership and sustainability of SMILE initiatives.

As we celebrate the achievements of SMILE, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the members of the steering committee. Their exceptional leadership, strategic guidance and tireless advocacy helped drive the project's success. It also shaped a brighter future for inclusive education in Kaduna State.

It is through their collective efforts that SMILE continues to inspire and transform, leaving an indelible mark on the educational landscape and the lives of children with disabilities.



A girl high-fiving her teacher to celebrate her success.

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Jake Epelle
CEO/founder TAF Africa
Convener, Disability
Inclusion Nigeria

SMILE started with a very strategic workshop which produced an efficient methodology, created to carry along the implementation partners in decision-making.

Consequently, Sightsavers and all the implementation partners agreed to have a steering committee and a leadership structure was established. I emerged as the first chairman of the steering committee. I must commend the inclusive system adopted by the Sightsavers team without the need for micromanaging. My leadership of the team continued until I stepped down and successfully handed over the baton of leadership to David Okon, who led the committee till the end of the project.

The overall success of SMILE is attributed to the collaborative efforts and the respective skill sets of participating members. They made this project a huge success in all ramifications. The primary beneficiaries of this project were reached. The quality of inclusive education in the location of the project increased. There was a rise in awareness of inclusive education policies. There were emerging trends in the inclusive educational process and domestication of the national policies on inclusive education.



Dr Hafsat Kontagora
Academic Services
Department
National Teachers'
Institute, Kaduna

Sightsavers provided a wonderful opportunity with the SMILE intervention on disability inclusive education.

NTI, which has a mandate to train and retrain teachers at all levels, benefited highly from its partnership with Sightsavers. Most important was the collaborative efforts on the developed inclusive education training manual by Sightsavers.

NTI found the courses in the manual relevant to its teacher training curriculum and have currently updated and upgraded teaching certificates through the Distance Learning System (DLS) by awarding certificates of Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE), Bachelor of Education and Postgraduate Diploma in Education among others.

In partnership with SMILE, the institute led on the review and production of the developed manuals on inclusive education teacher training modules. During the SMILE implementation process, NTI with other stakeholders and experts designed and developed an inclusive education course, now integrated into the NTI curriculum.

DLS and NCE programmes are to be undertaken by all students of NCE in the 100, 200 and 300 levels as a compulsory general course. These courses provide the teacher trainers an opportunity to acquire basic inclusive education knowledge and skills to prepare them for handling inclusive classrooms.



David Okon
SMILE steering committee chairman
Nigeria Association of the Blind

The structure of the steering committee enabled the project to run effectively and efficiently. The OPDs were able to bring experience to the project. They gave direction and guidance to people without disabilities implementing the project. People with disabilities took ownership of the project, which inspired the project community and resulted in increased enrolment. For the Nigeria Association of the Blind, it was very impactful. Mutual benefits derived. We added our experience to the project and gained knowledge, which will help us in future projects.



Aliyu Haruna Yakasai
Executive secretary
Kaduna State Disability Affairs Board

Kaduna state Disability Law was passed by the Kaduna State House of Assembly and assented to by His Excellency, the former governor of Kaduna State, in April 2021. The success in securing the passage of the law follows a 21-year struggle by disability associations and other relevant stakeholders.

Sightsavers' high-level advocacy to the Kaduna State government at the commencement of SMILE was acknowledged by the deputy governor, who promised to work towards the passage of the Disability Law, which eventually birthed the passage and assent of the law.

The efforts by the SMILE project transcended the passage of the Disability Law. Technical support was offered to the Kaduna State Disability Affairs Board to conduct a stakeholder mapping to support the implementation of the Kaduna State Disability Law. Sightsavers further supported the conduct of a two-day strategic implementation planning for stakeholders' roles and responsibilities.

This laudable initiative of SMILE has imparted greatly on the disability inclusion in education, social and economic offers in Kaduna State. The Kaduna State Disability Affairs Board, Ministry of Human Services and Social Development, Kaduna State government and the disability community will remain grateful to Sightsavers for its overwhelming support. Be rest assured that we will sustain the gains recorded.



Haj Aisha Sani
Special education teacher and SMILE desk officer
Kaduna State Ministry of Education

The government of Kaduna State desire to see that no child is left behind in education, regardless of their disabilities or social status. The state developed a policy to ensure that all children within school age have unrestricted access to education and other social amenities without any stigmatisation or difficulties.

The Kaduna State Policy on inclusive education was developed 11 years ago and was supposed to be reviewed every five years.

SMILE augments government efforts and supports the Kaduna State Ministry of Education in reviewing the Inclusive Education Policy, with emphasis on the following areas of the policy among others reviewed:

- Curriculum adaptation to carry all learners along
- Vocational and skills training to make learners self-reliant
- Environmental modification for easy accessibility and conducive atmosphere for learners with disabilities

My appreciation goes to UK Aid and partners, Kaduna State Ministry of Education, Sightsavers and the SMILE steering committee members.



Haj. Hauwa'u Muhammad
Desk officer gender, inclusive education
Kaduna State Universal Basic Education Board

Prior to the SMILE implementation, teachers within the eight supported schools had little or no knowledge of what inclusive education is all about and who the beneficiaries of inclusive education are.

But, today, the training acquired with the support of Sightsavers through SMILE has made a lot of difference in terms of identifying the needs of every child in the classroom and teaching approaches.

The scope of teachers' competence in teaching diverse learners with varied learning behaviours in pilot schools and other schools in Jema'a LGA has been broadened. This has been achieved by acquiring more knowledge on disabilities and interacting with parents of children with disabilities, both at school and at home.



Hajiya Risikat Toyin Muhammed
Executive Director
Women with Disabilities
Self Reliance Foundation

The involvement of parents of children with disabilities plays a vital role in promoting inclusion and acceptability in schools and in the community. Parents help the school to understand the disabling condition of their children at enrolment, particularly with the administration of CFM to identify the child’s area of functional difficulty and support the specific learning needs of each child.

The experience of OPD partners in the implementation of SMILE in creating awareness and community mobilisation for disability inclusion generated tremendous success. The OPDs enhanced visibility and understanding of benefits of education to children with disabilities and their families. The documented resource ‘Support guide for parents and caregivers of children of disabilities’ further dispel myths, stigmatisation and discrimination.

Parents and schools were supported to access relevant resources that facilitate access to education, medical and social needs of their children. The pilot schools, teachers, administrators and community experienced broadened knowledge of disability inclusion, which improved accessibility.

The SBMC, as key stakeholders and representatives of different groups from the community, also play an important role in community awareness, educating parents of children with disabilities and encouraging the enrolment and retention of children with disabilities. This is achieved by monitoring the attendance of the children, having follow-ups with parents, supporting with schoolbooks and uniforms, mobilising resources to renovate classrooms, creating accessibility for all learners, and monitoring each school’s environment and teachers to make schools welcoming for all learners.



Dr Ndubuisi Iroham
Special Education Expert
Nigerian Educational
Research and
Development Council

Representing my organisation, NERDC, on the SMILE steering committee provided an opportunity for me to bring my education and experience in the education of learners with disabilities.

SMILE offered me and other members of the steering committee the opportunity to contribute to having an equal society where every child can maximise their potential. I was part of the team that reviewed and edited most of the developed resources and materials used to drive the implementation of SMILE as presented in this compendium.

9.0 Acknowledgements: Thank you to everyone involved!

This compendium owes its existence to the unwavering determination of Sir John Wilson, the visionary founder of Sightsavers, who became blind after a tragic accident at the age of 12.

His lifelong advocacy for individuals with visual impairments led to the establishment of Sightsavers in 1950. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to Lady Jean Wilson, who has carried forward this remarkable legacy. She works alongside dedicated CEOs and teams at Sightsavers to uphold the vision of a world where preventable blindness is eliminated and individuals with disabilities have equitable access to health, education and livelihood opportunities.

Our deepest appreciation goes to our project partners. This project would not have been possible without the numerous OPDs, including The Albino Foundation Africa, National Association of the Blind, Hope for the Handicapped Persons Foundation, Kaduna State Association for the Deaf, Women with Disabilities Self Reliance Foundation and Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities Kaduna State branch. Their tireless efforts, along with the invaluable support of aids and sign language interpreters, have been instrumental in achieving the goals of this project and transforming the perceptions surrounding inclusive education in Kaduna and Nigeria as a whole.

Sightsavers expresses gratitude to the Federal and Kaduna State governments, particularly the Federal Ministry of Education, National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, National Teachers’ Institute, Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Kaduna State Ministry of Education, Kaduna State Disability Welfare Board, Kaduna State Universal Basic Education Board, Federal College of Education Zaria, College of Education, Gidan Waya, and the Jema’a Local Government Education Authority. Their significant contributions have created an enabling environment that facilitated the successful implementation of SMILE.

Sightsavers is grateful for the valuable contribution of consortium member IDS, particularly its expertise in participatory research to promote inclusion. This has led to valuable insights on how to effectively engage children and their parents in the process, giving them a voice and providing guidance on how to assess the wellbeing of learners.

The passion, commitment and willingness demonstrated by the SMILE steering committee cannot go without significant mention. We are especially thankful for taking ownership of SMILE and for providing the leadership that has resulted in the gains we celebrate. Their advisory role took the programme to a different level.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to the dedicated staff of Sightsavers, including the Disability Inclusive Development global team, the Nigeria country office, the global inclusive education team, and colleagues from MEL, Safeguarding. The overall success of this project wouldn't have been complete without the dedicated support of our Sightsavers team, namely Dr Sunday Isiyaku, Liesbeth Roolvink, Lucy Reeve, Gillian Mackay, James Horan-Smith, Grace Atsu-Antwi, Mary Wickenden, Stephen Thompson, Esther Angulu, Esther Bature, Justina Yetu Agaji, Alheri Grace Aduak, Amos Kibet, Omojo Adaji, Joy Tarbo, Fabian Tukmen and Rasak Adekoya. The impact of our consultants Dr. Grace Jamila Bila and Oludotun Babayemi was impactful. We sincerely appreciate the support of the security team and support services team.

Last but not least, we enjoyed working with Mary Wickenden and Stephen Thompson, from our consortium partner IDS. We have valued their contributions to make SMILE a success.

But most of all we would like to acknowledge the dear children with disabilities; this intervention was designed purposely for you. We hope we have made significant impact towards your education, and we hope your pursuit for education will continue after the SMILE project.

We want to also appreciate the parents of children with disabilities, School Based Management Committees, teachers from the eight pilot schools, Jema'a Local Government Education Authority and the Honourable Chairman of Jema'a Local Government, your support at the local government level made the journey seamless and rewarding.

To the government of Kaduna State, thank you for giving Sightsavers the opportunity to support and strengthen the education system of Kaduna State. We hope that the intervention is replicated beyond Kaduna State. Thank you!



Dr Joy Shu'aibu
Director of Programme
Operations
Sightsavers Nigeria

10 Annex

Training manuals and guides

Manual on inclusive education for teachers and school administrators in regular primary schools. sightsavershh.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DIDSightsavers/EV1DFRlyrilAp7l9BIgYt3YBboEIaVGddUSapogj30yzQw?e=U0mlmm

DID SMILE modules for inclusive education teachers and school administrators in regular primary schools. sightsavershh.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DIDSightsavers/EeFjLUBf0f5Nt15apzdesPYBFPwbYdSNAe_x2bmKF7kqIq?e=Pc6RXC

DID SMILE facilitators guide for teachers on inclusive education. sightsavershh.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DIDSightsavers/EST06u2M6ZRGgwM7noaJZbMB1lViT7-Ka2eIkpJsLA8pw?e=NXyi7p

Child Functioning Module (CFM) training manual for head teachers. sightsavershh.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DIDSightsavers/ESbxWdf1wIFFs70PgiV40wsBco6WvdBo3dsbq4OxrqHmw?e=TWaFwT

Albinism: Information pamphlet for teachers. www.sightsavers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Albinism_Information_for_teachers_and_parents_English.pdf

School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) training manual (English). sightsavershh.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DIDSightsavers/ERMmilp1MNIEjPiWYWr_e4oBhB_2tNePf2-QxAfhOa7kTg?e=HgHwQw

School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) training manual (Hausa). sightsavershh.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/DIDSightsavers/Ed6wTRpVZZJPrniUNFJFXqoBku0oALwJVTJfv0ZswDNzTA?e=SMoOQQ

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A learner receives special attention from a teacher due to a suspected partial visual impairment.

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