



DPI Position Paper on Inclusive Education

Recalling the UN Declaration of Human Rights that guarantees the right to education;

DPI is encouraged by the implementation of Inclusive Education policies in many countries that have resulted in positive changes in the lives of disabled people in those countries.

DPI recognizes that if we are to achieve an inclusive society it is imperative that children with disabilities are integrated into their schools at the earliest possible opportunity so that this inclusion can benefit both disabled and non-disabled children.

DPI also acknowledges that, in many countries, disabled peoples' access to education is still being denied or limited and that less than 3% of children with disabilities in developing countries receive an education.

DPI congratulates UNESCO on its initiative of education for all (EFA) and the establishment of a Flagship to address issues of concern to children with disabilities;

All these things being considered, our position on the subject of Inclusive Education is a statement of what we feel should be done in the process of moving towards inclusion and integration around the world to ensure that education for disabled people is:

- Not segregated or in a “special” school
- A quality education that recognizes the principle of life long learning
- Develops all the talents of each learner to reach their full potential
- Accommodates the individual needs of each learner's disability.

Inclusive Education is a policy of Education For All, but it involves more than just including every person in the classroom setting. Developing a system that includes every potential learner requires input from everyone — governments, the local community of people with disabilities, parents, teachers, and the students themselves.

Some key policy items in the worldwide movement towards inclusion are:

1. **Legislation:** Every child, youth, and adult – males and females equally, should have the right to pursue a quality education. This right to education must be provided and protected by legal means and administrative ways, in order to ensure that the options of people with disabilities are not limited.
2. **Planning:** The establishment of an education plan for each disabled student must be undertaken, with the full participation of educators, parents, and, as they move into high school and beyond, the students themselves. Educators must be prepared, willing and trained to accommodate students with disabilities in their classrooms. Parents must be made aware of the educational options that are available to their children, and they must be able to participate in planning their children's education. Secondary school students should be given a voice in the planning process, to allow for personal choice in the direction of their education.
3. **Accessibility:** Every learner must be given the opportunity to be a successful student and to reach his or her full potential and talents. Students with disabilities' needs such as educational facilities that are accessible, the provision of communication tools such as Braille, orientation and mobility, sign language, and technical aids are essential to enable them to fully participate.
4. **Testing:** Adapted methods of testing must be utilized in order to fairly assess the progress of disabled students. This test must be based on the capacity and ability of the students, respecting time and making available particular procedures and necessary aids. For example, the use of oral testing to accommodate difficulties with writing, or literacy training for students who have previously had no access to education.
5. **Continuing Education:** As adults, people with disabilities must have the option to continue their education throughout their life, with the same access to personal development as their non-disabled peers. Peer counselling should be available to support the independent living and empowerment of disabled people.

In summary, DPI believes that education should be accessible to all who desire to be educated, no matter their ability; disabled people should have the option to be integrated with the general school population, rather than being socially and educationally isolated from the mainstream without any choice in the matter. Students who are deaf, blind or deaf blind may be educated in their own groups to facilitate their learning, but must be integrated into all aspect of society.