

Strengthening inclusive education in Nepal

Project timeline: November 2019 – December 2025

Project budget: £3.06 million

Capturing the power of collaboration: Humanity and Inclusion, Leonard Cheshire, Sense International and Sense International India, Autism Care Nepal Society, National Federation of the Deaf Nepal, Committed Nepal (January 2022 – December 2022).

Every child has the right to education. However, children with disabilities in low and lower middle-income countries – **including 30.6 per cent of children with disabilities in Nepal¹** - are often left out of school and are more likely to receive a sub-standard education compared to children without disabilities². That is why Disability Inclusive Development - Inclusive Futures is part of the global movement to transform inclusive education for children with disabilities in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. **We are working with partners to open up education systems - and children's future opportunities.**



The situation in Nepal

There is little educational provision for children with disabilities³ in Nepal and the mainstream education system is not inclusive. Children with disabilities are separated from their non-disabled peers, either in a separate school or a separate “resource class” and have little interaction with them. Even then, out of more than 30,000 schools in Nepal, just one per cent have resource classes for children with

disabilities⁴. Whilst the Government of Nepal's Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2017 and School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023 commit to improving access to inclusive education, they are not being put into practice. **There are still too few children with disabilities accessing inclusive education and a significant need remains.**

How we are helping

To tackle this, we have brought together a consortium of experts, including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), education practitioners, international and local non-governmental organisations and research institutes. The team is creating a model to strengthen systems for enrolling, retaining, and providing quality education for children with disabilities in Nepal.

Targeting Kalika Municipality and Bharatpur Metropolitan City in Bagmati Province - communities with a high level of need and high percentages of marginalised ethnic groups - **we are supporting 154 schools to improve access to education for over 2,800 children with disabilities aged 4 - 14 years.**

Children with disabilities in Nepal face multiple barriers to participation; from inaccessible schools and a lack of qualified teachers to discrimination and non-inclusive curricula.

This project addresses these barriers through three pillars of action:

- **At community level** we are supporting parents and communities to understand that children with disabilities have a right to education, as we know this is crucial to increasing enrolment and retention. We are holding community awareness raising events, training parent-teacher associations and supporting parents and guardians to access government social security allowances for their children. Safeguarding is a key focus - each partner school has a Child Protection Focal Person and we are supporting local One Stop Crisis Management centres to make services more accessible for people with disabilities.



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“I must study hard so I can get a job and become independent. I have to turn my dreams into reality...training to walk with my new limb is hard work and sometimes painful, but I am confident that after it all, it will be OK.”

Sandeep, young person who dropped out of school following an accident and was supported to receive a prosthetic limb and return to school. [Watch our video of Sandeep's story.](#)

- **At system strengthening level** a gap analysis assessed disability inclusion in school curricula, teaching materials and classroom instruction to ensure a locally led approach. This is informing the training of teachers in inclusive teaching methods to improve education for children with disabilities in school and those out of school preparing to transition to school. We are strengthening the capacity of school management and local government engineers to undertake accessibility assessments of school buildings using an accessibility checklist developed by the National Federation of the Disabled Nepal. Schools are being supported to prepare School Improvement Plans incorporating universal design components, opening the door to children with disabilities.

- **At governance and policy level** we want schools, local and national government to commit to scale up inclusive education in Nepal. We are building the evidence base for increased government funding for inclusive education by collaborating with partners to improve how the national

education management information system collects and uses inclusive data to identify children with disabilities. We are sharing project learnings on inclusive data with local and national stakeholders, which is also contributing to the improved distribution of assistive devices for children with disabilities.

Project impact to date



The project has already supported over 2,500 children with disabilities across the 154 schools. 152 children who are learning at home have also received support, with 22 enrolling into nearby schools, resource classes or special schools. Support to parents and guardians, meanwhile, has supported 629 children with disabilities receive referral services including access to social security allowance.



Mentoring and coaching support in inclusive education has been provided to over 400 teachers, head teachers and members of school management committees. And we are supporting 147 schools to promote inclusive learning environments: 75 schools have made plans to make changes to make improvements to their schools and 12 have completed structural modifications to improve accessibility.



Following success in collecting inclusive data for over 30,000 primary school children, the project influenced two municipalities to make changes to incorporate inclusive data.



Promisingly, the Bagmati provincial government has already contributed almost £2,500 to co-fund the purchase of assistive devices for children with disabilities in project schools, and the two municipalities have committed funds for assistive devices (Kalika) and school adaptations (Bharatpur).

Discovering what works

The project is delivering vital learning about what works to the global evidence base for inclusive education. For example, the project has shown that data collected using the Washington Group Questions - Child Functioning Model is useful for both schools, budgeting purposes, and can feed into education management information systems. A recent **briefing paper** made recommendations on how to strengthen OPD participation in inclusive education work in Nepal.

Breaking barriers for people with disabilities

Disability inclusion is critical for reaching the Global Goals and we have produced the evidence on what works in a range of different areas. We now need the allocation of resources for inclusive education to turn evidence into action.

To find out more visit

inclusivefutures.org/inclusive-education or contact Claire Walsh at cwalsh@sightsavers.org.

Endnotes

- 1 UNICEF (2016) All Children in School: Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children – Nepal Country Study. Available online at: <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/sites/unicef.org/nepal/files/2018-07/All%20children%20in%20school-report%202016.pdf>
- 2 Human Rights Watch (2018) Nepal: Barriers to Inclusive Education as referenced in Inclusive Futures / Institute of Development Studies (2020), Nepal Situational Analysis - June 2020 update, p. 23.
- 3 Human Rights Watch (2018). Nepal: Barriers to Inclusive Education. Available online at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/13/nepal-barriers-inclusive-education>
- 4 Human Rights Watch (2018). Nepal: Barriers to Inclusive Education. Available online at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/13/nepal-barriers-inclusive-education>